Homework Challenges: How to Help Kids With Learning and Attention Issues

Homework challenges includes things like rushing through assignments and trouble with time management.Once you understand a homework challenge, it’s easier to find solutions.



The Challenge: Rushing Through Homework

- [ ] Some kids rush because they don’t like doing repetitive work. For these kids, you may want to try mixing things up.
- [ ] Consider having your child approach the material in a different way. For example, if your child is having a hard time with a writing assignment, help her talk it through or act it out first. If vocabulary words are a challenge, try using them in everyday conversation. You can also use household items to illustrate math problems in a fun way.

The Challenge: Taking Notes

- [ ] Note-taking isn’t an easy skill for kids to master. Some kids struggle with writing and organizational skills. For others, slow processing speed may make it hard to read text and take notes at the same time.
- [ ] There are several note-taking apps your child can use. But it can also help to explicitly teach note-taking strategies. For example, there are specific note-taking techniques for kids with slow processing speed.

The Challenge: Managing Time and Staying Organized

- [ ] There are a couple of simple ways you can help with organization and time management:
- [ ] Create a homework schedule. A homework schedule can help your child set a specific time and place for studying. Find a time of day when your child concentrates best and when you’re available to help. It’s important to choose a time when neither of you are in a hurry to get somewhere else. Also think about creating a designated homework space or homework station. Once you have a set time and place, show your child how to “chunk” homework with breaks in between.

- [ ] Teach your child to use checklists. There's something very rewarding about crossing a task off a checklist. Your child can learn how good that feels by using a checklist to keep track of schoolwork. All your child needs is a small pad of paper on which to list assignments for the day. As each one is completed, your child can cross it off the list.
- [ ] Help your child create a color-coding system. Using colored dot stickers, highlighters and colored folders and notebooks is a great (and inexpensive) way to keep organized
- [ ] Choose and use a homework timer.

The Challenge: Studying Effectively

- [ ] Kids need to find out what works best for them based on how they learn. It's important to start early by working on good study habits in grade school.
- [ ] You can help by pointing your child toward homework strategies for specific learning and attention issues. For instance, check out these tips for grade-schoolers and middle-schoolers with dyslexia.
- [ ] As your child gets older, learning effective study strategies can reduce stress about school and improve grades. Keep in mind that in middle school and high school, your child will have to study more. And you'll also have to decide how much (or how little) to supervise or be involved with homework.

The Challenge: Recalling Information

- [ ] Some kids study for hours but still have trouble retaining information. When it comes time for the test, it may seem like they haven't done their homework.
- [ ] For kids with ADHD, this may be due to problems with working memory. But it can also be an issue of inattention—they aren't able to tune out the unimportant stuff. Read an in-depth expert explanation about why some kids can't remember what they've studied.
- [ ] How you can help: Make sure your child is studying in a medium that helps her remember. For example, kids with language issues may struggle with processing and understanding verbal or written information. They may be better at remembering visual information, like maps or graphs.

The Challenge: Learning Independently

- [ ] It's important for kids with learning and attention issues to know how to ask for help when they need it. But they also need to learn how to become independent learners. Eventually, your child will have to do homework without your help.
- [ ] How you can help: Even if you're not doing the homework, you can make sure your child is. Help her set realistic goals and encourage her to "think out loud." Try using a homework contract. Learn more ways to help grade-schoolers and tweens and teens be more independent learners.
- [ ] Helping your child work through homework challenges can be tricky. But in the end, you can help your child be a more independent, confident and successful student.
- [ ] Sometimes, though, homework challenges persist, despite your best efforts. In this case, consider asking for help. Look for signs your child may have too much homework, and learn how to talk to your child's teacher about your concerns. You can also learn about different tutoring options.

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