

Government Guidelines on Homework.

Government guidelines on homework give a broad indication of the type of activities and how much time pupils of different ages might reasonably be expected to spend on homework.

For children at primary schools the guidelines are:

Years 1 and 2	1 hour per week
Years 3 and 4	1.5 hours per week
Years 5 and 6	30 minutes per day

For pupils at secondary school the guidelines are:

Years 7 and 8	45-90 minutes per day
Year 9	1 - 2 hours per day
Years 10 and 11	1.5 - 2.5 hours per day

However, the guidelines emphasise that it is more important that homework helps your child to learn than whether it takes a certain amount of time. The guidelines encourage schools to plan homework carefully alongside the work children do at school, and to make sure that all activities are appropriate for individual children.

The Government's guidelines for schools Homework: Guidelines for Primary and Secondary Schools can be read in full on the DfES Standards Site. There are a number of key points for parents to note.

How much homework?

Children should not be expected to spend significantly longer on them than the guide times set out above.

Activities may not take as long as the guide times: that does not matter at all as long as they are useful.

Schools and teachers are expected to organise homework carefully so that children are not expected to do too much on any one day.

What sort of activities should children be doing?

All homework activities should be related to work children are doing at school.

However, homework should not always be written work. For young children it will largely be:

- reading with parents or carers
- informal games to practice mathematical skills

For older children, including children at secondary school, homework may include:

- reading
- preparing a presentation to the class
- finding out information
- making something
- trying out a simple scientific experiment
- cooking

Should parents help with homework?

Generally, schools are very keen for parents to support and help children with their homework.

But there may be times when schools will want to see what your children can do on their own. < ?p?>

It is also important, particularly as they get older, for your children to become increasingly independent in their learning.

However, schools generally take the view that children are likely to get more out of an activity if parents get involved - as long as they do not take over too much.

If you are unsure about what your role should be you should discuss it with your child's school.

They will be very pleased that you are interested and will want to help you get the balance right.

Doing homework somewhere other than at home

Over the next few years, many schools will be given funding so that they can provide opportunities for older children to do homework either at school or somewhere else where there is supervision. For example a study support centre- such as at a library, or in some places a football club. Some schools already offer this opportunity; contact your child's school for information.

Feedback on your child's homework

Schools are expected to make sure that children are given feedback on their homework. It should be given in a way that lets your child know

- how well they have done
- how they could do better

This may not always be through written comments from the teacher.

- sometimes, work will be discussed in lessons
- other times, teachers may give written comments on just one or two aspects of a piece of work

If you are concerned about the feedback given to your child you should discuss this with the school.

Children with special needs

The Government's guidelines include broad recommendations on homework for children with special needs. Schools are expected to consider carefully the needs of individual children and think about how they can best work with parents and carers to support their learning, including their personal and social development.

Teachers are asked to be careful to ensure that children with special needs in mainstream schools are given good quality homework tasks - rather than just finishing off class work. They should also work with school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (the SENCO) to make sure that the level is right.

Ten things you can do to help your child learn outside (and at) school

1. Give your child confidence through lots of praise and encouragement.
 - As a parent, you have tremendous power to strengthen your child's confidence - and confidence is vital to learning.
 - Specific praise focusing on a particular aspect of their work ("I like the way you have...") is more effective than bland, blanket praise.
 - Some people argue that to really do well, children - perhaps all of us - need ten-times as much praise as criticism!
2. Read to, and with, your child as much as possible. As part of the National Year of Reading the Government is encouraging parents and carers to read to children, hear them read, or encourage them to read to themselves, for at least 20 minutes a day.
3. Encourage children to observe and talk about their surroundings. Even young children can be helped to read notices and signs, for example, and understand what they mean.
4. Make use of your local library. Look out for special events and services for children.
5. Visit museums and places you think your child might find interesting. Children now have free admission to major national museums and art galleries.
6. If your children like watching television, watch it with them sometimes and encourage them to talk about what they have seen. They will get more out of the experience.
7. Try to set time aside to do "homework" activities with young children. Schools won't mind if other members of the family join in too!
8. Wherever possible, try to provide a reasonably quiet place for children to do homework (or help them to get to other places where homework can be done).
9. Encourage your child to discuss homework with you, including feedback from teachers. Practise helping without taking over!
10. Try to help your child to see the enjoyable aspects of homework!

This information was kindly supplied by the [Dfes](#) (Department for Education and Skills).