

Solve the homework hassle

Do you dread those long nights of homework hassle—for parents and students? Homework does not have to be a time of great stress for families, according to Paula Kramer, chair and professor of occupational therapy at University of the Sciences. Dr. Kramer suggests the following ways to help avoid arguments over turning off the TV and hitting the books:

- Come to an understanding with your child that homework is a necessity—and must be done every day.
- Communicate (in person and by email) with the teachers and find out how much time the student is expected to devote to homework each night. Setting expectations and time limits will make the child more productive.
- Allow for active playtime before homework. If the child does not have an after-school activity such as a sport or dance class, provide 45 minutes to an hour for the child to engage in active behavior prior to homework. The physical activity will help the child burn off energy, settle the nervous system, and refocus mentally for homework.
- Create a designated area for homework and studying—desk in a bedroom or the kitchen table. Just keep the homework spot the same, quiet, and free from distractions.
- Create charts to track homework progress. The chart will not only set a schedule that visibly shows that homework needs to be done every night, but will also allow the child to track progress. Rewards can be given for homework completed successfully a few nights in a row.
- Use positive praise to encourage good homework and study habits.
- Be a role model for the child. School cannot teach everything. Responsibility for successful behavior also lies at home. Parents need to take an active role in their child's education and should check in on the child during homework to make sure it is completed properly.

