

Raise an academic champion

How? By helping your kids with their homework

Homework is often a daunting task for parents as well as students, and can easily become the cause of family disputes, regardless of how conscientious your kids are. As parents try to ensure their children prioritize schoolwork and complete tasks on time, they have to contend with trying to fit in various activities and family commitments. For students, concentrating at home can be tough, especially after a long school day that starts early and may include a lunchtime meeting for the science club and lacrosse practice after school.

Janeal Roberts, vice president of education for KLC School Partnerships, believes that organization is key to managing homework successfully. "Setting aside a dedicated area for homework, devising a schedule and helping your child stay on top of their workload will make life easier for the whole family," recommends Roberts. "Making school work a priority in your home, and helping your child to set aside time to complete school work, sends the signal that you care about your child and his or her future." Based on her experience and work with School Partnerships, Roberts offers these

helpful tips for parents:

- Make a schedule. Make homework part of a schedule that includes other fun activities so children will look forward to those activities and work toward them. Sitting down and establishing a contract with your child regarding homework and your expectations is essential.

- Identify a location in your home conducive to learning. Look for a location where there is good lighting, limited distractions and comfortable seating.

- Remove distractions. Turn off the TV and have your child avoid using the telephone until homework is completed. Ask family members to participate in quiet activities during homework time.

- Make sure your child has a healthy snack before doing homework. According to the American Dietetic Association, children who eat balanced snacks pay attention longer in class, make fewer mistakes on tests and generally have fewer behavioral problems.

- Be a role model for your child. It is important to read with your child, have him or her read to you or read while the child is studying as a way

of showing support. While your child is working on homework, let him or her see you completing tasks such as paying the bills or other work assignments.

- Talk to your child about his or her classes. Know what classes your child is taking, what regular homework assignments are in each class and learn which assignments are liked and which your son or daughter struggles with. Most schools today have online tools which give you access to teachers and homework resources. Take the time to learn about what communication tools your school is using and use them. Stay in contact with your child's teachers -- do not wait until conference time.

- Reward success with praise. Displaying good grades or significant improvement can boost your child's confidence. Post an A+ on the refrigerator and share accomplishments with other important people in your child's life.

(Janeal Roberts is vice president of education for School Partnerships, a nationwide provider of before- and after-school solutions. For more information visit www.klcschoolpartnerships.com.)

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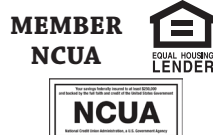
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