

## How to help with primary reading, maths, homework

How to help your child develop basic learning skills at primary school.

### Helping your child with reading



Reading with your child is vital. Research shows that it's the single most important thing you can do to help your child's education. It's best to read little and often, so try to put aside some time for it every day.

Think of ways to make reading fun - you want your child to learn how pleasurable books can be. If you're both enjoying talking about the content of a particular page, linger over it for as long as you like.

Books aren't just about reading the words on the page, they can also present new ideas and topics for you and your child to discuss.

Tips for helping your child to enjoy books:

- Encourage your child to pretend to 'read' a book before he or she can read words.
- Visit the library as often as possible - take out CDs and DVDs as well as books.
- Schedule a regular time for reading - perhaps when you get home from school or just before bed.
- Buy dual-language books if English isn't your family's first language - you can talk about books and stories, and develop a love for them, in any language.

- Look for books on topics that you know your child is interested in - maybe dragons, insects, cookery or a certain sport.
- Make sure that children's books are easily accessible in different rooms around your house.

Don't forget to sign their learning logs too so they can receive prizes for their home reading.

### Helping your child with maths



As with reading, try to make maths as much fun as possible - games, puzzles and jigsaws are a great way to start. It's also important to show how we use maths skills in our everyday lives and to involve your child in this.

Identifying problems and solving them can also help your child develop maths skills. If you see him or her puzzling over something, talk about the problem and try to work out the solution together.

Don't shy away from maths if you didn't like it at school. Try to find new ways to enjoy the subject with your child.

Tips for helping your child to enjoy maths:

- Point out the different shapes to be found around your home.
- Take your child shopping and talk about the quantities of anything you buy.
- Let your child handle money and work out how much things cost.
- Look together for numbers on street signs and car registration plates.

## Homework at primary school

Homework reinforces what your child is learning in school. It also gives you a chance to become involved in the learning process.

In Key Stage 1 (Reception to Year 2) reading is the most important homework. Your child may always have a book from the classroom library in his or her bag - try to read the book together every night. Don't forget to sign their learning log so that you can be involved with your child's progress with reading.

The time your child spends on homework is less important than his or her understanding of it. But the following is a rough guide to the amount of time he or she should be spending on homework at primary school:

Years 1 and 2      60 minutes a week

Years 3 and 4      90 minutes a week

Years 5 and 6      30 minutes a day or equivalent over two/three evenings or at the weekend

Primary school children are sometimes asked to talk to their families about what they learned in school on a particular day. This can be the most valuable homework of all, especially if you show interest and play an active role by asking your child questions about their day.

### Tips for good homework habits

- Do find a quiet place at home to use as a homework area. It needs a flat surface, a good light source and the right equipment eg pens, pencils, ruler, scissors, glue.
- Do be aware of modern teaching methods, eg in long division.
- Do plan a homework timetable and agree on when your child will do their homework.

- Do allow your child to have something nutritional to eat before starting on homework.
- Do discuss any homework tasks with your child and how it connects with what they are studying at school.
- Do turn off the TV - but you could have music on if they find it helpful.
  
- Don't give your child the answer in order to get a task finished. Instead, explain how to look up information or find a word in a dictionary.
- Don't teach your child methods you used at school. It could confuse them.
- Don't let homework become a chore. Keep it fun and make it a special time that you both look forward to.