

Do kids benefit from homework?

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Homework is as old as school itself. Yet the practice is controversial as people debate the benefits or consider the shortcomings and hassles. Research into the topic is often contradictory and certain districts in the United States have outright banned homework. So, what's the ideal solution?

“Those who favour [homework](#) argue that it makes parents participate in their child's education and follow the evolution of their child,” says Roch Chouinard, vice-dean of the Université de Montréal's Faculty of Education. “Homework gives kids a sense of responsibility and teaches them to plan their work, which in turn helps develop their autonomy and organizational skills.”

“Contrarily, those who are against homework argue that it contributes to social inequality,” continues Chouinard. “Lower income families or

single-parent families often can't offer as much time and input as two-parent families, which creates social disparities and increases conflict at home.”

Research arguing for the benefits of homework is often more sophisticated in data collection and analysis, says Chouinard: “This research has demonstrated benefits to learning outside school hours and its positive impact on parent-child relationships.”

“One thing is certain,” stresses Chouinard, “homework is more beneficial when it is short but frequent rather than long. What's more, the correlation between homework and cognitive and social benefits is precarious. This means if there is too much homework potential benefits can become negative. This tipping point varies from one family to the next and from one environment to the next.”

Chouinard insists that homework isn't the miracle remedy to an ailing [education](#) system and he says many other factors are far more important. “First, schools must have the ability to help a child's relationships with teachers and other students. If a child doesn't like anyone at school, he or she will have no reason to be there,” says Chouinard. “Second, a child must have some success at school in order to build his or her self-esteem. Third, a child must participate in decisions that will affect his or her life. Finally, a [child](#) needs meaning to why he is studying. This need for meaning increases with age.”

Chouinard recommends that for homework to be effective it must be instilled as part of daily routine: it must always be completed at the same time and in a calm environment with little distraction. Parents must never complete homework for their children and never use homework as a form of punishment. These simple rules, according to Chouinard, can make a world of difference.

Provided by University of Montreal ([news](#) : [web](#))

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