
***READY for SCHOOL* News: What about Homework?**

Homework is a typical expectation for children in elementary school. But is homework a good thing for four- and five-year-old children? Certainly reinforcing learning at home is always useful. Homework doesn't have to be what you remember as a child from your own school experience. It can be activities for you and your child to complete together so that it not only helps your child's learning but also reinforces the relationship between you and your child. Homework should be relevant to your child's emerging interests and skills and be short, interesting, fun, and low pressure.

Some homework will require children to bring something back to the center; others might have the expectation for verbal reporting to the group; still others may be entirely for personal enrichment with no reporting expected. The kind of homework that you might see at a Bright Horizons preschool or kindergarten* might include:

- Ask your parent to read you a book tonight. Copy the name of the book and bring it in tomorrow.
- Bring in one item that starts with the letter "C" in a bag. You and your parent can write down three clues to help us figure out what you have in your bag. For example, "It is orange; it is a vegetable; and it is eaten by rabbits."
- Write three different colors that leaves can be. Collect and bring in a leaf of each color.
- Count the number of cans in your kitchen cupboard/press.
- Take home a favorite soft toy/stuffed animal from your homebase. You and your parent can write a few sentences about its adventures over the weekend with you.

In preschool, your child will probably only receive homework occasionally. In kindergarten, homework is a regular activity sent home weekly or biweekly. As the school year progresses, homework typically becomes more challenging. Some kindergarten children may be reading and can borrow easy reader books that they can read to their family members.

There are other resources which you can use to reinforce children's learning at home.

- If your child is in preschool and you haven't already received them, ask your child's teacher or Director about the READY for SCHOOL Family Activity Cards which contain lots of activities to reinforce reading, writing, arithmetic and responsibility at home.
- You can also consult the *World at Their Fingertips* parent website for learning activities at home, <http://www.brighthorizons.com/splash/> and then click on the *World at Home* star. These activities have recently been updated with over 70 new additions.

There are lots of pulls on your time as a family and you may sometimes decide that cuddling or riding bikes together takes precedent over "homework." As a parent, you get to make those choices. The most important learning is communicating to your child that he or she matters to you and that is communicated through the time spent together.