



# Work & Family Matters

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September 2006



## Helping Your Student Get the Most Out of Homework



### Did You Know ...?

By many reports, 40% of kids don't eat breakfast.

But everyone knows that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, right?

Here is some proof:

The State of Minnesota Breakfast Study showed that 'students who ate breakfasts before starting school had a general increase in math grades and reading scores, increased student attention, reduced nurse visits, and improved student behaviors'

Children who eat a healthy breakfast 'meet their daily nutritional needs, keep their weight under control, have lower blood cholesterol levels, attend school more frequently, and make

Many students try to avoid it, but teaching and learning research indicates that children who spend more time on regularly assigned, meaningful homework, on average, do better in school.

This article answers questions many people have about homework. It gives specific advice for helping your children. Here are some quick hints to help your child get the most out of homework.

### Homework Hints

- Assume that your children will have studying to do every night.
- Ask your children to show you their homework after the teacher returns it, to learn where they're having trouble and where they're doing well. See if your children did the work correctly.
- Stay in touch with your children's teachers. Ask about their classes and what they are studying. Ask their teachers how you can support what they are studying (flash cards, spelling, etc.).
- Don't do your children's work for them. Help them learn how to do it themselves.
- Show your children that you think homework is important. If you are at work during homework time, ask to see their work when you get home.
- Praise your children for doing well. Make praise a habit.
- Maintain a portfolio of "best pieces."
- Help older students organize their assignments by recording them on calendars or planners, along with due dates, dates turned in, etc.

Source: National PTA & National Education Association

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## How Much Sleep Do Teens Need?

Most teens need about 8 1/2 to more than 9 hours of sleep each night. The right amount of sleep is essential for anyone who wants to do well on a test or play sports without tripping over their feet. Unfortunately, though, many teens don't get enough sleep.

Here are some things that may help you to sleep better:

- **Set a regular bedtime.** Going to bed at the same time each night signals to your body that it's time to sleep. Waking up at the same time every day can also help establish sleep patterns. So try to stick to your sleep schedule even on weekends. Don't go to sleep more than an hour later or wake up more than 2 to 3 hours later than you do during the week.
- **Exercise regularly.** Try not to exercise right before bed, though, as it can raise your body temperature and wake you up. Sleep experts believe that exercising 5 or 6 hours before bedtime (in late afternoon) may actually help a person sleep.
- **Avoid stimulants.** Don't drink beverages with **caffeine**, such as soda and coffee, after 4 PM.
- **Relax your mind.** Avoid violent, scary, or action movies or television shows right before bed - anything that might set your mind and heart racing. Reading books with involved or active plots may also keep you from falling or staying asleep.
- **Don't nap too much.** Naps of more than 30 minutes during the day may keep you from falling asleep later.
- **Create the right sleeping environment.** Studies show that people sleep best in a dark room that is slightly on the cool side. Close your blinds or curtains (and make sure they're heavy enough to block out light) and turn down the thermostat in your room (pile on extra blankets or wear PJs if you're cold). Lots of noise can be a sleep turnoff, too.

[http://kidshealth.org/teen/food\\_fitness/wellbeing/how\\_much\\_sleep.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/food_fitness/wellbeing/how_much_sleep.html)

## Did You Know...?

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fewer trips to the school nurses office complaining of tummy aches.

Kids who eat breakfast are more likely than children who skip breakfast to consume foods with adequate levels of minerals, such as calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, and vitamins, such as riboflavin, vitamins A, C, and B12, and folate.

Quick and easy breakfasts that are nutritional include:

- ready-to-eat cereal with fruit and milk
- toasted bagel with cheese
- fruit-filled breakfast bar and yogurt
- toasted waffle topped with fruit and yogurt
- fruit smoothie (fruit and milk whirled in a blender)
- peanut butter on whole-wheat toast

Source: American Dietetic Association

## The 10-Point Plan for Less Stress

Here are some pointers about how to cope better with stress:

1. Be positive-see problems as opportunities. Have goals and visions. Have a positive mental attitude.
2. Talk things over with someone. Learn to confide in others.
3. Determine what causes you stress and try to eliminate it.
4. Become physically fit. Step up your exercise.
5. Balance work, home/family and recreation.
6. Get enough sleep and rest.
7. Learn relaxation techniques and systematic ways to relax.
8. Give yourself time to think. Time taken for you is time well deserved, and is vital for a healthy body, mind and spirit.
9. "Coast" when necessary.
10. Learn to accept things you cannot change.

Source: Maria Gracia.  
Lifeorganizers, 2004-2005.  
[www.lifeorganizers.com/finances/oraanize-finacnes.htm](http://www.lifeorganizers.com/finances/oraanize-finacnes.htm)

## Friendship Is Important to Older Adults



Many studies have shown the benefits of friendship on positive social, emotional, and physical well-being. Having a strong circle of friends can be a good source for aging hearts and help the body's auto immune system resist disease. People who have one or more good friends have better health than those who have only casual friends or no friends.

In the USA, one of three women and one of every seven men aged 65 or older lives alone. They need to reach out to friends for companionship, friendship, support, and human contact. In addition, men usually have a harder time dealing with their widowhood than women. About two-thirds of older men reported that they did not have a close friend, while 16% of widows reported having no friends.

Because of physical changes, loss, and retirement, friendship is very important for older people. Although casual friendships can help, one close friend can help relieve stress and depression. Friendship not only gives emotional support, but also is a way of helping, sharing, caring, and informing each other. Friendship can help enrich a person's physical, emotional, and social health and adjust to changes through the challenging times of life.

If you don't have a friend, take the initiative to be a friend to someone else. For instance, join social clubs, civic groups, volunteer organizations, community events, church activities, etc. These are good places to meet people and build a good relationship. When you attend a group, have something to say. Be informed by reading news, magazines, and books and find opportunities to speak to other people without waiting for them to do it. It is also very important to listen to what the person is saying to you. Remember, if you want to have a friend, you must be a friend.

Source: Nina Chen, Ph.D., human development specialist, University of Missouri Extension

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Life, Work, & Family!**  
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