

# SHAKESPEARE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## HOW TO MOTIVATE YOUR CHILD TO

### DO THEIR HOMEWORK

**The First Rule of Homework** – Most children do not like to do homework. Focus on getting them to do it.

**The Second Rule of Homework** – You cannot make anyone do it. While you cannot insist, you can **assist**. Concentrate on assisting by being positive.

**The Third Rule of Homework** – It's their problem!  
Their pencil has to move. Their brains need to engage. Their bottoms need to be on the chair. Don't create ultimatums, scream and shout, threaten, bribe, scold and withhold privileges. They don't work! Your responsibility as parents/carers is to provide your child with an opportunity to do homework. Provide structure to create the system. Your child's job is to then do it!

#### **Tips**

- Don't expect them to just manage on their own. They may need you to sit with them, or be around to answer questions, explain what's required and how to go about it. When your child says, "I can't do it," suggest they act as if they can. Tell them to pretend like they know and see what happens. Then leave the immediate area and let them see if they can handle it from there. If they keep telling you they don't know how and you decide to offer help, concentrate on asking than on telling.  
Ask:  
"What do you get?"  
"What parts do you understand?"  
"Can you give me an example?"  
"What do you think the answer is?"  
"How could you find out?"
- Provide a quiet space with all the things they need (pencil/pen, rubber, ruler etc) so they don't have to keep running off to find them
- Set aside a regular, mutually agreed time slot, to cut down arguments, for example, after a bit of TV or after teatime

- If they are obviously too tired or feeling ill, leave it for another time
- Take the pressure off. If possible, make learning fun at this age by playing schools and going to the library or looking online together to find things out.
- Have a study table instead of a homework table. This word change alone will go a long way towards eliminating the problem of your child saying, “I don’t have any homework.”
- Keep the routine predictable and simple. One possibility includes a five-minute warning that study time is approaching, bringing their current activity to an end, clearing the study table, emptying their school bag of books and supplies, then beginning. Put out a drink and a biscuit too.
- Disorganisation is a problem for many primary school age children. If you want them to be organised you have to invest the time to help them learn an organisational system. Your job is to teach them the system. Their job is to use it.
- Replace monetary and external rewards with encouraging verbal responses. End the practice of paying for good work and going on a special trip for ice cream. This style of bribery has only short-term gains and does little to encourage children to develop a lifetime love of learning.  
 Instead make positive verbal comments that concentrate on describing the behaviour you wish to encourage.  
 “You followed the instructions exactly and finished in 15 minutes. Well done.”  
 “I notice you stayed up late last night working on your homework. It probably wasn’t easy saving that much to the end, but your efforts got it done.”  
 “I see you got to the table all organised and ready to start. I’m proud of you and I’m sure your teacher will be too.”
- Use study time to get some of your own responsibilities handled. Do the dishes, load the washer, do some ironing, or read. Keep the TV off and turn your mobile to silent! If you engage in fun or noisy activities during that time, children will naturally be distracted. Study time is a family commitment.

**If you won't commit to it, don't expect that your children will either.**

Special Note: tonight, when your child is studying, begin on *your* homework, which follows:

- Reread this article.
- Decide which parts of it you want to implement.
- Determine when you will begin.
- Then congratulate yourself for getting your homework done!

**CLARE WILSON – FAMILY LEARNING MENTOR**