



Supporting your child with their homework

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In this article, Colin explores how homework can be a particularly stressful time for both the child/young person and the parent/carer. Colin will describe how Executive functioning skills can be particularly challenging, but employing some simple strategies can make all the difference.

Task initiation is an executive function challenge for those with ADHD. Changing from one task to another can be a real struggle. Here are four ideas for supporting children with their homework:

1. Prepare

Having a set time for homework is beneficial as children know what to expect and what is expected of them.

2. Timing

Transition warnings and a 'countdown' to the start time also allows young people to process the fact that they will be changing tasks. A simple timer on a phone at five-minute intervals can prepare young children.



3. **Utilise calming strategies**

A 'learning state' is required to enable the successful completion of homework. In order to acquire this state, we introduced calming strategies- deep breathing or a short relaxation exercise for five minutes.

4. **Break tasks down**

Breaking things down into manageable bite size pieces —'chunking'— in terms of task and time, can limit the information overload and support completion. Giving a child or young person each section of text separately, means they are able to focus on one aspect at a time and not be overwhelmed. This also allows them to 'chunk' down the time, for example, one hour doing homework followed by a 15 min break and then another hour of homework.

5. **Reward!**

Rewarding completion with specific praise developed for self-esteem. It may seem like a lot to do each time there is a homework task, but implementing these strategies will take less time than the procrastination, arguments and upset that can arise when children and young people struggle with homework.

