

for Parents

Practical information about education for parents and carers

Homework

Many children come home with some type of homework, like reading, learning how to spell new words, practising basic maths facts, or even projects to be completed over a longer period of time. It is useful to know how to support your child to do their homework, but not do it for them.

Will my child get homework?

Maybe. Different schools and kura have different homework policies - some set homework for older students but not younger ones, some set homework for all students, while others set none at all.

Talk to your child's teacher to find out their approach to homework. If your child's school doesn't get homework at this stage in their learning, that's ok – they will still be learning what they need to at school.

Why do schools and kura have different homework policies?

There's a lot of debate about the value of homework, especially for primary school aged children. Some studies suggest that homework is not very useful for this age group, or has only a small benefit. However, it's generally agreed that reading at home is very beneficial and it's likely that your child will bring home books to read to you.

Some schools and kura may also encourage you to work with your child on basic maths facts or spelling tasks.

If homework is part of the school or kura's policy, research suggests this should be short and frequent and closely monitored by the teacher for the most impact. Your child's teacher should be providing feedback to your child for it to be beneficial.

Studies have also found interactive homework set by teachers and involving parents has a very positive effect, for example, using maths fractions when preparing food.

Teachers set homework for different reasons so it can be helpful to know why so that you can support that at home. You may want to ask them is it to:

- practise skills like maths and spelling
- fix new learning in your child's memory
- check how successful the classroom teaching has been and where your child needs some help
- to help students apply what they have learned to new situations or contexts
- to encourage you to get involved in your child's learning.

How can I help my child with homework?

If your child does bring work home here are some tips to help them:

- let them have a bit of time to unwind after school or kura - they will have been working all day
- give them a snack and drink - their brains work better with fuel
- make sure they have a suitable environment to work in. Let them choose a comfortable space, clear away any distractions and keep siblings away from them
- decide together how long their homework will take
- make sure they have everything they need before they start - a set of fun stationery just for homework can be a great motivator.

What if they get stuck?

Help your child problem-solve by explaining or showing them the steps to complete a task. Let them do the steps though.

- make up a similar question or task as an example. Show them how to work through it and then get them to have a go at their homework task
- try giving clues rather than the answer, but be aware of frustration levels - both theirs and yours
- keep the clues simple - remind them of all the other times they have been able to work things out
- ideally homework will be connected to something they've already learned, so encourage them to think back and start from what they can do.

Don't help them too much, for example, explain where and how to find information, rather than giving it to them.

What if I don't understand their homework?

If you're confused by your child's homework, talk to their teacher - you won't be the first parent to do this. Or it may be that your child is happy to ask for help and then they can explain things to you. They may also be able to find answers by using the internet or the local library, or by asking an older sister or brother.

Further information

There are some parent great ideas for helping with reading, writing and maths on the [Ministry's tki website](http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Reporting-to-parents-whanau/Examples-and-templates/How-parents-and-whanau-can-help-at-home) [<http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Reporting-to-parents-whanau/Examples-and-templates/How-parents-and-whanau-can-help-at-home>]

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