**The Guide to Good Homework Habits for the Middle School Child**

Middle school students want to manage their homework well. Your child will answer your questions around homework in a manner that shows they have things under control. However, they don't always recognize when they are not under control. Have your child keep their assignment book up-to-date. Negotiate how often you check your child's assignment book. It should be at least once a week. If they have not recorded their homework, have them contact their teacher's learning line or website. You may want to re-negotiate how often you check their assignment book. Your child will have homework every night. If they say they have completed it at school, please know that there is not enough time during tutorials, class time, and the bus ride to complete all of their homework assignments. Having a discussion about the information on this page will help you develop an honest and open dialogue with your child around homework.

The Basics:

There are four basic ways to improve study skills.

- Make homework the highest priority. A time and place should be set aside for homework everyday.

- Homework should be a positive experience that is associated with affection, love, fun, freedom and self-control.

- Set fair homework expectations for the completion of homework as well as for grades. If the expectations are not met, as a parent you need to have and enforce logical consequences. With the block schedule, students should complete A day homework on A days and B day homework on B days.

- Homework time should be spent completing schoolwork and projects as well as learning organization and study skills. If a child has completed their work but has left it at home or cannot find it, they did not complete their homework for the night. Organizing should be a daily homework task.

Homework:

There are basic guidelines that should be followed to make your child's homework experience positive.

- Do not criticize. Be there to give assistance and support.

- Allow your child to choose where (as long as it is in a public setting), when (ideally, it should be the same time everyday), and how he does his homework. This allows him some freedom and makes homework a more positive experience.

- Encourage your child to take pride in his work. This gives him a sense of accomplishment and raises self-esteem. He will also learn to control his learning abilities.

- When things go wrong, be sure to maintain patience and understanding. Let your child know you're there to lend a helping hand. Never get angry, shout or criticize.

- When choice is provided, encourage your child to choose assignments and projects that he will enjoy. Some kids excel at written reports while others prefer verbal or hands-on projects.

- Allow your child to choose which homework assignments he completes first. Some kids want to work on their favorite subject first while others prefer to get the dreaded assignment out of the way.

- If your child dislikes a particular subject, find ways to make it fun, more interesting and less frustrating. Have your child do five dreaded questions, take a short break and then complete five more. This keeps the level of frustration minimal.

- Encourage your child to do homework assignments and studying for tests with a friend. Research proves that children who study together get higher grades than those who work alone. Studying for tests should begin three to four days before the assigned test date.

- When your child's homework is complete, give him positive feedback and praise. Have them show you their completed work. The purpose of viewing their completed homework is not for you to check quality but to see that the assignment is complete. Allow him to participate in a favorite hobby, play a video game or go to the park to play with friends.

- Do not use homework to punish your child.

- Encourage your child to ask questions and then be a good listener.

- Quiz children for tests and exams.

- Always encourage your child to do his best. If he puts forth his best effort, that's all that should be expected of him.

Homework: A Priority

From the time your child begins to bring homework home, let him know that you expect his assignments to be completed and handed in on time. Stress that homework is of the highest priority.

- Have your child choose a comfortable setting where he can complete his homework. It should be at a desk or table in an area where the lighting is good.

- Encourage him to establish a homework routine. Homework should be completed at the same time and place each day.

- Be sure your child has all equipment and supplies he will need to complete his homework. This includes such items as crayons, markers, glue, ruler, pens, pencils, calculator, eraser, dictionary, thesaurus, reference books and access to a computer for research purposes.

- Be sure your child doesn't have so many after-school commitments that he doesn't have the energy or time to complete his homework. If he is struggling to complete homework due to activities, this is a clear sign that he is over-committed.

- Communicate with the teacher and know when assignments are due. Be sure to know when tests and exams will be given. Be certain your child studies for them. Quiz him for at least a week prior to tests and exams. Spend a half hour each night going over exam content. When test day arrives, he will be ready and confident to meet the challenge.

If you establish good homework and study habits in your child from the very beginning, he will take advantage of them and excel in school and throughout his career. These habits will remain part of your child's life forever.