



Organizations And Web Sites "Special needs"

Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder
(CH.A.D.D.)
(954) 587-3700
<http://www.chadd.org>

Eric Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted
Education (ERIC)
(800) 328-0272
http://www.indiana.edu/~eric_rec

National Information Center For Children & Youth
with Disabilities (NICHCY)
(800) 695-0285
<http://www.nichcy.org>

Parents' Educational Resource Center (PERC)
(415) 655-2410
<http://www.perc-schwabfdn.org>

Center for Development and Learning (CDL)
(504) 893-7777

Council For Exceptional Children (CEC) And the
Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD)
(703) 620-3660 or (800) 328-0272
<http://www.cec.sped.org>
<http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/~sjs5d/dld/>

National Center for Law and Learning Disabilities
(NCLLD)
(301) 469-8308

LD Online (WETA), in Association with the
Coordinated Campaign for Learning Disabilities
<http://www.ldonline.org>

National Parent Network on Disabilities shares
information to parents and support parents to
influence and affect policy issues concerning the
needs of people with disabilities and their families.
www.npnd.org/

California Department of Education Special
Education Division accessible site with
information related to special education programs.
www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/sed

Does Homework Help?

From an Article in Newsweek March, 1998
Editorialized by Joyce Inouye M.Ed.

Every night, millions of parents and children shed blood, sweat and tears over the kitchen table. Now, researchers say that these dreaded lessons are generally pointless until middle school.

I find it very interesting how many families join in the "protest" that their children are being drilled and practiced to tears because of the word "homework". Researchers are learning from the children whose long, sad battle with homework began in the first grade with maybe, 15 minutes a night plus some reading. Documented studies prove that by the fifth grade, there are honor roll children without learning differences, working as long as three to four hours a night. Families have become infuriated as homework has sabotaged family time and has crowded out childhood playtimes and extra-curricular activities. This infuriation may well be worth the cost if such has been proven to help children learn and develop within them good study habits and a lifelong love of learning. Unfortunately, results of this extensive study have found for elementary-age students, the effect of homework on achievement is trivial if it even exists at all. Harris Cooper of the University of Missouri has analyzed over 100 studies and concluded this from over ten years of research. Cooper collected data on 709 students in grades 2-4 and 6-12. In the lower grades, "there was a significant negative relationship between the amount of homework assigned and student attitudes."

The trend among schools to pile on more homework starting in kindergarten, could backfire. Private schools as well as public schools have felt the "academic push" to build skills at a younger age. Administrators, Teachers and parents have felt the need to help their children excel academically. High schools offer college credit for their seniors and the major universities are accepting only those students with college credit seen in their high school years. After school tutors are in great demand, as well as the academic after school programs which also prove to be very expensive. This push in a child's academic knowledge has become the rule and many families are concerned with the consequences of such, as more and more children are exhibiting compulsive and fearful behaviors.

The article mentions a term called, "Good Homework". "Good Homework" is mentioned to build upon a child's critical and creative thinking skills with tasks that take no more than 15-25 minutes to complete. It was found that with this kind of homework, children develop a love of learning, build and hone study skills through the discipline, and have a chance to exercise creative thinking. (i.e. rather than memorizing names, dates, battles of the Civil War, etc... students might write fictional letters from a Northerner to a Southerner.) "Good Homework" assignments are crucial to the next day's class work which can only emphasize to the students that their homework is important, and not something to just keep them "busy".

But even "Good Homework" can be overdone, if homework gets piled on, and if it's boring. Students will go through satiation and frustration. More than 100 studies find that it is not until middle school that homework begins to pay off. Julian Betts of the University of California, San Diego, for instance, followed 3,000 seventh and tenth graders. "The amount of math homework assigned had a huge effect on math test scores. A seventh grader given 15 minutes of math homework every school night through eleventh grade would wind up one full grade ahead in achievement compared with one who did no math homework for those years. Middle school children can imagine and focus with substantive homework that requires students to integrate and apply knowledge. High school students can relate directly to the school curriculum and have resigned themselves to the routine. Elementary students are beginning to build knowledge of basic information.

I feel "Good Homework" should include family and playtime with others. Family and playtime with others is developmentally necessary for the growing child. From these relationships, a child learns what Jesus considers utmost in importance, which is loving others. How can anyone learn to live with others when they are memorizing on a table by themselves? We want our children to grow in their social skills as well as their academic skills. God wants us in relationship with others. Perhaps having "Good homework" would provide us time with family and friends and would allow our children to have extra-curricular activities that build upon their interests and strengths. Have educators forgotten about a child's sense of balance, security, communicative skills and esteem? Why is there such a "push" for the elementary child to learn? Is it really in the child's interest to have SAT scores that promote a school's academic standing? It is my hope that schools would allow our the elementary child to have the joy of after-school time to do what would best build their interest in learning. My prayer alongside this, is that "Good Homework" will exist and that family and playtime would become a greater emphasis of our families every day. I feel that this article proves that homework should be a smaller part of a young child's afternoon and for the middle school child, a continuing discipline as long as family and friends also are an