



## **How to Help Your Child Get Organized and Stay On Track with Schoolwork**

“Mom, can you take me to Walmart to buy poster board for my science presentation tomorrow?” Sound familiar? Keeping young kids on track with their schoolwork is no easy task for moms or dads who have their own busy schedules to manage.

**So where do you start? How do you help your child get organized and stay organized with his schoolwork? Here are some tips that may help develop good work habits for him while easing your frustration.**

### **1. Accept the fact that helping your child do well in elementary school will require your ongoing support.**

This doesn't mean that you will need to watch over every assignment when he gets to high school, but it does take time and practice for young kids to develop good organizational and study skills. Students are more apt to be successful in elementary school when their parents play an active role in their education.

### **2. Insist that your child use a daily planner.**

Most schools provide yearly academic planners for their students to use. If your school does not provide a planner, shop for one that's an “academic” planner so the months align with the school year. The planner should go to every class with your child with the purpose being to write down each assignment and due date. Creating and checking off lists may sound like an easy thing to do, but many kids struggle with this task that often requires positive and continual reinforcement.

### **3. Help your child prioritize homework.**

Sit with your child and help him divide homework into manageable chunks. If he has a long-term project, help him map out the various stages and assign dates to each stage. Make sure he understands the requirements of every assignment and reach out to his teacher if anything is unclear to you.

#### **4. Help your child organize his work.**

Begin by labeling books and folders. Color-coding subjects can be very helpful. Devise a system with your child so he knows where to put new homework and completed homework. If he is completing his assignments but not turning them in the next day, figure out some type of prompt he can use at school to serve as a reminder to hand in his work. This could be a little drawing in his planner, a piece of yarn tied to his finger, or some other non-disruptive cue to take action.

#### **5. Reward your child's effort.**

This doesn't have to be expensive or even have any monetary value at all. Perhaps your child could get a small sticker on his folder for completing his homework. Or maybe he could play a video game for a certain amount of time on a certain day if he hands in all of his assignments on time that week. Every child wants to succeed, but they are all motivated by different things.

#### **6. Encourage good study skills.**

Start by establishing a consistent homework and study routine. Some kids work really well right after school while others need downtime to calm or recharge their bodies and minds before tackling more work. Make sure your child is not hungry when working and be firm about removing any distractions such as TV, loud music, texting, or phone calls. Allow a reasonable amount of breaks to keep their stress level down.

#### **7. Hold your child accountable.**

Kids don't need to be perfect, but they do need to understand responsibility and be held accountable for their actions (or lack of action). If you know your child has a big project due, make a clear agreement with him at the beginning letting him know what privilege will be taken away if he doesn't complete the project on time. Again, consider rewarding him for a job well done.

#### **8. Stay in touch with his teachers.**

Attend parent-teacher conferences and always raise questions or concerns about your child via email or phone calls. The more informed you are about your child's performance or behavior at school, the better able you'll be to help him meet his teachers' expectations.

#### **9. Keep a family school calendar.**

Dry erase boards are great way to color-code each of your children's activities at school. Hang the calendar in a prominent place like the kitchen where everybody will see it. Include things like P.E. day, library day, sports practices, tests, major projects, field trips, etc. Update the calendar regularly so nothing slips by.

#### **10. Set a good example.**

It's important for kids to see their parents being engaged in tasks such as reading, writing, paying bills, and completing projects in a timely manner. This should come as no surprise as kids mirror our behavior from the time they are born.