

# "Home" Work Connections

Homework should involve **"home"** in each activity. Providing children opportunities to use learning in everyday experiences. Each calendar was created to provide activities that children can do at home based upon different levels of Bloom's Taxonomy of thinking skills. While some days children will use list, count, find from the lowest level of thinking, the "knowledge" category. Other days will require them to plan, create, rate from the highest levels of thinking, "synthesis and evaluation". The calendar can provide parents with ideas on the types of activities that they can be doing with their children to connect learning between school and their lives. Calendars include opportunities to build math, language, speaking, reading, writing, science, social studies and many other valuable skills that bring learning to life for children. Many activities require parent involvement that will lead to better communication skills. Don't miss this opportunity to provide the homework families often request with valuable activities that you know allow children to enjoy and experience learning in a natural environment. Show our children that "home" work can be fun!

Parent letter , homework research and calendar(s) included.



# My thoughts along with some research on homework...

Shared by ~ Donna Whyte

As an education consultant, a question that has been asked of me many, many times is: What are your feelings on homework? This is a topic so dear to my heart. I have often said that my feelings and beliefs on the topic are personal. A side of my thoughts is driven from being a mom of two children who have had many "versions" of homework over the years; the other side is driven by being a teacher of young children. I often hear that homework is to reinforce concepts and/or to "bring a family together" to work with a child. My thoughts are this: Most of the research that I have read state that "homework helps starting at about 4th grade". This is a time that they seem better able to seek out assistance before completing assignments that they don't understand.

There are children who get assistance (at times, too much assistance) with their homework. The parents sit with the child and go through each assignment. It often seems to be the same children whose parents are involved with many aspects of their lives. They don't need me to send homework to bring them together. They do it because they have a commitment to their children. If I don't send homework...I tend to think that they will still spend time with their children...chances are doing things that bring them closer and make them smile. Then there are the children who struggle through with little or no assistance. At times, these children complete the assignment but in fact, they do it incorrectly. What we as educators should realize is that this reinforces the "wrong way". In terms of reinforcing the concepts, what we find is the children who need that reinforcement most are the ones that get it least. They are in homes where parents don't help or are in homes where parents "can't". This can be for a variety of reasons. Parents work second shift, single parents are overwhelmed or so many of our parents are not sure "how" to help. Perhaps due to a language barrier but also can be due to lack of knowledge on how to help. Then there are families that just "don't spend time together"...I tend to doubt that my sending homework home can or will change that.

My children had all the assistance they needed. It seemed at times that it was just busy work and they would robotically go through the steps. I am not sure that a lot of real learning occurs during this. It seemed that 95% of the time we just needed "to get it done". I

resented the time it took from our family. From a personal standpoint I never like to bring work home. I do, but I don't like it and I am an adult. If you have already put in a number of working hours it seems to me that you should then have "family time" or at the very least some "down time" at home. In my utopia world I want kids to go home and "be kids". Get some fresh air, play with the other kids in neighborhood, etc. I know that the reality is that many go home to empty houses and play video games. Accepting that which is beyond our control is hard, the truth is that WE don't get to decide what they do when they get home. It sure seems that struggling with homework shouldn't be a priority for these kids.

Harris Cooper, Ph.D., a psychology professor at the University of Missouri, has reviewed more than 100 studies on the effectiveness of homework. In general, he has found that the benefits of doing homework seem to depend on the student's grade level. In high school, students who regularly do homework outperform those who do not, as measured by standardized tests and grades. In middle school, homework is half as effective, and in elementary school it has NO apparent measurable effect on achievement. Now I have not conducted any research studies on the topic, but I tend to believe that as the child's grade (age) increases, their ability to "do it themselves" also increases, as does their responsibility for "learning". Learning good study habits is, without a doubt, a wonderful habit to acquire. I just don't see how giving it to Kindergarten, First and Second Graders benefits them in a way that outweighs the "burden". A great article to read: [Does Homework Help? A Review of Research](#)

If your school district or grade level has made a commitment to giving homework then perhaps looking over the research would help to decide "how much" is appropriate. Many parents, both expect and request homework. The National Education Association along with the national PTA suggests adding 10 minutes of homework per night incrementally with each grade level, as a general rule of thumb. Thus, a first-grader gets a total of 10 minutes, a second-grader 20 minutes, a third-grader 30 minutes, and so on, not to exceed two hours per night total in high school.

Note: K gets none.

I have shared the following books with parents and teachers, perhaps one will help you discover what homework means to the children you teach. "The End of Homework: How Homework Disrupts Families, Overburdens Children, and Limits Learning" by Etta Kralovec, John Buell The Battle Over Homework: Common Ground for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents by Harris M. Cooper.

Dear Parents,

I often get requests for “home” work. My feelings on homework come from varied sources, but in the end, I look to the research about the value of homework for elementary age children. I have attached an article that reviews that research and recommend these three popular books available on the subject of homework:

- **The Case Against Homework** by Sara Bennett and Nancy Kalish
- **The Homework Myth** by Alfie Kohn
- **The Battle Over Homework** by Harris Cooper

I hope that this will aid you in understanding my policy.

That said, I am happy to provide the attached calendar which was created to offer you the opportunity to connect things we learn at school with the children’s real life environment. It may not appear to be “traditional homework” but it is work that you can do at home to assist your child’s ability to learn. Some activities involve listening, speaking, math, reading or writing, placing emphasis on utilizing these skills within their home lives. There are many opportunities to expand on the activity on the calendar by recording, writing or doing an additional activity. The activity is just as valuable when you talk, ask questions and listen to your child. Each doesn’t need to be written.

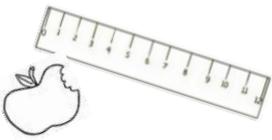
You can choose one activity a night each week. Save the activities that demand more time for a night when you have more time, or even on a weekend. Each activity was designed to meet the expectations that children can become higher level thinkers. While some activities ask only that a child can list, count or match – other activities will require a great deal of thought and research, stretching them to learn higher level thinking skills.

When an activity is done that can be shown or shared, I would love the students to bring them into the classroom. When something new is discovered or learned, sharing it is one of the best ways to “hang on” to the new learning.

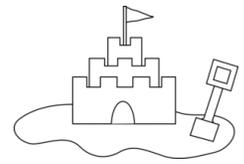
**“School”** work will only be sent home if your child was not able to complete it at school or was absent. My hope is that this type of “home” work allows you to be involved with your child’s education. Please note - if at any time, your child does not want to participate that night, it is fine to skip a night or two.

Expect a new calendar to arrive at the end of each month so there will not be a lapse in choice of activities. Providing choice builds motivation to learn, so please involve your child in the selection of an activity whenever it is possible.

Happy Learning!



# August



<p>Measure your grass before it is cut and after. How much did it change? Ask what you do with the clippings</p>	<p>Estimate how many buckets of sand it would take to fill your bathtub</p>	<p>List the letters A-Z and find an animal for each letter</p>	<p>5 senses – write or draw what you would see, hear, taste, feel and smell on a camping trip</p>	<p>Ask an adult to help you find a white flower – put the flower in water with food coloring – record what happens</p>
<p>Take a walk and find as many things as you can that are your favorite color</p>	<p>Discover how many things at your home have wheels (1, 2, 4 or more) create a graph to show what you find</p>	<p>Play catch with someone and record the highest number of times that you catch the ball in a row</p>	<p>Build a structure with toothpicks and mini marshmallows. Take a picture or describe it in writing</p>	<p>The summer sun sure is warm! Learn a new fact about the sun</p>
<p>School is Cool! Is this true? Defend your answer – why or why not?</p>	<p>Count the number of steps that it takes to get from your front door to the bus stop. Do you think it is close or far away?</p>	<p>Wear sunglasses outside and inside. Compare how things look with them on to when you are not wearing them</p>	<p>Record a new message for an answering machine</p>	<p>Write a note to your teacher. Tell him/her something that they don't know about you!</p>
<p>Get 2 servings of a food you like – taste it with your nose plugged and without – Any difference?</p>	<p>Draw a picture of a lunch tray and what would be on it – Decide in which order you'd eat the items</p>	<p>Ask all the people who live in your home their favorite TV show – were any of the answers the same?</p>	<p>Find 3 things that are round, square, rectangle or triangle shaped. List them</p>	<p>Do research on a favorite topic and learn 3 new things</p>
<p>People need food, water and shelter. What things does a car need? What things do pets need?</p>	<p>Save paper in your house for 1 week (boxes, junk mail, newspaper, etc.) At the end of the week weigh it.</p>	<p>Ask an adult to teach you to zip, tie, or buckle</p>	<p>Find all the pens and pencils in your house – sort them</p>	<p>Explain to a family member what you like or dislike about cats</p>
<p>Find a bug and watch it for a couple of minutes. Tell what it does and why you think it does it</p>	<p>Ask a friend or relative to tell you a story about when they were in school. Ask questions</p>	<p>Answer the question – What was the highest and lowest temperature ever on today's date?</p>	<p>List all the ways that you can find a recipe. Did you find anyone that had memorized a recipe?</p>	<p>Why do people go to school? Estimate how many years you will spend in school</p>