**Homework Tips for Parents

By: Liz DeLibero, M.Ed.**

**1.Find out what the homework policy is for your school.**Some schools or teachers limit the amount of time per night that student's should spend on homework.  Often this is done by grade level.  If it appears that your child is exceeding that amount of time and putting forth great effort, ask to discuss this with his/her teacher.  Many students with disabilities need modified assignments.  If this is necessary, it should be documented on the IEP.

2. **Talk to your child about the "where and when" of homework.**  Let your child decide (within reason of course) where, and when to do homework.  Some kids will do better in the middle of the kitchen while others may need a quiet spot away from family activity.  Let your child decide a good time to do homework. Will he/she do better right after school, or does after dinner work better?  Some kids need to break it up and do a little right after school and the rest later.  Let your child know that whatever he/she decides, homework must be done by a certain time.

3. **Assist your child in developing a plan for homework completion.**  Once there is a plan and your child knows about how long it will take, he/she may feel more confident. Some parents find it helpful to sit with their child during homework time and read or complete paper work.  That way you are available if help is needed, but you are doing your "homework" as well.

4.  **If your child needs assistance, have him/her verbalize what they are supposed to do.**  Sometimes kids don't bother to look carefully at directions or they just become overwhelmed without even attempting to understand the assignment.  Often once they hear themselves talk about the assignment, they understand what to do.  Avoid the trap of telling them what to do without first asking them.

5.  **Homework should be practice of a skill that your child has already been taught.**  If you find yourself in the position of having to teach your child concepts, you will want to let the teacher know.  If your child is extremely frustrated, attach a note to the homework explaining to the teacher that your child did not understand what to do.  For an older child, you want to encourage him/her to go to the teacher and ask for additional help.

 6.  **Remember, it is your child's homework, not yours**.  As long as you provide a quiet and supportive environment, you should not feel responsible if your child is not meeting homework obligations.

 7.**Finally, don't battle over homework**.  You can make it clear to your child that certain things cannot happen until homework is completed.  (T.V. for example.) It is not uncommon for kids (especially at the middle school level) to not be truthful about homework completion.  If you think this is happening with your child, contact the teacher and set up a method to keep track of assignment completion.  Some teachers will communicate by e-mail and others may use the agenda book.  Many districts even have homework hotlines, and website links with assignment information.  It helps if kids know that parents and teachers are talking to each other!   If your child is refusing to do homework, let him face the natural and logical consequences.  This may mean staying after school, missing recess, or ultimately a poor grade.