

## Some of the Ways Parents Can Help

- Communicate with the school—find out what the expectations are regarding homework.
- Create time and space for homework. Limit TV and computer games and help your child find a comfortable, quiet place to work.
- Provide supplies such as pencils, pens, coloured pencils, paper, scissors, sharpener, eraser, ruler, gluestick, dictionary, and perhaps a thesaurus.
- Allow your child to make the decisions regarding when homework will be done.
- Encourage initiative and independence.
- Show interest.
- Provide positive feedback.
- Let your child know that you have confidence in him or her.
- Set limits on homework. You will know when enough is enough!
- Avoid making homework your responsibility.
- Contact the teacher if there are any concerns about homework.

### Children will do their best when

- they are not tired or hungry
- they are not upset
- they understand the task and know how / have what they need to complete it
- they are keen to do the homework

## A Question of Balance ...

Homework is only one of many ways to help children develop confidence, motivation, diligence, persistence, and responsibility. Encourage your child to participate in physical activities, including play. Play also helps children learn at school. It is important for healthy brain and body development.

Unstructured play helps children to develop socially, emotionally, and academically by

- fostering creativity and imagination
- improving problem-solving skills
- developing teamwork skills—sharing, negotiating, and resolving conflicts

## What if Your Child's Teacher Doesn't Give Homework?

This is not a bad thing! It is your opportunity to encourage your child to work on things that are of interest to her or him.

Encourage your child to

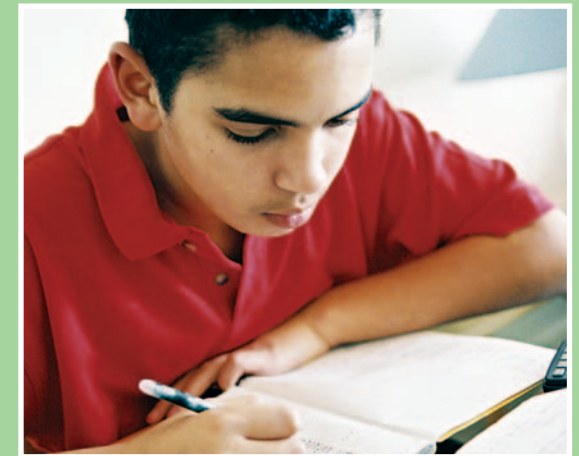
- be physically active
- read a book, magazine, or comic
- write a letter, poem, story, or song
- research a new topic
- work on challenging math questions
- draw, paint, sing, or dance
- perform a play
- build something
- offer to help someone
- work on his or her own home projects
- investigate the world around him or her



This pamphlet is part of a series to inform parents about the Nova Scotia Department of Education Public School Program. For more information, contact your child's teacher.

# Let's talk about ...

## Homework Grades 4–6



## Meaningful Homework

Assignments that are purposeful, engaging, and of high quality so that students will take the time needed to complete the assignment, students benefit from their effort, and parents are appropriately and effectively involved in their children's education. "More Than Minutes: Teachers' Roles in Designing Homework" (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001)

Let's talk about ...

# Homework Grades 4–6

Homework can be a wonderful opportunity to talk to your child about what's happening at school, and to see what your child can do on his or her own.

Homework can help children

- review and practise what they have learned in class
- develop self-confidence as independent learners
- apply what they have learned
- solve problems
- expand their knowledge

## What Counts as Homework?

Depending on the age of the child, assigned homework takes several different forms:

- home reading program
- preparation for class work (e.g., making observations in the home, collecting information or materials for projects)
- research and project work
- extension of the curriculum (e.g., continuing class work at home or at the library, researching a topic, playing math games)
- review and practice activities
- assigned physical activity

## What Does the Research Say?

“Homework can be beneficial when it is creative, challenging, and done in moderation.”

*Homework: The Evidence*  
Dr. Susan Hallam, 2004

## Time for Homework

Making time for homework can be a challenge. You want your child to have enough time for family and community activities, physical activities, hobbies, and play. Free time is essential for a child's development.

Homework time should be organized to meet the needs of individual students and families. If some nights are not good because of other commitments, then consider a block of time on the weekend.

Maximum Total Time for Homework Four Nights Per Week	
Grade 4	20–30 minutes per day
Grade 5	30–40 minutes per day
Grade 6	40–50 minutes per day

Remember: There is no hard and fast rule that requires homework every day!

## Caution!

Homework can also be a negative experience. It can cause young people to turn off school and turn off learning. Teachers and parents need to make sure that this doesn't happen. If your son or daughter frequently complains and is reluctant to do homework because

- there is too much of it to do
- it is boring
- it is unclear
- it is too difficult
- it is handed out as punishment

then ...

## Take Action!

Talk to your son or daughter about the homework. Find out exactly what the problem is and then contact the teacher. Do it sooner rather than later, before it becomes a major issue.

At the beginning of the school year, find out the school guidelines on homework.

let's talk about ...