

Boys and Homework

By Ian Lillico



Homework is an issue for many parents of boys and girls. Homes have become difficult places for students to study with the advent of television, two parents working, family fragmentation and general noise and confusion. Recent research indicates that students need to work more in class and less at home. However, when homework is set it needs to be done well and marked or assessed by the teacher.

Boys (when reading) need to look for information and fact to direct their reading. You can assist them in doing their reading by asking them questions to find out prior to their reading a chapter or book. When writing an essay or assignment, get the boy to verbalize to you what he is going to write prior to writing it. This greatly aids the fluency, content and volume of his writing.

It is a good idea to spend two minutes each night with your son to help him organize his homework before he starts it. Help him order the sequence of subjects etc and then send him to his room for a set amount of time to complete it. Boys should not spend wasted hours in their room each night presumably doing homework as they begin to get a negative attitude to it as a result. I am asking teachers throughout Australia to put a time limit on each piece of homework set to give boys and their parents an indication as to how much time should be spent (on average) on the particular piece of work. This also gives parents an idea of appropriate time that should be allocated.

Send him to his room for the sum of all the times suggested and have him return to you to see how he is gone. Give him positive feedback and praise him for good work completed. It is important to show an interest in his work as it makes him feel less isolated from the rest of the family. Boys are very social creatures and often don't want to make the sacrifice of isolation doing homework away from the family.

Try to ensure his room has no fluorescent lights, as these are disastrous to boys' learning. An incandescent light and preferably the low voltage 12V Quartz Halogen down lights are the best for giving atmosphere. The décor, lighting and general ambience of the area where your son does his homework is critical in giving him the incentive to spend time there. The same suggestions are very effective for daughters, but with boys we often have to try much harder to get him to make the sacrifice that homework demands of him.

