

The Jewish News - Making Time For Homework September 2009

It's a new school year and possibly a new school. There is no getting away from it, there will always be homework in one shape or another for your child. It may be learning 10 new words for a spelling test or a full-blown project that needs to be done over a term. Whatever it is, it requires commitment, discipline, motivation, co-operation and concentration from the child, and to some degree from you.

There are three steps for successful homework. They are:

- Having a regular homework schedule
- Having a suitable place to work
- Commitment from the child and from you

Successful homework happens when it is scheduled into the week when the child is receptive and more alert to do it. Ideally this would be at a set time every day or every week. This could be straight from school after a drink and a snack, after dinner or maybe at the weekend if it's a longer piece of work. Look at both of your diaries and see where there is consistent 'free time' during the week and agree with your child when they will do it. Your child needs to buy into committing to homework time so get them involved in timings and they will be more apt to stick with it. Use motivational tools to get 'dreaded homework' done and agree consequences if they don't stick to the routine, beforehand. For example, not being able to watch or go to a friend's house. Have this plan set once you know what homework will be given and when it needs to be given in.

A child needs to be able to work where they are most comfortable. This may be in total silence or with people around them. Either way, find a place in your home where your child is comfortable and able to concentrate on their work. Make sure the space is well lit space and your child has everything they need to do their homework – paper, pens, a pc etc. If they have everything around them and are motivated, they will have every opportunity to get to the task straightaway.

A child will be more ready to commit to homework if you have some level of involvement and interest in it. You should know what the homework is, how much of it there is and how long it should take your child to complete. If you can, try to be on hand when your child is doing their homework as they may need to ask you questions about it and you need to make sure they are doing it.

Homework is part of school life. If it is done regularly it becomes part of their routine and children can enjoy the benefits of having freetime during their evenings, at weekends or holidays. Recognise great efforts in doing homework and celebrate homework marks from teachers with a special treat, magazine, trip out etc.

Bio

Naomi Richards is The Kids Coach. She coaches children through positive change with children aged six and upwards. She helps them solve problems they have at home or at school, teaches life skills to children and tackles their emotional and behavioural issues.