

Helping your Child with Disabilities with Homework

Research shows that when parents become involved in their children's schoolwork, children do better in school. One way you can be involved is by helping your child with their homework. Homework is something that is widely recognized as important to a child's success in school. Teachers use homework to provide additional learning time and to strengthen study and organizational skills. For students with disabilities, homework may be especially challenging. Your child may have significant attention or organization issues, or they may have difficulty with the way homework assignments are given. A lack of communication between home and school about homework can be at the root of the problems or, sometimes, children need special assistance to complete the assignments. It is essential for parents, teachers, and students to collaborate in building positive habits and creating a system tailored to each child's unique needs. Building effective homework and study routines, you're helping your child grow into a responsible and organized adult.

Homework Tips for Parents of Children with Disabilities

1) **Communication:**

Communication is an essential part of successful homework. Teachers and parents of students with disabilities should set up a clear and effective way of sharing information with one another and the student about homework policies, expectations and concerns.

- a) Use technology such as voice mail, texting, or email for communication.
- b) Request teacher monitoring of assignment books.

2) **Organization:**

Many students need help with organizational skills to be successful with homework.

- a) Establish a daily routine or schedule. Be sure to give your child time for a snack and wind-down time after school before they start homework.
- b) Limit distractions (tv, phone, tablet, loud music) and arrange a quiet well-lit place for homework.
- c) Organize a consistent workspace with needed items (pencils, pens, paper, computer, etc.) where homework is done each day.
- d) Use a calendar or day planner/assignment book that has been developed with the teacher to organize and keep track of daily assignments.
- e) Develop a homework schedule that allows enough time for completion of assignments.
- f) Supervise the packing of completed homework! Make sure assignments go directly into your child's notebook or backpack before they leave the next morning. It's incredibly frustrating when finished work isn't turned in, costing your child credit for their efforts. To prevent this, consider setting up a system with the teacher for immediate collection upon arrival at school.

3) **Guidance:**

Some students only need help getting started on their assignments, and some may need guidance to keep them on track.

- a) Begin by reviewing the instructions with your child, complete the initial items together, observe their approach to the next task independently, and then allow them to continue on their own.
- b) Guide your child without doing the work for them. Highlight errors and suggest ways to approach the problem but let them find the solution.
- c) Allow breaks when needed. If your child has a large amount of homework or feels stressed by a particular subject, break the work into smaller chunks. Let them complete part of it, then take a short break with a calming activity. Just be sure to set a timer so they know exactly how long the break will be before returning to work.

Helping your Child with Disabilities with Homework

4) **Accommodations:**

If your child uses accommodations in the classroom, they may be needed for homework as well. Your child might need shortened assignments or alternative response formats (e.g., allow the student to audio record an assignment rather than handwriting it). Homework accommodations can be written in your child's (Individualized Education Plan) IEP and be followed by all of your child's teachers.

5) **Assistive Technology.**

Devices that are used at school may be needed at home. Talk with the IEP team about how best to accommodate your child's technology needs for homework. Parents should be trained on how to assist their child with the device during homework time.

6) **IEP Goals.**

Include goals and objectives for homework completion in your child's IEP. Make sure that all assistive technology, supplementary supports, accommodations etc. are included.

Possible Homework Adaptations and Accommodations

Below are just some of the things that might be included on your child's IEP to assist them in becoming more successful and independent in doing their homework. Discuss with the IEP team any other things that you think your child might need.

- Allow alternative response formats (e.g., audio recording rather than writing an assignment).
- Adjust the length of the assignment.
- Provide a peer tutor.
- Provide learning tools or technology (e.g., calculators).
- Adjust grading standards.
- Give fewer assignments.
- Provide an extra set of textbooks for homework use.

Where to go for more information:

Parent to Parent of Georgia
770 451-5484 or 800-229-2038
<https://www.p2pga.org/>

Georgia Department of Education, Divisions for Exceptional Children
404 656-3963 or 800-311-3627 and ask to be transferred to Special Education
<https://gadoe.org/special-education/>

Additional resources: Contact the **Special Education Director** for your school system.