


**Using Homework to
Teach the Three R's**

Responsibility, Resourcefulness, Respect



Learning About Learning Series
January 27, 2012
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Homework just a necessary evil?

- Reinforcement of concepts
- Practice independent skills
- Opportunity for organization
 - Materials management
 - Time management
 - Emotional management
- Taking ownership of skills
- Repetition results in automaticity

**Stressed out homework time -
The family factors:**

- Expectations and perceptions
 - Agendas
 - Shooting too high or too low
- Who's in charge?
 - The student, the parent, the teacher?
- Beliefs and past experiences
 - Beliefs about the child and about yourself
 - Gearing up for a battle
- Comparisons
 - To others
 - To past performance

Parents as homework allies:

- A search for strengths
 - Make a study
 - Where is the line of mastery?
 - It moves
 - Help your child to see it
 - Do not intervene on this side of it
 - Islands of competence
- Setting the emotional tone - Mindset
- The learning atmosphere of the home – see previous talk notes
- Priorities
 - Is homework one?

Responsibility

- Children not responsible for:
 - Unrealistic expectations
 - What we don't communicate to them
 - What we will take responsibility for
- Children are responsible for:
 - Their homework
 - Their behavior when doing homework
 - Their own learning (fun or not)

The Laws of Sowing and Reaping Responsibility

- Make sense because they are God's laws
 - Scriptural basis
 - Unreasonable to sow one crop and expect to reap another
- For children, it is ridiculous to:
 - Sow half-hearted effort and expect to reap good grades
 - Sow passive learning and expect to reap understanding
 - Sow over-dependence on mom and expect to reap maturity
- For parents, it is ridiculous to:
 - Sow over-involvement and expect to reap independence
 - Sow charged emotion and expect to reap learning
 - Sow insufficient time and expect to reap thoroughness

Resourcefulness

- The ability to accomplish a task using the tools available
 - Using one's fullest capacity for problem-solving
 - Must be flexible, creative, challenged
 - Must know the resources available
 - Must use the resources available - "use your tools"
- Set a boundary and then let them bounce around in it
 - How much stress is self-imposed?
 - How does the child wrestle with difficulty and frustration?
 - How dependent is the child on you?
 - What messages might the child be receiving?
- Resourcefulness encouraged through:
 - Interesting and thought provoking conversation
 - "You are responsible for your own fun."
 - Exposure to stimulating and challenging ideas.

Building resourcefulness

- Only give the child what he needs
 - Not necessarily what he wants
 - Don't be the tool unless he doesn't have the tool
 - Let him struggle - it's how he grows
 - Shadowing the child as he works
- Learning from failure
 - Building self-respect - a true view of oneself
 - "What went right?" and "What went wrong?"
 - Matter-of-fact discussions about failure
- Tenacity and Ownership
 - We want them to want it for themselves - not for us
 - Living right on top of their line of competence

Questions to build responsibility and resourcefulness at the same time:

- "How much time are you spending being distracted or struggling and how much is actually spent doing the homework?"
- "What is distracting to you and what can you do about it?"
- "What do you think you need from me?"
- "What's your goal for this assignment/test?"
- "What are your tools?" or "What tools are you going to need for this assignment?"
- "Do you need a prompt?"
- "Do you need a break? Some exercise?"
- "So, what's your plan?"

Respect

- For the learning process
 - The need for thoroughness
 - Seeing the skill upon skill building
- For the parent supervising
 - Who's in charge? - Power struggles Who trumps whom?
 - Asserting appropriate authority - be the adult
- For the teacher/school
 - Parent backs the teacher until further notice
 - Parent sets the tone for attitudes and perceptions in the home
 - Parent models appropriate respect for authority
 - Communication between parents and school important for the child
- For himself/herself
 - I can do it and I can do it right - Mindset
 - Making good decisions
- Parent respect for the child
 - Positive messages - shoulder-to-shoulder rather than face-to-face
 - Over-involvement = "I don't think you can do this without my help."

The "Big Three" skills built doing homework:

- Materials Management
 - Provide and maintain the setting
 - Keeping up with materials
 - Having the right books, supplies
 - Having the right assignment written down
 - When to double-check and when to let it ride
- Time Management
 - Prioritize - "first thing's first"
 - Time and effort estimates before starting
 - Good management buys time
 - Consistent routines save time
- Emotion Management
 - Maintaining emotional and attitude stability ("matter-of-fact")
 - Modeling healthy emotional responses
 - An attitude of gratitude

Recommended Reading (in no particular order)

- *Smart but Scattered* by Dawson and Guare
- *Homework without Tears* by L. Canter and L. Hausner
- *Crazybusy* by Edward Hallowell
- *Boundaries with Kids* by Henry Cloud and John Townsend
- *Parenting Teens with Love and Logic* by Foster Cline and Jim Fay
- *Organizing the Disorganized Child* by Martin Kutscher

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