

A stack of three books is placed on a wooden table. The books are bound in light-colored, textured covers. The top book is labeled 'MATH', the middle book 'HISTORY', and the bottom book 'SCIENCE'. In the background, a wooden chair with a curved back is visible, and a window with horizontal blinds is partially open, letting in natural light.

MATH

HISTORY

SCIENCE



Research on both gifted and disadvantaged children shows that home efforts can greatly improve student achievement.



What Works: Research on Teaching and Learning
U.S. Department of Education

Lesson 1: Study Time

School work is important, but children have other activities that are also important to them. They spend time with friends; they watch television; they talk on the telephone; they may belong to clubs or participate in sports; they listen to music or play musical instruments. Church activities may be important. Some young people have hobbies, and some have part-time jobs. Others have chores to do at home. How can we teach our children to use time wisely in order to get everything done? The first step is to consider how our children now use their time.

EXERCISE



USE-OF-TIME FORM

- ⌚ How does your child use his/her time after school? Complete a use-of-time form for one of your children.
- ⌚ How does your child use his/her time from 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on a typical school day? Fill in the blanks in the chart on the next page. Select from the following activities:

Watching television	Studying	Reading for pleasure
Talking on telephone	Eating	Listening to music
Playing with friends	Sleeping	School activities
Cell Phone (texting)	Computer	Other (what?)

- ⌚ If two activities are done at the same time, count only the one that is the primary or most important activity. For example, if the child eats popcorn while reading, the primary activity is reading.

How can we teach our children to use time wisely in order to get everything done?



Child's Name:		
Activity (Example)	Hours/Minutes	Activity
Playing with friends	3:00-3:30	
Playing with friends	3:30-4:00	
Watching television	4:00-4:30	
Watching television	4:30-5:00	
Eating	5:00-5:30	
Talking on the telephone	5:30-6:00	
Studying	6:00-6:30	
Studying	6:30-7:00	
Listening to music	7:00-7:30	
Listening to music	7:30-8:00	
Reading for pleasure	8:00-8:30	
Reading for pleasure	8:30-9:00	
Sleeping	9:00-9:30	
Sleeping	9:30-10:00	

*Which activity takes the largest amount of your child's time after school?
How much time is spent studying? I will share my answers with the group.
Then each group member will share his or her answers.*

**TELL THE
GROUP**

Guidelines for Study Time

The following guidelines for study time help establish the habit of studying at home.

-  **PLAN AHEAD.** Students should plan study time for the week ahead to avoid conflicts with other activities. Study time need not be at the same time every day.
-  **SET A MINIMUM TIME.** Ten minutes per grade level per day, five days per week (usually Sunday through Thursday) is a reasonable standard. For example, a fourth grader would study no less than 40 minutes per day, and an eighth grader would study no less than 80 minutes per day.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT STUDY TIME

QUESTION: Does time spent studying in study hall at school count as study time?

ANSWER: No. We certainly want to encourage our children to use study time at school wisely. But we also want them to get in the habit of regular study time at home.

QUESTION: What if the teacher gives no homework assignments?

ANSWER: Parents want their children to acquire good study habits whether or not teachers give homework assignments. Study time can be used to review notes, re-read textbook chapters, read ahead in chapters that will be covered later, work extra math problems, make flash cards, edit and review notes, read something related to what is being studied at school.

QUESTION: What if the student finishes the homework assignments before the minimum amount of study time has been used?

ANSWER: The full amount of time is always used. The student can re-read chapters, read ahead, work extra math problems, make flash cards, edit and review notes, read something related to what is being studied in school.

QUESTION: What if the student has a long report to write or a test coming up? Is the minimum amount of study time enough?

ANSWER: Of course not. The study time must be expanded in order to get everything done.

QUESTION: What if the student receives a telephone call during study time?

ANSWER: The party calling is told that the student will return the call later. The student must develop a habit of quiet, uninterrupted study time. Friends will soon catch on.

QUESTION: What should parents do during study time?




ANSWER: Be available when possible. Make the time special. Provide a healthful snack. Show an interest in the work. Be friendly without being a nuisance.

Lesson 2: Study Schedule

Session 1

A study schedule, planned for the week in advance, helps a student manage time. A study schedule works best when it is planned by the student. Parents can teach their children how to plan and use a study schedule.

A study schedule includes:

-  Important activities such as
 - school events
 - church, club, sports
 - birthday parties, family outings
 - special television shows
-  Study time
-  Dinner time
-  Bedtime

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT STUDY SCHEDULES

QUESTION: Why is it best for the student to plan his own study schedule?

ANSWER: Planning a study schedule teaches a child to manage time and set priorities. When a child plans his own study schedule, he feels more commitment to it. He doesn't need to argue with parents about when homework will be done. The child chooses the time so that it fits with other activities. The parents then check to see that the study schedule is followed.

QUESTION: Can the schedule be changed when unexpected conflicts arise?

ANSWER: Sure. Study time may be changed to a different time of day, but it should not be skipped.

EXERCISE



PRACTICE STUDY SCHEDULE

For practice, complete a two-day study schedule for one of your children. Remember, 10 minutes per grade level per day is the minimum. Study schedules are planned for the week in advance by the student, with the help of a parent.

By completing this two-day study schedule, we will learn how a study schedule works. Then we can teach our children how to make study schedules for the whole week.

Name of Student: _____

Grade Level: _____

Minimum Study Time (10 Minutes x Grade Level): _____minutes

Include important activities, study time, dinner time, bedtime.

Day of Week (Example)		Time	Day of Week	
Monday	Tuesday			
Study	Birthday Party	3:00-3:30		
↓	↓	3:30-4:00		
		4:00-4:30		
		4:30-5:00		
		5:00-5:30		
Dinner	Dinner	5:30-6:00		
		6:00-6:30		
		6:30-7:00		
Go to Library	Study	7:00-7:30		
↓	↓	7:30-8:00		
		8:00-8:30		
		8:30-9:00		
		9:00-9:30		
Bed	Bed	9:30-10:00		

TELL THE GROUP

TAKING IT HOME



What time did you select for your child to study? Why?









Now we can teach our children to prepare weekly study schedules.

Lesson 3: Study Place

Session 1

The study place is where the student studies at home. Six important rules for a good study place are:

-  Study in a quiet room. No television, radio, or other noise.
-  Study in the same place every day.
-  Sit up to study.
-  Take a short break every 20 minutes.
-  Use good lighting.
-  Keep tools for learning handy—notebook, textbooks, pens, pencils, dictionary.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT STUDY PLACES

QUESTION: Many young people study with music in the background. What is wrong with this?

ANSWER: Unfortunately, most young people play songs with distracting lyrics and a dominant rhythm. They play the music too loudly for it to be background music. Television and loud, rhythmic music are distracting and interfere with a student's ability to concentrate and learn. There is plenty of time in a young person's life to enjoy music, but study time is quiet time.

QUESTION: Why study in the same place every day?

ANSWER: The mind learns to associate a location with an activity. For example, when we enter a football stadium, our mind prepares for excitement. When we enter a library, our mind prepares for quiet, calm, and concentration. A student should establish a special place for study. When she enters that place at home, her mind will prepare for learning.

QUESTION: Why sit up to study and take a short break every 20 minutes?

ANSWER: Lying down is a good posture for sleeping, but not for learning. The brain needs oxygen in order to function. It must be kept awake and alert. Taking a short break and walking around the room restores the flow of oxygen and freshens the mind.

QUESTION: What if the family is large and the home is small?

ANSWER: One area of the home can be designated as a study area, and other members of the family must be quiet when near that area. The family might want to have study time around the kitchen table, with all students studying at the same time. For the study period, other members of the family should help maintain quiet, not watching television nearby or talking loudly.

QUESTION: Why is it important that children have a specific time and place to study in the home?

ANSWER: Parents who make study time a part of the family experience let everyone in the family know that learning is important. Families show their values in the way they arrange their time and space.

QUESTION: What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a central study place for all the children?

ANSWER: In some families, the children have separate study places—perhaps in the bedrooms. Other families establish one central place—the kitchen table or a desk in a den for example—as the study place for all the children. Each method has advantages and disadvantages. A central study place allows for more interaction between the parents and the children, but it may be less free from distractions. Separate study places may be private and free from distraction, but they make it more difficult for parents to monitor study and provide praise and support for good study habits. If children have separate, private study places, parents should be certain that the children do not feel exiled. Parents should check on the children and give them attention. If a central study place is established, parents should keep the atmosphere warm but guard against distractions.

Parents who make study time a part of the family experience let everyone in the family know that learning is important.

STUDY PLACES IN YOUR HOME

EXERCISE

Where is the best place in your home for each of your children to study? The best place may be different for each child or the same place for everyone.

Student's Name	Best Place to Study at Home	Does he/she study in this place now?	
		Yes	No
		Yes	No
		Yes	No
		Yes	No
		Yes	No
		Yes	No

Tell the group about the study places in your home. Describe the place or places where your children can study. Will your children be free from distraction? Will you be available to check on your children and offer praise for their good study habits? I'll describe my family's study places, then ask each group member to do the same.

TELL THE GROUP

Lesson 4: Help•Check•Praise

One way to help children develop good habits is to follow the Help•Check•Praise method. Help•Check•Praise explains the parent's role in the child's home study.

- HELP the child plan a study schedule and find a good study place.
- CHECK to see that the child is using study time properly.
- PRAISE the child for good study habits.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT HELP•CHECK•PRAISE

QUESTION: Does HELP mean that parents should help children with their homework?

ANSWER: Usually this is not necessary. The child must learn to study independently. Parents may answer questions when the child asks, unless the child continually asks questions for attention or to keep from doing the work. Parents need never feel guilty if they do not understand the child's assignment. It is not the job of the parent to do the homework. The parent HELPS by showing a positive interest in the child's learning and by seeing that the child has a place to study and takes the time to study.

QUESTION: Should the parents CHECK to see that the child is really studying?

ANSWER: Certainly. The parents should CHECK frequently to see that the child is studying and offer PRAISE when the child is doing well.

QUESTION: How can parents reward a child for good study habits?

ANSWER: Sincere PRAISE, attention, and affection are the best rewards. Parents should let their pride show.

QUESTION: Should PRAISE be given only for good grades?

ANSWER: PRAISE is given for good study habits and positive attitudes toward school and learning. Good study habits and positive attitudes are the building blocks of good school performance. Keep the construction going even if performance seems to lag. Sometimes getting the foundation in place takes some time.








QUESTION: What if a student gets good grades without good study habits?

ANSWER: We want our children to develop habits and attitudes that will stand the test of time. We want our children to grow into adulthood considering study and learning to be a normal part of life. We can't be sidetracked from these goals because our children get good grades without studying. An athlete may win races without practicing when he is twelve, but at age twenty the winners are those who have learned the discipline of regular practice and have acquired a love for the sport.

*We want our children to develop habits
and attitudes that will stand the test of
time.*

Key Points

Let's review the key points from this session:

-  Studying at home is a habit taught by parents, not teachers.
-  The first step is to consider how our children now use their time.
-  Homework is only one part of studying at home.
-  Planning a study schedule teaches a child to manage time and set priorities.
-  Families show their values in the way they arrange their time and space.
-  Parents who make study time a part of the family experience are letting everyone in the family know that learning is important.
-  Good study habits and positive attitudes are the building blocks of good school performance.

We have learned about studying at home. We have learned guidelines for study time and for a study place. We have learned to use Help•Check•Praise to develop our children's study habits. Now it is time to put our learning into practice. Listed below are our tasks for the week. As I read each task, write your initials as a commitment to your family and the parent group to complete the task before the next session.

TASKS FOR THE WEEK

Parent's Initials:

- _____ 1. I will HELP my children complete their study schedules for the week. Study schedules are in the back of this manual.
- _____ 2. I will HELP my children find a time and place to study.
- _____ 3. I will CHECK to see that my children follow their study schedules and use their study time wisely.
- _____ 4. I will PRAISE my children for good study habits and constructive attitudes about school and learning.

INVOLVING OUR CHILDREN

How will our children respond when we take these tasks home?

Some children will respond very willingly to the tasks we take home. They will enjoy our attention. They will appreciate our help.

Other children may be less eager to take on new responsibilities, and they may be the ones who need our help the most.

To gain the cooperation of our children, it is a good idea to sit down with them and explain what we are doing. We may say something like this:

"I am taking a course with several other parents. The course is called *Studying At Home*. In the course, we are learning ways to help our families study and learn. You know that learning is important to our family. In the course, I have assignments to complete—just like homework in school. But my assignments include activities that involve you. I know we will have fun with these activities. I will appreciate your help."

If the children grumble, they are probably just a little nervous about something that is new. We need to be firm and positive when we introduce new ideas to our children. They will be captured by our enthusiasm and our interest in them.

Studying at Home

Building Family Study Habits

TASKS FOR WEEK #1

Check (√) when completed

- _____ I will HELP my children complete their study schedules for the week.
- _____ I will HELP my children find a time and place to study.
- _____ I will CHECK to see that my children follow their study schedules and use their study time weekly.
- _____ I will PRAISE my children for good study habits and constructive attitudes about school and learning.

MATH
HISTORY
SCIENCE

*Studying at Home
Brings Out the Stars.*

STUDY SCHEDULE

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Minimum Study Time (10 Minutes x Grade Level): _____ Minutes: _____

Include: activities, study time, dinner, bedtime.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
3:00-3:30					
3:30-4:00					
4:00-4:30					
4:30-5:00					
5:00-5:30					
5:30-6:00					
6:00-6:30					
6:30-7:00					
7:00-7:30					
7:30-8:00					
8:00-8:30					
8:30-9:00					
9:00-9:30					
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8:30-9:00					
9:00-9:30					
9:30-10:00					

Academic Development Institute

Founded in 1984

The Academic Development Institute (ADI) works with families, schools, and communities so that all children may become self-directed learners, avid readers, and responsible citizens, respecting themselves and those around them. ADI's vision is of an American landscape filled with distinct school communities reflecting the hopes and dreams of the people intimately attached to them. To this image of the school as a community, ADI is devoted. When the school functions as a community, its constituents (students, parents, teachers, staff) associate with one another and share common values about the education of children. At the root, members of the school community assume responsibility for one another. Those children become our children, and parents are not external agents, but full partners in the education of their children and of each other's children. Teachers are not isolated practitioners of pedagogy, but professionals integrated into the web of community and buoyed by common purpose.



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