

Homework Helping Dos and Don'ts

Do...	Don't...
Prompt your child with, "What do you think you should do next?"	Tell your child what to do next.
Identify where a math or grammar error is and let your child diagnose and fix the error on his or her own.	Tell your child what the errors are and how to fix them.
Offer to quiz your child from student-prepared review materials (e.g., notes, flash cards, study sheets).	Make a study sheet for your child.
Help your child to proofread by having him or her read the essay aloud to find the location of an error or clunky syntax.	Proofread by fixing the essay's mistakes in grammar or syntax.
Read a draft of your child's paper and offer general advice (e.g., add more details or evidence," "find a hook," "your paper needs a stronger conclusion").	Rewrite a draft by composing sentences, rearranging sections, and deleting redundancies.
Talk with your student to help him or her to get back on track when feeling frustrated.	Do the work because your child is tired and you just want to get it done.
Ask questions to help your child brainstorm ideas for a project or essay.	Come up with your idea for a project or essay.
Help your child find reference materials to aid her or him in the work.	Give your child the answer.
Listen to presentation rehearsals to give feedback about timing, eye contact, and fluency.	Interrupt throughout the presentation.
Define an occasional word (assuming that the assignment was not to define that word).	Don't discourage children from using spellcheck and other resources.

General Homework Recommendations

- Connect what your child is learning in class to current events or family affairs through informal conversations.
- Praise and encourage students' effort and perseverance; help them notice their own learning and growth.
- Encourage students to be aware of their focus and take short breaks that involves movement, music or some other activity away from books/technology.

Helping Children with Mathematics & Science Homework

In an article in *Teaching Children Mathematics*, Regina Mistretta (St. John's University/New York) shares strategies for getting parents involved in their children's math learning. Here are questions that parents might ask their children who are struggling with math homework that are also applicable to science and all other areas:

What problem are you working on?

What do the directions say?

What words or directions don't you understand?

Where do you think you should begin?

What do you already know that can help you work through the problem?

What have you done so far?

Do you have similar problems to look at?

Can you draw a picture or make a diagram?

Can you explain what the teacher asked you to do?

Can you tell me where you are stuck?

"'We Do Care,' Say Parents" by Regina Mistretta in *Teaching Children Mathematics*, May 2013 (Vo. 19, #9, p. 572-580), www.nctm.org; Mistretta is at mistret@stjohns.edu