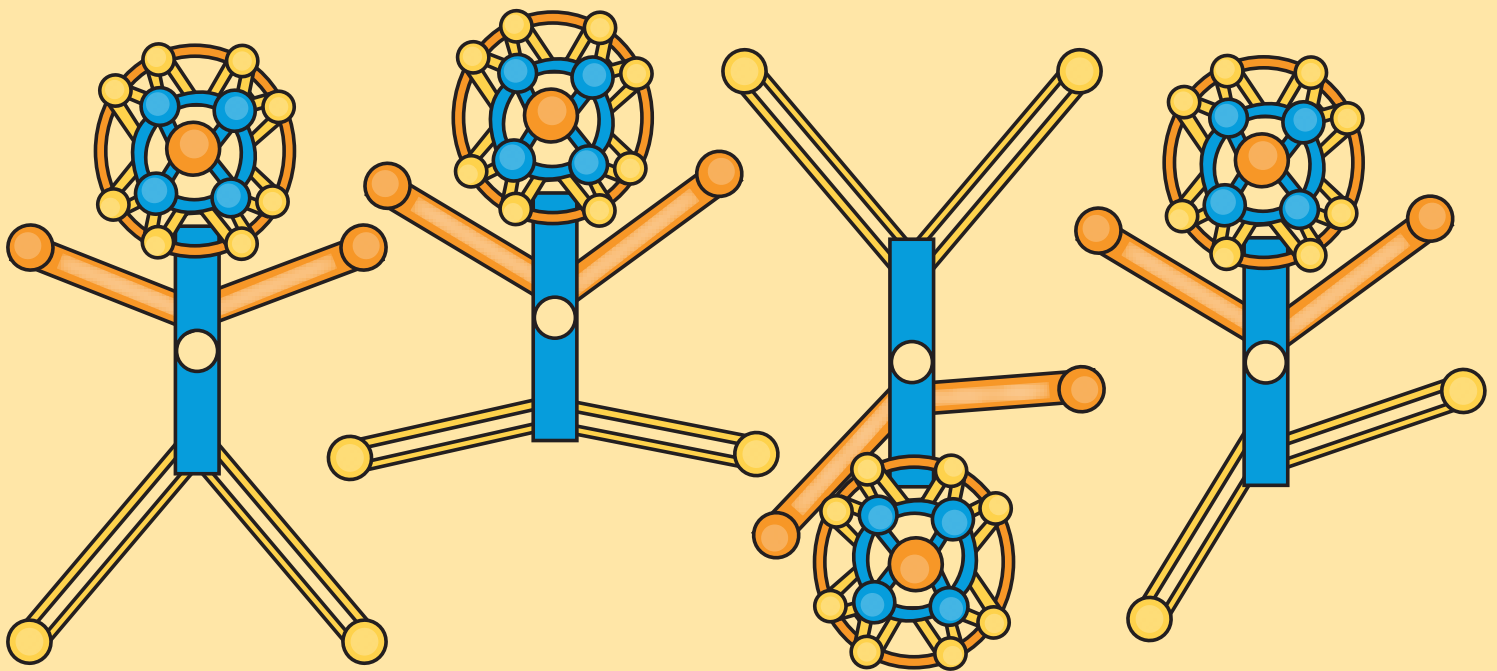


For elementary grades

HOMESCHOOL

TIME

AFTERSCHOOL STYLE



CENTER FOR AFTERSCHOOL EDUCATION
FOUNDATIONS, INC.

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For elementary grades

HOMEWORK TIME AFTERSCHOOL STYLE

Claudia Weisburd, PhD

CENTER FOR
AFTERSCHOOL EDUCATION

FOUNDATIONS, INC.
MOORESTOWN, NJ

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INTRODUCTION



Afterschool is the new home for homework. Homework time may be a small part of your program; it may use the majority of time, or may even be the program's sole focus. Whatever role homework time plays in your program, this guide will help you make the most of it.

As afterschool educators, we know that homework time offers some terrific opportunities. We also know it can be an area of conflict and tension. Children have been sitting in classrooms all day and need a break. Parents want homework done—or at least well underway—before children come home. Teachers want to see homework turned in. Programs want to provide opportunities for children to explore and grow—and to help children succeed in school. Children themselves want to do well. It is no surprise that afterschool staff often struggle to balance all these needs.

The Center for Afterschool Education at Foundations, Inc. has been there, too. We have operated afterschool programs for more than ten years in Philadelphia, PA, including programs with mandated homework time and an explicit academic focus. We've conducted trainings around the country with programs large and small, urban, suburban and rural, kindergarten through high school, hearing shared issues and challenges.

Over the course of working with thousands of staff, school teachers, and children, we've developed approaches and strategies for homework time that make it work well—for everyone.

The key: **Make over homework time, afterschool style.**



Homework Time, Afterschool Style: It Works

Making over homework time starts with thinking more about the feeling of “home” than of school. We’ve seen the evidence that setting up homework time to be more like doing homework at home and less like school builds a broader set of learning and developmental skills, and reduces management problems. Putting children, learning, and child development—not just task completion—at the center works.

“We have completely restructured the way we do homework in our after-school program. It’s helped everyone—students, teachers, staff, and parents.”
—Coordinator, Westmorland, CA

“Learning how to structure our homework time—like having something ready for those who come in without homework—made a huge difference.”
—Coordinator, Pompano Beach, FL

Children see the results:

“I never used to do homework. Now I do it every day.”
“I have fun and do the work too.”
“It’s not like school.”
“I like working with my friends.”
“I’m not so scared of tests.”
“I get better grades now.”

Afterschool: Rich resource for homework and learning

Afterschool programs have a great deal to offer to extend the learning beyond assignments—from building relationships and social skills, to materials, to linking with schools and teachers.

Consider these assets of afterschool time:

- Mixed ages and skill levels allow opportunities for peer learning and support
- Children can work in different ways at different times—individually, in pairs, or in groups, with friends, or with adults
- Children can study and practice for tests together
- Materials and supplies that may not be available at home can be provided
- Staff can use the time to build positive relationships and create a safe space—physically and emotionally—laying essential bases for learning and healthy development
- Program staff can talk with teachers to better support children’s learning
- Classroom teachers can assign group projects, knowing the afterschool space is there for support
- Children can be actively supported in learning time management, focusing, decision-making, and how best to get help when needed
- Staff can give focused attention or homework help to small groups

Programs that have access to computers and the Internet have a powerful resource for helping with the content and tasks of homework. Online tutors can explain concepts. Helplines provide facts and answers, and software guides children in practicing skills. But even if you use a technology base to assist with homework content, young children need to develop the additional social skills, attitudes, and work habits that can be cultivated in the afterschool setting.

Capitalize on the unique features of afterschool to create a rich, supportive learning environment during homework time. With careful, deliberate planning you can foster relationships, engage imaginations, practice teamwork, self-direction and leadership, stimulate critical thinking and also strengthen core subject knowledge. Remember that all children would rather do well than fail. They want approval and attention; they're curious; and they like to learn. Let's make the most of it.

Use Homework Time, Afterschool Style to:

- Capture learning opportunities
- Make homework time work more smoothly for everyone
- Build children's skills as successful students
- Provide effective help—from staff and peers—during homework time
- Reinforce connections with parents, teachers, and schools
- Provide training for staff on homework time

Get help answering frequently asked questions like these:

I have children of all ages in my program. How can I give the younger ones the help they need while still helping my older and more independent students?

What about children who don't have homework or finish early?

How can I set up a good homework environment when my program is held in the lunch room?

How can I make sure I'm offering all the other parts of my program when homework takes up so much time?

What if I don't understand the assignment? What if I learned to do the assignment differently than they are learning it?

If homework time is an important component of your program, plan and develop it deliberately for a quality experience.



HOMework FAQs

Providers across the country struggle with many of the same issues when it comes to homework and management.

I have children of all ages in my program. How can I give the younger ones the help they need while still helping my older and more independent students? What about the ones who don't have homework or finish early?

"There are so many of them and so few of me!" The key to handling this diversity is creating a schedule, structure, and mix of options that fit children's developmental stages and needs. Use Part I of this workbook for scheduling and organizing options and Part II for helping strategies that can maximize staff capacity. Grouping strategies and techniques that build children's independence give staff time to work directly with those that need more focused support. Self-guided activities keep kids focused when they've finished their assignments, so they don't disturb others.

How can I set up a good homework environment when my program is held in the lunch room?


Finding adequate space for afterschool activities is always a challenge. Meeting multiple learning styles and needs in a large open space is particularly difficult. Part I includes suggestions for creating areas in large, shared spaces and options for programs that have to tear down and set up each day. Actively build partnerships with the schools to make the best use of the spaces available (see Part II).

How can I be sure I'm offering all the other parts of my program when homework takes up so much time?

What should be the responsibility of afterschool with respect to homework? Is it to make sure assignments are started? Completed? Correct? Should enrichment activities take a back seat to homework? This guide doesn't offer the "one perfect solution," but it does emphasize the importance of clarifying expectations among all players and provides tools to support the communications. It also shows how to blend homework time more with other types of activities, build broader sets of skills, and address social-emotional development.

What if I don't understand the assignment? What if I learned to do the assignment differently than my students are learning it?

Students need practice finding answers on their own, using available resources. Part II includes helping strategies to apply across subjects, and for working with students to find answers together. Peers can be tapped for helping, and open communication with classroom teachers is always a plus. For staff, helping starts with being aware of what children are learning in class. Part II also includes excerpts from *Academic Content, Afterschool Style*, another resource from the Center for Afterschool Education, which outlines academic content standards, and suggests subject-specific help in math, reading, and writing.



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE




Homework Time, Afterschool Style (HTAS) provides information and strategies to set up, manage, and enrich homework time, to track progress, and to communicate with parents and teachers. But there is no “one-size-fits-all” in the very diverse world of afterschool. *HTAS* will help you think through strategies and approaches, and tailor them to best fit your children, your program and its goals, and your communities of parents, teachers, funders, and school districts.

The CD is designed as a guide that you can customize, then print out to make your own program manual. Print the pages, binder cover, spine, and back cover for easy referencing and use. In each part of the guide you’ll find call-out boxes with examples, discussion questions, and reflection tools. Bring these thinking tools to colleagues and staff in trainings and meetings, and use the ideas to inspire actions that really work.











Tools on the CD

The CD format of *Homework Time, Afterschool Style* lets you create your own customized version of the tools and guides. Insert your program name, put customized copy into letters, fill-in charts, create your own checklists, and print out the handouts you need, when you need them.








On this CD, you will find 3 types of files:

1. PDF files marked with this icon  are print-and-go documents such as worksheets, lists, and handouts that cannot be altered. They are designed to be ready-to-use.
2. Type-able PDF files are marked with this icon . These files are created like the print-and-go PDF, but allow you to type into certain fields, making them your own. You can print these as blanks to fill in by hand (during a meeting, for example), or fill in the information and then print it out.
3. Word Documents are marked with this icon  and are fully customizable. You can change copy, fonts—anything on the sheet! Or, you can print them out as blanks and fill them in as reflections or worksheets.



















Part I Getting Started

- Clarifying Expectations 
- Aligning with Developmental Stages 
- Homework Time Overview 
- Blank Graph Paper 
- Good News Postcard 
- Expectations in Practice 
- Developmentally Appropriate Programming 
- Homework Schedule Planner 
- Resource and Supply Checklist 
- Rethinking Behavior and Behavior Management 
















Part II Helping Learning Happen

- Getting Unstuck with Math 
- Sample Math Process Standard Rubric  
- ELL List with Home Language Information 
- Sample Writing Assessment Rubric  
- Supporting ELLs in Groups 
- Sample Letter to Families 


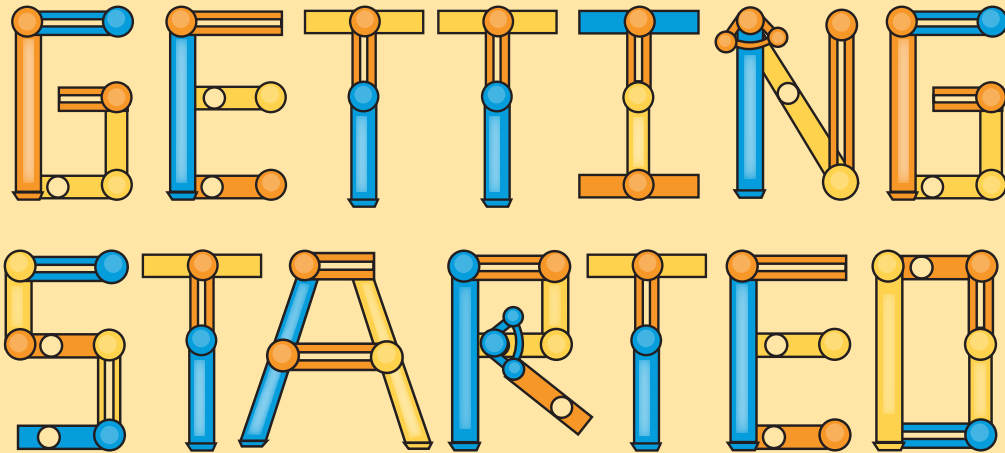
Part III Keep the Learning Growing: Strategies to Expand Learning

- Homework Tracker Planner 
- Tips for Tutoring  
- The Best Reading Buddies 
- Activity Station Planner  
- Homework Contract 
- Weekly or Monthly Homework Log 
- Forming Groups Cards  
- Peer Tutoring Planner  
- Committee Planner  
- Homework After School  
- Sample Learning Contract 
- Homework Work Checklist and Evaluation 

Part IV Building the Team for Homework Time, Afterschool Style

- Quick Check Meeting and Next Steps 
- Odds and Evens 
- Staff Reflection Tool 
- Homework Contract 
- Homework Tool Review 
- Finding Resources 
- Homework Scenarios 
- Forming Groups  
- Math Problems Worksheet 
- Homework Tracker 
- Homework Reflection  
- Observation Guide Active Homework Help 
- Helping Strategies 


PART I



Making homework time work well calls for deliberate planning and consistent implementation by all staff and volunteers working with the children. It's easy to fall back on the classroom or study hall model. "Just sit quietly and do your homework!" It's what most of us are familiar with. But if we aim to capture the opportunities afterschool offers for broader, more in-depth learning and development—and for a more positive experience for everyone—it begins with deliberate attention to:

- Goals for the children and for the program
- Expectations—of parents, staff, children, teachers, and schools
- Alignment with developmental stages
- Putting it together in scheduling and balancing components

It is also necessary to address the learning environment—the foundations that help achieve those goals and objectives:

- Physical space set-up
 - Staffing
 - Resource materials and supplies
 - Social-emotional climate (aka "behavior management")
- 

GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

"I don't have any today." "I have a ton." "I don't understand the assignment." "I finished already!" "I just have math." "I have a project."

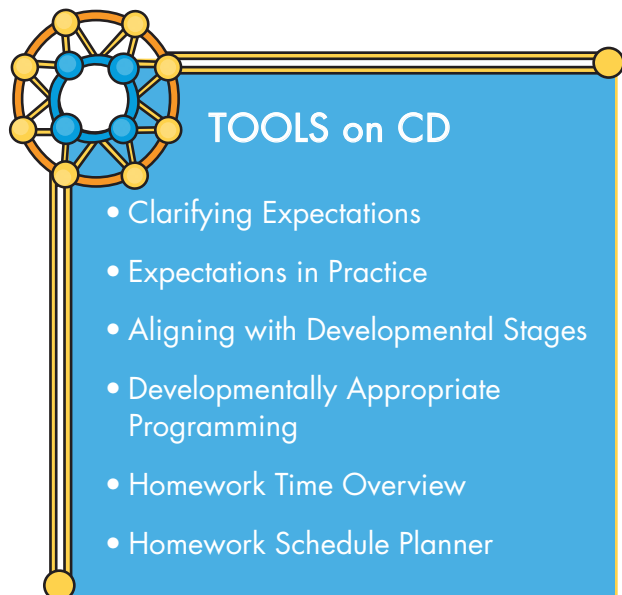
Children have different amounts of homework, teachers assign different types of homework (or none, or have it done in class), children work with homework differently. This challenge—which can vary widely day to day—drives the need to plan homework time deliberately so it can meet those differing and changing needs and conditions.

Begin by thinking through the goals, objectives, and expectations for homework time. Consider how homework time fits within your program. Think about needs and resources of the children, parents, and the program overall.

Set a higher standard with broader goals

Set up the program to ensure that in addition to doing their assignments, children are also gaining the 21st century skills they need to do well in school as they move through elementary, middle, and high school—and into college and the workplace.

- Working with others
- Communicating clearly, including speaking and listening
- Problem solving—including where to find help when needed
- Time management and decision-making
- Focus and productivity





SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

How important are these skills for the children in your program?

Rate from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important)

<input type="checkbox"/> Critical thinking	<input type="checkbox"/> Focus and ability to stay on task	<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation
<input type="checkbox"/> Problem-solving	<input type="checkbox"/> Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Study habits
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-direction	<input type="checkbox"/> Tracking assignments
<input type="checkbox"/> Creativity	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal and social responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/> Follow-through
<input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration		

Clarify expectations

How much?

What is the right amount of time to spend on homework? The National Education Association along with the national PTA offers as a rule of thumb adding a total of 10 minutes of homework per night, increasing incrementally with each grade level. By this standard, a first grader would get 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.

The reality is that afterschool programs typically have little control over what teachers assign. However, if it appears that children are coming to the program overloaded, it is important that the responsibilities and expectations of the afterschool program are clear among parents, teachers, and children. At the same time, afterschool staff may want to discuss with classroom teachers issues they may see arising associated with the amount of homework assigned.

In mixed age groups, or groups coming from different classes or schools, you may well have children with different amounts of homework. Some children will also finish more quickly than others. Use strategies and techniques, such as those in this guide, to provide engaging activities, and to maximize having older children help younger ones.

Allocate an amount of time that aligns with expectations, responsibilities, and work loads, and also fits with children's developmental stages. Homework time will look different for kindergartners with shorter assignments than for fifth graders who are getting longer, more complex assignments. Designing your program to fit the developmental stages and learning styles of the children will reduce behavior problems that come from ill-fitting schedules and expectations. Engaged, interested children don't usually present behavior or "classroom management" problems. Bored, frustrated, and antsy kids do.

To what point and how?

Competing expectations can breed frustration for everyone. Consider this range of expectations, which may be held by parents, teachers, funders, program leaders, or children.

- All homework is completed by the time the child leaves
- All homework is complete and correct
- Some homework is completed, all is started
- However much gets done in the allotted time is the amount that's done
- No homework in afterschool; keep afterschool for enrichment activities
- Get homework started first
- Unwind and have snack first, then start homework
- Allocate the last portion of the program to homework
- Staff only supervise children and keep them quiet
- Staff tutor children who need it

Think carefully about what your program can and will offer. Talk with parents, teachers, and children about expectations, and design the program and policies accordingly. Homework contracts agreed to by parents, children, and teachers, are useful for clarifying and communicating expectations. They also build children's learning skills and sense of responsibility by engaging children in thinking through their work habits and obligations. (See Part III)

When the goals and expectations of homework time are well understood by everyone, it is easier to establish rules, schedules, and systems, because everyone is headed to the same outcome: helping children learn and grow during homework time.



CLARIFYING EXPECTATIONS

Which expectations are held for your program? Whose expectations are they—parents, teachers, program staff, program directors, funders, or children?

Circle or flag areas of differing expectations. Use this tool as the basis for a conversation with staff, families, children and others about how to schedule homework to work best for everyone.

Expectation	Whose expectation?				Priority for your program?
	Parents	Program Leaders	Children	Funders	
All homework is completed by the time the child leaves					
All homework is complete and correct					
However much gets done in the allotted time is the amount that's done					
No homework time in afterschool; keep afterschool for enrichment activities					
Limit homework time to 30 minutes					
Get homework started first					
Unwind and have snack first, then start homework					
Staff supervise the children					
Staff tutor children who need it					
Other					



EXPECTATIONS IN PRACTICE

Ultimately, expectations around homework time will play out in day-to-day practice. Establishing expectations for homework time needs to happen in context of the program resources. For example, parents or teachers may want homework to be completed and corrected before children go home. Is that reasonable or desirable in the context of your program staff or other program goals?

Use the following examples to help discussions about homework time in practice.

Practice	Advantages	Challenges
Students must complete all assignments during homework time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework (or more homework) gets done before children go home • Leaves home time unencumbered • Children learn discipline <p>Other:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work at different rates • Requires more options for students who finish early • May limit enrichment opportunities • May mean that struggling students don't get a chance to experience other program activities • Can generate behavior issues • Can turn children off afterschool • Can be difficult or feel punitive for children who need more time, or who have extra-heavy workloads <p>Other:</p>
Students must work on homework for a given amount of time. Those who finish early are given other quiet activities or may leave the work area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes the importance of daily homework completion and consistency. • Children get at least some homework done • Staff can see where children need more help or support • Can help build work habits, focus, and time management skills • Can be peer learning time • Allows for time to offer enrichment activities in addition to homework time. <p>Other:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to provide activities for children who finish early • Need to combine with groupings and peer supports • Setting appropriate amount of time for mixed ages, grades, and learning styles • Motivation and behavior need attention • Decreases amount of time for enrichment activities <p>Other:</p>



EXPECTATIONS IN PRACTICE cont.

Practice	Advantages	Challenges
Students have the option of doing some or all of their assignments. Workspace is available for a set amount of time, or at any time during the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodates different work styles • Builds independence and decision-making skills • Allows participation in other activities <p>Other:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not be appropriate for younger students • Should be guided by contracts or agreements • Requires dedicated homework area • Can be chaotic • Children may avoid more difficult assignments • Requires sufficient staff to support children in multiple simultaneous activities <p>Other:</p>
Program aims to ensure that assignments done during homework time are correct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are relieved of checking homework • Can reinforce the importance of careful work • Can provide opportunities for peer tutoring or support if students are involved in the checking <p>Other:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires additional staff time to check all assignments • Staff may need training in how to help without providing answers; staff may not have the knowledge base or methods • Classroom teachers and families may not be aware of where students are struggling • May decrease time for other activities <p>Other:</p>
<p>Program combines required and optional homework time. May be mandatory for younger children and optional for older ones.</p> <p>May be mandatory for a set time period, then optional for the remainder of the day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes the importance of working on homework daily and consistently • Allows time for enrichment activities • Provides practice in decision-making and choice • Accommodates varied learning styles • Supports students' sense of independence <p>Other:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May require dedicated homework space • May be best with agreements or contracts if parents hold different expectations • Requires sufficient staffing <p>Other:</p>



ALIGNING WITH DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

In addition to aligning expectations with program resources and among parents, teachers, and staff, attention has to be given to children's developmental stages. A basic think-through will help you structure the time and activities to operate most smoothly toward meeting learning goals.

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES*				
Grade Level/ Age Range	Characteristics	Needs	Likes	Looks like during Homework time
Kindergarten– 2nd grade (5–7 year-olds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinking is concrete (learn by seeing, feeling and doing rather than through thinking alone) Very active Very competitive Very imaginative Very sensitive to praise and recognition; seeks adult approval Learning to master physical skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent breaks from tasks Things to do that are fun Rest periods Adult affirmation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More interested in doing things (process) than the end product 	<p>Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide frequent praise Provide focused attention and support <p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Math manipulatives Games that reinforce academic concepts Homework tracking system Art supplies <p>Scheduling and space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short focus periods with breaks for movement and games Options for working on the floor, standing up, etc.
3rd–5th grade (8–10-year-olds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefer to find their own solutions rather than accept those offered by adults Wide discrepancies in reading ability Busy, active; can't sit still for long periods of time Acceptance by friends is very important Very sensitive to praise and recognition Sensitive to criticism; recognize failure Concerned with what is "fair" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent breaks Group approval Adult affirmation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clubs and groups Idolize heroes, TV stars, and sports figures 	<p>Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide frequent praise Use stamps, cards, etc. to communicate success to teachers and parents Help build up skills Form peer groups and small groups for helping <p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-level reading materials Computers Homework logs and contracts <p>Scheduling and space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve children in setting up work space and rules Create student work groups Provide active breaks Involve children in decision making about homework

* Adapted from: Sniad, T., Weisburd, C. and Mello, S. (2007) Afterschool Style in Practice: 25 Skill-Building Meetings for Staff. See also YMCA and 4-H resources.



DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PROGRAMMING

Use this checklist to think about your current program from a developmental standpoint.

Number of children in grades K-2 _____

Number of children in grades 3-5 _____

Number of English Language Learners _____

Number of children needing special attention or services _____
(developmental or physical differences, etc.)

Rate your program on the following dimensions

Describes Our Program	Exactly	Pretty Well	Slightly	Not At All
Our homework schedule allows for breaks and movement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our staff are trained in helping strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our staff have strong, positive relationships with children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We communicate regularly with teachers about student strengths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We communicate regularly with families about student strengths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We use contracts or agreements with our children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have materials and resources that are developmentally appropriate for our children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children have opportunities to work in groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our staff are trained to support ELL students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our program has appropriate materials to support English language learners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our staff are trained to support students with special needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have appropriate materials and resources to support students with special needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our program fosters positive, regular interaction between all students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thoughts, comments, and reflections				

Putting it Together: Program and Schedule

Given objectives and goals, expectations, your resources, and the needs of the children in your program, what format and schedule might be best? Develop a schedule with components that align with what you are trying to accomplish.

The following chart offers an example. Use and adapt components and allocate amounts of time that you think will work best for you and your children. You may want to revisit this after you've considered the various options and ideas presented in the guide. Schedules should also be tweaked and revised as you see how children respond, and whether goals are being reached over time.

PROGRAM EXAMPLE: HOMEWORK TIME

In one Chicago center for academic enrichment, parents requested that the program integrate homework into the daily schedule. The provider established a '50/50' rule, matching homework time for activity time. When children spent 30 minutes on homework, they spent another 30 minutes on enrichment activities. A before- and afterschool program in Seattle starts the afternoon with snack and 45 minutes of homework. Children move into activities or clubs at the end of 45 minutes.

PROGRAM EXAMPLE: HOMEWORK CENTERS

A 4-H out-of-school time program in Columbia, Missouri built time management skills, responsibility, and choice into their program by setting up homework centers. Children used the homework centers according to their own pace and schedule. Program providers worked with afterschool staff, parents, students, and school staff to design the centers and establish operating policies, rules, and expectations.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE COMPONENTS

HOMESCHOOL TIME COMPONENT	PRACTICE NOTES
Transitions Sign-in	Sign-ins can help children get into "homework time" start-up mode. Putting in a sign-in and sign-out time can also concretely recognize and document the amount of time children put into homework. In a drop-in program, sign-ins help track children's attendance.
Snack (can also be committee time, or time for presentations)	Most programs offer snack prior to homework time, others make snack available during the homework time. Whenever possible, provide ample, healthy snacks. High fat or sugar snacks may interfere with children's ability to concentrate on their assignments.
Transition activities	Provide self-directed, fairly short activities or art supplies on the tables as children come in, or post GraffitiWall* activities for set amount of time. Use a signal to shift into focused work time.
Structured homework time or optional homework time	Using a check-in process helps children get started by having them explain what their assignments are. Check-ins can also help staff form groups or identify areas for attention.
Check-in and calendaring or transitional set-up activity	Group calendaring of assignments for older children builds time management skills, leadership, and responsibility. (See Homework Tracker, page 81.)
Focused homework time Studying and study skills	During the working time block, form peer support pairs or groups; staff and other adults circulate and help; students may also study and practice for tests.
Activity break	Use of short games and activities to get kids up out of their seats, energize, and help re-focus the group. K-2—Quick songs or games like Simon Says, group chants, or cheers 3-5—Brain teasers, puzzles, and short team-building challenges
Homework time and additional activities	Provide activity stations, GraffitiWalls, art supplies, free reading material, playing cards, or board games. Time may also be used for committees, school projects, or test practice time.
Sign-off	Marking the close to homework time and the work achieved helps children see results, build time management skills, and gain a sense of satisfaction. Sign-offs can include completing logs, sending 'good news' notes home, stamping assignments as 'Done with pride in afterschool' for teachers to see, etc.
Play, sports, games Projects, committees Enrichment, activities	Homework time can be continued as a choice during this period. See also <i>Academic Content, Afterschool Style</i> for ideas on projects, service learning, committees, learning activities, and resources.

* GraffitiWall and Global GraffitiWall are fast, easy-to-make learning games and activities to post on the wall for children to play. Available from Center for Afterschool Education, Foundations Inc. www.afterschooled.org



HOMework TIME OVERVIEW

Factors to Consider	Your Program
Amount of time dedicated to homework	
Goals and objectives of homework time	
Expectations of homework time	
Mandatory elements	
Other elements	
Tools to use with students	
Tools to use with parents and teachers	
Supports and resources needed from school administrators, teachers, others	



HOMework SCHEDULE PLANNER

Use the template below to block out the homework time components of your program. In the left hand columns, note the time (amount and schedule), then the program component (snack, sign-in etc.). On the right, note details with respect to specific age or ability groups, or planned activities.

Amount of time	Schedule time	Component	Notes

THE HOMEWORK AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

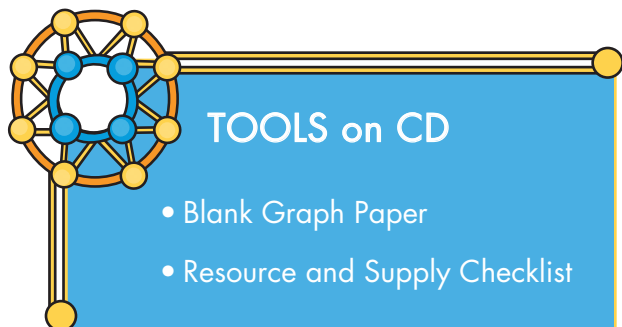
SPACE, STAFF, and STUFF

Your afterschool program provides core resources that can go far beyond what may be provided at home—or in a study hall. Planning homework time deliberately to meet larger goals and expectations means marshalling those resources to best serve the children.

SPACE

Physical space matters. It affects movement, behavior, supervision, and interactions. The space should reflect—and facilitate, if possible—the goals you have for homework time, with ample room for individual, small group and large group work, along with areas for focused support or tutoring if needed.

Whether you are using a library, one or more classrooms, or large multi-purpose space (like a lunchroom or gymnasium), find ways to define areas for different types and styles of work using signs, table and chair arrangements, colors, tape on the floor, etc. You may define quiet areas for individual work, noisier areas for pairs or small groups, and areas to work with an adult or with computers. Consider the goals of the program and the learning styles of the children. Some children need quiet; others work best with music or activity around them. Some are most motivated by working with peers; others can only keep focused when they work alone.



Younger students are still learning what they need to work best. A somewhat separate space for them may work well, but don't rule out inviting older peer helpers over for some of the time.

When setting up the space, keep in mind:

- Furniture: desks and chairs, comfortable chairs, bean bags, couches
- Adequate lighting for the tasks and space without glare
- Rugs and floor space for working
- Space and access to reference materials, textbooks, computers
- Access to supplies and materials
- Visibility of the whole space for supervision
- Proximity to noise and distractions from other program areas

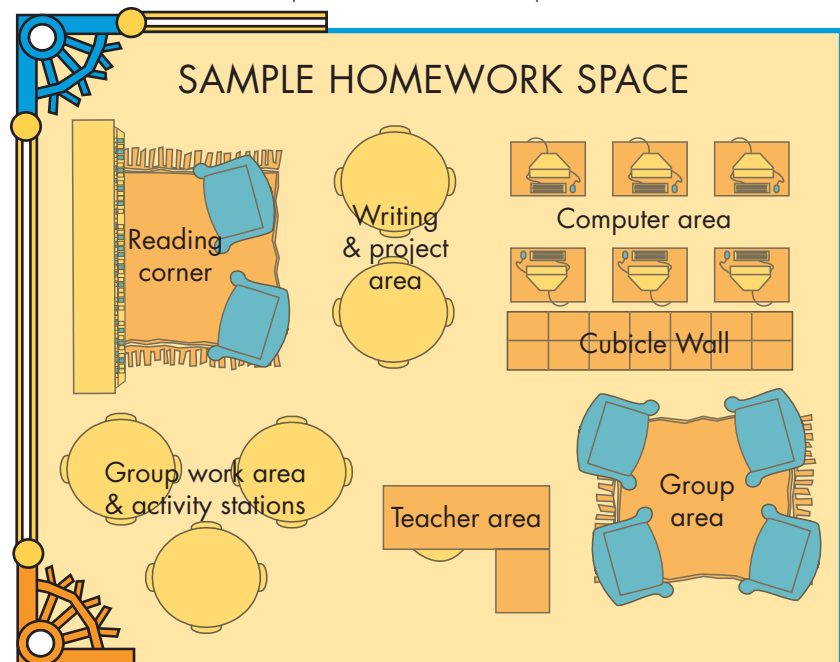
To the extent possible, engage children in making decisions about the space. It helps them become aware of thinking about their learning and how they work best, provides an opportunity for group decision-making processes, and creates a sense of ownership.

Out of control: shared space

Afterschool programs are often held in less than ideal spaces. Tap into everyone's creativity to transform the space, even if temporarily.

Look for ways to divide the space visually. If possible, use partitions or movable storage shelves or cubes to make smaller spaces. Quick set-up outdoor dining tents and canopies are fun and flexible. Area rugs, carpet remnants, and samples can delineate space and soften noise, and can then be rolled up at the end of the day. Even tablecloths can be spread on the floor picnic-style to mark out an area. Different color tablecloths on tables can also liven up and differentiate space.

Large pieces of cardboard from appliance stores can become temporary bulletin boards for displaying student work, awards and notices to families. Butcher paper or large poster paper can be carefully taped to doors or windows. Easels with poster pads can be set up to work on, to show work, and to mark spaces.



Sound also delineates space. One area can have livelier music, another more quiet sounds, such as recordings of ocean waves or forest birds. Coupled with tape on the floor, tablecloths, signs, or rugs, sound helps mark different areas and set different expectations for behavior.

Work with space committees of kids to create, set up, and knock down space. Be sure to work with maintenance staff and the others who use the space, such as teachers, to clarify expectations, ground rules, and storage.

GETTING INTO SPACE

Create a design project for homework space. It helps kids think about learning environments and what works for them—and will generate good ideas for making your space work better!

Activity

Tell the children they are going to design their dream homework space. Remind them that it needs to be comfortable, but also a space where people can get their work done. Explain that this is a way to get creative by thinking about what you all could do in your own space, and that all the “dream space” ideas will be shared with the school.

Materials:

- Glue sticks
- Magazines and catalogues to cut up
- Scissors
- Paper
- Calculators (one per four children)

Start by brainstorming with the whole group a list of guidelines for what the space should include, such as:

- Places for group work
- Places for quiet individual work
- Message center
- Check-in area
- Group meeting space
- Resource area (books, computers, pens, pencils etc.)
- Other...?

Divide into groups of four or five.

Provide groups with sheets of large poster paper, magazines, and furniture catalogues, along with colored markers, crayons, etc. Have groups make posters explaining or representing their dream spaces. This can be shown as a collection of items or features, or as a plan or map, or in some other conceptual way.

Ratchet it up: For older children, provide a budget. When they present their dream space, they have to show how it fits—or doesn't fit—the budget.

Ask each group to present their ideas to the whole group. After everyone has presented, brainstorm a list of the best ideas you may be able to try in your own space.

Staff and Staffing

It almost goes without saying: It's all about relationships, and that's all about staff. Homework time at home is grounded in parent-child relationships, which can have their own set of issues and tensions. Homework time that's based solely on the study-hall or assignment-only model is grounded in teacher-student and student-school relationships.

In afterschool, staff can work with children as supporters, cheerleaders, coaches, helpers, tutors, goal-setters, parent/teacher intermediaries, models, or mentors. Staff and the other adults available during homework time can provide the most powerful learning support there is: caring, coupled with high expectations. Staff can capitalize on homework time to show that they care about students' success in school, that they believe in children's abilities to learn, reach, and grow. They can show they're dependably there to guide and support, and they can provide useful techniques for getting homework done, and for being a successful student.

Staffing

Certified classroom teachers, experienced recreation leaders, community volunteers, college students, and others all can contribute richness and talent during homework time. Staff (including paid and volunteer) do not need to be experts in any subject areas, nor do they need an education background to be helpful in meaningful ways. Most parents are not teachers, yet we know that parent engagement in children's schooling (including homework time) is vitally important. What should be expected of all staff is that they build caring, trusting relationships, that they create active, engaging learning environments, and that they thoughtfully and deliberately use strategies and techniques to help children meet learning goals.

Involve all staff and volunteers in planning the program and sharing responsibilities so that every child has positive, personal interactions with at least one adult in the program every day. The more adults in the program who are familiar with all children, the less stressful a staff absence or change will be. A mix of staff—ages, experience, interests—offer multiple ways for children to connect and relate. Cultural competence is important, and staff from children's language, ethnic, or local communities can be a critical asset.

Regardless of staff experience levels, they will need, at the very least, an orientation to the program and the homework component within it. All adults working with children during homework time should be on the same page about the goals of homework time, expectations, and approaches. Classroom teachers may need a refresher in non-formal, learner-centered afterschool education. Classroom teachers, college students, and volunteers need to understand how to set up and run homework time as something other than the study hall, monitoring, or 'sit-by-yourself-and-do-your-work-quietly' mode. Non-educators need to learn how they are, in fact, educators all the time, and how they can provide different types and levels of help during homework time. (For staff training in *Homework Time, Afterschool Style*, see Part IV)

The following table offers a start for thinking about your staffing mix, and the kinds of supports they may need to offer *Homework Time*, *Afterschool Style*.

STAFFING AFTER SCHOOL			
EXPERIENCE	BENEFITS	CHALLENGES	HOW TO SUPPORT
Youth workers, informal educators, non-certified staff	<p>Experience with multi-age groups</p> <p>May live in the same communities as the children</p> <p>May speak home languages of students</p> <p>Experience in developmentally appropriate programming and enrichment activities</p>	<p>May not stay in position long due to pay or hours</p> <p>May lack confidence in supporting academic content</p>	<p>Build on their experience</p> <p>Teach strategies for homework help</p> <p>Provide strategies for knowing what children are learning in school</p> <p>Bolster communication or co-training with classroom teachers</p> <p>Look for ways to increase satisfaction and reduce turnover</p>
Certified teachers	<p>Know curriculum and school expectations</p> <p>Have group-management skills</p> <p>May know many of the children</p>	<p>Require higher salaries</p> <p>May be challenged to move to a whole-child, afterschool approach to teaching and learning</p>	<p>Encourage them to share hobbies, sports, games, and interests with students</p> <p>Provide staff development on afterschool style teaching and learning</p> <p>Pair with youth development workers</p>
School Paraprofessionals	<p>May live in the same communities as the children</p> <p>May speak home languages of the students</p> <p>May know many of the children</p> <p>Familiar with school day expectations</p> <p>Have experience with specific children, possibly including special education students</p>	<p>May not stay in position long due to pay or hours</p> <p>May not feel confident in supporting academic content unless learned or practiced during the school day</p>	<p>Encourage them to share hobbies, interests, games, and sports with students</p> <p>Provide staff development on being an afterschool educator and core techniques</p> <p>Pair with certified teacher or youth development worker</p>

STAFFING AFTER SCHOOL cont.

EXPERIENCE	BENEFITS	CHALLENGES	HOW TO SUPPORT
College students	<p>May work as volunteers or as part of a work study program (low cost or free)</p> <p>Children often easily form attachments to them</p>	<p>Changing schedules depending on course load</p> <p>May have limited experience working with children</p>	<p>Make expectations clear and realistic</p> <p>Provide training</p> <p>Pair with experienced staff</p>
High school students	<p>May need to earn service learning credit</p> <p>Often have high energy</p> <p>Children can often relate easily and form attachments to them</p> <p>Can often provide up-to-date games, activities</p>	<p>Participation may not be consistent</p> <p>May have limited experience working with children</p> <p>Often require additional supervision themselves</p>	<p>Provide regular training and support</p> <p>Pair with experienced staff</p> <p>Give planned leadership and growth opportunities in their interest and talent areas</p>
Volunteers	<p>Free</p> <p>Have a desire to be involved with children</p> <p>Diverse areas of expertise</p> <p>May live in the community</p>	<p>Participation may not be consistent</p> <p>May have limited experience working with children</p>	<p>Provide thorough program orientation</p> <p>Create positions based on their interests</p> <p>Pair with a more experienced afterschool educator</p>

STUFF: Supplies and materials

Like the physical space, the materials and supplies you provide and make readily available also send a message. Attractive, colorful materials, interesting looking books and magazines, familiar classroom books, small toys to fidget with, doodle areas, GraffitiWalls, nice pens and pencils, ample supplies of paper—these all say ‘jump in!’ Use materials and supplies to help make the space visually appealing and inviting, and at the same time, provide materials to support the learning. How many times have you seen children work laboriously and proudly on the cover for their report, or decorate a poem? Encourage multi-sensory, multiple intelligence ways of learning and engaging with homework time.

Use the checklist below as a guide for identifying materials and supplies that will support homework time. Remember to keep a good supply of the basics—in many cases, children may not have these available at home. Provide the best you can, in the best condition possible, to reinforce the importance and value of children’s work.

Homework help from the Internet

If you or your students have access to the Internet, you clearly have a tremendous resource at hand. A quick Google search will turn up dozens of Internet sites that offer homework help and online tutoring. The Internet is also a fabulous resource for projects.

Plan how children can use this resource—and how you will organize and manage it equitably.



RESOURCE AND SUPPLY CHECKLIST

Supplies	To Get
Storage boxes or bins	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rulers, protractors, compasses and calculators	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pencils, pens	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pencil sharpeners and erasers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Colored markers and pencils, crayons, water colors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety scissors (some for lefties!)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Index cards (for flashcards)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tape, staplers, glue, glue sticks or paste, hole punch	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assignment books or sheets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paper—construction, loose leaf, and graph	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paper clips, rubber bands	<input type="checkbox"/>
General References	
Dictionary, thesaurus Examples: K–2 <i>The American Heritage Picture Dictionary</i> , <i>Scholastic First Picture Dictionary</i> , <i>Webster's New World Children's Dictionary</i> , <i>Scholastic Children's Dictionary</i> 3–5 <i>Merriam-Webster's Intermediate Dictionary</i> , <i>The American Heritage Children's Thesaurus</i> or <i>Merriam-Webster's Intermediate Thesaurus</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Atlas, almanac, encyclopedia Examples: K–2 <i>World Almanac for Kids</i> , <i>The Scholastic Children's Encyclopedia</i> 3–5 <i>National Geographic Student Atlas of the World</i> , <i>The Kingfisher Student Atlas</i> , <i>Kingfisher Encyclopedia series</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Subject-Specific References and Materials	
Copies of texts from children's classrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grammar and Writing Guides All ages <i>Checking Your Grammar: Scholastic Guides</i> , <i>The Kid's Guide to Good Grammar: What You Need to Know About Punctuation, Sentence Structure, Spelling, and More</i> ; or <i>Scholastic Writer's Desk Reference: Ultimate Guide to Punctuation, Grammar, Writing, Spelling, Letter Writing and Much More</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ESL resources, games and activities Bilingual dictionaries (older elementary students), <i>Oxford Picture Dictionary</i> , <i>More Than Just Talk: Supporting English Language Learners in Afterschool</i> , <i>Vocabulary Games for Intermediate English Language Learners</i> , <i>Solo, Duo, Trio: Puzzles and Games for Building English Language Skills</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General interest reading materials (Consider students' ages, interests, and what they are studying in class.) <i>Weekly Reader</i> , <i>Time for Kids</i> , <i>Discovery Kids</i> Many public libraries and some government agencies offer differentiated reading lists organized by grade level, topics, etc. Check out these websites for possible general reading materials. http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/reading/elem/ http://www.nypl.org/branch/books/booklists.cfm#CR http://www.bookspot.com/readinglists/	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

THREE

THE SOCIAL- EMOTIONAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

AKA BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT


Behavior and Expectations

Young children act out—create behavior problems—most when they are bored and unengaged, or when they are resisting being controlled. They act out when they're frustrated by being asked to do things they can't do, or fear they can't. They chafe and feel misunderstood, even if they can't name it, when demands are made that are out of synch with their developmental stage or learning styles. Behavior problems also arise from emotional stresses accumulated during the day, or at home.

We all know what these can look like. Anger, comes out in throwing things, hitting, crying, or yelling. Resistance, whether direct 'No, I won't.' or indirect 'I'll do it, but it will take forever, and I'll do 75 other things at the same time.' Antsy, and provoking others.

Restructuring homework time by putting the children, not just the task completion, at the center defuses a great deal of the emotions that underlie behavior problems. Putting children at the center means planning the work time, space, and program activities in ways that acknowledge children's developmental stages and needs, their lives at home and in school, their interests, their energy levels.





Providing children with appropriate levels of choice, for example, reduces resistance. Allowing children to be active and to physically decompress when they transition from school into afterschool can calm the tensions caused by having young children sit still or be quiet for hours on end. Providing creative outlets and letting children talk and reconnect with their friends opens space to learn in different ways. Building relationships of trust and caring creates a feeling of respect and support that can cushion or help cope with problems.

Careful attention to thoughtful and deliberate restructuring of homework time can deflect, minimize, or eliminate many behavior issues. You'll see that the strategies described in this section embody, in many respects, what are referred to as 'behavior management' techniques.

For afterschool, the overall strategy is:

Think less about managing behavior and more about managing learning.

The learning environment you create lays the foundation for children's behavior not only in the program, but in school as well. In kindergarten and first grade, children are at the start of learning how to behave in a school setting. They're learning the norms and picking up all kinds of subtle and not-so-subtle cues about expectations and how they are supposed to relate to teachers, other adults, friends, and peers. They're also just beginning to learn about following directions, getting assignments, focusing on work they may not like, and completing tasks to someone else's standards.

In second through fifth grades, children are learning to take more responsibility, to become more self-directed and independent learners. They need practice tracking and managing workloads, following through, turning in assignments, and reaching to achieve higher standards.

Behavioral expectations, the strategies you use to build healthy child development, and the relationships you foster, all help create a climate for learning—and appropriate behavior.

Clear expectations

Involve children in setting guidelines for acceptable behavior. Consider space restrictions, time constraints and the various learning needs when developing homework time rules.

Young children will need examples. If keeping a low noise level is important, ask children what they think is an acceptable level of noise. Ask them to suggest ways to signal or get their attention if things get too loud. Find out what signals the school day teachers use and see if they feel appropriate to your program.

Remember that afterschool programs can and should look and feel different from school day classrooms. Your program may benefit from rules and processes that allow for more movement or noise than is permitted during the day. Once you and the children have decided on some behavior rules, post them in a clearly visible space. Phrase the expectations positively rather than using “don’t” and “no.” For example, “No running” becomes “Please walk when you are inside.” The goal is to teach children what they can do and what the proper behavior is.

Motivation

Many programs struggle with decisions about whether to offer rewards or incentives for student participation. Some people feel that children should not be rewarded for behavior that is expected of them. Others feel praise and sense of accomplishment should be enough of a reward, while still others offer toys, snacks and other items as encouragements for positive behavior. Adults expect to be rewarded for efforts at work, and bonuses and awards sometimes motivate people to work harder. On the other hand, many work hard for the satisfaction of a job well done. And most adults put in a great deal of effort and ‘work’ into leisure time activities, some of which are quite challenging.

What are appropriate incentives and how should they be awarded? In determining the approach for your program, consider the importance of recognition to elementary age children. Certificates, awards and positive notes home publicly acknowledge improvement and demonstrate to the rest of the group what is expected of them. Avoid giving candy and unhealthy fast food rewards, which can cultivate preferences for these foods and reinforce the association of junk food with feeling happy—not a good strategy for lifelong health. Instead, offer small toys, school supplies or special privileges like being “director for a day” or choosing the snack.

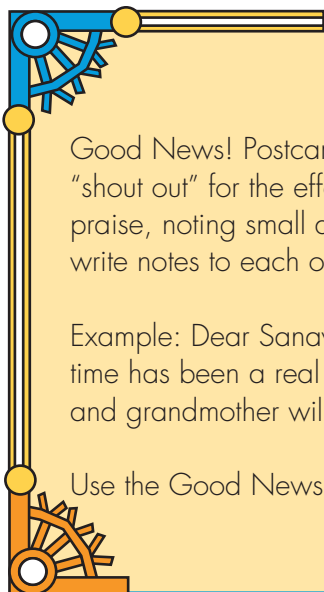
Rewards can be given to individuals, teams, or whole groups for specific achievements. Group awards can be offered for meeting targets set by the group for things such as increased amount of time spent working, more homework turned in, or more buddy reading time. Students can earn raffle tickets for their participation in homework time and drawings can be held weekly. Some programs set up homework “stores” where children spend points earned for helping others, completing assignments, or improving their work habits. Rewards can also be established for individual goals and efforts, varying by student. Completing assignments may be a good milestone for some students while for others, simply arriving with a notebook could be a major accomplishment. Move the bar regularly, increasing expectations as children reach one benchmark and move up to the next.

Praise and encouragement

Elementary school children need and seek adult approval. Find ways to praise and recognize them for work, behavior, and actions well done. Be generous, but not false or out-of-proportion. Kids easily spot phony praise, and can see it as coming from low expectations.

To truly support:

- Encourage children to do better in ways that convey caring and belief in the child's ability to reach high expectations
- Offer very concrete suggestions for improvement
- Ask children what they think is good work, and what is not
- Ask children what they would like to do better, and how they might achieve their goals
- Provide concrete and achievable suggestions—one or two at a time
- Encourage—and praise—self-evaluation
- Make praise public and visible—stars, points, “shout-outs”
- Inspire groups to strive for high goals
- Keep critiques private and targeted on specifics



GOOD NEWS! POSTCARD

Good News! Postcards are notes to children or their parents that offer a positive “shout out” for the effort and hard work a child is doing. Be generous with your praise, noting small and large accomplishments. Students can be encouraged to write notes to each other as well.

Example: Dear Sanaya, Great job today on your math packet! I know that telling time has been a real challenge for you but you stuck with it. I know your teacher and grandmother will be proud!

Use the Good News postcard template on the CD to make your own.



GOOD NEWS! POSTCARD TEMPLATES

[Enter school's name here]

GOOD NEWS!

[Enter student's name] is working hard to do well. He/She is keeping track of assignments, getting right to work, and focusing.

Keep Up the
Good Work!

[Enter staff's name]

[Enter school's name here]

GOOD NEWS!

[Enter student's name] is working hard to do well.

Use this template to customize your own text.

Keep Up the
Good Work!

[Enter staff's name]



RETHINKING BEHAVIOR AND BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Broadening homework time to deliberately include building skills such as group work, independent learning, decision-making, self-management, responsibility, and follow-through means rethinking:

- What children are doing and why (motivation)
- Noise levels
- Setting up rules and clarifying expectations
- What adults are doing and how

Look at these common questions or concerns about moving away from the study hall model. Do you share these concerns? Then look at the comments and tips for addressing the concerns. Do these ideas seem do-able? Do you have additional ideas?

1. If children are talking to each other and working together, won't they disturb each other, copy assignments and fail to learn the information for themselves?

☐ Yes, I have this concern

☐ No, this is not a concern

Comments

We know that college students and adults need to be able to work in groups, in different environments, and despite distractions. Yet, we give little time and opportunity for children to build those skills—and it is a set of skills! One picture of homework time has children sitting quietly, working alone. Another is the family room with a group of kids, music playing, and snacks around. They foster different skills.

When the expectation is clear that it is time to do certain kinds of activities or work, we can allow children to find the best ways for them to focus. Just like adults, some prefer working with noise or music—it actually helps concentration. Children need to see that they can interact with friends around homework or other activities, not just play time. And some kinds of school work, such as practicing for tests, practicing reading aloud, or understanding a story, are much better done in pairs or small groups. Promoting peer interaction also provides opportunities for students to take the ‘teacher’ role, building confidence, communication skills, and helping children understand material in different ways.

Our experience in programs involving hundreds of children is that children do better working together in a relaxed, but focused, environment—like working at home, only with more support!

I can try some of these ideas: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments: _____

Other ideas? _____

GROUP WORK AND NOISE

- Before asking a group to be quiet, listen to what the talking is about. Are children asking each other questions? Sharing strategies? Comparing answers? These are the kinds of conversations to encourage during homework time.
- Help children generate questions and discussion about their assignments. Encourage them to ask each other questions like, “What are we supposed to do?” “What do you think?” “How do you do this?” “What is this about?”
- Plan an attention-getting signal with children in case the noise level gets too high. Involve children in coming up with the signal or deciding what it should be. You might offer a choice between, “When you hear my voice clap twice!!” or “Countdown 5 to quiet!” or “When I say “peace” you say “quiet!”
- If space allows, offer a quiet space and a talking space for homework and allow children to choose where they would like to work each day.
- In limited space, offer time in the schedule for both individual work and group work to help children develop skills for both settings.
- At the beginning of the year and again at the start of each semester or marking period, have children reflect on their own best work environments. Have a full group discussion about noise levels, working with friends, and how to make it work well for everyone.

2. Elementary school children are too young to make decisions for themselves.

☐ Yes, I have this concern

☐ No, this is not a concern

Comments

Making choices and decisions are skills that can be taught and practiced at any age. For younger children, control the choices more narrowly to things they really can decide, such as, "Would you like to wear the red pajamas tonight or the blue ones?" Note that there is no choice about whether or not to put on the pajamas. During homework time, the question may be, "Do you want to work with Olanna and Rob, or at the quiet table? "

As students gain more responsibility, increase the degree and complexity of choice. Offer only those choices you will honor. For example, if the only options for snack are fruit or cheese, do not ask "What would you like to have for a snack?" if you will not be able to meet a choice of candy and soda. Avoid false questions like, "Do you want to do homework now?" unless it really is a choice to do it now or later. The question might be, "What time will you start working on homework? Do you want a reminder?"

MANAGING CHOICE

- Offer real choices and follow through on the decisions children make.
- Find choice in even simple areas: Which table would you like to sit at today? Which pencil would you like to use? Which assignment would you like to start first?
- Praise children for making decisions and show them how their choices led to success: "Julius, I see you chose to start on your spelling words first. Last week you didn't get them finished when you left them for last. Nice choice."

I can try some of these ideas: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments: _____

Other ideas? _____

3. Children won't want to work on homework if there are other options like activity stations or games.

☐ Yes, I have this concern

☐ No, this is not a concern

Comments

When choices are offered during homework time, staff are responsible for teaching children to make choices that will lead to good work habits. If a child chooses to work only at activity stations and neglects his or her assignments, the work doesn't get done. Homework contracts and tracking tools help children set goals, as well as plan and manage their time to get their work done. Activity stations can be developed to reinforce the academic content found in homework assignments. Moving between content-relevant activities and the homework assignment can help make assignments and the learning more meaningful. See page 27 for activity center ideas.

I can try some of these ideas: ☐ Yes ☐ No

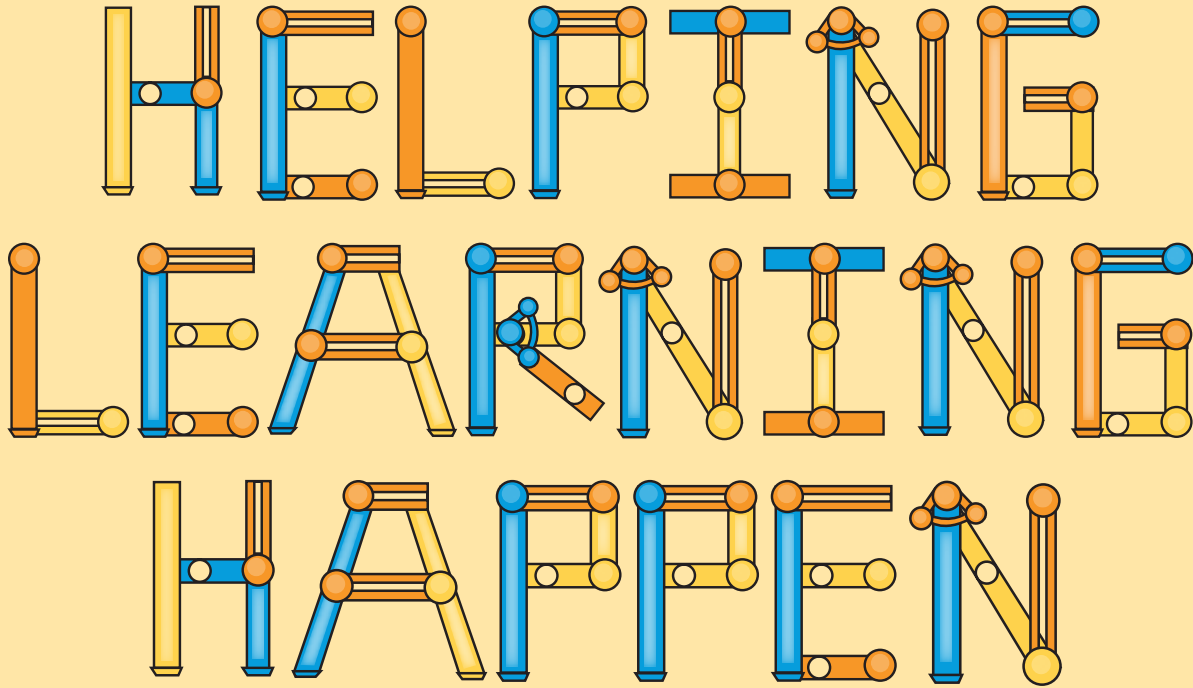
Comments: _____

Other ideas? _____

STRATEGIZING ACTIVITY CENTER CHOICE

- Plan activity centers with topics and skills related to what is being covered in school.
- If space allows, set up activity centers in another room.
- Schedule center time for 15 minutes before, during or after the time children will be working on assignments to give every child a chance to participate.
- Use activity center time as a reward for students who meet their goals. Be cautious about only allowing this reward to students who complete assignments or achieve particular grades. Find goals that are appropriate to each student's needs and challenges.
- Involve children in creating expectations for the use of activity centers.

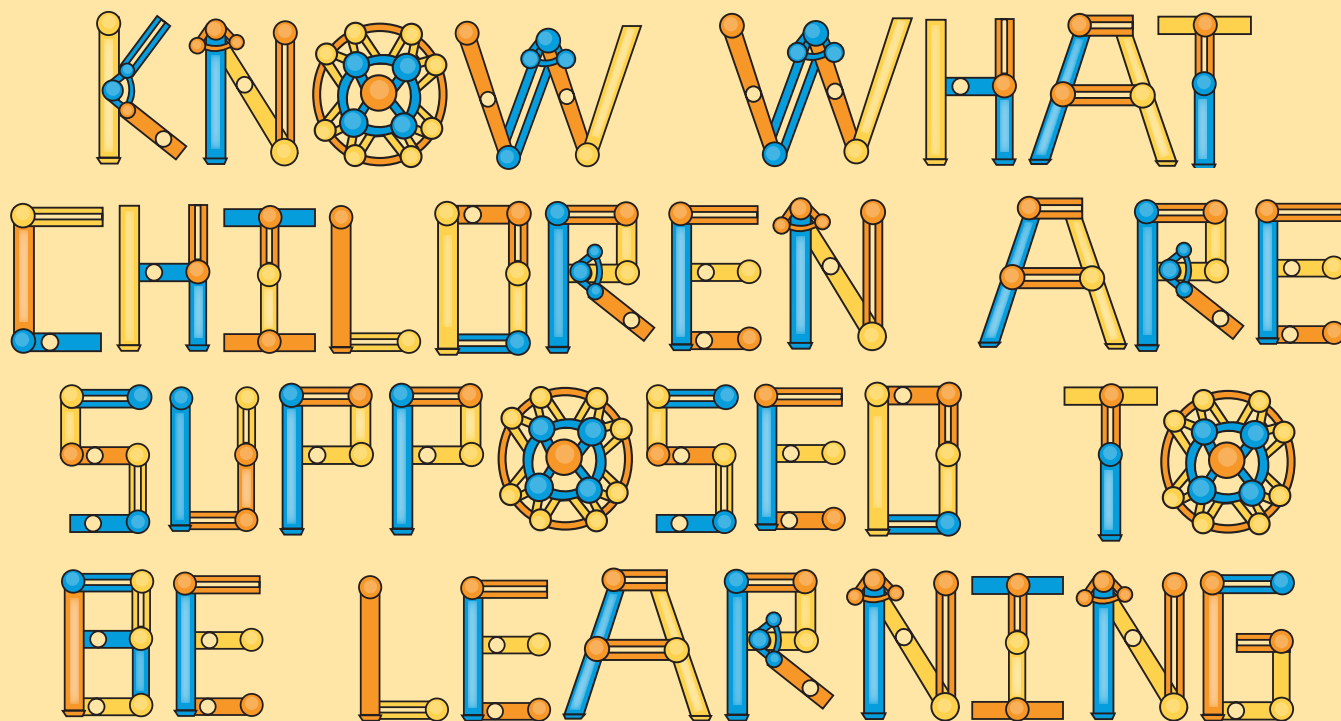
PART II



Providing help that makes a difference in children's learning and success in school is not about supplying answers to homework. The overall purpose of homework time during afterschool is giving children time to work on their assignments, in a setting where help and support are available.

The best help goes beyond the content of the assignments alone, expanding to deliberately develop the work habits, study skills, engagement, connection, motivation, and enthusiasm that underpin success throughout school. The kind of help that truly allows students to succeed as students rests on:

- Knowing what children are supposed to be learning in school
- Using effective strategies to help with assignments
- Communicating and connecting with parents, families, schools and communities



All staff and volunteers in the program during homework time should have a broad understanding of what children are supposed to be learning in school. This helps staff establish reasonable expectations, and can help staff see specific areas where children may need help. If a kindergartner, for example, can't sound out a word, it's helpful to know that at this age, they are learning letter-sound associations. The adult reaction, then, isn't, "Why can't you do that?" but rather, "What sound does 'b' make?"

Go to school web sites, or to your state or local school district, or department of education web sites to find copies of standards. Talk to teachers and principals, attend teacher meetings, and ask for summaries of target topics and skills. Distribute summaries and lists to all staff, and discuss them at staff meetings. Keep the summaries and lists updated.

Although details of standards vary from state to state, they are fairly consistent with respect to skills and core content. The following summary is drawn from *Academic Content, Afterschool Style: A Notebook and Guide**.

* *Academic Content, Afterschool Style* (2004) includes more detailed, plain language content, with activity ideas for targeted specific content. Learn more at www.afterschooled.org.



GRADES K–2

By the end of grade 2 children should be able to:

English Language Arts


- Print their names, addresses and phone numbers
- Write in full sentences with basic punctuation and grammar
- Use capital letters correctly (names, beginning of sentences, etc.)
- Read and write numbers 0–100
- Read picture books, easy chapter books, poems and short stories
- Find information in written materials
- Correct their writing
- Sound out words and figure out meanings from context

Mathematics

- Count backward and forward to 30 (K), 100 (1st), 1000 (2nd)
- Tell time and talk about time
- Use money and have an idea of correct change
- Make reasonable estimates
- Name, draw and describe shapes
- Describe the concept of 2 and 3 dimensions
- Use a calendar and name days of the week, months, years and seasons
- Measure and weigh things
- Use and know left and right
- Understand the idea of number “places” (1s, 10s, 100s)
- Collect information and present it in an organized way
- Demonstrate a sense of space and distance

Science

Children should know that:

- Science is part of their everyday lives
 - Asking questions and looking for answers is part of the scientific process
 - Science changes over time
 - Every culture contributes to science
 - People live on earth and have an effect on the environment
 - Earth is one of the nine planets and the sun provides light and warmth
 - There are four seasons, each with distinct characteristics
 - Materials have different properties
 - The human body has many parts and all parts have functions
 - Technology is part of science
- 



GRADES 3–5

By the end of grade 5, children should be able to:


English Language Arts

- Read and write for many purposes
- Use correct grammar, syntax and punctuation
- Read more complex materials
- Write in paragraphs
- Use media for information gathering
- Define words using different clues and strategies
- Use cursive (script) writing
- Distinguish fact from opinion

Mathematics

- Try several different ways to arrive at answers
- Explain reasoning
- Figure out problems mentally, using paper and pencil, and with calculators
- Make, read, and use graphs, charts and diagrams
- Make reasonable guesses or estimates of answers to problems
- Use and show 1s, 10s, and 100s places
- Add, subtract, multiply and divide whole numbers, decimals and fractions
- Name, describe and explain relationships between 2 and 3 dimensional figures using math vocabulary
- Measure area
- Convert among different units of measurement
- Collect analyze and explain data using math terminology

Science

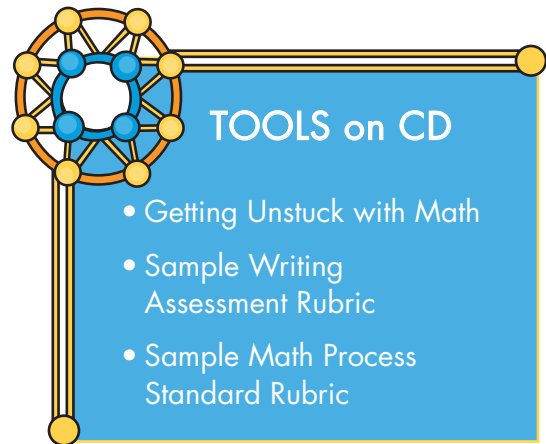
- Ask testable questions
 - Investigate using tools such as microscopes, magnifying glasses, scales, and telescopes; and techniques of measuring, mixing, and observing
 - Record results and draw conclusions based on evidence
 - Explain relationships among humans, plants, and animals, and changes over time
 - Analyze and discuss the effects of humans on the environment
 - Explain and demonstrate forces and their effects
 - Explain improvements in technology and the potential benefits and harms of technology
- 

All staff should stay up to date with what children are working on in class. Use homework assignments as a way to see details of what children are expected to be learning. Ask children and teachers about upcoming tests and quizzes. If teachers schedule regular vocabulary or spelling tests, for example, get the words early on and incorporate them into games and puzzles during homework time.

HELPING WITH ASSIGNMENTS STRATEGIES TO MAKE YOUR OWN

Children need different amounts and types of help, in different skill and content areas, at different times. Learning and skill building is not a straight-line process, nor is it the same for all children. A child may be learning to read quickly and easily, then plateau for a while. While reading skills are growing, mathematical thinking may be lagging, or vice versa. Some children learn best by working problems through on their own or with a friend, others need adult support. A student may be able to do math assignments by himself with little adult supervision but may need more structured help with book reports and writing.

Be aware of techniques for helping in different ways so you can tailor your support to best fit students' needs. Encourage problem solving and independence. Children will become better students, they will learn to work together and help one another, and staff will be freed up to give more attention to those who need it. Recognize, too, that you and the staff do not need to be expert in subjects to be able to help children build skills.



Strategy: Manage transitions into homework time

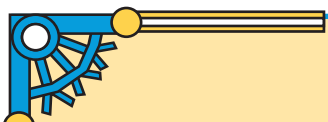
Early in the year, establish processes for children to transition into homework time. Transitions should be developed with as much care as other parts of your program. A well-developed transition sets the tone for the rest of the homework time.

Different kinds of transitions—and different amounts of time—work with students of different ages. Draw from the list below, and come up with your own ideas. The key is to avoid having children drift in and spend ten minutes wondering what to do, and acting accordingly. Make ‘what next’ obvious and positive, either by having materials out, or having established with the group what the patterns are.

- Determine an amount of transition time, and a signal or specific activity that ends it
- Create a group game or activity to focus kids, such as brainstorms, daily puzzles, or opinion polls
- Post GraffitiWalls, games, or activities for children to play as they come in and get settled
- Put out brain teasers, puzzles or short tabletop activities before children arrive
- Have books, magazines, or comics out on tables; replenish with new editions regularly
- Establish a routine of committee time, library time, or snack and news updates as children arrive

Strategy: Calibrate levels of help

Be aware of different intensities of help. Aim to provide the level of support needed to help children gain confidence and independence. The model below illustrates different levels of help.



LEVELS OF HELP


“I do, you watch”
Staff member gives step-by-step instructions and shows what to do while the student (or group) watches.

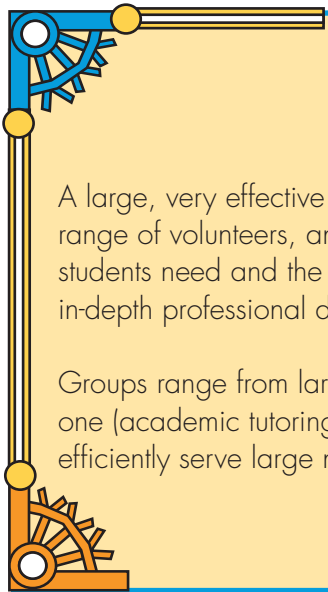
“I do, you help”
Staff member and student work together, with the staff member giving substantial guidance. The staff member may do some of the initial steps, then give hints as the student finishes.

“You do, I help”
Students work in pairs or small groups, with the staff member monitoring and offering demonstrations and light guidance as needed.

“You do, I watch”
Students work independently on problems, projects, or at activity stations, working alone, in pairs, or in small groups. Children help each other and problem-solve together as the staff member circulates and supervises

(Adapted from the work of P. David Pearson, Center for the Study of Reading, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign)





PROGRAM EXAMPLE TIERED TUTORIAL

A large, very effective tutorial program in New York City uses a tiered approach. Staff, a range of volunteers, and students are assigned to groups according to the level of help students need and the type of help the adult is able to give. All volunteers and staff receive in-depth professional development geared to the type of support they will offer.

Groups range from large (the independent workers), to small (mid-level help), to one-on-one (academic tutoring). The tiered approach allows the program to successfully and cost-efficiently serve large numbers of students with widely differing needs from a variety of schools.

Strategy: Ask questions to help children think through assignments and their work

Talk with students about their work. Ask questions that encourage conversation rather than those that could be answered with a simple “yes” or “no”. Have children summarize homework assignments or what was covered in class.

Ask the kinds of questions students should be asking themselves as they get started and work through assignments. By modeling and practicing, you’re getting students into the habit of thinking things through on their own.

- Ask the student to explain the problem in his or her own words.
What is the problem asking? What does that mean? What are you supposed to do?
- Suggest breaking the problem down into smaller parts and steps.
What steps are you going to take? What is the first thing to do? What next?
- Suggest students try different ways of working on the problem.
Does this seem like anything else that you’ve done? What have you tried? What else can you try?
- Ask students to explain what they don’t understand and need help with.
Where are you getting stuck? Which piece can you do? Where do you want some help?

Strategy: Direct students to resources

Ask students to think about where they might find answers (Internet, dictionary, encyclopedia, textbook, etc.). Show students how to look up words in a dictionary or conduct a web search. Build their skills to find answers on their own.

Remind children to see their teachers and parents as resources, too. Encourage them to be specific about the kind of help or support they need, and help them learn how to ask for it—and to remember to ask for it!

Strategy: The “1, 2, 3” approach

Teach children to think “1, 2, 3” as their steps in working on homework.

Step 1: Try to figure it out on your own.

Step 2: Ask a friend for help.

Step 3: Ask a staff member or volunteer for help.

Begin by telling children that when they get stuck, they should think, “1, 2, 3.” Before they ask you for help, they should have (1) tried to solve the problem, then (2), asked a friend. When a child asks you for help, prompt with, “Did you try steps one and two?”

Strategy: Time management

Time management is a skill to be developed. Children need to become conscious of how long it takes them to complete a task, and they need to develop a sense of how long it should take. They need to learn that if they plan and focus their work, they can get more done in a shorter amount of time. They also need to work out their best working styles. If they need more frequent breaks (as most young children do), talk directly about working for a set amount of time, such as 15 minutes, then taking five minutes to do something more active, then working again for 15 minutes.

In some schools, younger children begin to practice time management by using homework packets given to them by the teacher at the beginning of the week to be collected on Fridays. Discuss with children how they are going to plan their time to get the work done.

Check to see that children are keeping track of assignments and due dates. Create calendars with younger children to map out their work schedules and build awareness of time management. Help older children prepare schedules and track assignments.

Strategy: Be specific with reading help

Build students' reading skills by teaching them the techniques of good readers. Help students see that strong readers use several techniques everyone can learn. Promote a love for reading by having plenty of high-interest reading materials available. Include books, magazines, books on tape, comic books, and books from diverse cultures and around the world.

Show that reading is fun. Talk about the books you are reading. Create a recommended reading list based on suggestions from the children in the program. Post titles of books that children are reading and invite everyone to write comments on a big review poster. Set up a Critics Team as a rotating committee to review and recommend books, stories or other materials during snack time.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD READER?

Struggling readers often think reading is about sounding out words. Teach children the techniques of good readers—they're learnable! As you model techniques and ask questions, children will learn to ask those questions themselves as they move along.

GOOD READERS

- **Get ready** to read by looking at the title, table of contents, and pictures to get an idea of what's coming.

Ask: What do the pictures and title tell you about this book? What do you recognize? (K-2)

What more can you guess about this book by looking at the table of contents? Does the back of the book tell you anything? (3-5)

- **Skip words** they don't know and read on for more clues.

Ask: What do you think that word might mean? What is this page about? (K-2)

What is the paragraph about? What words are part of the word you don't know? Do you see any parts you know? What does the prefix mean? (For example, seeing 'manage' in 'manageable', and 'un' in 'unmanageable'.) (3-5)

- **Re-read** when things don't make sense.

Try: Listen as I read that section to you. Now what do you think that part means? (K-2)

Try: Let's read that section together. You start and give me a signal when you want me to join in with you. (3-5)

- **Go for overall meaning** rather than stopping at each word.

Tell me what happened in that story we just read. (K-2)

Think about what you just read. What was the main point the author was trying to make? (3-5)



READING STRATEGIES FOR TEXTBOOKS

Older students often have reading assignments in textbooks. Typically, this involves reading a chapter and answering questions. Help by showing students to use these strategies, adapted to the age and level of the child.

Preview

Read through the chapter headings and subheadings, the introduction, and the summary at the end of the chapter. Look at the graphs, tables, charts and other illustrations.

Connect to previous knowledge

Once you have an idea of what the chapter is about, think about what you already know about the topic. Ask yourself what else you might want to know about the topic.

Read the questions first

Read the questions all the way through, looking up any words you don't understand in the book's glossary or dictionary.

Read the chapter carefully

Read the text carefully. Note where you can find answers to the questions.

Answer the questions

Answer the questions. Look back and skim the chapter when you need to, and to double check your answers.

Summarize and discuss

Review the main ideas, the ending, your thoughts, and what you learned from the questions.



Strategy: Be specific with writing help

Like reading, writing improves with practice. Good writers see writing as a form of expression, a way of sharing ideas and communicating. Help students move from thinking and talking to writing with confidence. Show off examples of written work, and reward both form and content.

Elementary students are required to write essays, poems, book reports, short stories, and other forms. Regardless of the type of writing assignment, students should build skills and comfort with all steps in the writing process.

Use tools such as the Sample Writing Assessment Rubric (see page 52 and on CD as a customizable form) to review work with students. Give them a copy of any assessment guidelines ahead of time, and discuss it. Using a tool such as the Writing Assessment Rubric helps students see concretely what counts as poor, adequate, and excellent, and why.

K–2

Younger students will still be practicing the mechanics of writing—how to hold a pencil, form letters, and write their names. They are learning punctuation marks and how to write complete sentences. Many elementary teachers accept “invented spelling” in creative writing assignments, preferring that children focus more on getting ideas on paper and not worrying as much about correct spelling.

Encourage children to make books of experiences, to write cards with illustrations, to make their own cartoons, to create story boards, and to create scrapbooks. Telling and retelling stories helps with writing, as children develop a sense of ‘story line,’ beginning, middle, and end. Help children be excited about the idea that writing is telling a story so others can see it and read it later.

3–5

Older students are often assigned longer writing projects such as reports. Getting started is often the hardest part of writing. Help students by asking them to do the following:

- State the assignment clearly.
- Explain expectations in terms of length, topic, and due date.
- Explain expectations in terms of content.
- State the topic (if it is given) aloud in one sentence.
- Ask if they are seeking any particular kind of help.

Ask students if they would like help with ideas, organizing thoughts, finding information, writing complete sentences, grammar, spelling, or other skills. Suggest appropriate resources. Encourage students to work with each other, and encourage communication with teachers as much as possible.

Once a student completes a draft, help with reviewing and polishing.

- Ask for a verbal summary; this reviews content, logic, and flow.
- Have the writer read it to you or to a peer. By reading aloud, students often discover skipped words or jumbled sentences. Ask if they want to add anything.
- Read the work for meaning, not grammar or spelling. See if it says what the student intended. If not, tell the student what you didn’t understand and ask for clarification.
- Remind students to review it themselves, share it with older students or others, or ask their teacher for help in finalizing it.
- Guide students to resources to check their writing, such as reference books, textbooks, or computer programs.
- Encourage, express interest, and discuss children’s work with them. Connect their writing to other things in their experience and the world around them.

THE WRITING PROCESS

Students in elementary grades begin to learn and practice the writing process through essays and short stories. Become familiar with these steps in the process to help children with their work and become stronger writers.

Steps in the Writing Process

- Pre-writing:
 - Brainstorm: Come up with ideas and get them on paper
 - Zero in on the topic
 - Think about the audience and purpose
- Find information or come up with more ideas about the topic
- Organize the main information and ideas
- Write a first draft to get the ideas down and organized—not polished!
- Revise and get feedback (this might take more than one round)
- Proofread and edit
- Produce the final version



SAMPLE WRITING ASSESSMENT RUBRIC*

	Excellent 4	Good 3	Satisfactory 2	Needs Work 1
Topic	Topic is clear and focused	Has a topic	Topic is there somewhere	Seems not to have a topic
Content and Ideas	Ideas and content relate to the topic, make sense, are well-developed and presented interestingly	Ideas and content relate to the topic, and are developed	Ideas and content may relate to topic, but are poorly developed and difficult to understand	Ideas and content do not seem related to the topic and are not understandable
Organization	Writing is organized, easy to follow, and interesting	Writing is organized	Writing is a little difficult to follow	Writing jumps around and is very difficult to follow because it lacks organization
Grammar, punctuation, spelling, and other mechanics	Grammar, spelling, and punctuation help make the work readable	Grammar, spelling, and punctuation are no obstacle to understanding the work	Grammar, spelling, and punctuation cause some problems with understanding the text	Grammar, spelling, and punctuation problems make the text very difficult to understand
Neatness	Work is neat, attractive, and easy to read	Work is neat	Work is sloppy	Work is so sloppy it is hard to read

* Liberally adapted for afterschool from the PA PSSA Writing Rubric

Strategy: Help with math and science

Elementary students are building the foundation for math and science. It is important that they retain their natural enthusiasm for mathematical and scientific thinking: seeing patterns, making order, understanding how things relate to each other, logical constructions, exploring and explaining. They are also learning to work with numbers and calculations that affect their everyday lives.

Reinforce and practice math concepts and arithmetic skills by providing games, puzzles, activities, and projects. Use real-life situations, such as handling money, telling time, or converting cooking measurements, as much as possible. Your attitude matters!

Many staff are uneasy with helping in these areas because the processes and content children are being taught in class may be different than how you or other staff learned the material. Use class textbooks, and form peer buddies for children to help each other. Help children identify where they are getting stuck, point out resources they might use, and help them communicate their questions to their teachers.

During homework time, do your best to help children to think through and understand problems, and develop ways to address them.

Help students get unstuck by asking them to:

- Explain a problem in words
- Write problems in different ways
- Break problems into smaller parts and steps
- Guess, estimate and explain why they made their estimates
- Try different ways
- Explain what they don't understand and where they need help
- Talk with peers
- Identify resources for getting help

Offer the following suggestions to help students solve problems:

- Make a list, chart, or graph
- Draw a diagram
- Look for a pattern
- Simplify the problem
- Work backwards
- Use a process of elimination
- Act out or model the problem with objects
- Guess and check
- Encourage students to think aloud, explain, and try different approaches

Make resources available that offer explanations to help staff and students. A set of class textbooks, along with any teacher guides or manuals, should be kept on hand. Reference books such as *Math on Call* provide quick refreshers on elementary math, and students love using these types of materials.

Use tools such as the Math Process Standards Rubric (see page 58 and on CD as a customizable form) to help staff and students support thinking and work-skills development around math assignments.

Science assignments

Most science homework assignments fall into one of two categories: (1) read a chapter or section in a science textbook and answer questions following the section; or (2) work on special projects such as science fairs, presentations, or experiments.

Reading informational material, as in textbooks, requires a different approach than reading a story or literature. It calls for reading for facts and themes, and usually reading more slowly, carefully, and deliberately. Because science textbooks tend to be written more densely and at a higher reading level than fiction intended for the same age group, extra support may be needed. Consider buddy systems specifically for science reading, and use deliberate reading help strategies. (See Reading Strategies for Textbooks).

Afterschool can provide important support for children working on projects and presentations. Help children identify and find materials and resources they need. If necessary, help them break the projects down into smaller chunks, and talk about where and when they'll do each piece. Recognize that many children do not have access to materials at home. Provide as much as you can—even if just the basics—to help children succeed.

Support children in their preparation of visual materials. Ask questions, show interest, and provide materials. Encourage them to practice their presentations with you, with friends, or with the group. Cheer them on and share the excitement!

Strategy: Help with long term projects or assignments

In upper elementary school, children start getting longer-term assignments, such as reports and presentations, or projects with multiple steps and parts.

Elementary students need help thinking through the steps for completing extended projects. Afterschool staff can help not only with materials, encouragement, and showing interest by listening, but also in explaining and guiding the steps.

Projects involve several steps.

Preliminary thinking and research. Projects usually start by considering the whole topic, then narrowing the focus or deciding the angle to take within the parameters given by the teacher. For example, the teacher may have said, "Write a paper about a past president of the United States." Help by asking questions to jumpstart thinking. For example, you might ask, "Have you heard of any presidents? Who? What do you know about them?" If they can't come up with anything, try some prompts such as, "Have you ever seen any movies that had a president? Have you come across any presidents in books? On dollar bills or on coins?" Suggest that they ask their parents, or other kids.

At this stage, students might gather information or ask questions about several presidents to decide which one to write about. Guide them to resources.

Decide on a topic

Once they have a basic sense of where they're headed—writing about Lincoln, for example—help them focus further. Talk with them to see if they seem particularly interested by a point, idea, or angle. Encourage them to talk with their friends about it. The more interested the student is in the topic, the more readily—and happily—he or she will do the work. Try to find and spark their motivation and interest. Many angles can be pursued about Lincoln: the social and political conflicts of the times, his role in wartime, his speeches or speechwriting, his biography and personal characteristics, his connection to current events and politics.

Collect and organize the information

Support students in learning how to do the basic research and information gathering. Ask where they can start finding information. Suggest ways to keep notes, such as notecards that can be used later for organizing. Typically, classroom teachers provide an outline format or other guidelines for the project. Help students think through and sort out what information goes where. If students wrote key information on cards, have students lay out the cards and arrange them in order, then explain it to you.

Finding materials

For assignments that require students to construct displays or objects, determine what materials are feasible for the program to provide. If the project requires more extensive materials, help students plan their at-home time for finding supplies and working on the assignments. Ask teachers for supplies if needed.

Writing

Use clear steps in the writing process to coach children through this part of the assignment.

Strategy: Internet help sites

Some programs have access to computers and to the Internet. Determine how you will use this resource and give children access fairly if there is limited time or supply. Homework help lines can be a great support, especially in specific subject areas. Afterschool programs may also make use of online tutoring programs during homework time. Be aware of the quality of the program and of the experience. Worksheet 'drill and kill' is just as boring on a computer as it is on paper.

The Internet is clearly a fabulous resource for research and projects. Again, unless you have no shortage of access, develop fair rules for use of the computers and Internet access, and what they may be used to do.



GETTING UNSTUCK WITH MATH

Share these strategies with staff and families.

Ask students to:

Describe the problem.

Explain the problem in words.

What is the problem asking?

Is it like other problems you've encountered?

Write the problem in different ways.

Is there another way to write that?

Break the problem down into smaller parts or steps.

Lay out parts or steps.

What steps are you going to take?

Guess and estimate.

Explain the guesses and estimates.

What do you think the answer might be?

How did you get that?

Try different ways.

What have you tried?

Are there other alternatives?

Explain what they don't understand.

Pinpoint the problem area.

What do you think about your answer?

Where are you getting stuck?

Figure out how to get help.

Name specific resources.

Where can you go to find an explanation?

Who can you ask?



SAMPLE MATH PROCESS STANDARDS RUBRIC

Sample rubric to encourage math thinking and help assess math work processes.

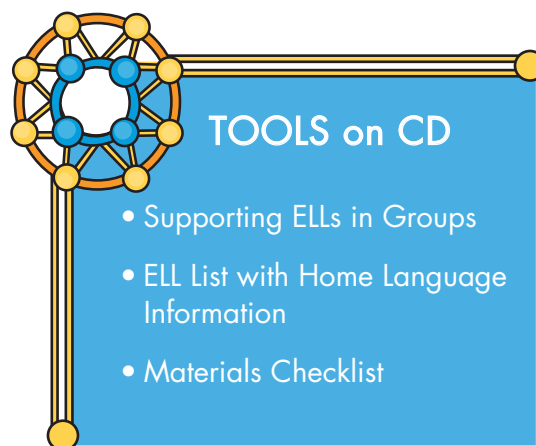
Process	Excellent	Good	Needs Work
Understands problems	Can quickly explain problems so others can understand	Seems to understand most problems and can explain them in words	Needs a great deal of help understanding problems
Able to explain processes used and why	Can clearly explain steps of how arrived at all answers	Can generally explain almost all answers	Can't explain at all how arrived at anything
Effort	Works steadily and independently	Works steadily with some encouragement	Barely starts, gives up easily
Tries different methods	Gets unstuck by trying different approaches independently	Gets unstuck by asking for help	Tries one method then gives up
Uses tools to help work on problems (calculator, computer, measurement/drawing tools)	Selects appropriate tools and uses them easily	Selects and uses tools with some assistance	Little idea of which tools to use for what, or how to use them
Notes and references	Keeps clear notes and neat notebook, uses notes and references for review and help	Keeps notebook, sometimes messy, uses it and other references for review and help with some encouragement	Barely keeps notebook, often forgets text book, doesn't use notes or reference books

THREE

SPECIAL SUPPORTS: SPECIAL NEEDS

Children are truly individuals in their learning styles, the pace at which they learn different skills in different areas, their best ways to practice, their patience levels, and their balance of tolerance for control versus independence. They come to school and afterschool with behaviors, patterns, and emotional skills developed elsewhere and at other times in their lives. Afterschool offers children the opportunity to work with a wide diversity of peers and adults. Create an environment that welcomes all children, with caring, attention, and support that recognizes children as the individuals they are.

The chart below offers suggestions and discussion points for addressing the needs of children who may require additional support to be successful during homework time. These general guidelines are helpful working with children with developmental, physical, and learning differences, as well as those with challenging family, home, language and cultural barriers.



Challenge	Discussion	Options	Additional resources
Child needs one-on-one support to participate	Some children may have physical or behavioral needs that require them to have an aide during the school day. In some cases, the aide can be contracted to attend homework time or some portion of afterschool. Funds may be provided through state agencies, but in many cases families have to pay extra for the additional hours.	<p>Speak with the special education staff or advocate at the school to see what services may be accessible after school.</p> <p>Contact local colleges for student interns studying special education.</p> <p>Recruit volunteers from the community with a special interest in working with children with special needs.</p>	<p>College fraternities and sororities (for volunteers).</p> <p>Lions Club and other volunteer service organizations (fundraising and volunteers).</p> <p>School special education staff and aides (resources and information).</p> <p>Circle of Inclusion This web site offers demonstrations of and information about effective practices of inclusive educational programs for children from birth through age eight. www.circleofinclusion.org</p> <p>LD Online Features a kids' magazine and art gallery for children with learning disabilities. www.ldonline.org/kids</p> <p>Learn and Serve America Home page of LSA, a program that supports service-learning programs in schools and community organizations. www.learnandserve.org</p>
Staff have no training in the specific needs	It can feel frightening or overwhelming to meet a child with a disability or need that is outside one's experience or training. In most cases, extensive education is not necessary to effectively incorporate children into the program, but some basic techniques and knowledge about the situation will help staff feel more confident.	<p>Observe in the child's school-day classroom to see which techniques are effective.</p> <p>Meet with family members, counselors, aides, or others to develop a plan for supporting the child.</p> <p>Invite local experts to train staff on basic techniques and information about the needs of your students.</p>	
Child may be a danger to themselves or other participants in the program	In rare circumstances, children may have behavioral challenges which may put them or the other children in your program at risk. It is important to build relationships with families so they feel comfortable being candid with you about their children's needs. Before admitting the child into your program, meet with school staff, families, and any other professionals who work with the child to discuss what accommodations can be made to support participation, and what limitations there may be.	<p>Identify all possible resources to support the child.</p> <p>Develop a communication plan with parents, staff and others to regularly assess the situation.</p> <p>Be clear with all involved what will happen if the child cannot remain in the program.</p>	

Additional Supports: English Language Learners

English Language Learners (ELLs¹) may be immigrants, refugees, or native-born Americans². They come from different cultural and language backgrounds, with different amounts of schooling, and may be at any level of English at any age. In the same grade or class, ELLs may be working at widely different levels of English, creating a significant challenge for the classroom teacher. Students may seem fluent, yet still struggle with schoolwork. It is not uncommon for language learners to speak and understand conversational English while lacking the academic English needed for school.

Afterschool is a terrific resource for helping ELLs build their English language skills. Programs can provide the engaging activities, homework time, projects, arts, and recreation that naturally motivate children to use their English to participate. When staff form caring, supportive relationships with learners and use deliberate strategies to promote speaking and listening in English, children gain confidence and build skills further. As anyone who has learned another language knows, practice is key. Learners need listeners with the patience to wait encouragingly while they try to find the words, people who listen and figure out the meaning, rather than interrupt to correct every mistake. Classroom teachers rarely have the time to allow students to practice spoken English. Afterschool staff can, and should, play this vital role for ELLs. *More Than Just Talk: English Language Learning in Afterschool*³ provides more information about language acquisition and offers dozens of easy-to-make activities to help ELLs develop all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—afterschool style.

Homework time is a particularly good opportunity for ELLs to practice and learn academic and conversational English simultaneously. For immigrants or newcomers to the system, homework time is also a chance to help children learn norms, practices (such as test-taking) and expectations of teachers and schools.

Homework Assignments and ELLs

Homework assignments and the expectations of ELLs vary across the different kinds of programs ELLs attend. Bilingual programs may assign homework in English and in the native language. Newcomer centers⁴ for newly arrived students often focus on literacy and an introduction to American culture, with homework at the beginner ESL level. More typically, language learners attend ESL classes part of the day and spend the rest of the day in grade-level classes with their English-speaking peers. These students may have assignments from their ESL class instead of, or in addition to, assignments from their grade-level classes.

When ELL students have the same assignments as their peers, teachers may hold different expectations of ELLs with respect to completion or correctness. While this can be an important bridging support, always encourage ELLs to do their best, and to avoid letting different expectations become a crutch or deterrent to success. As with all students, afterschool staff should help build the habits and skills of ELLs to see that they understand the assignments, know what is expected, focus on work; and know how, when, and where to get help.

¹ Across the US, terms for English language learners (ELL) and programs may vary. ELLs may also be known as English as a Second Language (ESL), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Limited English Proficient (LEP) or language minority students. In this text, we use ELL.

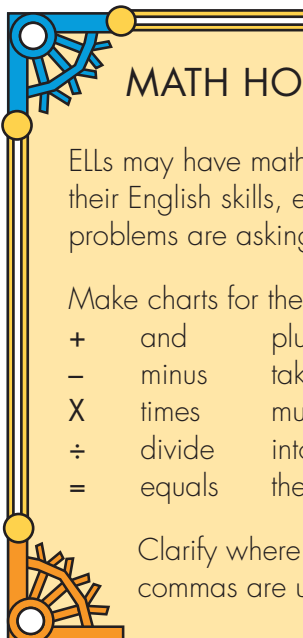
² According to the Migration Policy Institute (2006), 64% of ELLs are native-born.

³ *More Than Just Talk: English Language Learning in Afterschool* (2007). Weisburd, C. and Sniad, T. Foundations, Inc. Available from www.afterschooled.org.

⁴ School districts with large numbers of ELLs often have newcomer centers or programs serving the special needs of newly arrived immigrant or refugee students. Depending on the program's design and goals, ELLs may attend for part of the day or the whole day, for several months or for an entire year or more.

Simplifying the language of the instructions and outlining steps can be very helpful. Grouping students with native speakers and ELLs at different language levels is also a support. Be aware that children may nod and smile in a way that makes you think they understand when in fact they may not—they may simply be acknowledging that they heard, or they are trying to be polite. Check for comprehension by asking ELLs to explain in their own words or to demonstrate understanding by doing something such as pointing out words, gathering the right materials, or turning to the page in the book. Bilingual staff and students, or more advanced ELLs can be enlisted as homework helpers for all students.

Talk to classroom teachers and ESL teachers if you see that your ELLs need more support. Be an advocate for children! ELL parents may not have the language skills, or may not be comfortable asking teachers and school administrators for the supports their children need.



MATH HOMEWORK AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

ELLs may have math skills at their grade level in their home language, but struggle because of their English skills, especially with word problems. Check that children understand what word problems are asking, and help children understand the language of math.

Make charts for the room that show words, phrases, and meanings, such as:

+	and	plus	sum	addition	more than
–	minus	take-away	subtract	less than	
X	times	multiply			
÷	divide	into parts	fractions		
=	equals	the same as			

Clarify where periods and commas are used and what they mean. In some countries, commas are used where we use decimal points (for example: 1,5 is 1.5).

Beginning language learners

Beginner ELLs need lots of time to talk and listen.

- During homework check-in, give ELLs extra time to say what they have as assignments, to show work, or to talk about their day
- Get in the habit of regularly checking for comprehension
- Engage all students in telling stories and writing their own books; support ELLs with writing their words
- Have children create their own dictionaries; encourage ELLs and all children to use combinations of pictures and words
- Provide lots of opportunities to present work and ideas
- Help ELLs and all children make flash cards to practice for tests
- Group language learners in mixed fluency level groups (which could be ELLs from the same grade) so they can practice speaking and learn new words as they work with the assignments

It does no harm—and actually helps—to let children help each other with assignments in their home language. Being in an English-speaking environment all day can be tiring and frustrating, especially for beginners. Try to find bilingual tutors for this group.

Intermediate level learners

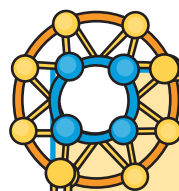
At this level, students speak English well enough to understand and be understood most of the time, but their academic reading and writing may not be equal to their social and conversational English skills.

- Support written work to help ELLs practice and learn patterns of grammar and punctuation
- Ask students what they are working on with their ESL teachers and classroom teachers
- Check in with ESL or classroom teachers for areas needing support
- Model vocabulary and pronunciation by repeating back what the child is saying with the correct words and pronunciation
- Avoid discouraging speech by overcorrecting or pointing out too many errors
- Follow up with conversations about assignments, asking questions that call for more elaborate answers than 'yes' or 'no'
- Encourage all students to keep dictionaries of words and phrases
- Make books on tape available
- Create a culturally rich library of books, pictures, and magazines
- Help children learn how to study and practice for tests
- Use bilingual students, staff, and references to help with specific content material

Advanced level speakers

Children who are far along with their English may seem to need no more help with their assignments than non-ELL students. However, though they may be near fluency in speaking and writing, ELL children may lack the cultural background knowledge to understand readings in subjects like history, social studies, or literature.

Staff and other students may need to explain historical events, American holidays, traditions and rituals. In addition to support in background knowledge, help advanced ELLs increase their subject-matter vocabulary and understanding of idiomatic expressions.



ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Materials to Have on Hand

- ☐ Dictionaries
 - Picture dictionaries in English and other languages
 - Bilingual dictionaries for students who have had schooling in their own country for several years
 - English dictionaries for ESL students
- ☐ ESL textbooks
- ☐ ESL magazines for students
- ☐ High interest low reading level reference books with lots of pictures
- ☐ Books on tape
- ☐ Books and magazines in the native languages of the students





SUPPORTING ELLs IN GROUPS

Be aware of who the ELLs are in your group, and plan homework and activity groups to support their language learning needs. Group ELLs of different levels and with native English speakers: they will all help each other.

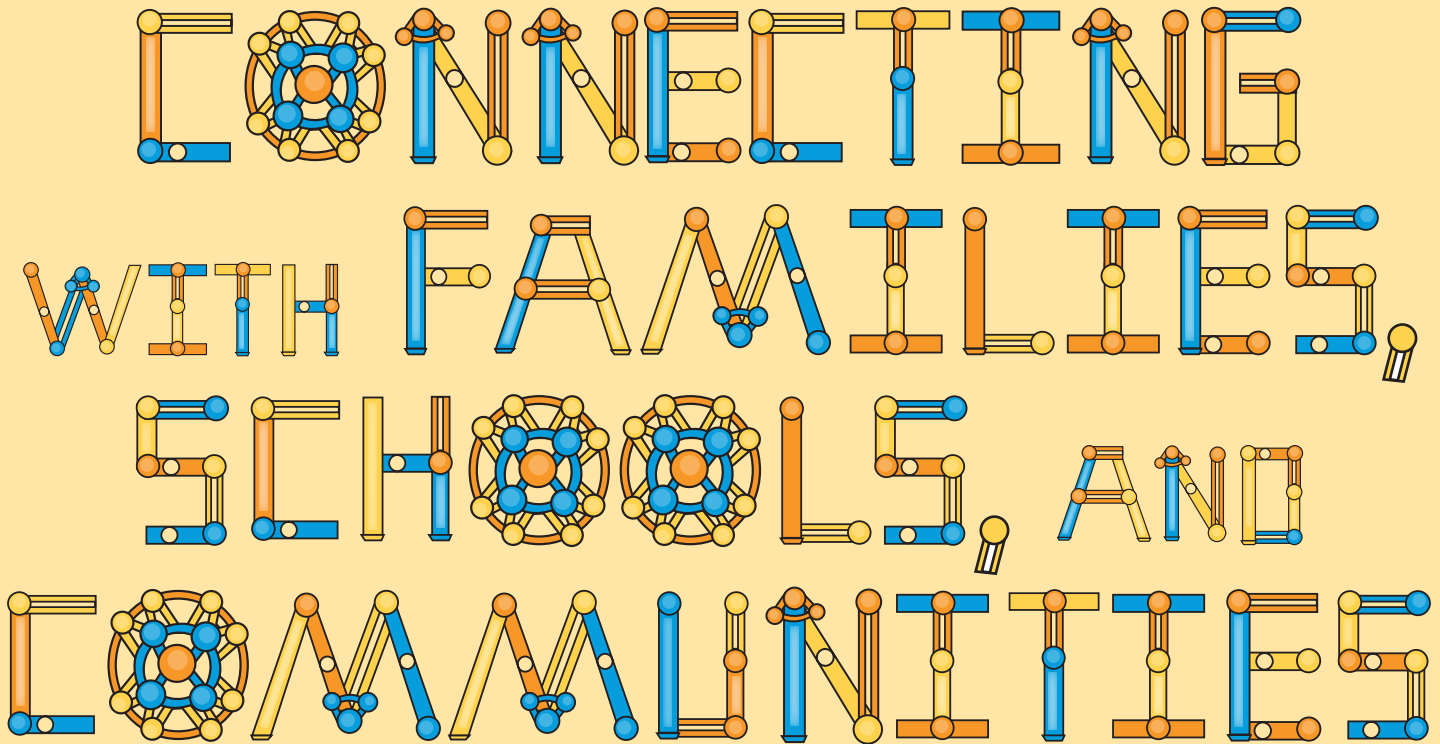
Numbers of ELLs by Grade

ESL Level*/Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5
Advanced						
Intermediate Fluency						
Beginners						
Speech Emergence						
Early Production						
Pre-production						
Total						

* Different school districts may use different terms for ELL levels.

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FOUR

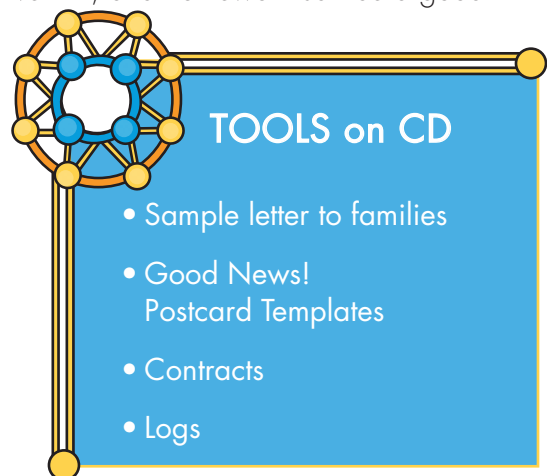


Afterschool is part of a network of supports for children's success. Any good net is made up of interwoven strands, connected closely enough so things don't fall through. Afterschool and homework time are two strands. They need to be connected with other key strands: families, school systems, teachers, and community resources to help learning happen.

Connecting with Families

It is well known that families' involvement with their children's schooling makes a difference in student achievement, attitude, behavior and homework habits. But schools and families don't always connect well, for a number of reasons. Afterschool can be an effective link, and homework can be a good starting point.

Be deliberate about reaching out to and involving parents and guardians. It will be highly beneficial for the child, and will make your life easier, as well. Most elementary afterschool programs have daily contact with parents or guardians, usually at pick-up time; scheduled meetings are also very important. Plan communications about homework and homework time strategically to address the needs of parents, children, the program, schools, and the afterschool staff. Build on the ideas presented below. Talk with staff about other strategies.



Discuss and develop homework policies together with parents and guardians

Schedule a meeting at the beginning of the year to talk about the different goals and objectives of homework time. Make it a group event and invite all families. If your program has established homework policies, create a handout so parents have a copy of the policies in writing. Do your best to have handouts available in the languages of all families.

Discuss student needs, and where possible, establish policies together with parents. Introduce the idea of contracts to guide individual students' learning and work. Lead a frank discussion about parents' goals, children's needs, and realistic expectations of the program.

Use contracts to clarify expectations and guide work

Contracts developed and signed as an agreement among afterschool staff, children, and parents or guardians clarifies expectations for everyone. Use contracts to structure discussions with parents about children's work habits, learning styles, and learning goals. This is an opportunity for parents to talk about challenges around getting children to focus, follow-through, or take responsibility, and to also highlight children's strengths and interests in topics or subjects, friendships, speaking ability, or curiosity, for example. Contracts make concrete the diverse learning goals you can aim for during homework time, and help staff pace deliberate development of different skills at an individual level. Develop and sign contracts with each child in the beginning month or so of the program. Revisit and review them with the child periodically to see if learning goals are being met, to mark achievements, and to revise as needed. Review them, too, during parent meetings, and revise to reflect growth, change, and new challenges.

Communicate often with families about homework time in your program

Use flyers, brochures, letters, and e-mails to communicate regularly with families about homework and homework time. Be clear about the kinds of supports offered in the program. Build a sense of partnership between parents and the program aimed at helping children succeed. Let parents know how things are going generally, flag any issues, ask for help or support as needed, and offer progress reports, positive changes, and good news.

On an individual level, keep families informed with frequent updates about their child's progress and hard work during homework time. Share reflections, contracts, meeting notes, logs, or other tools that show progress. Good news! postcards, e-mails, or phone messages (with sensitivity to languages) are fast ways to share praise with parents about their children's good work and effort. Remember that many parents are contacted only when there's a problem. Use the opportunity that homework time presents to give some good reports, too!

Use the parent corner or bulletin board to communicate about homework time

Many programs have a waiting or sign-in area for families. Post information relevant to homework and homework time: helpful tips for helping with homework, changes in homework policies, and celebrations of student accomplishments. Consider posting copies of children's work, or even notes from children.

Playtime and social events around homework time

Blend homework time with family social events. Schedule afternoons or evenings for parents to come in during homework time, and make an event of it. This is an opportunity for staff and parents to spend some time together, for parents to see what children are doing during homework time, and for staff to model tips and techniques for helping with homework. It shows children that parents care, and reinforces the message that there is an integrated network of adults committed to their success. And it provides some family time around homework without the usual stresses.

Family potlucks, movie night, or exciting read-alouds can follow homework time. Consider holding a family night each month, with a parent volunteer committed to leading just once. Recruit twelve volunteers, each taking on one session, and you have a full year of parent involvement.

You can also build some shared play time with parents and kids around homework time and learning games. When you provide educational games for kids, such as Junior Scrabble, Uno, chess, GraffitiWall*, Rummikub®, Tangrams®, or others, you encourage parents to take a few more moments at pick-up time to play games and engage with their children. Provide food to make it more special, and keep parents and kids interacting longer.

GraffitiWall games and activities are particularly good for quick involvement, when parents may have only a few minutes. Post games on the wall just before pick-up time, get kids started, and invite parents to add a word, phrase, formula, or check-mark on their way out. You can also make handout-sized copies of many of the activities for parents to continue to play with their children at home. Ask parents to send 'played' GraffitiWall games and handouts back to you, then pass them along to children's teachers to show how parents and children are playing learning games at home.

Letter to families

A letter to families about homework time in your program should address the following:

- Homework time schedule and structure
- Homework policy or approach
- Expectations for all involved in the homework process
- Invitation to see it in action

Use the template (you'll find it on the CD) to create a letter to families that fits your program.

* GraffitiWall activities are easy-to-make games, puzzles, and activities. Dozens of ideas are presented in *GraffitiWall* and *Global GraffitiWall* from the Center for Afterschool Education at Foundations (www.afterschooled.org), or make up your own and try them!



SAMPLE LETTER TO FAMILIES

To the family of _____,

We are happy that your child is a part of our program and we look forward to an exciting year.

Homework time is among the many choices and activities that we make available to the children in our program. Homework is one part of our schedule which also includes recreation, enrichment, and snack. Space for students to work on their homework is open for **<one hour>** from **<4:00 pm–5:00 pm>**. During this time your child has the option to work on homework or join in some other program activity.

Our homework space is equipped with computers, dictionaries, and other tools that are useful to students as they work on their assignments. Students are given time to work on their homework assignments both in groups and individually, with skilled staff to help with homework and offer other supports. We help without doing the assignment or giving answers, and we aim to build the skills of children to check their own work themselves or with peers. We'll keep you updated on your child's progress. It will be even more helpful for your child if you review their homework every day, and ask what it is about. Please come to us with any questions or concerns you may have about homework time, or how to support your child's learning at home.

We are pleased to be working with you to help your child be successful in school. If you have any questions, please feel free to discuss this with my staff or me. We can be reached at **<phone number>** or **<email address>**.

Sincerely,

Program Director

Connecting with Schools and Teachers

Homework time in afterschool is one of the most significant connection points between the program and children's schools and teachers. Homework time is the time you:

- Show children that you take schoolwork seriously
- Convey the message that doing homework is important for learning and doing well in school
- Help motivate and inspire children around topics or subjects
- Build work habits and skills that will help with schoolwork
- Identify self-regulation skills children may need to work on—focus, learning styles, being prepared, knowing how to ask for help, patience, etc.
- See the content areas or skill sets where children need support
- Help children learn, and to work on their homework

Set up lines of communication that enable you, the schools, and children's teachers to work together for the children's advantage.

Basics: information base

Establishing and maintaining contact with your students' teachers can be challenging, especially if the children you serve attend multiple schools, across multiple grades and if your program's location is not within one of the schools. The number of children enrolled in the program can also complicate your efforts at communication. Nonetheless, effective communication with students' teachers is a great asset in supporting children's success.


At the beginning of the year, gather information in one accessible place.

- Child's name
- School, with address, e-mail address, phone, and fax
- Teacher's names, with contact information if possible

Be creative in obtaining contact information. Enlist children's help by providing a form for their teachers to complete and return. Your goal should be to have accurate contact information for each child's teacher.

Core communication and relationship-building strategies

- **Be open and accessible.** Provide the school and teachers with information about the program, hours of operation, and contact information. Offer an open-door policy, and invite teachers and administrators to stop by.
- **Build shared expectations.** Talk with teachers and school administrators about how homework time is organized, who is staffing it, and its goals and objectives. Show them any tools you plan to use to support development of children's work habits and study skills.



Discuss expectations about amount of homework and the kinds of supports children need to do it. Be clear about the program's resources for helping, and responsibilities with respect to getting homework started, homework completion, and correctness. Discuss whether goals and objectives should change over time. Perhaps at the beginning of the year, objectives will focus on process skills—such as being able to keep track of assignments, working steadily for 15 minutes, and turning in assignments. Later in the year you may shift to goals of longer amounts of work time, and more work being accomplished. Contracts among program staff, children, parents, and teachers can help clarify goals and expectations, and are useful for conversations in support of individual children.

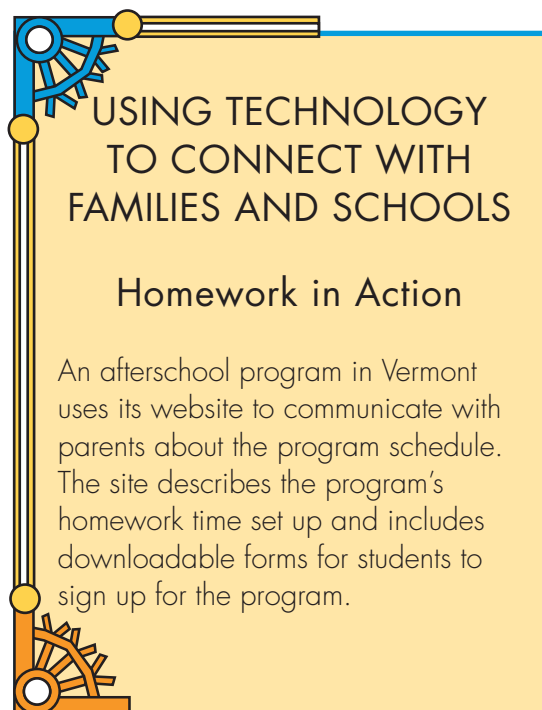
- **Become part of the team.** Let teachers know what resources and supports are available to children during homework time. Tell them they can contact you if there are special projects or group projects that could be part of engaging homework time in afterschool. Ask for copies of books or materials they'd like to see available to students in the program. Be open to providing targeted or specific types of supports for children, if they fit with your staffing and your overall program approaches and schedule. Come up with a plan for getting copies of assignments and copies of school textbooks for students who may forget them.

Participate in school events, volunteer for field trips, and invite teachers and school personnel, including service staff, to afterschool events and family homework nights.

- **Share information.** Develop relationships and communication paths to share information about children and how best to support their learning and success. Find out what children are working on in school, and share what they're doing in afterschool. In afterschool, you see children in a different work environment, and you have a different kind of relationship with children and parents. Be sensitive to confidentiality, but share information appropriately that can help teachers gain further insight into the particular needs of children at particular times. Avoid conveying the information in a way that suggests that afterschool staff know better. You're offering additional information, as a partner for children's learning and healthy development.
- **Respect the teachers' and the principal's perspectives.** If afterschool staff are not school teachers, or do not have a school teaching background, they should be sensitive to overall school culture and communication channels. The principal and teachers are typically the 'host' to afterschool programs, and may well see the program as a 'guest.' The school is focused on academics; afterschool typically has a mix of objectives. Consequently, in-school and afterschool educators may have different approaches and priorities. Everyone, though, has the interests of the children at heart. All are doing their best to help children succeed. Mutual respect—and admiration!—should always be evident.

Avenues of communication

- **Attend school faculty meetings.** Contact school principals to see if there is time at an upcoming faculty meeting to talk about the program. Ask if afterschool staff, or reports from afterschool, can be regularly included.
- **Back-to-school nights.** Ask that your program be part of the agenda in the fall. Including afterschool programs in back-to-school nights shows families a commitment to working with them and addressing their schedules.
- **Attend parent meetings.** Arrange to speak at a Parent Teacher Association/ Parent Teacher Organization Meeting (PTA/PTO). Talk with PTA/PTO leadership about introducing your program at the beginning of the year. Arrange to attend meetings regularly to update them on your program's efforts and successes and to recruit volunteers for your activities.



- **Use newsletters—your own, and those of others.** Provide updates and tips about homework in your program's newsletter. Make copies of your newsletter available at the school, and send them to the teachers. If your program doesn't have a newsletter, see if you can get a regular corner in the school's newsletters, or on its website.
- **Identify a school "point" person.** Work with school principals to identify a school-based person who can serve as a liaison to the homework program. The liaison can help resolve issues of space and resources, strengthen communication with classroom teachers, and plan coordinated strategies to increase family involvement in school and afterschool.
- **Message envelopes or bulletin boards.** Post a message envelope in teacher's lounges or mailrooms for communications with and from teachers. If possible, see if you can get a dedicated corner of a teacher's lounge or office bulletin board and post the message envelope there, along with children's work, notices, newsletters, and other relevant material.

Connecting with Communities and Resources

Communities can be a great resource for homework time. Tap your wider community for volunteers to help during homework time, and for materials and supplies. Community sites and individuals may also be part of school activities that connect well with afterschool and homework time. Consider, too, the global community as a resource for homework time.

Volunteers. Recruit volunteers from local businesses or community organizations to help during homework time. This provides children with additional adult role models, introduces children to others in the community, and gets extra hands on deck. Volunteers can tutor or work with small groups on assignments, they can be reading buddies, or they can serve as game and activity partners with children who are done with assignments or taking a break.

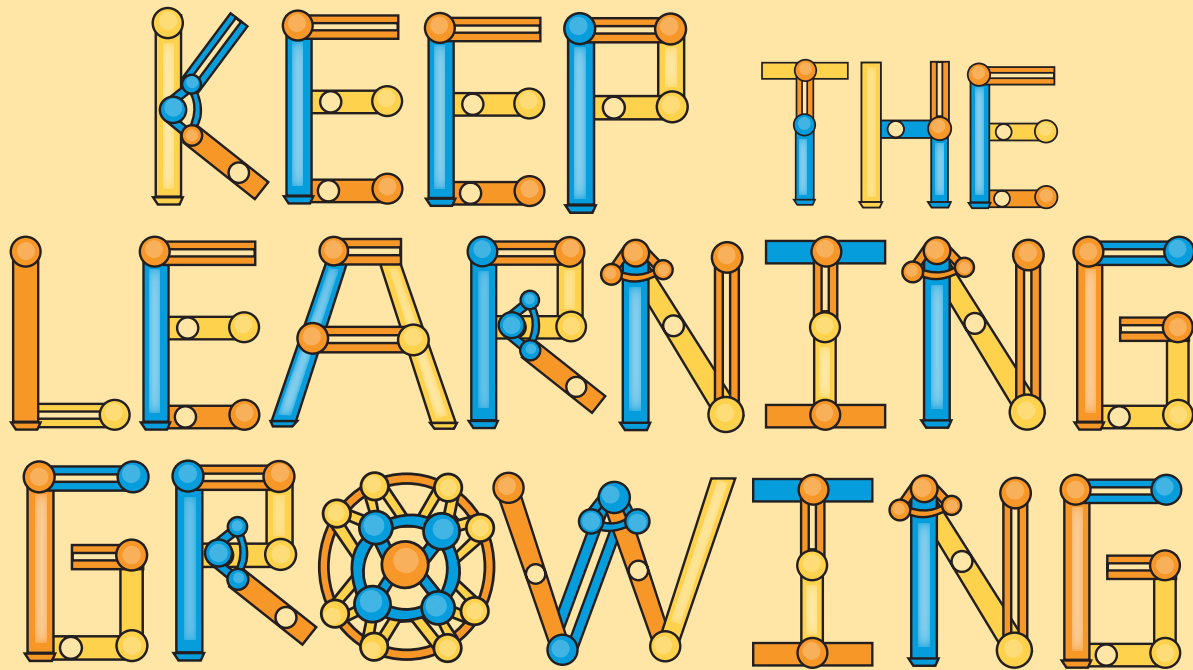
Be sure volunteers receive an orientation to the program. Discuss goals and objectives of the program overall, and any particular goals for individuals. Volunteers may need supervision and support, especially in the beginning, to work effectively with children.

Resources. Homework time can consume a great deal of resources: paper, pencils, pens, calculators, books, magazines, art supplies, computers, computer software, printers, incentives and give-aways, file folders, file boxes, snacks, and more. Engage children in outreach to local businesses and organizations for donations of surplus office supplies, books and magazines donated by employees, and other materials.

Consider community members as another possible link-point between school and afterschool homework time. Children in school may take a field trip to a community site, or have a guest speaker from a local business, office, another school, etc. Try to have afterschool staff involved, then follow-up with additional story-writing, book-making, skits, or presentations during homework time. The reverse can happen, as well. Round out homework time with occasional field-trips, activities led by guests, or presentations. Talk with teachers to tie these homework time enrichments to topics and skills being worked on in classes.

If you have access to the Internet, stretch understanding of “community” to reach beyond the immediate surroundings. Use homework time to expand children’s knowledge of and connection with the wider world and the global community. Let teacher’s know that you will be able to support children’s use of the Internet and rich sources of global learning such as Google Earth, Google Maps, and international e-pals. Download activities, materials and guide virtual tours from dozens of museum sites, from National Geographic, and the arts communities.

PART III



STRATEGIES TO EXPAND LEARNING

Making over homework time calls for deliberate strategies to expand the learning beyond assignments, targeting goals and skills such as the ability to work in groups, building focus and work habits, gaining confidence in schoolwork, learning how to practice for tests, and developing as an independent learner.

Expanding learning begins with the fundamentals discussed in Part I—creating a positive learning environment, one that is physically safe and appealing, with age- and developmentally-appropriate goals and schedules. Part II offered core helping strategies largely focused on subject content, along with building connections with families and schools.

Build on this strong foundation by using processes and incorporating elements geared toward learning and developmental goals, such as:

- Tracker system, for building work skills and 21st century skills along with homework completion
- Learning groups and peer tutoring
- Activity stations
- Committees
- Tools that specifically target focus, independence, and responsibility

As you try these strategies, adapt, revise, and expand them over time to best fit the program and to move homework to a new level for children's learning and development.

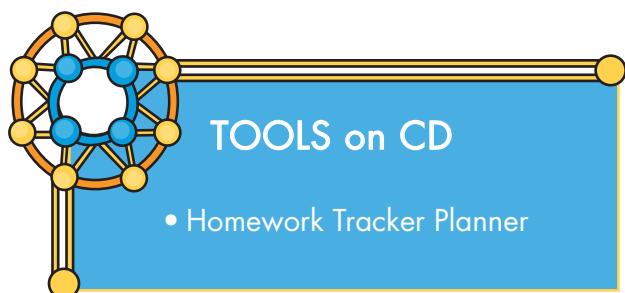
HOMework TRACKER

DELIBERATE PROCESSES FOR BUILDING 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Children need to learn to be responsible students who take note of assignments, understand expectations, and attend to due dates. They also need to build cross-cutting, 21st century skills. Adopting a process such as “Homework Tracker” deliberately develops skills such as:

- **Responsibility:** remembering assignments, remembering tools like pencil, paper, or notebooks, managing due dates
- **Work habits:** writing down assignments, asking for clarification, planning time, getting help as needed
- **Communication:** speaking clearly, speaking to a group
- **Understanding:** Rephrasing, explaining
- **Social and group work skills:** working with others, providing help, asking for help, leadership

A structured Tracker process includes three steps: (1) Check-in with the whole group; (2) Work time; (3) Check-off. The specifics of the process will look different depending on age group. For the younger ones, establish more frequent, structured routines. Older children can take on more responsibility, independence, and leadership, with roles such as Trackers (keeping a calendar) and Buddies (helping with homework time, giving reminders).



1. Check-in

Open homework time with a group check-in about assignments. Children can show their homework, or explain their assignments. Students from the same classes typically have the same assignments, so it is useful to know who is in what class. Asking about assignments in a whole group setting makes it clear which students need help keeping track of assignments. It may also help reduce the common, but untrue, “I don’t have any homework” response.

Start the year holding check-ins daily to get children into the habit of thinking about their assignments before getting started. As the year progresses, or in larger programs, you may want to hold check-ins only once or twice a week on scheduled days.

In grades K–2, ask students to hold up assignments if they have them, and explain what they are supposed to do. It isn’t necessary for every child to list his homework, which could quickly get repetitive. Ask when it is due (typically at this grade, the answer will be ‘tomorrow’). Don’t rely on the same set of children to announce assignments; rotate the check-in responsibilities among them to underscore that each is responsible for knowing assignments.

For example, a Check-in session might begin:

Teacher: “Who would like to go first and say what your homework is?”

Child: “We have to color all the things on the page that start with the letter ‘G’.”


Teacher: “Is anyone else in Janelle’s class? Do you all have the same page as Janelle? Can you find it? Good. What other assignments are there today? When do you have to turn it in?”

The afterschool teacher can also ask if anyone wants help with the assignment, or wants to be a Buddy to help out. Check to see that everyone has what they need—papers, markers, pencils—to do the work.

This age group may also need guidance for putting assignments away where they can be retrieved the next day (backpack, homework folder, etc.). Some programs collect assignments and deliver them to teacher mailboxes.

If some students don’t have homework, ask what they will work on during homework time; steer them to other learning activities. “No homework” shouldn’t mean “no learning!” See Chapter 3, *Building More Learning Opportunities*, and also *Academic Content, Afterschool Style** for ideas to keep children engaged during homework time.

* *Academic Content, Afterschool Style: A Notebook and Guide*. Center for Afterschool Education, Foundations Inc.
www.afterschooled.org or www.foundationinc.org.



Children in grades 3–5 can simply state their list of assignments. Ask the group to confirm among themselves whether the list is complete. Ask whether anyone wants help, and try to group children so they can help each other. Note whether children frequently fail to write down their assignments, or routinely ‘don’t hear’ that they were given an assignment. Help these children set up a place in their notebooks to write their assignments each day.

By later elementary school, students may be getting assignments that are due later than the next day. This is the time to start building time management skills.

- Ask for volunteers to serve as Trackers for a week or two.
- Create a large calendar with assignments and due dates.
- At check-in, the Tracker can review the calendar and flag upcoming due dates.
- Ask if anyone wants a Buddy to help remember dates and assignments.
- When assignments have been turned in, the Trackers cross it off the calendar.

If staffing allows, consider breaking the group into smaller groupings of younger and older children.

2. Work Time

Schedule an appropriate amount of time for work, and help children understand that this is their time to focus. Ideally, children have some choice during this time about where to sit, and whether to work alone or with friends. You may choose to use this opportunity to strategically group children, to help them learn how to work together, how to sit with friends yet still concentrate, and how to help each other. For younger students especially, give stretch and move-around breaks during longer periods.

Focused working time is the time for staff to circulate, helping out as needed, and showing they care about children getting their work done well. It is an opportunity to see what children are working on in school, to talk with them about school and how things are going, and to see children’s strengths in school as well as areas where they need support.

Be sure to have activities available for children who don’t have homework, for those who finish early, or for providing choices for breaks. These may be books or magazines, art supplies, activity stations, board games or cards. Avoid more worksheets. Why would anyone finish efficiently if they know they’re just going to get more of the same—or more boring things—to do? Good options can be motivating!

3. Check-off

Structuring a closing to the work time helps children notice accomplishments and gaps. Use the last five to ten minutes to have children note what they got done, and to raise questions. Ask if anyone wants to ask their teachers about the homework or the subject, the next day. Help them jot down their questions so they'll remember, or for younger children, you can write it and attach it to the homework. If children are recording their work on logs or other records, this is the time to do so.

Consider stamping or initialing homework assignments to let the class teacher know that children are working on their homework in afterschool. If your program has a logo or name stamp, use that, or have a special one made.

If parents are required to review and initial assignments, remind students that they still need to get that done.

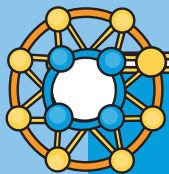
Staff follow-up

Periodically, especially at the start of the program year, ask students to discuss how the Tracker process is working. Is it helpful for them? Do they want to change it to make it work better? Should elements be dropped or added, or should the amount of time be changed?

Program staff should deliberately note progress, or lack of it, in children's work habits. Are children checking in more efficiently? Are they tracking their assignments better? Turning in more assignments? Is the calendar up to date and working to meet due dates for longer assignments? Revise and fine tune the process to target ongoing and new goals as children's skills develop.

Record and celebrate improvements in children's work habits, individually and in the group! Share successes with children, teachers, and families.

Use the Homework Tracker Planner to create and monitor your Tracker process. It is included on the CD as a customizable tool to fill in, change, and revise to fit your program over time. Print it to share and review with staff.



HOMework TRACKER PLANNER

Program name: _____

Date: _____

Amount of time allocated to homework

Time

Check-in time (5 to 10 minutes): _____

Work time _____

Breaks _____

Check-off _____

Materials needed

Check

Calendar ☐

Supplies ☐

Assignment books ☐

Stamp ☐

Other: _____ ☐

_____ ☐

Children's jobs

Names

Tracker _____

Buddy _____

Other: _____

Notes on grouping

Activities for "done" or "no homework"

Review of Tracker process

Date _____

Comments _____

Revision notes _____

Review of children's progress

Date _____

Tools used to track progress _____

Documentation _____

Communication with classroom teachers _____

Communication with parents _____

Comments _____

TWO

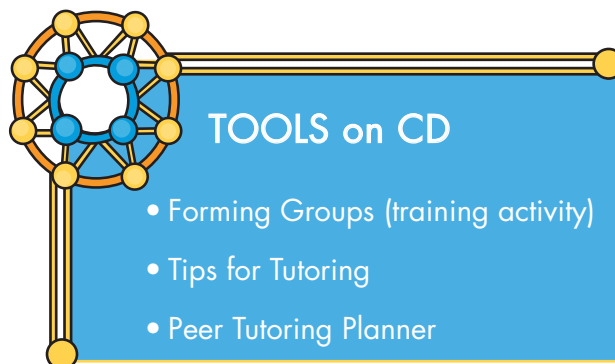
LEARNING GROUPS AND PEER TUTORING

Learning groups and peer tutoring offer opportunities for:

- **Building relationships.** Relationships create a sense of belonging to peer groups, to communities, to the school community, and to the student world. Relationships are motivating. Children are motivated to do things that will help them belong, be accepted and admired, and to connect. Use homework time to build positive relationships with adults and with peers—this is a vital support for children's success.
- **Better learning and motivation.** Children learn well in mixed age groups. Young children want to live up to the expectations of older children, and want to please them. They are often competitive, thinking, "If that kid can do it, I can," and they want to show they measure up.

In mixed-age groups, younger children receive help with assignments, see good homework habits modeled, and get a chance to socialize with older students. Older students get a chance to see themselves as helpers and experts and gain mastery of content as they work to explain it to others.

- **Learning to work cooperatively.** Children may not have opportunities to work together in classrooms, which are typically organized for individual work. Structuring time for children to work together, even in parallel activities (where they are sharing a table, but working on different things), helps build this basic skill.
- **Devoting staff time to those who need it most.** When children work well in groups and can help each other, it frees staff to give more individual attention to those who need it most. It also allows staff to work with small groups of children who need similar supports.



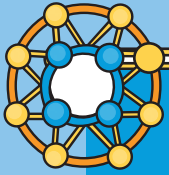
Grouping Students

How you group students depends on what you are trying to accomplish.

- To help children learn to work with a variety of personalities, try a variety of grouping strategies. Group by age one day, by subject area on a different day or by assignment on another day. Or mix it up by characteristics: by first letter of birthday month, by names that share a letter, by favorite colors or ice cream flavors.
- To promote cross-age support and relationships, use age and grade.
- For skill-building, group a few stronger-skilled students with some weaker ones.
- To concentrate on assignments, group by same or similar assignments.
- To build a sense of belonging and connection in school classes, group by school, class teacher, or grade.

Regardless of how you choose to group students, consider personality, as well. Do these particular children work well together? Are they shy and quiet; loud and domineering? Will their work styles go well together? What about likes and dislikes? Do they like the same subjects? Are they interested in the same kinds of things?

Use the Forming Groups activity with staff to think about deliberate grouping of children to meet different kinds of goals. This staff training activity is also provided on the CD as a customizable document that you can fill in to best fit your program and staff.



FORMING GROUPS

Print and cut out the Afterschool Kids cards. Arrange the children into groups of 3–4 based on the information provided.

What criteria did you use to form the groups? Ask a colleague to form groups with the cards, and compare.

Warren Johnson

- 5th grade
- Excellent reader and writer; good student
- Competitive; able to set and achieve goals; impatient

Homework—Pick a state for your “state project” and write a proposal on why you should be able to do a report on that state.

Shelia Rodriguez

- 5th grade
- Very good in math; has trouble completing homework
- Very patient; likes number and logic games

Homework—Develop questions for your interview with an older person. Ask about his/her life and community when he/she was your age.

Francis Chan

- 5th grade
- English Language Learner; likes science
- Natural leader; excellent artist

Homework—Think of two project ideas for the science fair. Write down your question and two possible hypotheses for each idea.

Khalil Peters

- 5th grade
- Average student; has trouble staying focused
- Good athlete; likes to create and play games; likes to help the younger students

Homework—Read section 1.4 in the social studies book. Answer questions at the end of the chapter.

Elizabeth Stewart

- 4th grade
- Excellent reader; very creative thinker
- Bundle of energy; likes to dance and sing

Homework—Turn in corrections on the “Matter” test.

Elliot Monroe

- 4th grade
- Good student; likes social studies best
- Prefers to work independently; very imaginative

Homework—Write a story about what happens to Wilbur or one of Charlotte’s baby spiders after the end of *Charlotte’s Web*.

Boomer Okara

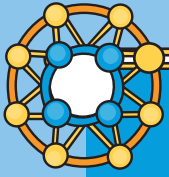
- 4th grade
- Excellent student; math and science are his favorite subjects
- Friendly; outgoing nature; relatively patient; needs his alone time
- Has a younger sister, Teresa, in the program

Homework—Complete problems #1, 2, 6, 19, 20, and 26 in math workbook pg. 12.

Matthew O’Neil

- 3rd grade
- Average student; has trouble completing homework
- Competitive; outgoing; likes games with physical activity
- Has a younger sister, Sarah, in the program

Homework—Spelling test tomorrow.



FORMING GROUPS

Print and cut out the Afterschool Kids cards. Arrange the children into groups of 3–4 based on the information provided.

What criteria did you use to form the groups? Ask a colleague to form groups with the cards, and compare.

Ana Maria Schwartz

- 2nd grade
- Likes spelling and reading
- Bundle of energy; likes working with the older kids

Homework—Write a story about the day after Alexander's bad day in *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*.

Mike Pascal

- 2nd grade
- Has difficulties with math; likes social studies; good reader
- Competitive; likes riddles and jokes

Homework—Write a paragraph on how you would have handled things, if you were Alexander in *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*.

Mary Moore

- 2nd grade
- Has trouble with spelling; good student otherwise
- Outgoing; natural leader

Homework—Complete pages 1–2 of addition and subtraction problems in the math workbook.

William Ortiz

- 1st grade
- Likes spelling and math; has trouble focusing during homework time
- Prefers to work in groups; likes word games

Homework—Write a sentence from *Tar Beach* and illustrate it; write 5 sentences using this week's vocabulary words.

Edith Carmen Moreno

- 1st grade
- Likes math and science; large vocabulary
- Natural leader; can be disruptive

Homework—Use your own words to write definitions of words on vocabulary list.

Nigel Jacobs

- Kindergarten
- Learning how to read
- A little shy; once acclimated, works well with others; likes counting and number games

Homework—Identify the following coins, and know their value: penny, nickel, and dime.

Mikey Dillon

- Kindergarten
- Learning how to read; likes to play games
- Has trouble following directions; likes working with others

Homework—Draw pictures of 3 animals and 3 foods that begin with the letter of the week, R.

Christopher Elliott

- Kindergarten
- Likes to draw and paint; likes to make up stories
- Very outgoing; prefers to work with other kids; likes to interact with the big kids

Homework—None

Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring is a structured extension of grouping. Peer tutors are students who can truly help another student more fully understand the concepts and skills being taught in a particular assignment. That is, they go beyond the general support and motivation of peers in groups by providing a level of explanation of the material and targeted homework assistance. Cross-age and peer tutoring have been connected with benefits not only for the learner, but also for the tutor, including academic and social skills, as well as self-esteem.

Be aware that cross-age and peer tutoring is a **deliberate strategy**, that requires planning, and training to be most effective. Use the Peer Tutoring Planner with staff to get started. (On the CD as a customizable document.)

- **Select carefully and deliberately**

Establish parameters or guidelines. Can peer tutors be in the same grade as those they're tutoring? If not, how many grades ahead? Do they need to finish their own work first? Do they need to achieve certain class grades?

Ask for volunteers, and choose students who are motivated to be tutors. Tutors should want to help others, be patient, and be willing to give suggestions and encouragement to children being tutored.

Tutors need a good understanding of the material. Ask teachers, look at grades, observe work habits.

- **Formalize the role**

Formalize the role of helper with peer tutors. Explain what it means to be a helper, and explain that there are techniques to helping well. Remember that tutors are also learners. They need your support and supervision.

Consider setting up a Coaching Corps or similar group. Spend time at the beginning reviewing what Corps members are expected to do. Go over Tips for Tutors (provided on CD), discuss challenges, and talk about how and when to ask for help. Check in with Corps members individually, and meet periodically as a group to talk about learning and techniques.

- **Set a term for tutors, and structure a "thank you"**

Do tutors sign up for a certain amount of time? All year? Half the year? Remember that young children form bonds with older ones. Too rapid a turnover can be stressful and counterproductive.

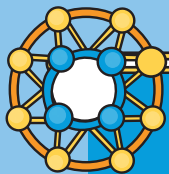
How will you thank peer tutors for their help? How often?

- **Determine when peer tutors tutor**

Will peer tutoring be available all the time? Only on certain days? Do children sign up, or is it organized as needed?

- **Orient children, parents, and teachers to the peer tutoring**

Explain the guidelines for peer tutoring program to children, their families and classroom teachers. Provide a short list of expectations and explain how you will be training and supporting the tutors.



TIPS FOR TUTORING

What is a tutor?

Tutors are people who help other students learn by helping with their homework or other assignments.

Why be a Peer Tutor?

If you like to help others or think you may want to be a teacher as a career, you may want to learn how to be a Peer Tutor. Tutoring also helps you with your own learning—and it's fun! It's great to work with other students, and know that you are providing meaningful support.

Good Tutors:

Build confidence

Don't label a problem as easy or hard.

Never make fun of an answer; never make fun of your fellow student. Your tutee (the student you're tutoring) should always feel comfortable with you, and never feel shy or embarrassed about asking questions.

Share what you know. If you are helping a student who has the same teacher that you have had before, give tips about how that teacher assigns and grades work.

Ask questions

Help your tutee think through what he or she is doing. Ask for explanations of the steps that are being taken to solve the problem.

When helping with homework, ask questions about the assignment.

Start by asking your tutee to explain the assignment or problem in his or her own words.

Ask the student to explain what they don't understand and what they need help with. Ask where they're getting stuck.

Ask if the problem can be broken into smaller pieces or steps.

Ask if there are different ways to approach the problem or assignment.

Wait before jumping in with help

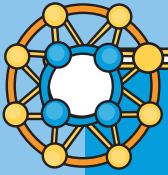
Give your student time to think about the answer or to try something new.

Demonstrate

Never just give the answer. Show ways to come up with the answer. Use examples or materials to explain or reinforce the idea.

Give feedback

Make sure you recognize and encourage effort, thinking, and work.



PEER TUTORING PLANNER

Objectives, goals for peer tutoring

For students receiving tutoring _____

For peer tutors _____

For the program _____

For the staff _____

Peer tutor requirements

Grade in school _____

Knowledge, skill levels _____

Tutor recruitment

How many to recruit _____

Recruitment strategies _____

Dates _____

Expectations of peer tutors

Start date _____

Schedule _____

Number of weeks _____

Type of help _____

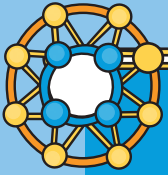
Review of tutoring with staff _____

Training and orientation

Dates _____

Who will be responsible _____

Materials needed _____



PEER TUTORING PLANNER

Review with peer tutors

Date(s) _____

Staff responsible _____

Materials needed _____

Appreciations

How will tutors be recognized and thanked? _____

Dates _____

Staff responsible _____

Review of peer tutoring program with staff

Dates _____

Revisions _____

Notes _____

THREE

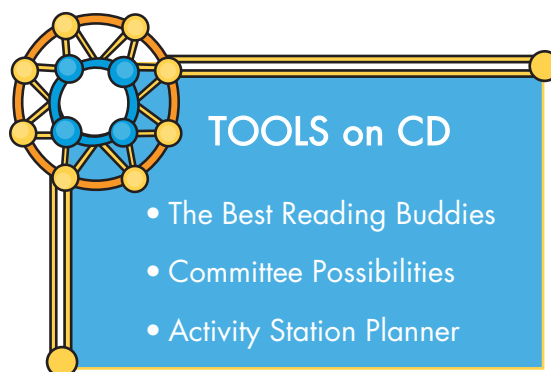
BUILDING MORE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES ACTIVITY STATIONS

Activity stations offer learning opportunities during homework time for children who finish early, need a break, or have no homework. If activity stations are routinely available during homework time, they can also be integrated into children's choices about what to work on and when. Some stations might be offered only on certain days if space is limited or if there are other program restrictions.

Stations can be set up at tables in the room, or in adjacent supervised space. Make set-up and clean-up part of children's work or responsibilities. You might put a Center Committee in charge, or simply have children help out.

Self-directed, self-correcting activities (where children can see for themselves whether they're doing it well or correctly) require little adult involvement and keep children engaged and focused on their own; this allows staff to continue to support those who need more attention. Some stations, however, need an adult to facilitate the activities initially; some need ongoing adult involvement. Select what works for your staffing levels, children's interests and independence levels, and learning objectives. The primary aim is providing learning activities for children to do largely on their own.

Pay attention to transitions between homework-focused work and activity stations. Establish processes and behavior norms with the group to minimize distractions for children still working on homework. For example you may offer the entire group a stretch break for ten minutes and use that time to allow some children to move to activity stations. Or you may have the rule that at the beginning of homework time, children say which activity they want to go to once they're finished with homework.



Tips for setting up stations:

- Provide plenty of supplies and materials. Label them clearly so children can find what they need without asking an adult. Use clear plastic boxes or tubs for easy set-up, clean-up, and storage.
- Write any guidelines or directions in short, simple sentences and post them at the stations.
- Involve children in planning stations based on their interests.
- Keep the stations interesting by introducing new themes or materials periodically.
- Limit the number of students allowed at each station and teach children to make first and second choices for where they will spend their time.
- Provide open-ended activities that don't require adult direction. Coloring pages and worksheets simply get finished, and leave little room for children to be inventive with the material once done.
- If there is sufficient staff, stations for older students can focus on study skills and practice that can help them do better in school overall.

Look at the examples of Activity Stations below. Use the Activity Station Planner (on the CD as a customizable tool) to adapt these and create your own. Discuss with staff to come up with ideas. Structure time to review, revise, and refresh.

Activity Station Examples

Stepping Up: Skill building and practice

Purpose

Encourage children to make games and activities to practice what they're learning in school. Staff may need to prepare some of the materials for younger children or group younger children with older ones.

Activity ideas

- Spelling words. Glue pictures from magazines on one side, write the word on the other, have children practice spelling in pairs using the cards.
- Vocabulary words. Glue pictures on cards, write the meaning on the other side. In pairs or small groups, children can give the definition and guess the word, or show the picture and give the definition.
- Make your own business cards. Children design their own business cards with their name, address, phone, and logo on the backs of donated cards or blank index cards.
- Make Go Fish or Concentration card games with pictures or vocabulary words.
- Fact or Fiction? Write true and false statements and guess which is which.
- Name Scramble. Have children write their names, one letter per card. Mix up all the cards and see how many words can be made.

Materials

- 3X5 cards
- 5X7 cards
- paper, plain and colored
- lightweight cardboard or card stock
- round container cover or other object to trace circles
- pens, pencils, markers
- scissors
- magazines

- Practice telling time. Have children make clock faces on one side of a paper, with digital times on the other side, or make clocks with movable hands.
- Practice numbers and money. Draw coins and bills on one side, and dollar amounts in numbers on the other side.
- Pie charts and fractions. Have children draw pie charts on one side of a paper and fractions in numerals on the other side. Pair children to make matches.

Worlds of Ideas: Reading station

Purpose

Practice reading; spark enjoyment in reading

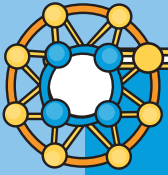
Activity ideas

- Children learn to be better readers by reading more, aloud to others, and silently to themselves. Use the station to promote buddy read-alouds, giving children the opportunity to read aloud to each other, talk about the stories, and share interpretations. Help children be 'best reading buddies' by explaining how to read together. Soon they'll be able to do this on their own.
 - Decide together what books or material to read
 - Take turns reading a line, a page, or take turns reading whole books, poems, articles, songs, or other material
 - Look at the title, the back of the book, pictures, table of contents (in chapter books), and talk together about what it will be about.
 - Try reading aloud together, at the same time
- Ask what children are interested in, and provide books and magazines on those topics.
- Set up a library committee, so children can sign-out books (to take home, if possible).
- Provide large stuffed animals to be read to. Children feel safe reading aloud when they don't feel judged. Buddies or individual children can set up read-alouds to the dog, tiger, dragon—or the whole crew!
- Play recording studio, with children reading lyrics and recording songs.
- Listen to books on tape and read along.
- Have children record their own books on tape.
- Play restaurant, with children ordering from menus. Add prices and play money to bring in more fun and more skills.

Materials

Be sure reading materials are in good condition. Torn books, missing pages, and scribbled over covers are unattractive and a turn-off. Colorful, exciting books and materials call out to be used—and read!

- magazines
- comic books
- newspapers
- books for all levels and on all sorts of topics, including current themes from the school day (partner with a local library to keep the collection fresh)
- books on tape or CD (with CD and tape player)
- tape recorders to record children as they read aloud
- stuffed animals
- song lyrics, restaurant menus, other written materials



THE BEST READING BUDDIES*

Best buddies

- Take turns
- Look at the title and pictures
- Guess what will happen or talk about the topic
- Listen to each other
- Help if your buddy gets stuck. You can help guess, or skip the word and come back to it after reading a little more.
- If you get stuck, skip the word and keep reading words you recognize. Guess what the word was and go back to it. Look at the first letter and try to sound it out. Guess what would make sense.
- Ask each other: "What's going to happen next?" "Who do you like best?" "What do you think?"
- Ask at the end: "Did you like it?" "Was it interesting?" "What was best?" "What didn't you like?" "Would we change the end?"

* http://library.thinkquest.org/J001156/helpothers/cp_buddyreading.htm

Worlds of Ideas: Writing station

Purpose

Practice writing; see writing as a form of expression

Activity ideas

- Travel pals. Send postcards to students in classes in other countries, and ask for postcards back.
- Create a class newspaper, web page, or blog; have students write or post entries.
- Write letters to celebrities (find addresses on the Internet).
- Write and perform songs, raps, spoken word, poetry.
- Create an illustrated cookbook.
- Make illustrated calendars.
- Make story books or comic books.
- Make greeting cards.

Materials

- pencils and pens
- paper, cards, notebooks
- stamps, stickers and envelopes
- computer
- colored markers
- art supplies
- computers

There are many creative ways to get and keep children writing. While younger children may still be combining pictures, creating collages, and invented spelling, older children can practice writing for different audiences for different purposes.

Discovery (Science) station

Purpose

Encourage children to have fun exploring, observing, and using measurement tools, all of which underlie science and enthusiasm for discovery. Note that many activities blend well with math and language arts.

Activity ideas

- Set up challenges or questions each day, such as: Which is the heaviest, longest, biggest? What floats? What do magnets pick up?
- Put out a mix of things that can be grouped in different ways (different beans and peas, stones, pasta, paper stars), and have children group them into different categories. Ask them to explain their groupings to each other, or have them create category scrapbooks. Set parameters and have children sort objects (such as edible and not; recyclable and not; manufactured and not).
- Prompt some measurements. How tall are you? How long are your arms and legs? Stretch out your arms; how far is it from fingertips to fingertips?

Materials

Note: Many science museums offer science kits on loan or low cost to programs.

- magnifying lenses
- magnets
- jars and boxes for collections and activities
- items from nature (leaves, twigs, shells and bones etc.)
- clay for molds
- thermometers
- ruler, tape measure
- eyedropper
- journals or paper for students to write or draw their observations
- inexpensive microscopes and premade slides
- a mix of dried beans, seeds, and nuts
- scale

- Create some guessing games. Have children make their guesses and write them down. Winners get to pose a new challenge. For example: Guess how cold the water is in the bathroom. Guess how hot it is. Guess how tall someone is. Guess how heavy a chair is.
- Put out microscope and slides. Have children create Amazing View journals with drawings and labels of what they can see.

Arts station

Purpose

The arts include all areas of creative expression: painting, drawing, sculpture, theater, music, dance, spoken word, mixed media, computer aided graphics, illustration. Encourage creative expression with wide ranging materials and ideas.

Activity ideas

Your imagination and children's imagination will fill this out!

- Encourage children to use different media

Collages

Painting

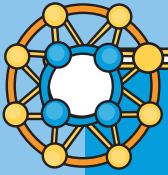
Drawing

Clay

- Put together and show skits from books
- Create shows with singing and dancing
- Other _____

Materials

- paper
- colored pencils, washable markers
- water colors and brushes
- yarn, fabric scraps
- scissors
- glue, paste, or glue sticks
- clothes for dress-up and costumes
- play microphone
- computer
- clay or similar



ACTIVITY STATION PLANNER

Description of station

Learning objectives

What is the purpose of the station? What should children get out of it? Are there content or skill objectives/purpose (such as practicing reading, or exploring science materials)? Developmental ones (such as learning to work independently)?

Number of users at one time _____

Primarily for ☐ Individual ☐ Pairs ☐ Small groups ☐ Any

Instructions ☐ Instructions clearly written
☐ Need to be explained
☐ Users can explain to each other

Availability ☐ Always ☐ Sometimes (when?) ☐ Request

Supervision ☐ None, general only ☐ Demonstrations needed
☐ Periodic check ☐ Supervise actively
☐ Supplies needed

Observation checklist

- ☐ Actively used
- ☐ Instructions clear, needs little supervision or input
- ☐ Used by all participants
- ☐ Producing positive outcomes
- ☐ Meeting objectives

Comments? Changes? _____

Student Committees*

Committees offer children opportunities to take on real tasks and responsibilities, and to contribute to the group. Through committee work, children develop a sense of belonging and of efficacy, as their input is heard and put into action. They gain confidence as they see the results of their work and as they exercise control, decision-making, and leadership.

Although it takes time to organize committees and to support follow-through, as committees begin to handle some of the program work, it frees staff for other tasks. Once organized, they are self-perpetuating, with different children rotating in and out of different committees over the year, and into the next.

Children of all ages can participate in committees, with younger children taking on less complex tasks and older children handling more—and increasing—responsibility. The younger the group, the more adult support will be needed.

Committees can take on tasks such as:

- Choosing and preparing snacks
- Setting up and cleaning up snack time
- Setting up and cleaning up activity stations

Use committees to stretch children's skills and raise your expectations of the group. Children can plan and run activities such as:

- Planning and leading group games during breaks and at group time
- Operating a program "store" where children redeem incentive points for prizes
- Organizing, making materials, and getting books or CDs for a program library, and operating the library
- Running a monthly movie day
- Creating a music library
- Doing a weekly sports news report at snack time
- Planning and conducting fund raisers


LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Library committees get children involved in many ways, from making rules, to surveying, to carrying out tasks, to fulfilling responsibilities.

Children can:

- Select and organize books, magazines, or CDs for borrowing (these may be borrowed only during program time, or better, taken home).
- Make a recordkeeping system to track who has borrowed what, and when it is due.
- Create rules for borrowing and returning.
- Survey children for suggestions for library materials.
- Plan and conduct fundraising events.
- Set up collection drives to grow the library resources.

* See also *Academic Content, Afterschool Style: A Notebook and Guide*; and *Afterschool Style in Practice: 25 Skill-Building Meetings for Staff*. Includes planners and tools for staff meetings to establish committees, roles and responsibilities for committee members.



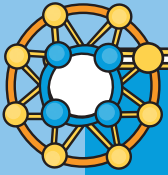
Help groups identify the different pieces of work that need to be done, and guide children in establishing and choosing age-appropriate roles and responsibilities. Roles and tasks include, for example:

- Planning and organizing
- Budgeting
- Making lists of supplies or materials
- Getting and organizing materials
- Keeping notes and records
- Carrying out the activity (e.g., being the librarian, being the newscaster)
- Communicating with other students, parents, teachers

Committees can be established for a set amount of time, or ongoing committees can have rotating memberships, with children cycling through different committees every two weeks or a month or more.

Committees may meet during homework time, during snack time, or at other convenient times. If possible, designate a committee meeting space, and provide children with folders, paper, pens, and other needed supplies to help support the process and show that it is important.

Use the Committee Planner tool (customizable on the CD) to develop committees. Meet with staff to come up with ideas, try them out, then review and revise over time.



COMMITTEE PLANNER

Committees can be charged with planning, helping, or actually carrying out all kinds of tasks.

Which can you form committees to work on?

- ☐ Snack selection, ordering, serving, and cleaning up
- ☐ Trips and outings
- ☐ Guest speakers
- ☐ Special events, parties, and celebrations
- ☐ Announcements, news, and weather reports
- ☐ Recordkeeping, attendance
- ☐ Communications
- ☐ Materials selections and supply maintenance
- ☐ Library materials and systems
- ☐ Workshops and special lessons
- ☐ Other committee project ideas: _____

When might you start committees? _____

Committee name _____ Date _____

Objective/purpose/function: _____

What do you need to get started? _____

Who will be responsible? _____

How long will it run? _____

Review

How long did the committee operate? _____

Did children enjoy it? Did they want to join? _____

What did children gain from the experience? _____

FOUR

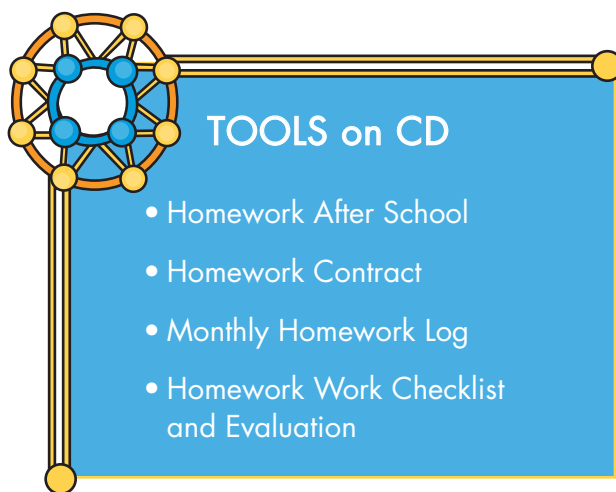
TOOLS FOR LEARNING AND SHOWING PROGRESS


Early on, children need to see that when they put in effort, they can see results. Formalizing a process for noting children's goals and marking their progress over time clearly demonstrates to children that effort pays off, and develops a sense of efficacy. Set goals and objectives that are do-able and achievable in the time frame you have available. Be sure to target goals that are in children's—and the program's—direct control, with visible, short-term outcomes. Then use age-appropriate tools or systems to help children connect effort with change, whether individually or in groups.

Contracts

Many programs use homework contracts signed by children, parents, program staff, and teachers to outline expectations of everyone. They can also serve as tools to help children reflect on their learning, on how they work best, and to set goals and mark progress.

Contracts should cover what each is agreeing to with respect to work, amount of time, supports offered, follow-through, communications, or other points. They may be established with all children and families at the beginning of the year, or they may be used as needed to support individual





children or small groups. If you establish a contract system, be consistent. Schedule review times and keep to them. Follow through on what is laid out in the contract as goals and expectations, and share progress (or issues) with family members and school day teachers.

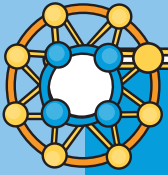
Individual contracts may not be most appropriate for the youngest students, unless it seems advisable primarily as a communication tool with parents and/or teachers. For this age group, consider group contracts or lists of expectations for how to work—alone or together—during homework time. Use the opportunity to involve children in thinking about norms or behavior, group conduct, and making agreements that work for the group. Keep the list short, (no more than five items), ask each student to sign the agreement, and post it in a visible area so it can be referred to easily.

Logs, charts

Logs and charts can show change in particular skills, study habits, or behaviors, such as the amount of time being spent on homework, the number of assignments turned in by the child or by the group as a whole, working independently, or asking for help when needed. Sticker charts or graphs can track progress of the group as a whole. Avoid negative competition by showing how much time the group put into homework, the total number of assignments turned in each week, or the number of projects completed. For tracking individual work, it is better to use individual logs and records that children keep as part of their portfolios or other work folders.

Use the examples on the pages that follow and adapt them to work with your children and the specific learning goals you have for each of them.

These forms and tools are included on the CD as customizable documents for you to adapt and print.



HOMework AFTER SCHOOL DAILY REVIEW FORM

(For afterschool teacher to complete)

Name of student: _____ Date: _____

Afterschool teacher: _____

Class teacher: _____

Homework worked on: _____

☐ Said she/he had no homework

Worked for about _____ minutes

Was able to do homework with:

☐ No help

☐ Some help

☐ A lot of help

Help was needed with:

☐ Understanding the assignment

☐ Getting started or focused

☐ Knowledge of the material: basic skills or information lacking

☐ Staying on task through completion

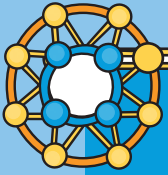
☐ Other: _____

☐ Completed assignment

☐ Did not complete

Comments: _____

Teacher _____ Student _____



HOMEWORK AFTER SCHOOL DAILY OR WEEKLY REVIEW

(For student to complete)

Name of student: _____

Afterschool teacher: _____

Class teacher: _____

Date: _____

☐ No homework

☐ Homework worked on: _____

I was able to do homework with:

☐ No help

☐ Some help

☐ A lot of help

I needed help...

☐ Understanding the assignment, what I was supposed to do

☐ Getting started or focused

☐ Understanding the information or material. (I didn't know how to do the work.)

☐ Other: _____

I worked for about _____ minutes

☐ I completed the assignment

☐ I did not complete it because it was/I had...

☐ Too hard

☐ Too many other assignments

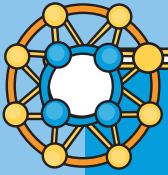
☐ Not enough time

☐ Other things to do

Other comments: _____

Student signature _____

Teacher initials _____



HOMework CONTRACT

Student

Name: _____ School grade or class: _____

I work best (check all that apply):

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> When it's quiet | <input type="checkbox"/> With a little background noise | <input type="checkbox"/> With music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> With food | <input type="checkbox"/> At a desk and chair | <input type="checkbox"/> On a sofa or soft chair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> On the floor alone | <input type="checkbox"/> With other people | <input type="checkbox"/> After doing other activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> After a snack | <input type="checkbox"/> After a break | <input type="checkbox"/> Right away, before other things |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

My best subject areas are: _____

My worst subject areas are: _____

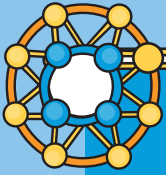
I need the most help with: _____

When I need help I usually (check all that apply):

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for it | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask, but still don't understand | <input type="checkbox"/> Try harder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Get frustrated | <input type="checkbox"/> Give up | <input type="checkbox"/> Look for information on my own |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

The hardest part about homework for me is:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finding the time | <input type="checkbox"/> It's not particularly hard | <input type="checkbox"/> Getting started |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It's too hard | <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding assignments | <input type="checkbox"/> It's boring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other responsibilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Having the right books/supplies | <input type="checkbox"/> Remembering the assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |



HOMework CONTRACT cont.

Families, Parents, Guardians

I want my child, _____, to:

- ☐ Do homework at home, after leaving the program.
- ☐ Work on homework everyday after school for
At least _____ minutes
Not more than _____ minutes
- ☐ Can be flexible, depending on other program activities
- ☐ Complete as much homework as possible
(Some contracts include a section such as: My child must complete 20 minutes/one assignment/
one subject area of homework before he/she can participate in other activities.)

My child seems to work best (check as many as apply):

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alone | <input type="checkbox"/> In small groups | <input type="checkbox"/> In large groups |
| <input type="checkbox"/> With food | <input type="checkbox"/> With noise | <input type="checkbox"/> With quiet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

When my child needs help, he or she tends to:

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for it | <input type="checkbox"/> Try harder | <input type="checkbox"/> Get frustrated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Give up without asking for help | | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask but not listen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Get help but be annoyed | | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Agreements

Student

By signing this contract, I agree to:

- Keep track of assignments and know what is expected
- Bring assignments, books, and materials I need to complete my homework
- Work on my assignments during afterschool time as agreed
- Ask for help when I need it

Signed: _____

Parents

By signing this contract, I agree to:

- Review homework with my child every day
- Talk to the afterschool and class teachers about homework and my child's progress

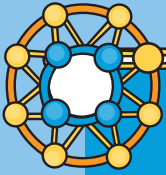
Signed: _____

Afterschool Teacher

By signing this contract, I agree to:

- Serve as a homework support without doing assignments or giving answers
- Talk to parents and children about homework
- Support the items in this contract

Signed: _____



SAMPLE LEARNING CONTRACT

Name: _____

Start date: _____ End date: _____

By signing this contract, I agree to take responsibility for my learning by:

- ☐ Attending afterschool at least three days per week
- ☐ Showing respect for my peers
- ☐ Completing my homework to the best of my ability
- ☐ Asking for help when I need it

This month month I will work on the following:

Work	Do what?	How much?	How well?	Help	Review	Comments
Reading	Read a full-length Young-adult novel	Finish one book	Tell the story with plot, main characters, and the parts I liked best	Check in two weeks from today	4/30	
Math	Complete math homework	At least 2 assignments per week	Turn in 2 good assignments on time to math teacher	Remind me to do homework	4/30	

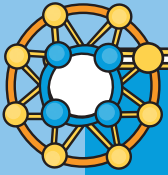
Student signature _____ Date _____

Teacher's name: _____

By signing this contract, I agree to:

provide the help asked for to the best of my ability, review homework,
support learner in reaching goals review, help evaluate progress

Teacher's signature: _____ Date: _____



WEEKLY or MONTHLY HOMEWORK LOG

To be completed by student and kept in portfolio.

Name: _____

Log for following subjects: _____

Keep Track

Check how much you did.

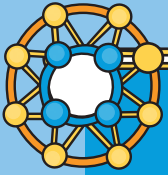
Date															Count the total
I worked on homework															
I completed all homework															
I completed some homework															

Doing better?

	This month	Last month
Total days worked on homework	_____	_____
Total days completed all homework	_____	_____
Total days completed some homework	_____	_____

Even Better...

To do better, I will: _____



HOMework WORK CHECKLIST & EVALUATION

Teacher: Complete this checklist periodically to pinpoint skills to work on and to show change over time.

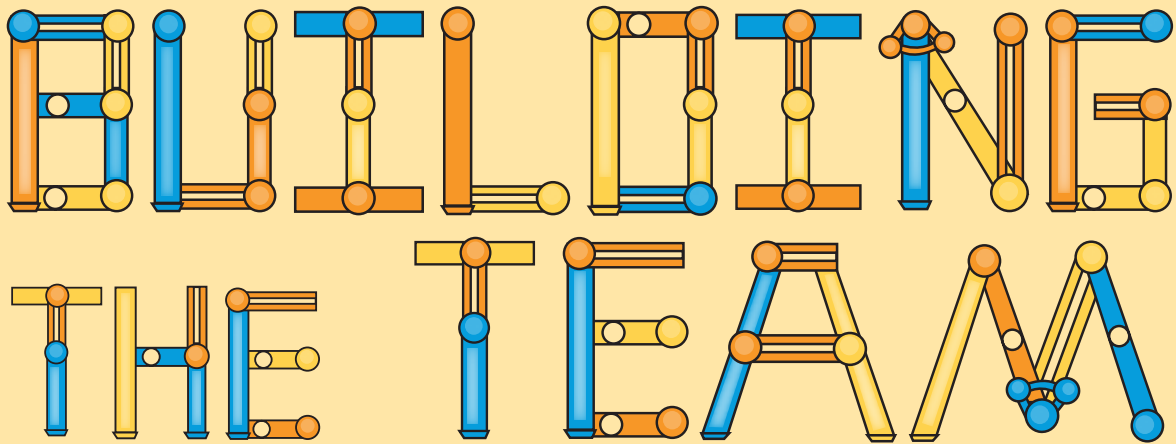
Student Name: _____ Date: _____

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Almost always	Always	Comments
Comes prepared to work (assignment, materials, books)	1	2	3	4	5	
Can explain assignment	1	2	3	4	5	
Can plan time	1	2	3	4	5	
Can explain steps and processes	1	2	3	4	5	
Works independently	1	2	3	4	5	
Stays focused	1	2	3	4	5	
Finds help from peers, references, other	1	2	3	4	5	
Asks for help appropriately	1	2	3	4	5	


Needs help with: _____

Comments: _____

PART IV



FOR HOMEWORK TIME, AFTERSCHOOL STYLE

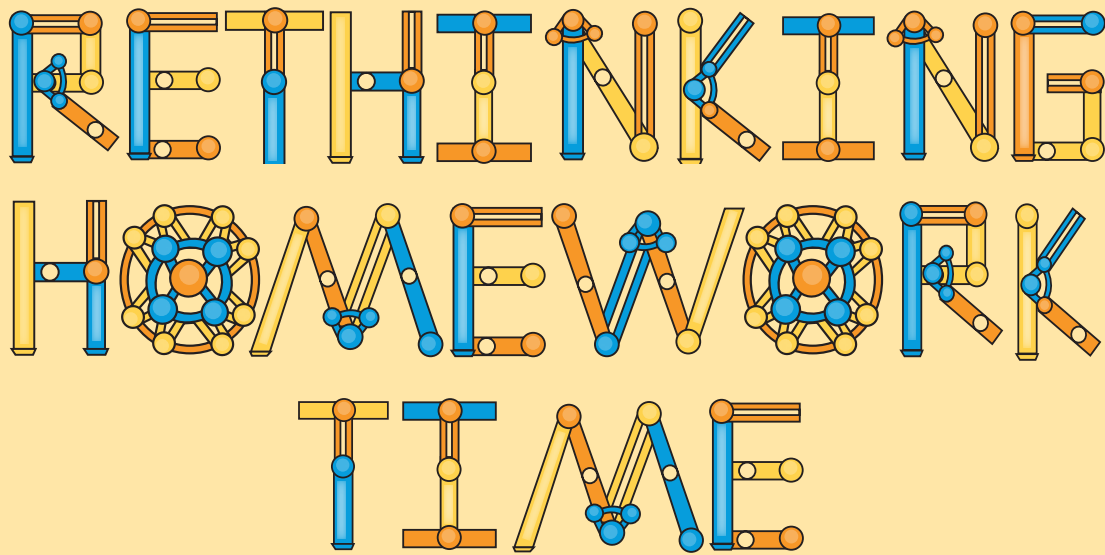


When homework time is deliberately designed to maximize a broader set of learning goals, it is important to provide staff training to get everyone on board with the approach, and to become familiar with tools and techniques.

The following pages outline three professional development training plans designed to fit into a 45-minute staff meeting. Adapt them to fit your program, and schedule regular training and check-ins. Plan regularly scheduled times to talk about what is and isn't working, to generate ideas, and to share tips and strategies.

Facilitator or Director: Review the content of the three homework meetings to see how they fit with any homework policies or procedures you may have in place. Ask staff about any issues they may have around homework time. Select and adapt from the next three trainings to fit your program.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSION I



Time: Approximately 45 minutes, depending on the size of the group.

Meeting Goal: Staff learn to make homework time more active and engaging, with different kinds of learning opportunities.

Prep: Before the meeting, create two to three activities or games (Tic-Tac-Toe, Hangman, Anagrams, or similar) on flip chart paper and post them around the room, with markers nearby. Copy and cut up a set of *Student Grouping Cards* for each pair of participants.

Facilitator or Director: Invite staff to play the posted games as they come in. Once everyone has arrived and has had a few minutes to play, call the group together.

Materials:

- Flip chart paper or whiteboard for posted games
- *Forming Groups*, one set per pair
- Handout: *Odds and Evens*, one per participant
- Handout: *Math Problems Worksheet*, one per pair



TOOLS on CD

- Quick Check Meeting and Next Steps
- Forming Groups
- Odds and Evens
- Math Problems Worksheet
- Staff Reflection Tool

Opener—5 minutes

Free Write Activity

- Tell participants you're doing a one minute "Free Write." Explain that they'll have one minute to write all the words that they can they associate with the word you give.
- Give the word "homework" and start timing.
- After one minute, tell everyone to stop and look at their words.
- Ask whether words were mostly positive or negative. Ask for some examples.

Explain: Homework time is part of our program. Kids need to turn in homework to do well in school, and parents need the support of getting at least some homework addressed in afterschool. But it can be a struggle. We're going to look at ways to make homework time work better for everyone.

Learning Opportunities—5 minutes

Ask and List

Ask participants what afterschool can offer as a place to do homework. List responses on a flip chart. Possible answers may include working with friends, materials, supplies, and help from staff.

Explain: We can build on the assets of afterschool to make homework time less stressful and more valuable. We can use the time to help kids learn to be responsible for themselves and their learning. By giving them some independence and choice, and setting things up so they're working with friends, children can develop skills beyond those that are part of the assignments.

Building Self-Direction and Responsibility—20 minutes

Explain: Children can't learn to make good decisions or choices if they never have choices to make. Giving children the chance to make choices builds their independence and sense of responsibility.

Brainstorm and Discuss

- Ask participants to brainstorm kinds of choices that can be given to children around homework.
- List all ideas, to be discussed later. Possible answers might include when to start; how long to work; where to do the work; who to sit with, etc.
- Choose two or three ideas to discuss in detail for about 10 minutes. If the group is large enough, split into small groups and ask each to discuss one of the ideas. The purpose is not to make final decisions, but to explore possibilities.
- In the discussions consider staffing needs, materials, and room set-up, along with potential problems. For example, if children choose where to work, what spaces should be made available? Is outdoors a choice? The floor? Where will staff need to be?
- If you've broken into small groups, share thinking with the full group.

Social but Focused—15 minutes

Explain: Having kids work together in groups can work well for everyone. It allows kids to help each other. Staff can spend more time with children who need more intensive or one-on-one support. Children learn to be with friends, but still focus on their work.

There are lots of ways to group kids. They can choose on their own, which has some big advantages and may work well. Or you can organize groups for particular reasons, grouping by assignments or class, or grouping a few more advanced students with some needing support in the particular subject area.

Activity

- Divide into pairs.
- Give each pair a set of *Forming Groups*.
- Form homework groups with the children on the cards. Use any criteria that make sense.
- After five minutes, compare groupings. Ask pairs with different groupings to explain their reasoning.

Open Activities—15 minutes

Explain: Sometimes you need filler or alternative activities during homework time. Some kids may not have homework, or may finish before others. What else can be going on?

Activity

- Divide the group in half. Give one group the *Math Problems Worksheet* and the other the *Odds and Evens* handout.
- Explain that these are the kinds of things children can be given when they finish their homework and they're waiting for the time to be over.
- Give 5 minutes to complete the worksheets.
- After 5 minutes, ask how people felt about the assignments. What did they do when they were done?

Explain: Worksheets or coloring pages are “closed” activities. Once they're complete, children need to wait for more instructions from staff, which takes up valuable staff time. Open-ended activities like *Odds and Evens* can be played again and again. Children can invent new rules and involve their friends.

Extension

Now that staff have discussed grouping hypothetical kids, have staff write description cards for actual children in the program. (You can use the customizable template on the CD.) Use the cards at a later staff meeting to have staff form groups and discuss their thinking.

Ask staff to be deliberate about their grouping during homework time, and note that you'll be talking afterwards as a group about how it is working. Distribute the Staff Reflection form (on the CD) to help structure the discussions.

Planning for Action—5 Minutes

Ask which approaches or techniques can be tried to make homework time work better in the program.

What would it take to put these ideas into action?

Discuss how to start, and how to support each other as you try new approaches.



FACILITATOR QUICK CHECK MEETING AND NEXT STEPS

Reflect on how the meeting went to develop facilitation skills, think about topics, and consider techniques. Note next steps.

Topic: _____ Date: _____

Attendees: _____

Check all that apply

Response from participants:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Was meaningful and useful for them | <input type="checkbox"/> Responsive and engaged |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respectful but neutral | <input type="checkbox"/> Appeared bored or indifferent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected or resisted ideas | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

The material seemed to be:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interesting, motivating | <input type="checkbox"/> Do-able |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Understandable | <input type="checkbox"/> Right amount, right level |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irrelevant to the program or staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Too advanced or complex |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too much for the time available | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Changes for this or other sessions:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> More activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Better prep by facilitator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Draw more on participants' experience | <input type="checkbox"/> More review, move slower |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Build stronger collaborative, team feeling | <input type="checkbox"/> Move faster |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

Other topics to cover: _____

Notes: _____

Next steps: _____



FORMING GROUPS

Print and cut out the Afterschool Kids cards. Arrange the children into groups of 3–4 based on the information provided.

What criteria did you use to form the groups? Ask a colleague to form groups with the cards, and compare.

Warren Johnson

- 5th grade
- Excellent reader and writer; good student
- Competitive; able to set and achieve goals; impatient

Homework—Pick a state for your “state project” and write a proposal on why you should be able to do a report on that state.

Shelia Rodriguez

- 5th grade
- Very good in math; has trouble completing homework
- Very patient; likes number and logic games

Homework—Develop questions for your interview with an older person. Ask about his/her life and community when he/she was your age.

Francis Chan

- 5th grade
- English language learner; likes science
- Natural leader; excellent artist

Homework—Think of two project ideas for the science fair. Write down your question and two possible hypotheses for each idea.

Khalil Peters

- 5th grade
- Average student; has trouble staying focused
- Good athlete; likes to create and play games; likes to help the younger students

Homework—Read section 1.4 in the social studies book. Answer questions at the end of the chapter.

Elizabeth Stewart

- 4th grade
- Excellent reader; very creative thinker
- Bundle of energy; likes to dance and sing

Homework—Turn in corrections on the “Matter” test.

Elliot Monroe

- 4th grade
- Good student; likes social studies best
- Prefers to work independently; very imaginative

Homework—Write a story about what happens to Wilbur or one of Charlotte’s baby spiders after the end of *Charlotte’s Web*.

Boomer Okara

- 4th grade
- Excellent student; math and science are his favorite subjects
- Friendly; outgoing nature; relatively patient; needs his alone time
- Has a younger sister, Teresa, in the program

Homework—Complete problems #1, 2, 6, 19, 20, and 26 in math workbook pg. 12.

Matthew O’Neil

- 3rd grade
- Average student; has trouble completing homework
- Competitive; outgoing; likes games with physical activity
- Has a younger sister, Sarah, in the program

Homework—Spelling test tomorrow.



FORMING GROUPS

Print and cut out the Afterschool Kids cards. Arrange the children into groups of 3–4 based on the information provided.

What criteria did you use to form the groups? Ask a colleague to form groups with the cards, and compare.

Ana Maria Schwartz

- 2nd grade
- Likes spelling and reading
- Bundle of energy; likes working with the older kids

Homework—Write a story about the day after Alexander's bad day in *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*.

Mike Pascal

- 2nd grade
- Has difficulties with math; likes social studies; good reader
- Competitive; likes riddles and jokes

Homework—Write a paragraph on how you would have handled things, if you were Alexander in *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*.

Mary Moore

- 2nd grade
- Has trouble with spelling; good student otherwise
- Outgoing; natural leader

Homework—Complete pages 1–2 of addition and subtraction problems in the math workbook.

William Ortiz

- 1st grade
- Likes spelling and math; has trouble focusing during homework time
- Prefers to work in groups; likes word games

Homework—Write a sentence from *Tar Beach* and illustrate it; write 5 sentences using this week's vocabulary words.

Edith Carmen Moreno

- 1st grade
- Likes math and science; large vocabulary
- Natural leader; can be disruptive

Homework—Use your own words to write definitions of words on vocabulary list.

Nigel Jacobs

- Kindergarten
- Learning how to read
- A little shy; once acclimated, works well with others; likes counting and number games

Homework—Identify the following coins, and know their value: penny, nickel, and dime.

Mikey Dillon

- Kindergarten
- Learning how to read; likes to play games
- Has trouble following directions; likes working with others

Homework—Draw pictures of 3 animals and 3 foods that begin with the letter of the week, R.

Christopher Elliott

- Kindergarten
- Likes to draw and paint; likes to make up stories
- Very outgoing; prefers to work with other kids; likes to interact with the big kids

Homework—None



ODDS AND EVENS

Players: Two

Goal: Be the first to make 15 from three cards in a row, column, or diagonal.

- How to Play:**
1. Make a set of cards 1–9.
 2. One player takes the five odd-number cards and one takes the four even-number cards.
 3. Player with odd cards places one card on the grid.
 4. The player with the even cards puts one card on the grid.
 5. Keep it going! The first player who makes a row, column, or diagonal that equals 15 wins!



MATH PROBLEMS WORKSHEET

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ +3 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 7 \\ +4 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 4 \\ +2 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ +7 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 9 \\ +3 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ +6 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 1 \\ +7 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ +8 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ +1 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 9 \\ +4 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 1 \\ +7 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 0 \\ +3 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ +0 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 3 \\ +2 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ +3 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ +1 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 6 \\ +6 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ +3 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ +5 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 9 \\ +3 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 8 \\ +2 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 3 \\ +0 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 4 \\ +4 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 7 \\ +2 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 1 \\ +7 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 9 \\ +1 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ +8 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ +3 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ +7 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 9 \\ +8 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ +2 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 7 \\ +0 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \\ +4 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ +5 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 9 \\ +2 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 1 \\ +0 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 9 \\ +4 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 4 \\ +1 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 9 \\ +9 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 7 \\ +3 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 8 \\ +5 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 1 \\ +3 \\ \hline \end{array}$$



STAFF REFLECTION TOOL

Below is a tool staff can use to reflect on strategies they are using during homework time.

Date: _____

Strategy or idea:

- ☐ Grouping the students differently
- ☐ Offering choices (Which? How?) _____

- ☐ Offering open activities to kids
- ☐ Using a new activity station
- ☐ Other (Please explain.) _____

How did the strategy or idea work? _____

Comments _____

Revisions to make _____

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSION II

BEYOND THE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT ITSELF

Homework time can be used to help kids learn to take responsibility and to build their skills to focus and work. It's also an opportunity to communicate with parents and schools.

Meeting Goal: Staff explore ways to build independent learning, to clarify expectations around homework with parents, students, and teachers, and to communicate with home and school.

Prep: Write each of these statements on flip chart paper, one per sheet. Post them in different areas of the room.

I work hard to get children to complete their homework. Sometimes they don't want to do it or don't understand it. I want teachers and parents to know I tried.

I want to help kids take responsibility for their assignments.

Kids and parents want different things from our program. I want to meet the needs of teachers, parents AND kids when it comes to homework.

Materials:

- Handouts: *Homework Tracker*, *Homework Contract*, and *Homework Reflection*, one for each participant
- *Homework Tool Review*, one per participant

TOOLS on CD

- Quick Check Meeting and Next Steps
- Homework Tracker
- Homework Contract
- Homework Reflection
- Homework Tool Review

Opener—5 Minutes

Put up the prepared statements. Ask staff to stand near the statement that hits home for them.

Discuss

When everyone has moved near a poster, discuss the issue in the group, or choose one or two issues to discuss as a full group. After a few minutes, ask for highlights from the different groups.

Introduction

Explain: Homework time is an opportunity to work on skills beyond the content of the assignment itself. In order to work on assignments and even complete them, kids need a range of skills.

Brainstorm

Brainstorm and list skills needed to work on homework other than the content. Possible answers include time management, working in groups, focus, concentration, responsibility, self-assessment, asking for help.

Tools for Skill Building—25 Minutes

Explain: We can focus deliberately on building these kinds of skills. These are examples of tools that can help.

Activity

- Divide into groups associated with the posted statements, or otherwise.
- Distribute copies of *Homework Reflection*, *Homework Tracker*, and *Homework Contracts* to each group, along with a *Homework Tool Review* page.
- Give a few minutes to look over all the tools.
- Assign one tool to each group.
- Give 15 minutes to discuss the following:
 - What would this tool help with? How can it help kids? How can it help staff?
 - Would we use it?
 - How would we use it? What are possible problems?
 - What would we do with the forms when completed?
- Tell groups to make notes on the *Tool Review* page.
- After 15 minutes, ask each group to report out.

Discuss

Looking at the statements on the wall, which tools can help? For example, the *Homework Reflection* form has a student side and an afterschool staff side. It can share information about the students' efforts, needs, and challenges, and help with "I want the teacher/family to know I tried." Note other possible links: *Homework Tracker* and *Homework Contract* help kids take more responsibility, and contracts establish shared expectations.

Tools for Communication—5 Minutes

Explain: Looking at how the tools can help build skills for kids, we also see how they can be used for building communications with school and home.

Ask, Discuss, List

Ask staff how to use the tools even further for communications. Discuss, and list ideas.

Planning for Action—5 Minutes

Ask participants which tools they might try.

Discuss how to support each other in using these tools or this approach.

Determine how long you'll try it before coming back together to assess how it's working and to make changes, if needed.



FACILITATOR QUICK CHECK MEETING AND NEXT STEPS

Reflect on how the meeting went to develop facilitation skills, think about topics, and consider techniques. Note next steps.

Topic: _____ Date: _____

Attendees: _____

Check all that apply

Response from participants:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Was meaningful and useful for them | <input type="checkbox"/> Responsive and engaged |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respectful but neutral | <input type="checkbox"/> Appeared bored or indifferent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected or resisted ideas | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

The material seemed to be:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interesting, motivating | <input type="checkbox"/> Do-able |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Understandable | <input type="checkbox"/> Right amount, right level |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irrelevant to the program or staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Too advanced or complex |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too much for the time available | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Changes for this or other sessions:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> More activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Better prep by facilitator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Draw more on participants' experience | <input type="checkbox"/> More review, move slower |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Build stronger collaborative, team feeling | <input type="checkbox"/> Move faster |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

Other topics to cover: _____

Notes: _____

Next steps: _____



HOMework TRACKER PLANNER

Program name: _____

Date: _____

Amount of time allocated to homework

Time

Check-in time (5 to 10 minutes):

Work time

Breaks

Check-off

Notes on grouping

Materials needed

Check

Calendar

☐

Supplies

☐

Assignment books

☐

Stamp

☐

Other: _____

☐

☐

Activities for "done" or "no homework"

Children's jobs

Names

Tracker

Buddy

Other: _____

Review of Tracker process

Date _____

Comments _____

Revision notes _____

Review of children's progress

Date _____

Tools used to track progress _____

Documentation _____

Communication with classroom teachers _____

Communication with parents _____

Comments _____



HOMework CONTRACT

Student

Name: _____ School grade or class: _____

I work best (check all that apply):

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> When it's quiet | <input type="checkbox"/> With a little background noise | <input type="checkbox"/> With music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> With food | <input type="checkbox"/> At a desk and chair | <input type="checkbox"/> On a sofa or soft chair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> On the floor alone | <input type="checkbox"/> With other people | <input type="checkbox"/> After doing other activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> After a snack | <input type="checkbox"/> After a break | <input type="checkbox"/> Right away, before other things |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

My best subject areas are: _____

My worst subject areas are: _____

I need the most help with: _____

When I need help I usually (check all that apply):

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for it | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask, but still don't understand | <input type="checkbox"/> Try harder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Get frustrated | <input type="checkbox"/> Give up | <input type="checkbox"/> Look for information on my own |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

The hardest part about homework for me is:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finding the time | <input type="checkbox"/> It's not particularly hard | <input type="checkbox"/> Getting started |
| <input type="checkbox"/> It's too hard | <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding assignments | <input type="checkbox"/> It's boring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other responsibilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Having the right books/supplies | <input type="checkbox"/> Remembering the assignment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |



HOMework CONTRACT cont.

Families, Parents, Guardians

I want my child, _____, to:

- ☐ Do homework at home, after leaving the program.
- ☐ Work on homework everyday after school for
At least _____ minutes
Not more than _____ minutes
- ☐ Can be flexible, depending on other program activities
- ☐ Complete as much homework as possible
(Some contracts include a section such as: My child must complete 20 minutes/one assignment/
one subject area of homework before he/she can participate in other activities.)

My child seems to work best (check as many as apply):

- ☐ Alone
- ☐ In small groups
- ☐ In large groups
- ☐ With food
- ☐ With noise
- ☐ With quiet
- ☐ Other: _____

When my child needs help, he or she tends to:

- ☐ Ask for it
- ☐ Try harder
- ☐ Get frustrated
- ☐ Give up without asking for help
- ☐ Ask but not listen
- ☐ Get help but be annoyed
- ☐ Other: _____

Agreements

Student

By signing this contract, I agree to:

- Keep track of assignments and know what is expected
- Bring assignments, books, and materials I need to complete my homework
- Work on my assignments during afterschool time as agreed
- Ask for help when I need it

Signed: _____

Parents

By signing this contract, I agree to:

- Review homework with my child every day
- Talk to the afterschool and class teachers about homework and my child's progress

Signed: _____

Afterschool Teacher

By signing this contract, I agree to:

- Serve as a homework support without doing assignments or giving answers
- Talk to parents and children about homework
- Support the items in this contract

Signed: _____



HOMework REFLECTION

(For afterschool teacher to complete)

Name of student: _____ Date: _____

Afterschool teacher: _____

Class teacher: _____

Homework worked on: _____

☐ Said she/he had no homework

Worked for about _____ minutes

Was able to do homework with:

☐ No help

☐ Some help

☐ A lot of help

Help was needed with:

☐ Understanding the assignment

☐ Getting started or focused

☐ Knowledge of the material: basic skills or information lacking

☐ Staying on task through completion

☐ Other: _____

☐ Completed assignment

☐ Did not complete

Comments: _____

Teacher _____ Student _____



HOMEWORK REFLECTION

(For student to complete)

Name of student: _____

Afterschool teacher: _____

Class teacher: _____

Date: _____

☐ No homework

☐ Homework worked on: _____

I was able to do homework with:

☐ No help

☐ Some help

☐ A lot of help

I needed help...

☐ Understanding the assignment, what I was supposed to do

☐ Getting started or focused

☐ Understanding the information or material. (I didn't know how to do the work.)

☐ Other: _____

I worked for about _____ minutes

☐ I completed the assignment

☐ I did not complete it because it was/I had...

☐ Too hard

☐ Too many other assignments

☐ Not enough time

☐ Other things to do

Other comments: _____

Student signature _____

Teacher initials _____



HOMework TOOL REVIEW

What would this tool help with? _____

How can it help kids? _____

How can it help staff? _____

Would we use it? _____

How would we use it? _____

What are possible problems? _____

What would we do with the forms when completed? _____

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSION III

HELPING WITH HOMEWORK

Afterschool staff are like parent substitutes when it comes to homework. They should not be expected to be subject matter specialists any more than parents are. But staff still need to offer help to large groups of kids with very different needs! Helping strategies can help staff, too.

Meeting Goal: Staff gain techniques to help with homework and build students' independent learning.

Prep: Collect and copy one or more typical homework assignments for a role play.

Materials:

- Flip chart paper
- Handout: *Observation Guide Active Homework Help*, one per small group
- Handout: *Finding Resources*, one per pair
- Handout: *Helping Strategies*, one per participant
- Handout: *Homework Scenarios*, one per small group of 3–5 (optional)
- One copy per participant of a typical homework assignment that kids bring to the program. You can use copies of the same one or different ones.



TOOLS on CD

- Quick Check Meeting and Next Steps
- Observation Guide Active Homework Help
- Finding Resources
- Helping Strategies
- Homework Scenarios

Opener—5 Minutes

Explain: Homework help can be aimed at different levels of need. Sometimes it's encouragement, or bridging a small knowledge or skill gap. Sometimes it's pointing to resources or helping children ask for help from their teachers.

Ask and List

Ask participants to think of a time when someone really helped them with a task or assignment. What did the helper do? What did they show or tell you that helped? Write on a flip chart or on a piece of paper some of the key words and techniques.

Introduction

Explain: Kids need different kinds of help at different times and with different assignments. Different kids respond better to different kinds of help. Even moods and what kind of day it has been can determine what kind of help will be most effective. Distinguishing who needs what kind of help lets staff focus more intense types of help or attention on those who need it.

Levels of Help—10 Minutes

You can think about different levels or intensity of help, from demonstrating something, to explaining step-by-step, to just general supervision and check in.

Activity

- Distribute *Observation Guide: Active Homework Help*.
- Form pairs and look at the "Levels of Help" callout box.
- Roleplay what each level might look like; use phrases that fit the level of help.
- After five minutes, ask if some types of help come more naturally. Do people get into one habit or style of helping?

Resources—10 Minutes

Explain: Staff can't do it all themselves. Use resources to help. Note that "resources" can include texts, reference books, the Internet or computer software, other staff, and other students.

Activity

- Distribute *Finding Resources*.
- In pairs or small groups, identify how to draw on resources to help, and which resources are useful for which purposes.
- As staff work on this, have them note which resources are available and which are not. If resources are not available, note alternatives or ways to get the resources.

Getting Unstuck—10 Minutes

Explain: It's helpful to get a handle on which subjects or types of tasks individual kids get stuck on, and which come more easily to them.

Ask: What subjects do their groups really balk at? Are there any they love? What about staff or volunteers? Any subjects they strongly dislike or do they have special favorites?

Explain: A common first step for getting unstuck is to ask students to state and clarify the problem. Sometimes just explaining it aloud helps. Breaking the problem into steps is another technique that's helpful to students and staff. You may be able to help with one step, even if not the whole thing. Thinking about different ways to approach the problem also helps—and this is a critical thinking skill.

Ask and List

- Ask participants: How can we encourage kids to help each other get unstuck? List.
- What about other people or volunteers?
- List volunteers and peer helpers (older students) you could tap to help during homework time.
- What skills do these people need to have? What is the best way to get this group on board with the program's approach to homework help?

Helping Strategies—15 Minutes

Activity

- Distribute and look at (but do not complete) *Helping Strategies*.
- Form groups of at least four. Choose who will be the observer, the staff person, and the students.
- Give groups a copy of an assignment (prepared beforehand).
- Role play the afterschool homework time. Observers use the *Observation Guide* to note helping strategies used.
- After about 10 minutes, ask each role to talk about helping strategies from their perspective. What worked? What didn't?

Planning for Action—5 Minutes

Ask staff to complete *Helping Strategies*, noting things they can do, and those they'd need help with, or need to learn to do.

Name two or three specific things staff can do to help each other with helping during homework time. What will it take to implement these?

If you or other staff know of an excellent teacher, or someone you've seen doing a great job helping, see if you can arrange for him or her to come in and give the staff some ideas and approaches.

Additional Activity: To review or consolidate homework time approaches, distribute *Homework Scenarios* to small groups. Discuss, and share with the full group.



FACILITATOR QUICK CHECK MEETING AND NEXT STEPS

Reflect on how the meeting went to develop facilitation skills, think about topics, and consider techniques. Note next steps.

Topic: _____ Date: _____

Attendees: _____

Check all that apply

Response from participants:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Was meaningful and useful for them | <input type="checkbox"/> Responsive and engaged |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respectful but neutral | <input type="checkbox"/> Appeared bored or indifferent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rejected or resisted ideas | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

The material seemed to be:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interesting, motivating | <input type="checkbox"/> Do-able |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Understandable | <input type="checkbox"/> Right amount, right level |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irrelevant to the program or staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Too advanced or complex |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too much for the time available | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Changes for this or other sessions:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> More activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Better prep by facilitator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Draw more on participants' experience | <input type="checkbox"/> More review, move slower |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Build stronger collaborative, team feeling | <input type="checkbox"/> Move faster |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

Other topics to cover: _____

Notes: _____

Next steps: _____



OBSERVATION GUIDE ACTIVE HOMEWORK HELP

Helping Strategies

- Ask student(s) to explain assignment in own words
- Have students write a problem in different ways
- Encourage student(s) to guess or estimate
- Suggest working backwards
- Enlist peer support
- Break problems or tasks into smaller parts and steps
- Suggest trying to solve the problem in different ways
- Have students use the process of elimination
- Model the problem with objects or using a different example
- Ask student to explain what they don't understand and need help with
- Suggest or ask students where they can get help
- Other techniques that helped

(Describe) _____

LEVELS OF HELP

- "I do, you watch"
- "I do, you help"
- "You do, I help"
- "You do, I watch"



FINDING RESOURCES

A student is planning to write a paper about the life cycle of stars. What resources might the student use? _____

A student's assignment is to plan a sightseeing trip around their state, mapping a route and developing a budget. What resources would you recommend? _____

A Spanish-speaking student needs help with a writing assignment. What resources would you recommend? _____

A student is in the process of writing a history report. What resources would you recommend? _____

A student needs to practice the reading strategy of "making predictions." What resources might the student use? _____

A student is about to take his or her first statewide reading test. What resources would you suggest to help him or her practice? _____

A student has a math question that you can't answer. What resource do you have to help the student? _____

A student's assignment is to compare the population of the world's largest cities. What resource would you recommend? _____

A student needs help converting fractions to decimals. Where can he/she find help? _____

A student's assignment involves writing a poem. Where can the student find a range of words and word choices? _____

A student must create a list of countries that border China. What resource would you recommend? _____

A student is checking his or her writing for grammar and spelling. What resource could the child use? _____



HELPING STRATEGIES

	Can Do	Can Do with Support
Ask student(s) to explain assignment in own words		
Suggest students work backwards or try another way if stuck		
Enlist peer support and help		
Ask questions to check comprehension		
Give students time to respond to questions (wait time)		
Suggest breaking task into smaller parts and steps		
Guide students to resources		
Encourage students to think through problems by asking open-ended questions		
Ask student to explain what they don't understand and need help with		
Model with different examples		
Other techniques: (list) _____ _____		



HOMework SCENARIOS

1. A group of children consistently comes to your program not knowing what their homework assignments are, or not knowing when projects are due. How can you help them?

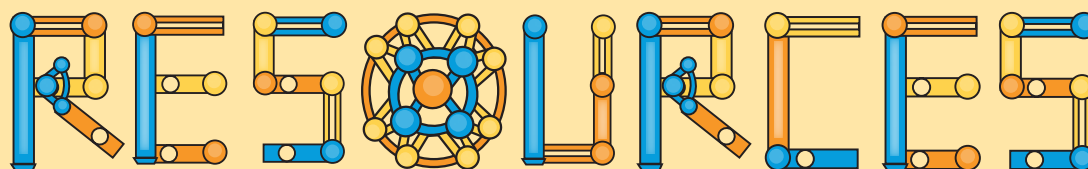
2. Your homework program includes students from grades 1–5. Some of your second graders need help reading a story in their book. At the same time, some fifth graders need help studying for a history test. What strategies can you use to help these two groups of students?

3. You are lucky enough to have an honors student helping you in your homework program. Although this student is knowledgeable in subject areas, the students do not seem to respond to him in a positive manner. What are two or three strategies you would give your assistant to use when working with the kids?

4. A few 6th grade students have been assigned beginning algebra problems for homework. They ask you for help, but algebra is not your strong point. You look for other 6th graders to give some help, but there are none today. What strategies can you use with these 6th grade students?

5. A teacher has given her 5th grade students an assignment to write a paragraph explaining how they feel about teen gun violence. They are struggling to get started. What strategies can you use to get them going?

APPENDIX



Center for Afterschool Education

Academic Content, Afterschool Style: A Notebook and Guide

The “how to” for blending active, engaged learning into any program. Plain language content standards, dozens of content-linked K–12 activities, and basics for becoming an afterschool educator.

Afterschool in Practice: 25 Skill-Building Meetings for Staff

Turn principals for quality into every day staff practice with twenty five ready-to-use one-hour trainings, complete with activities and handouts.

GraffitiWall

Instant, easy-to-make activities for challenge, skill building, and fun, with dozens of extensions and variations. Get kids of all ages guessing, puzzling and playing during transitions, homework time, pick-up—anytime! Includes training plan and handouts for staff, and CD for print-and-go activities.

Global GraffitiWall

Tap into kids’ natural curiosity about the world, afterschool style! Easy-to-make games, activities, and projects with global themes to explore people, places and languages. Includes print-and-go CD.

More Than Just Talk: English Language Learning for Afterschool

Make your afterschool programs English-language-learning rich with techniques, activities, and projects to get English Language Learners talking and playing. Includes basics of language acquisition, core methods, and three staff development plans and handouts. CD for ready-to-go and customizable activities.

Celebrate Success RFP Project

Real-life learning is what it’s about in afterschool. Turn your end-of-year celebration into a rich math, English, and 21st century skills project with students applying for a “grant” for their activities. Includes step-by-step guidelines and student handouts.



www.afterschooled.org
888.977.KIDS (5437)

General, Subject, and Activity Resource Books

Homework and Subject Resources

How To Help Your Child With Homework: The Complete Guide To Encouraging Good Study Habits And Ending The Homework War by Jeanne Shay Schumm

The Kids' Nature Book: 365 Indoor/Outdoor Activities and Experiences by Susan Milord

Everything You Need To Know About Science Homework by Kate Kelly and Anne Zeman

Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Science series published by HarperCollins

The New Way Things Work David Macauley

The Reasons for Seasons by Gail Gibbons

Science Experiments You Can Eat by Vicki Cobb and David Cain

Stunning Science Of Everything by Nick Arnold

Math on Call: A Mathematics Handbook by Andrew Kaplan, Carol Debold, Susan Rogalski, and Pat Bourdreau

Math Through Children's Literature: Making the NCTM Standards Come Alive by Kathryn L. Braddon, Nancy J. Hall and Dale Taylor

Let's Read Math Funbook 1 by Claire Passantino and Fiona Passantino

ADD & ADHD Answer by Susan Ashley

Resource Websites

Note: Websites and addresses change frequently, and new ones appear all the time. The usual search engines will turn up a great deal. The following sites are some to get you started.

Academic Content and Standards

The resources in this section offer information about standards, support specific content areas, or offer activities.

Education World: State Standards

<http://www.education-world.com/standards/state/index.shtml>

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, Content Knowledge Standards and Benchmarks

www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks

National Science Education Standards

<http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/nses/6a.html>

Exploratorium

The Science Explorer: An Exploratorium-At-Home book

http://www.exploratorium.edu/science_explorer/

The Franklin Institute Science Museum: Activities

<http://slh.fi.edu/tfi/activity/act-summ.html>

Science Museum of Minnesota

Simply Science

<http://wonderwhy.mediasmm.org/>

Try Science

http://www.tryscience.org/experiments/experiments_home.html

Zoom

<http://pbskids.org/zoom/activities/sci/>

Homework Help

The following resources offer general and subject-specific homework help for students.

General

KidSpace @ the Internet Public Library

<http://www.ipl.org/kidspace/browse/ref0000>

KOL Homework Help for Elementary Students

<http://kids.aol.com/homework-help>

Math

Elementary School Student Center

<http://www.mathforum.org/students/elem/www.math.com>

Coolmath.com

<http://www.coolmath4kids.com/>

Homework Helper

<http://www.aplusmath.com/hh/index.html>

Science

Fact Monster Homework Center: Science

<http://www.factmonster.com/homework/hwscience.html>

Special Education

The following sites provide information on working with students with special needs or links to local resources.

The ARC

<http://www.thearc.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?&pid=183&srcid=207>

Teaching Special Kids: On-Line Resources for Teachers by Linda Star

http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr139.shtml

This online article is filled with links to sites focused on working with students with special needs. Topics range from lessons and activities for students with special needs, to informational resources, to technology sites for students with special needs.