

Defeat Procrastination

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Kids procrastinate by putting off completion of assignments, projects or reviewing work until another time. Often times, they postpone until it is too late. Procrastination can make parents feel powerless. You may even view your child's delay tactics as an act of rebellion or defiance which leads to great frustration.

If your child is:

- Waiting until the last minute to take on a task,
- Not completing a task within the time allotted,
- Choosing a more preferable task over the one at hand,

then, you could have a problem with procrastination.

Why do kids procrastinate?

Everyone procrastinates from time to time. It is a misconception that children who procrastinate are lazy. There are other reasons that could contribute to this behavior.

- Fear of failure- kids want to please parents and teachers. Doubting one's ability to successfully complete a task could lead to delay of either starting the job or completing it. Kids may feel that adults expect perfection.
- Distractions- A child may choose more favourable ways of spending their time such as watching TV, playing games, socializing with friends.
- Overscheduling- these days, kids have many extra curricular activities which may occur every day of the week. This can leave the child tired and with little energy to complete school related tasks.
- Lack of understanding- Children may put off homework or projects simply because they do not understand what is expected. Parents can offer assistance, if possible. The child should be encouraged to communicate with his teacher if he is not understanding a concept or the assignment.
- Disorganization – students are not usually taught organizational skills at school. Therefore, parents need to teach kids organizational strategies. If your child is constantly leaving books needed for assignments at school, or forgetting to bring their completed assignments to school, then this a clear indication that the child is disorganized.

Tips to Help Kids Not to Procrastinate

1. Make sure assignments are recorded in a special notebook that you can check. If necessary, you may ask the teacher to assist in guaranteeing that homework is recorded before the child leaves class. Ensure that you check this homework book from time to time.
2. Help your child to become comfortable with making mistakes. Explain that mistakes are part of learning and teachers are there to help correct these mistakes. Ensure that they understand that your love does not change if errors are made. Not being perfect does not mean failure.
3. Help them to break up large tasks into smaller chunks. For example, when preparing for a twenty word spelling test, help them to learn five words at a time rather than attempting to learn all twenty in one attempt.
4. Turn off the music. Many students believe they can study or do homework while listening to music. Research has shown that this is untrue. The level of focus achieved is greatly diminished. While home work and studying may occur with music playing, focus is reduced.
5. Ensure balance between extra curricular activities and school work. Emphasis should always be on successful completion of assignments and study. Extra curricular activities are important but should not take precedence over academics.
6. Turn off the television. Students should not attempt to study with the television on. Again, this is a source of distraction.
7. Maintain a structured homework time. This is a time allotted specifically for assignments. If there are no assignments, then the time should be used for studying.
8. Teach time management skills by implementing systems which aid in organization. This could mean having colour coded folders designated to each subject. A large calendar where important dates are placed is also advantageous. Crossing off assignments as they are completed will give your child a sense of achievement and pride.
9. Allow for consequences. If students fail to complete assignments or to not hand in assignments on time, despite your best efforts, then they will have to suffer consequences at school. In addition, there should also be effects at home such as no computer games for a week.

10. Empower your child with your love and support. Make sure they know that you love them and convey your confidence in their ability to get the job done. Praise your child when an assignment or project is successfully completed.