

## Dealing with Homework Woes

Chatting with parents after a recent 4-H meeting the subject quickly turned to homework. I have heard the horror stories of third and fourth grade children coming home with hours of homework.

Although it has been awhile, I can remember back to the days of elementary school and my own homework woes. However, I think that as time has progressed the amount of homework children have to do has increased.

Hours of homework scares not only young people, but also their parents. Families are so busy running to sports practices, going to meetings, doing chores at home, and much more that it is impossible to get everything done when you are spending hours doing homework. I am not sure that I have the solution when it comes to tackling the woes that homework brings, but here are some suggestions to make life easier for both parents and child.

**Get a daily planner.** I know this sounds unrealistic, but it helps. Often times children forget what they have to do or when it is due. Find a system that works best for you. Some children may use a notebook that they fill out while others might need a sheet that is signed each day by the teacher.

**Find a good place and time to do homework.** Obviously in front of the television is not a prime homework location. Help your child find a corner of their own and think about the best time for the homework to get done. If you create good habits from the beginning of the school year they are more likely to be carried on throughout the year. Right after school may not be the best time to do homework. Kid have been sitting all day, it might be important to build in some time to play before sitting down to work.

**Remember that children have a saturation point.** Even as an adult there is a time in the day where it is no longer productive to be doing work. Children have shorter attention spans than most adults and at some point in time, depending on how much homework your child has they may reach this point also. Talk with your child's teacher to find out how much time they should be spending on homework per night and try to find a solution if you are working many hours beyond the set goal.

**Help them get started.** If your child starts out on the wrong foot, it is all downhill from there. Being there for the first few problems will assure you and your child that things are going to be okay.

**Realize when there is a problem.** If you end each night with you or your child in tears something needs to be done. Look for other sources such as a tutor, friend, or relative to help. It is better to be a supportive parent than an ineffective teacher.

The five ideas above may not be the solution to your problems, and in fact they may or may not help to make things better when it comes to homework. Remember that communication with your child and their teachers are the key to success when it comes to homework. Keeping everyone informed is a solution that can help almost any problem. For more information on this topic or other youth related issues please contact the University of Missouri Extension Office in Henry County at 660-885-5556.