

Help Your Child Take Responsibility for Belongings and Schoolwork

“I can’t do my homework. I left my book at school.” Sound familiar? Here’s a tip developed by a middle school teacher to make sure the right books get home at night.

- ❖ Tell your child to organize his/her locker. Your child should stack schoolbooks so the spines are visible.
- ❖ Purchase a supply of 1x1 self-stick notes. Ask your child to carry these to every class.
- ❖ At the end of class, your child can write the assignment on the self-stick note (as well as in his/her agenda), and stick it on the spine of the book.

At the end of the day when everyone is in a rush to catch the bus, your child can relax. All he/she needs to do is take out the books with notes stuck to the spine. All books and assignments will be right at hand.

Make Sure Homework Gets to School:

For many children, getting ready for school each day involves a daily scavenger hunt: “Where is my homework? Who took my lunch box?”

You can save time and tempers. All you need is cardboard box for each child. The box needs to be big enough to hold everything your child takes to school each day. (Produce boxes from the supermarket are ideal.)

Have your child choose a place for the box—near the front door or in his/her room. Every afternoon, the first task is to place all belongings in the box. When homework is finished, it goes in the box, too. In the morning, the box is the last stop before heading out the door.

Make Remembering Easier

Try a large family calendar. Keep one calendar for the entire family. Use different colors to keep track of each person’s activities. Add things like major tests and big school projects. Help your child get into the habit of checking the calendar each day, before and after school.

Put up a bulletin board. Post a bulletin board for each family member by the back door. Tack anything your child needs to remember to the bulletin board.

Notebook Helps Older Kids Get Organized

As kids grow older, buy them one large three-ring notebook for school. Use dividers to separate the work for class. You may also want to create some “pockets” for holding papers. Expect them to carry the notebook with them to every class—and to bring it home at night.

Each night, as your child finishes homework for a class, he/she should put everything into the notebook. Corrected homework and test go back into the notebook or the pockets, making it easier to study for tests. If all of his/her schoolwork is in one place, it will be harder to forget it at school or home.

Figure Out Why Your Child Is Forgetting

Try as you might, there are some kids who always seem to forget to bring home their homework, despite all of your efforts. Ask yourself:

Is my child looking for attention? If so, don't react when your child tells you he or she has forgotten something. Stay calm—and let your child accept the consequences.

Is the homework too hard? Talk with the teacher. Is your child the only one having problems? Is your child capable of doing the work? What extra help could your child receive?

Does your child understand the importance of homework? Ask for a three-way conference with you, your child and the teacher. Have the teacher explain the importance of homework now...and in the future.