



## **“Help! My Child won’t do Homeschooling work!”**

### **Suggestion and Ideas for Getting More Co-operation and Less Power Struggles**

- Give choices in subject matter, time, or place of study. E.g. would the child like to do Math or English today? When is their best, most alert time of day? Would they like to study in their rooms, outside, or on the couch?
- Alternate bookwork days with outing days. Consider helping the child learn in a different way with an outing or field trip instead of researching books.
- Consider giving tests first and if the concepts are mastered, eliminate the text material. Cuts down on boredom and busywork.
- Present the material in a fun way and geared to child’s learning style. Use learning aids such as movies, cookie fractions, board and action games such as multiplication tag. Children in elementary school love to learn through play and food.
- Follow interests as much as possible, if not in format, then in content. For example, if the child has to write essay or book report, perhaps he could choose the topic or book.
- Use rewards if they work for your child. Stickers, Passes for fun outings and computer time are some choices from parents. Have a jar of 200 dimes (one for each school day). Any day the child doesn’t whine about doing schoolwork, put a dime into another jar. The child can keep the money at the end of the year.
- Avoid power struggles. Put your relationship building first. Try and approach learning another way. Listen to why your child doesn’t want to do the work. Is it too boring? Too easy? Not relevant?

- For those hesitant writers, try being the scribe while the child dictates ideas. Or try letting them write on the computer, which is easier on little hands. Remember that in school, children are taught to read and write early because most curriculums is delivered that way for mass distribution. At home, you have the time and resources to deliver the knowledge in other formats, so you can wait until the child is developmentally ready to use their fine motor skills.
- For those hesitant readers, try picking up an enticing children’s book and reading out loud. Your child might come join you if it’s not forced. Model reading yourself. Cuddle on the couch with a child and make reading a fun, cozy, exciting time. Use vocal variety and stop when the child is not longer interested.
- Keep a routine going when you figure out the best time of day for bookwork. This has to work for you and your child. Not all children are “morning people”. Be kind but firm in sticking to a routine. Children need some structure.
- Have a written contract each week, month or year that is signed and agreed to by the parent and child, about what work must be completed for that time period.
- Work with the child that is most interested in the topic (such as History or Science). Other siblings will join willingly if they are interested. If they are not, wait awhile. If the topic is forced, the retention of knowledge will be minimal. They may be more interested in a few months or years. Children often learn better by discovery than by being told.
- Some months are better than others. Children go through spurts and plateaus and most do not learn in tidy sequential steps. During a plateau, trust that the desire and motivation will come back.
- Assimilation of material takes time. Plan for playtime, down time and many breaks (minutes, days, weeks and even months).
- Create a learning environment of fun, curiosity and good feelings. Make sure everyone is fed, rested, comfortable and non-stressed!
- Add movement. Young children need to move their bodies in order to learn.
- Beware of peer pressure – sometimes children do not want to work in the presence of siblings.
- Have fun! Make it a game. Have a contest. Award prizes for participating.
- Make the world your learning environment. Make use of “waiting” time. Have (laminated posters in the bathroom, a world map on the wall, a timeline in a room, library books in the car, busy bags for waiting, and play word or numeracy games while commuting (not the driver!).
- Use the Problem-Solving template to find out your needs and your child’s needs. Brainstorm solutions and come to some compromise on how everyone gets their needs met.
- Never punish for not doing the work. You want to create a climate for lifelong learning and enjoyment of the pursuit of knowledge. Remember, your job is to facilitate learning. Nudge, but don’t force! Kids can learn math any time, but building a relationship only has a few years window.

**BUILD THE RELATIONSHIP AND THE RESUME WILL TAKE CARE OF ITSELF**

WE WILL TRY AGAIN, ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER WAY

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