

Parents need an attitude adjustment to improve their children's homework motivation

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Parents who want to improve their child's motivation to complete homework this school year need to change their own attitude and behavior, according to a new study by Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) researchers.

In the study published in *Learning and Individual Differences*, BGU researchers found that if [parents](#) had a more positive, supportive attitude and communicated the learning value as motivation, rather than focusing on completing an assignment or getting a higher grade, then the child's attitude and motivation would improve.

Dr. Idit Katz, Dr. Avi Kaplan and doctoral student Tamara Buzukashvily, of BGU's Department of Education, recommend parents give their children some choices, including when or where to do homework.

"Parents can improve a sense of competence by allowing children to structure their own tasks and by giving the child the feeling that he is loved and admired no matter how successful he or she is in math or language," the researchers said.

The study also shows that parents should ask themselves about their own motivations, attitudes and competence before trying to "treat" or "change" the child. Moreover, educational programs that try to change the attitude and motivation of students toward homework should not keep the parents "out of the loop" as their behavior is essential.

"Little formal research has been conducted about the [home environment](#) where homework is taking place, although it has been an integral part of education and is a controversial yet often used educational practice," according to the study. "The home environment is just as important for instilling positive motivation as the school is."

The researchers conducted the study at two [elementary schools](#) with 135 fourth graders and one of each child's parents. The students completed questionnaires regarding their level of motivation to do homework, while parents answered another survey on their willingness to help. This allowed perceptions of the home environment to be examined from both perspectives.

Among the sample, more than 60 percent of parents reported being involved with their child's homework once a week and 35 percent indicated being involved every day or more than once a week. Only four percent said they are never involved in their child's [homework](#).

Provided by American Associates, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

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