

We can win the battle!



Are you experiencing fights over homework with your kids almost every day? Do you find yourself keep asking questions like: “ Is it my responsibility, or his? How many times should I say it? Am I getting too much involved? Are you fighting over and over about the same things and you have the feeling nothing is changing?” Every parent who has children at school, has probably experienced some “home-work battles”.

But how does homework become a battle?

There are several reasons for a struggle to begin, the most common is because your child would rather be playing, texting with friends, or doing anything else but homework and then the parents force them to do it and the children push back. The result is the vicious circle of anger and force that starts with parents becoming angry and using force to get it done and children become more resistant (subconsciously).

So what do we have to do?

There is no secret formula to answer this question but there are some approaches which in every family depending on the age of the children, their maturity, their schedule and their environment, could help.

- Start from an early age to talk about the importance of schoolwork, it is their job! Our job is to do errands, to cook, to go to our work and do it properly, make the children realise. Going to school is a very normal thing in our lives.
- Set a homework time, with your child and keep this schedule. If this doesn't work, then you can change it according to convenience (in your rules). Always after homework time, they should be allowed to do what they want whether, it is playing or pursuing any other hobby. In case your child has less homework or no homework you could set a reading time, they can read a book or magazine and then they can play. ( don't overdo it with reading time though, free time and playing outside is very much important, too).
- I had good experiences by setting up the alarm clock. For example, put 20 min on your timer and say: “ I'm sure you can do this homework in less than 20 min and when the alarm clock rings you can play!” or “ How much time do you think you need for this, do you want to try if you're ready in 20 min?” Try something like this in a funny way. You can also make it look like a game between you and your child saying ” Let's see who is ready first...”
- Some kids like to do their homework in their own room, some prefer to be near to us doing homework on the kitchen table. When it's homework time it should be quiet time in your house, take a book and read while they do homework or do

some stuff you have to do on your computer, noticing how nice it is that you work together.

- Sometimes children have a lot of homework through the weekends. Personally, I don't think this is good. After five days of work they also deserve free time, but as I said before, this is what I believe.

Still, what to do if they have homework? Talk with your child, does he/ she prefer to do homework on Friday, so that weekends can be free or they prefer to take some time out in weekends. Always try out what works better for you and your family, but stay on what you agree.

- Get informed about your child's homework. It is important to know what your child's homework is, but for sure you have also have been through answers like : " We have no homework today." or "The teacher said we don't have to do it, it is optional" or "My teacher never checks the homework anyway." or "I finished it at school." Yes, our children can have creative excuses for not doing homework. It is not that they are not motivated. Motivation is something we have been born with, but our children are motivated to do what they like to. For that reason it is better to focus on their behaviour first and not on their motivation and slowly there will be an improvement on homework too. What you can use is taking advantage on your child's motivation in case if they have something they'd like to earn. Depending on their age and their maturity, there is a big spectrum of children's wishes starting from having an ice cream or extra time for something they want to watch till the driving licence.

We have to remember that our children come home from school tired and exhausted where they work and play the whole day. They need to feel free and less burdened while at home. In the school they have structures and consequences, that is why it is important that we have to continue to give them structure at home too. Parenting mostly is about creating constructive habits which make it possible for results to happen but it takes time.

As always it is easier to say than to do, and reading this doesn't mean you will win the "battle" tomorrow. It could give you some ideas, maybe you can develop your own creative ideas to prepare to "win the war" soon.

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