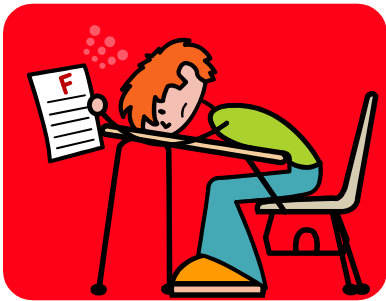


Struggling with Homework

Homework is a typical aspect of most children's and adolescents' lives. In many ways homework can be a useful, productive experience. Studying at home increases knowledge of the subject area. There are non-academic benefits as well, including fostering independence and involving parents in their child's education.

For parents of students with learning disabilities, however, homework can be a *nightmare!*

Salend and Schliff (1989) surveyed 88 special educators and found that 85% reported experiencing problems getting students to complete assignments.



Although research in the area is scarce, some general conclusions can be drawn. Cooper and Nye (1994) reviewed the literature on homework for students with learning disabilities and concluded that homework

assignments should be short and should focus on reinforcement of skills already taught rather than integration and extension of new skills.

Parents of students with learning disabilities often face a dilemma when dealing with their son's or daughter's homework. On the one hand, children and adolescents with learning disabilities often require help to start and complete homework, due to their difficulties. On the other hand, children/adolescents with learning disabilities may adamantly resist help with homework. Children with learning disabilities who have experienced repeated academic failure may try to avoid academic tasks in an effort to protect themselves from more failure and blows to their self-esteem.

Parents of these children/adolescents must carefully consider whether and how to be involved in their children's homework.

Conflict caused by their involvement may place extra stress and pressure on the parent-child/-adolescent relationship. Adolescents, in particular, may resent their parents' involvement. These children/adolescents may need alternative help, such as teacher assistance or tutoring, to complete academic tasks. Some may not benefit from homework assignments.

If parents are able to help children with homework, it is important to keep in mind that children/adolescents with learning disabilities may have more poorly developed organization and study skills than their peers. Setting aside a time and place for homework can help provide structure for students with weak time management skills. Since many adolescents with learning disabilities are easily distracted, the area should be kept as uncluttered as possible. These students may need help to organize the homework area daily to keep it free from clutter and distractions. Minimize noise and commotion in the house during homework time. Regular contact with teachers will help parents to monitor daily assignments. Often this can be done with a homework book that the child takes to school every day. Finally, rewards for completion and accuracy can be given either during homework time or immediately afterwards.





Integra, founded in 1967 by parents and professionals, is an accredited Children's Mental Health Centre dedicated to helping children and adolescents who experience social, emotional and behavioural problems related to their learning disabilities. We are a charitable organization administered by a Board of Directors comprised of dedicated volunteers from the community.

Integra has an experienced and multidisciplinary professional staff that is dedicated to creating and implementing a range of programs. Integra serves as a centre for research, practicum placement and continuing education.

Integra is committed to the promotion of a community-wide understanding of the mental health needs of children and adolescents who have learning disabilities, and to improving community-based services for them and their families. A range of clinical services is provided by Integra, as well as related activities in research and evaluation, and in training, consultation, collaboration and advocacy.

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TIPS FOR PARENTS

Struggling with homework

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