

# Oh No... Homework! -- Parent Workshop – Notes

## Presenter Kent Toussaint 10/15/09



### Expectations

As parents, we all want our kids to do well. We see their amazing potential & intelligence, but remember they are just regular people. Play is their real practice for life. It helps them with reasoning, social skills and creativity. Take a step back from your expectations. It's great to see potential, but try not to put so much emphasis and pressure at this point in their lives on what they *can* (should) do academically. Being "good enough" is Good Enough. This goes for parents as well as kids.

### Boundaries

It's up to the parent to set the boundaries. Your child can't do it. You can set limits on their homework time. If your child is putting in their best effort and still not completing their homework, it is within your power to let them leave it at that. Discuss these options with your teacher first – if there is a battle to be fought over homework, let the teacher battle with YOU, not your child.

### DAILY ROUTINE

- RELAX. Your mood, whether you are conscious of it or not, has a profound effect on your child's. If you are tense and in a hurry, your child will get tense and impatient/frustrated.
- Do not allow any electronics before homework. Give the kids time to hang out, have a snack, play with the dog, etc, and make them understand the specific time homework will begin.
- Positive rewards work – punishment, yelling and nagging DO NOT. Shaming a child creates sadness and fear. It can also lead to anger, resentment and an "It's all Mom's fault" reaction in your child.
- Point System - You can establish a point system – for example, set up an incentive & give a point for sitting at the table, a point for each problem completed, or give a certain # of points for a certain # of minutes spent on homework, etc. Then make the points translate into a reward for the SAME DAY. (TV time, favorite toy/game, later bed time, etc.) Rewards are different than bribes. A bribe is something you don't feel quite right about, like giving lots of candy or something expensive. A reward is a positive reinforcement for something that has been legitimately earned. NOTE: Make it clear to your child: They are NOT going to get every point every day (and that's okay!).
- If your child needs/likes to take lots of breaks, SCHEDULE the breaks.
- If your child has a tantrum re: homework frustration or resisting your boundaries, try and give brief reassurance – if possible, hold them until they can physically calm down – and tell them it's okay. "You are out of control right now. I'm going to make sure you don't hurt yourself or me. I'm going to hold you until you calm down." And/Or, "I'm sorry you didn't earn enough points to get the reward. You'll do better next time." Then WALK AWAY.

CALM consequences help your child focus on what he/she did, and not focus on anger at the person (you) who has to give the consequences.

*Parents:* It's important for you to get social support. Your children are going to continue to push your buttons; they are going to test you. Give yourself permission to vent to your spouse, friends, etc. Talking about it makes it more manageable, and helps you set a better example for your kids. In the event that you do "lose it," learn to apologize to your kids. This will help teach them honesty and accountability.

**LAUSD Homework Time Allocation Recommendations -- Total Minutes Per Day**

These are the Los Angeles Unified School District's standards for time spent on daily homework. Your child's teacher may have a different policy

Kindergarten	15-20 minutes
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	30-35 minutes
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	30-35 minutes
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	35-45 minutes
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	35-45 minutes
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	50-60 minutes

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