



SEND Supported
Embracing difference

Homework (Parents)

Your child may have difficulty transferring working at school to home. Visual supports can help children with ASC to be more focused and independent. Having a visual timetable at school that extends to show what will be happening at home will help to prepare your child for doing homework.

Showing an interest in your child's homework helps to create a positive feeling and homework will not seem like such a chore.

The best time to start homework depends on your child's needs. Your child may need time to play, relax or regroup after a long school day before they start their homework, rather than going straight into it.

Try to do homework before more preferred fun activities.

It can help to do homework at the same time each day so it becomes part of a routine. Try to have a set time so your child knows exactly the beginning and end of the homework session, ensuring consistency and predictability.

Be aware of distractions within the environment. These can be visual such as the presence of toys or television, which are a constant reminder of what your child would rather be doing or auditory distraction such as the noise from electrical appliances and the chatter of siblings.

If possible, identify a distraction free area of your home for your child to do their homework. It might help to set up a desk or table that they can work on. Ideally it should be away from any distractions like the television, radio or computer.

Try to ensure that your child's working environment is safe from curious brothers and sisters. It helps if you ask other siblings not to interrupt your child while they are working.

Where possible, ensure the working surface only has equipment relevant to the task.

Your child may find it difficult to concentrate on a work task for an extended amount of time. You could encourage them to work for shorter periods and gradually build up to longer amounts of time. It could be helpful to use a timer to show how long they need to spend on their homework.

Homework tasks could be broken down into smaller portions so it does not seem overwhelming when your child looks at it. A little bit of homework done well with interest is better than a lot of homework that was done with confrontation.

Consider encouraging breaks in learning as required where your child can engage in an activity that relaxes them – set a timer and make sure your child knows how much free time they will have.

Let your child know that you are available if they need your help but avoid hovering, commenting, repeating and giving further instructions.

State your expectations— Habits take time to develop and are difficult to break. This is as true for good habits as it is for bad habits. Good study habits take time to develop and bad study habits are difficult to overcome.

Stay positive - Your positive approach will help your youngster maintain their good mood when completing their tasks.

Be patient when they make the same mistakes over and over again. Maybe they need to be taught using a different approach.

Consider introducing a consistent reward system for your child. This can be an extension of a reward system used at school, or it can be unique to the home setting.

It may be necessary to begin with small steps with rewards. Remember that your child may be resisting and avoiding homework because it seems daunting and overwhelming – empathise and validate their feelings.

Try to alternate what you use as a motivator, for example one day it might be homework then computer and the next day it could be homework then favourite DVD. It also helps to use positive words of encouragement when your child is working well.

Try to ensure that when the homework is completed that you encourage and support your child's organisational skills to place it in their school bag. Establish a consistent routine and with the support of school staff, build in supports (reminders) or introduce a checklist for your child to remember where, when and who the homework is handed to.

Acknowledge when they have made an effort to complete a homework task. If you make your child aware that you noticed their good work habits, they are likely to repeat them.

If your child has problems writing their homework down in a homework diary, ask the teacher and/or teaching assistant if they can do this or adapt the way it's done. For example, if the homework is written up on a white board and all the children have to copy it, ask if the teacher could supervise your child or give them a copy just for themselves to copy out. It may also help if the teacher provides written instructions breaking the homework task down further that your child can take home.

Ask the teacher if they could simplify the way they present homework to your child, by highlighting the important words on a homework sheet, using visual supports or bullet points. If your child has problems writing, could they use a computer to do their homework?

Dictaphones can be a useful auditory reminder of tasks, work, events or deadlines.

It is a good idea to keep school up to date with how your child is progressing with homework. Keep in contact with the school by talking to the class teacher, SENCO or another member of staff about any homework issues you have.

If your child continues to experience difficulty and has heightened anxiety around home based learning tasks, some schools can create opportunities for homework to be completed within school. Work together with the school to find solutions for your child.