

# HOMWORK

PARENTING CHALLENGES ★ PAGE 1 OF 1

One purpose of homework is to teach self-discipline. (1) It is important that your child has a place where she can study: flat area with good light and no TV, radio or CD player, (2) It is helpful if there is no TV on in the home during study time, (3) If the child has a one hour study period, have them show you what they are going to do with their hour: "I'm going to do twelve math problems, learn my spelling words and answer some of my social studies questions." The value of this exercise is that it gets your child focused. Tell your child you will check to see what they have accomplished at the end of the hour.

At the end of the hour, ask to see the work. If the child didn't do (the math) because she says she doesn't know how to do it, tell her you will help her with it now. Only do this if you are able to help. The child will protest because study time is over. You may reply, "You knew you couldn't do this at the first of the hour. I could have helped you during your study hour; I will help you now." If the child is using, "I don't know how to do it" as an excuse not to do the work, this action will cut off that choice. If you don't know how to do the work, write a note to the child's teacher. Tell the child, "This note is to be signed and returned to me today. If you forget to get it signed or bring it home, you are volunteering for a chore."

What your children may not understand is that every person in your home has a job. Your job may be to earn the money so the family can survive. The child's job is to go to school and do what is expected in order to learn. The child needs to do his or her job. In today's world, the best jobs come via a good education; for your child's sake, encourage him/her to do well in school.

If there is an obvious solution to the children's problem (you play with that toy for fifteen minutes and when the timer goes off it is your turn for fifteen minutes with the toy), the parent might offer the solution. If an argument erupts, stop the action! "It doesn't look like you two want to get along today. For the next hour, Kathleen you go into the dining room with your toys and play. Scott, you take your toys into the living room; there will be no TV while you are there." Separate them for an hour. If, at the end of the hour, they still don't choose to get along, separate them for a second hour.

This is the rule: If you play together well, you stay together. Fight, and you are separated.

Footnote: Skills are best taught out of the heat of a battle. If one child is constantly taking the other child's toy away, talk to him/her about that. Explain that it is important to take turns with toys. Tell the child that he/she does not have the right to take a toy away from another child. Set up a consequence : "Should I see you take Kathleen's toy away from her again, I will give her the toy and you will have a fifteen minute time out."

Behavior that is rewarded continues, behavior that is not rewarded stops.