

Back-to-School Tips for Helping Your Scholar with Homework

July 30, 2017

By: Tiffany Covington

Have you ever sat down to help your scholar with their homework and thought, “I have no clue how to do this,” or maybe, “This is NOT the way I learned how to do this!” If so, you are NOT alone! As the Center Director of Scholar Factory, a local Academic Enrichment Center, I hear stories like this daily. Maybe this story doesn’t describe your situation? Maybe you have a scholar who you just cannot motivate to complete their homework? You feel like you’ve tried everything and just do not know what else to do? This too is very common.

If you think about it, when you get home from work do you feel like sitting down to do more work? If you are like me, then probably not. So, think about your scholar’s situation. They have been at school for 7+ hours having to sit still and pay attention. I don’t know about you, but I can understand why they may be a little resistant to having to do homework! However, don’t worry! I have compiled a list of ways to help you and your scholar get over the homework-blues and be successful!

Some things to consider if you are having trouble getting homework completed (or even started):

1. I know when we are frustrated it is difficult, but try to be patient. Remember, our little ones pick up on everything and if they see you are frustrated they may become too!
2. If your scholar’s teacher sends home a packet with a whole week’s worth of homework that has to be turned in at the end of the week, consider creating a [choice board](#) to let them decide the order they want to complete it in.
3. Consider using a timer and taking breaks. Start out small. Have them work for 3-5 minutes and then take a 3-5 minute break. As they get used to this and are consistently successful, increase the time in 5 minute increments until the timer is no longer needed.
4. Have a [reward system](#) in place, such as a [treasure chest](#). A good way to find out what will motivate your scholar is to complete a [Forced Choice Reinforcement Survey](#). Not every scholar wants tangible items, sometimes they want things like extra time with you or a trip to the park. Completing a Forced Choice Reinforcement Survey will show you what motivates your scholar to do well.
5. Try to connect the topic to a real world example. If your elementary-aged scholar is working on fractions, take a trip to the kitchen and bake something together. Have them measure and add the ingredients (with your help) so they can gain real experience and see the value in learning that topic.
6. Consider making some lifestyle changes. I know this is easier said than done, but it can make a huge impact! Think about decreasing the amount of sugar your scholar consumes each day or the amount of screen time they get. Every scholar reacts to these things differently and they may be affecting your scholar more than you realize, especially if your scholar may have ADD/ADHD.
7. Remember, it is very important to have a routine and designated time and space for completing homework. Create your routine together and let your scholar have some choice. Think about things like: Will they complete homework as soon as they get home or will they take a break first? If they take a break how long will it be? Where is



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a space that they can work that is conducive to being productive? Is it quiet, away from distractions (siblings, noise, electronics, toys, etc.), have good lighting, full of needed resources (crayons, pencils, paper, calculator, ruler, blocks, etc.)? Be consistent and stick to the routine. Trust me, scholars need a structured environment, especially if they have having difficulty.

Some things to consider if you or your scholar are having trouble with the topics in the homework:

1. Be your child's advocate!
 - a. If they are struggling at home and at school, ask if your scholar is receiving any interventions. If not, ask if they can be added to one. If so, find out the details (what are skills are they working on, how long have they been receiving them, what are the next steps, etc.)
 - b. Maybe they are already receiving interventions, but they still need more support. Ask your scholar's school if there are any other opportunities for extra help before, during, or even after school.
 - c. Another thing to consider is asking your scholar's teacher for additional resources that they use or recommend, such as extra practice, websites, or logins for online resources that the school has access to, like BrainPop, Accelerated Reader, Moby Max, IXL, or many others.
 - d. Ask the teacher to send home completed examples of work, so you know how they expect them to be solved or completed.
2. Familiarize yourself with the concept/topic before you sit down to help your scholar. New standards, techniques, teaching practices, and technology have your scholar learning differently than you did. I know it can be frustrating to sit down to help your scholar and you have no clue what to do. So, save you and your scholar the frustration. Check out some resources beforehand and be prepared to help them by familiarizing yourself. Resources such as [Khan Academy](#), [National Geographic Kids](#), [Scholastic](#), or even [YouTube](#) can be very helpful in showing you how to complete an assignment.
3. Be creative and/or get additional practice for your scholar. Here are some ideas and resources to get you started! Simply click the hyperlink for more details.
 - a. [Common Core Sheets](#) (Simply search the website for the topic or standard your scholar needs help with.)
 - b. [Khan Academy](#) (Simply search the website for the topic or standard your scholar needs help with.)
 - c. [Choice Board](#) (This is one example, simply enter Choice Board into your search engine to get even more great ideas or for you can customize for your scholar.)
 - d. [Forced Choice Reinforcement Survey](#) ([Here](#) is another example for younger students)
 - e. Flashcards (Print on card stock, front and back for sets with answers) ([Numbers](#), [Addition](#), [Subtraction](#), [Multiplication](#), [Division](#), [Letters](#), [Sight Words](#))



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- f. [Board Games](#) (I like to print a generic board game that can be used with basically any set of flash cards, like the ones I have linked you to, please note that they are toward the end of the document.) (If you don't want to make your own games, the [KSS](#) store has lots of pre-made games for most topics.)
- g. [Video Games](#)
- h. [Sensory Items](#) (Use this method with Sand, Sugar, Salt, Sprinkles, Beads, Shaving Cream, etc. and for many topics like letters, numbers, sight words, math facts) (Watch a video [here](#).)
- i. [Sight Words](#)
- j. Computer Games ([ABCya](#), [TurtleDiary](#), [FunBrain](#), and there are many more!)
- k. DVD's & TV Shows (Carmen Sandiego, Reading Rainbow, SchoolHouse Rock, and many more!)
- l. Magnetic [Letters](#) or Numbers
- m. [Dice](#)
- n. [YouTube](#)
- o. [National Geographic Kids](#)
- p. [Scholastic](#)
- q. [Care.com](#)
- r. [Extra Practice](#) (i.e. worksheets) (Simply enter second grade reading worksheets or fourth grade math worksheets, etc. into your search engine and find plenty of extra practice pages!)
- s. [Treasure Chest](#) ([Here](#) is an article discussing it's uses.)