

AFTERSCHOOL *news*



More Than Homework: Building Study Skills

Many expanded learning programs include time for students to complete homework after school. To achieve academic success, however, students don't just need time to complete homework. They also need to develop study skills that will help them succeed. Tutoring, Mentoring, and Building Study Skills is one of the promising practices in the homework section of the Afterschool Training Toolkit, and it outlines ways you can help students acquire study skills.

The first step in successful tutoring and mentoring programs is to identify the subjects in which students need help. For example, if students have ongoing questions about homework in a particular subject area, they may need tutoring in that subject. Consider whether one-on-one or small-group tutoring would be more appropriate. Next, determine the best tutoring match: Is the ideal tutor an afterschool instructor, a teacher, or another student?

To help students develop study skills, remember the three Ms essential to mentoring students to succeed in homework: motivation, monitoring, and modeling. To increase motivation, create an open and positive atmosphere, help students feel valued, and give frequent and positive feedback and praise. Monitor students by circulating around the room looking for verbal and nonverbal cues for attention. When helping students who need attention, ask open-ended questions and give students time to think before answering questions. Modeling positive behavior is also important for student success. Always be positive when helping students with homework.

To complete their homework, students may need certain skills that are not taught in the school curriculum. For example, students may need help developing supplemental skills such as time management, note-taking, and test preparation. You can

- help students establish goals and timelines that divide their assignments and projects into smaller parts;
- help students study nonfiction text by having them write down emphasized words (boldface, italicized, etc.) on a separate sheet of paper that can serve as a study guide;
- help students determine what information to study for quizzes or tests and ask them expected test questions; and
- provide resources (e.g., books and Web sites) on study skills for students and review these resources yourself to help identify any additional skills your students may need.



To achieve academic success, students don't just need time to complete homework; they also need to develop study skills that will help them succeed.

The SEDL National Center for Quality Afterschool helps state education agencies and local practitioners develop high-quality programs for academic enrichment as well as youth development activities.

www.sedl.org/afterschool



RECOMMENDED *resource*

VIRTUAL ACADEMY FOR AFTERSCHOOL

This interactive professional development resource includes five online courses for professionals in a variety of expanded learning settings. Each course includes links to help align afterschool to school-day learning, effective instructional strategies, guided practice in project planning, and evidence-based instruction models that keep students engaged.

www.sedl.org/afterschool/academy



"Students who regularly did not complete their homework now experience the rewards of coming to school with it done."

KAY HANECA
co-coordinator

ECHO Charter School 21st Century Program

ECHO, MINNESOTA

At ECHO Charter School, the instructors know that a successful transformation in a student's academic performance can begin in afterschool. All 68 students, in grades 3 through 11, in the school's afterschool program must complete their homework before they can participate in other activities. According to program co-coordinator Kay Haneca, "We have found that students who regularly did not complete their homework [before attending afterschool] now experience the rewards of coming to school with it done. They have started to work harder on completing homework on their own."

To support their tutoring efforts, instructors consult with day-school teachers to learn about students' assignments and special projects or if they are falling behind on their work. Afterschool instructors allot a minimum of 30 minutes to homework completion and regularly schedule time for tutoring. Tutors help students understand their homework content and complete it on time.

According to Haneca, when students feel cared for, they try harder. She also attributes the program's success to cooperation, communication, high expectations, and positive attitudes. The program's structure and emphasis on homework helps ensure that the work done in afterschool will benefit students' day-school performance. "Most of our students are excited to go home with their homework completed," says Haneca. By offering homework help and tutoring in afterschool, the program at ECHO also helps ensure that the school fulfills its motto: Every Child Has Opportunities.

IN YOUR words

What do you think is the best way to ensure that students get the most out of their homework time in an expanded learning program? (Select all that apply.)

- Make homework time a daily routine
- Make sure that students can't participate in "fun" activities until they have completed their homework.
- Work closely with day-school teachers.
- Offer prizes for students who complete their homework.
- Other

To participate in this survey and view results, submit your vote at www.sedl.org/afterschool/afterwords/survey200906.html.

Produced by

NATIONAL CENTER FOR QUALITY AFTERSCHOOL

Advancing Research, Improving Education



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TRAINING tip

Give Them a Break

While it is important for students to develop the habit of finishing their homework before beginning other activities, they may also be ready for a break if they have just finished the school day. Consider giving students a chance to eat a snack and complete a brief warm-up activity as a way of transitioning into homework time. This break doesn't need to last very long, but it will give students a chance to rest before tackling the books.

EVENTS calendar

July 7–9 21st Century Community Learning Centers
Summer Institute
www.sei2003.com/21stcentury/
NASHVILLE, TN

July 9 Summer Learning Day
www.summerlearning.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=104&Itemid=426
NATIONWIDE

For more events, visit our calendar at www.sedl.org/afterschool/training/calendar.html.

Newsletter available online at www.sedl.org/afterschool/afterwords