
COUNSELORS CORNER

A place to educate, inspire, and nurture our growth as parents and educators.

Over the years, I've heard horror stories from parents regarding getting their teenager to consistently do their homework. Often, students come to Edison with minimal skills or methods for completing homework in a timely and efficient manner. Developing and enhancing these skills can improve a student's self-discipline and time management. I'd like offer a few steps to help students not only make the most out of homework each night, but also reduce stress!

1. **Establish a Time**

Pick a consistent homework time and stick to it. Depending on your child, it could be right after school, after dinner, or during Edison's 8th period. A routine will help your student prepare mentally and provide a designated, dependable time for homework to be completed. Hopefully, it can reduce conflict with your student over whether or not they completed homework!

2. **Pick a Place**

A study/homework space should be quiet, well-lit, and free from distraction. A desk in the student's bedroom, the kitchen table, or a home office are all examples of good study spaces. Trying to work in front of the TV, on a bed, or in the middle of a busy room in your home could be detrimental. My own experience as a high school student taught me that doing homework in bed always led to a nap and not much work being completed.

3. **Keep the Space Organized**

Make sure that your student has all of the materials they need to complete their work. Be the sure the area is free from clutter. You don't want your student spending valuable time trying to find a pen or clearing the table.

4. **Eliminate Distractions**

Students should not have their phones, a TV or video games in their homework space. They are not allowed to have any of these devices in the classroom, so why make it permissible while they are doing homework? If they have to use their iPad, make sure it is charged and any internet content they access is education-related. Music helps many of our students to focus and accomplish the task at hand. One student said, "I have to listen to music when I do math, but it's too distracting if I'm trying to read or write." Talk to your students about listening to music and appropriate internet use during homework time. Setting boundaries and clear expectations of electronics usage will help your student stay on task.

5. **Build In Breaks**

Students with learning differences need breaks; otherwise, the assignments and time spent doing homework can seem indefinite. Learning specialists recommend 5- to 10-minute power breaks. Use a kitchen timer, or the timer on an electronic device, to remind your student to take a break, recharge and then get back to work. For Edison students, spending 30 minutes straight working on an assignment may be too long. One student reported, "It's smart to take breaks because then large assignments feel more manageable." Make sure you talk to your student about suitable ways to spend their break as well.

6. **Be Available, But...**

Encouragement, praise and support are all important. However, remember not to hover, interrupt or carry out the work for your teen. One of our goals at Edison is to teach students how to do homework independently. Our job is to facilitate completion, not complete it for the student. Homework gives your student responsibility for their own learning and advancement. Model task management by sitting with your student to pay bills, plan meals, read or complete any of your "assignments."

Remember, students don't learn just by sitting in a classroom and listening to a lecture; they also learn by taking material home, contemplating and absorbing it. Edison students grow and improve by undertaking, practicing and repeating a task until the information is assimilated or a skill becomes routine.