

Homework Tips for Parents

This tip sheet, created by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) is designed to provide parents with resources and tips to assist their children with homework, develop study skills and use online and community resources. Parent support in your children's education is integral in leading them to explore content and experiences beyond the classroom!

How Teaching and Learning Impact the Way We Do Homework:

The Common Core State Standards has influenced the way literacy and numeracy are taught in our classrooms. Teachers make adjustments every day to ensure that students have a deeper understanding of concepts by asking open-ended questions. Teachers are looking for students to apply logical reasoning and critical thinking. Answers to open-ended questions may require students to think deeply and outside of the box at times.

When helping with homework:

- Pay attention to the way that your child learns and the ways they best remember information. Ask them, "How did you arrive at your answer?"
- Get to know your child's teachers and go visit the classroom! Get a better understanding of what your child's teacher is looking for and find out as much as you can about homework policies.
- Just like teachers have to make a plan for teaching, parents have to make a plan for studying and practice!
- Remember, if you are the one helping students with their homework, **stay calm**. Do not let the assignment frustrate you and your child. Message the teacher or write a note letting him or her know what you both need help understanding.

Adapted from:

<http://www.corestandards.org/what-parents-should-know/>
<https://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/homework/index.html>



Tips for Numeracy:

- Warm-Up! Set aside a few minutes of homework time to practice math facts!
- If your child is learning to add, practice strategies such as adding doubles. Practice adding by 9's.
- Skip counting by 2's, 5's and 10's is a fun way to practice math and it helps prepare younger students for multiplication. Look out for patterns!
- If your child is learning to multiply, concentrate on the most challenging multiplication facts first.
- Explain! Explain! Explain! Whenever your child answers a math problem, ask him or her to explain the answer, even when the answer is correct. When students explain their thinking, they are deepening their understanding of math concepts. Have your child act out or draw what is happening in word problems. This will help him or her visualize what is going on and supports math reasoning and problem solving.
- Share with your child how you use math in your daily life. Take a trip to the grocery store and discuss the prices and how much you plan to buy based on a budget. Cook with your child and share how you use measuring to prepare meals.
- Call Count On Us, the Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) Math Homework Hotline for help and tips to support mathematics achievement from October until June. The number is 301-772-0080 or email Count On Us at cou@pgcps.org. Check out the live show on Verizon channel 38, Comcast channel 96, and live streaming at www.pgcps.org.

Adapted from: <https://www.readyatfive.org/for-parents/parents-matter.html>

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Setting Up a Homework Station

Younger Students:

- Create a friendly but functional space within your home where your child can do homework. For each family and each child, they may require different resources. So, listen to your children's needs! But for most stations, you will definitely need:
 - paper, scissors, glue, and tape
 - pencils, pens, crayons, and markers
 - good lighting
- Some children need a desk; others like to spread out on the floor. You can use pillows to create softer surfaces on chairs and floors. Some children like to rock or roll over when they are trying to concentrate. Try placing a small area rug or rubber padding in a corner of a room as you create a distraction-free homework zone.
- Use earmuffs or headphones to help children drown out any distractions.
- Lastly, if there are too many distractions at home, take your children to the library. The public library specializes in creating work-friendly environments where people can study.

Adapted from:

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/education/going-to-school/supporting-your-learner/homework-help/>

Tips for Literacy:

- Create a library of favorite books.
- Use your library card often!
- Have your child read DAILY! At least 15 minutes each day. Read whatever interests them as often as possible.
- Have them read aloud to you or another family member.
- As your child is reading a story, to themselves or aloud, ask questions about the main character(s), where the story is taking place, and what problem are the characters trying to solve within the events of the story.
- Find out why your child thinks the character is acting a certain way in the story and what could possibly happen next.
- Always encourage your child to write stories of their own when they are done with their school assignments.

Adapted from:

<http://www.readingrockets.org>

Older Students:

Children in middle and high school need support too! Helping them feel confident in school is an important step in getting your children college and career ready. The earlier you start preparing your child, the better! By reinforcing the habit of studying now, it can foster a disciplined and independent student later.

As children progress throughout school, the higher the stakes are each time they take an exam. Before going to college, students have to take exams like the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), or the American College Test (ACT). Ultimately, taking the SAT is a big deal because it measures how ready your child is for college. Each class from middle to high school becomes a building block or a stepping stone to success on these assessments. So, take advantage of the free online SAT classes the county offers for our students!

Some children may need help with study habits. After years of

Potentially Harmful Websites:

Even when we warn our children about the dangers of the internet, like a moth to a flame, their curiosities get the best of them, and children find themselves on sites they just should not be on.

Be a step ahead of your children and manage the family security settings in the applications on all of your devices.

- Microsoft Windows 10 allows parents to create child accounts.
- Google has YouTube for on Androids and iPhones/iPads
- Purchase and download parental control software, like, Qustodio or Net Nanny.

Adapted from:

<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/online-id.html>

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being in school, they may experience challenges when asked to retain more complex information. Others may need strategies on staying organized.

At times, children may need a tutor. Perhaps the material is complicated and a professional is necessary to help unravel the confusion or tie up the loose ends your child may have. Don't hesitate to find someone who can lend a helping hand. Check out the online resources at the Prince George's County Memorial Library System at: <https://www.pgcmcls.info/website/online-tutoring-436>

Adapted from: <https://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/sat-or-act-help-your-child-get-ready/>

Helpful Instructional Websites:

Math Support:
<https://www.pgcps.org/countonus/>

SAT Support:
<https://www.pgcps.org/sat/#menu>

PARCC Practice Tests: <https://parcc-assessment.org/practice-tests/>

SAT Suite of Assessments:
<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat>

ACT: <http://www.act.org/>

Khan Academy:
<https://www.khanacademy.org/>

PGC Memorial Library System/Online Tutoring:
<https://www.pgcmcls.info/website/online-tutoring-436>

Managing Digital Media:

Develop norms, or rules, for media use at home. Technology is helpful for many students as they look for information on the internet. However, younger children become overly dependent using a particular device and may need more structure. Older children may need guidance on using their technology in a constructive fashion.

- Consider turning off the television during dinnertime. This is no time for the cell phones and tablets. Turn off the TV and talk.
- Remind your children that they cannot copy and paste from an online resource without citing where the information was found. That is plagiarism!
- Remind your children, when it comes to social media, **be careful** what they post online. While it may become illegal for employers and schools to ask potential candidates for access to their social media, consider the costs if private information becomes public.
- Utilize Common Sense Media, the leading independent nonprofit organization dedicated to helping children thrive in a world of media and technology. The site provides unbiased information, trusted advice, and innovative tools to help families safely harness the power of media and technology as a positive force in all children's lives.

Adapted from: <https://www.common sense media.org/>

Helpful Websites for Doing Homework:

Skill Development:
<https://www.khanacademy.org>

Interactive Support/Research:
<https://learninglab.si.edu>

Free E-books: <http://www.gutenberg.org>

Language Support:
<https://calicospanish.com/motivating-homework-ideas-in-the-world-language-classroom/>

Additional Resources for Homework Help:
<https://www.thoughtco.com/homework-help-4132587>

Homework Site with Useful Apps:
<https://www.common sense media.org/lists/homework-help-apps>

Common Core Standards:
<http://www.corestandards.org/>

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Nurturing STEMtastic Students:

The best homework to solidify STEM teaching and learning is to apply what your children learn outside of the classroom. It takes the intentional involvement of all stakeholders to nurture a STEMtastic student. Through teaching and learning from educators, parents, community partners and businesses both in and out of the classroom, PGCPs students will be prepared to solve the problems of the 21st and 22nd Century.

Informal Learning Experiences are those opportunities and activities that occur outside of the traditional classroom setting.

Examples include:

- Engage your child in a conversation about what they do, observe, imagine, create, and learn. Help your child to see the STEM in **everything!**
- Visit museums, and natural parks to participate in STEM exploration.
- Participate in job shadowing and or short-term internship opportunities.
- Create a family STEM activity. (Challenge your child to create a family STEM activity!)

The 5 E's of Nurturing a STEMtastic student:

Enroll your child in STEM courses.

Encourage curiosity and questioning in your child.

Expose your child to science and technology shows, events, programs, etc.

Engage your child in STEM clubs.

Enhance your home by making it a STEM friendly environment.



Should you have additional questions about supporting your child in completing homework, contact the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, 301-808-5956