

Homework Help and Study Strategies

by
Vicki Zion



Are you frustrated with the homework battles? Do you need new ways to approach studying with your child? Helpful hints are listed below. Give them a try.

STUDY ENVIRONMENT:

First, consider where your child studies. Is it in the kitchen, living room or his/her bedroom? Try to change locations for one week and see if it makes a difference. What is the lighting like? Is it too bright or too dim? If it isn't right, sit by a brighter light or one with less wattage. What is the temperature like? Is the location too cold or too hot? Relocate to a place that is just right. What is the noise level? Is the study spot where there's a lot of noise? Use a little white noise to help with concentration. Play classical or instrumental music. It helps some people focus better. Experiment with each of the elements until you find the right combination so that your child can focus and get the best results from the time he's studying.

SUPPLIES:

Have all supplies needed at your fingertips. They can be in a shoebox in the kitchen, a file box in your room, or a desk that is organized with containers and supplies ready to go.

PLAN AND PRIORITIZE:

Check your child's planner to see what needs done immediately and what can wait. If there are long-term projects, work backwards and create a timeline with the project broken down into pieces that are possible to do in the time allotted. If tests are coming up, plan ahead and break up the study periods into shorter and more frequent study periods. Set goals for your child and reward him/her when the goal is reached. If there are several assignments in one night to do, prioritize them. What needs done now, are there some that can be started today and finished tomorrow. Look over your time availability for studying. Is time available right after school, after dinner, or even in the morning? Use the time wisely. Have your child make his/her best guess as to how long it will take for each assignment and then see if it really took that long. Try to have them "beat the clock".

LEARNING STYLES:

Determine what your child's learning style is by having him/her take a survey. There is a good one by Kelley Wingate Publishers called *Study Skills: (grades 2 – 4, 5 – 8)*. There is also one in the book *Learning to Learn* by Gloria Frender. Next, use the study strategies that go with the dominant learning style. Play to your child's strengths. It will make his/her study time more effective.

Visual Strategies:

- Use color codes for notes, study sheets, flashcards
- Visualize information – get the big picture
- Take notes: on flashcards, graphic organizers, study sheets, notebook paper
- Use pictures from magazines or on-line and put on flashcards or notes
- Watch a movie on the topic being studied (a good website: historychannel.com) (Schoolhouse Rock, Standard Deviants have many topics on VHS/DVD)
- Read a map or a timeline or make one to help visual information being studied

- Read or create a chart or graph on material studied
- Put together or create a puzzle
- Make a drawing
- Use mnemonics: Acronyms for what is being studied (HOMES for the Great Lakes)
Acrostics – first letter goes with information or a word
Rhymes
Poem
Song/rap
- Use graph paper or turn lined paper sideways to make columns for numbers to stay in the correct order

Auditory Strategies:

- Listen to a book on tape while reading it
- Listen to a song on the subject (Schoolhouse Rock has many topics on DVD/VHS)
- Read aloud
- Repeat information out loud
- Have discussion with someone on the topic
- Use mnemonics
- Tape record information and while playing it back, repeat it with the tape

Kinesthetic/Hands-On Strategies:

- Play card games or board games on math topics
- Make up cards to play Jeopardy style game, Bingo, Matching
- Use dice or Dominos to practice skills
- Jump rope, dribble a ball, play hopscotch while repeating information aloud
- Dance while repeating information aloud
- Role play
- Write with your finger on a surface to practice a skill: sand, shaving cream, dishsoap
- Write in the air and practice spelling
- Use Playdough or cookie dough and form words

The best yet is to use a multi-sensory method like Slingerland to help all 3 learning styles at the same time.

BREAKS:

Plan to have a break from studying. Plan a break 5 to 10 minutes for every half hour at first to build up endurance. Keep increasing the amount of study time versus break time until you reach an hour for older children. During the break get a drink of water, a snack or just move around during that time.

If you and your child are still having trouble, seek help from a tutor.

Workshops are available for parents and students.

See my website: www.personalbesttutoring.com

Vicki Zion

Director/Owner of Personal Best Tutoring

Staff Teacher for Slingerland® Institute

