

Homework for Kindy kids

Public schools in NSW don't expect children in Kindergarten to complete formal homework.

They encourage families to read with their children and be involved in family activities that assist the development of their skills in reading, mathematics and problem solving to make the most of what they are learning.

Learning through play

Thea Eyles, an early childhood expert with the NSW Department of Education and Communities, says young children in the early years of school need the time to play.

"I think the most powerful message around the homework issue for parents of children who are in Kindergarten and Year 1 is that playing is

learning," Thea says.

"Early childhood educators know the importance of learning through play – it is this philosophy that forms the basis of early childhood education, and all of the international research supports this approach."

Formal homework

More formal homework usually starts in Years 1 and 2 where children may be asked to complete some maths, simple writing tasks, or an activity sheet. The purpose of this homework is to reinforce what has been learnt in class.

Homework helps:

* to bridge the gap between learning at school and learning at home.

* parents to see what their child can do and to be involved in their learning.

* improve children's concentration and focus.

* children to retain and understand what they've been taught in class.

* prepare children for what they will be taught the next day.

* provide children with the challenges and stimulus they need to engage in their class-work.

Perfect balance

NSW Department of Education and Communities curriculum expert Ken Olah says the homework policy, which schools use as a guide, is based on common sense.

"The amount of

homework depends on the age of the student, the school context, the subject, the purpose for which the homework is set, and so on," he says.

"Homework should help build good learning habits; it shouldn't exhaust or turn kids off."

Schools develop their own homework policy with input from staff and parents. Ask your school for a copy.

If you find homework is becoming too much or is too difficult for your child, or there is something specific going on for your family that makes getting homework done a real challenge, have a chat with your child's teacher.

Source:

www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au

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Goulburn High School | Goldsmith St, Goulburn
Ph 4821 4022 | www.goulburn-h.school.nsw.edu.au

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