

September 27, 2000

Dear Oakdale Families;

Recently the Oakdale home/school surveys have indicated that our families would like a better understanding of "homework" at Oakdale School. As a staff we took this information and began to discuss and pull together information that more clearly defines "homework" at our school, while offering suggestions that may help our children achieve more success in this area.

Attached you will find "A Guide to Homework" at Oakdale. We hope this information is useful and results in your child feeling more positive and successful. This information can also be found on the Oakdale website (www.unit5.org/oakdale).

Thank you for providing feedback and allowing us to offer additional support to our families.

Sincerely,

Oakdale Staff

**A GUIDE TO
HOMEWORK
AT
OAKDALE ELEMENTARY
2000/2001**

HOMEWORK POSITION STATEMENT

We believe homework is important because it is an integral, valuable component of the school experience. Homework is useful in reinforcing what has been learned in class, teaching responsibility, organization, and developing a true sense of accomplishment. Expectations for assigned work beyond the school day will be clearly shared with students and parents through a combination of letters, newsletters, parent meetings, assignment notebooks, homework hotline etc.

We expect students to always do their best job on homework. Assignments will be varied where appropriate, to provide support for learning differences. Students should do the work on their own and ask for help only after giving their best effort.

We acknowledge that excessive time spent on homework may be frustrating and counterproductive for students and families. It is our intent to assign work that, based on a concentrated effort, would be completed in the following time frames:

K - 2	15 - 30 minutes/day or 2 hours/week (maximum)
3 - 6	45 - 60 minutes/day or 4 hours/week (maximum)

Studies indicate that student achievement rises when teachers regularly assign developmentally appropriate homework and students conscientiously do it. Oakdale teachers are committed at all grade levels to assign work that will contribute to the academic development of students and foster positive attitudes toward learning.

LATE WORK POLICY

Students may not receive full credit for work handed in late. If a student is absent he/she has one day to catch up for each day missed. We understand that families, after exhausting all other scheduling options, may feel a need to take their child/children out of school for a vacation or family trip. When a student is taken out of school for a vacation or family trip, teachers will prepare assignments upon the student's return to school. A teacher has the **option** to send assignments prior to a student leaving, but it is not required. In this case a student has one school day for each day missed (up to a maximum of 5 days) to make up assigned work rather than the standard policy of one day for every day missed.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

The following tools/resources may be available to Oakdale students to assist with school work at home.

1. Extra help from teachers
2. Assignment notebooks/grades 3 - 6
3. Assignments posted in each classroom
4. Newsletters
5. Homework hotline
6. E-mail
7. Parent/Teacher conferences (telephone)
8. Examples from class
9. "Study Buddy"/Peer support
10. Unit 5 Tutor List

Additional Ideas For Homework

1. Neighborhood Homework Clubs
2. Websites i.e. www.familyeducation.com
3. Community organizations/clubs

HOMEWORK TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. Praise, compliment, and congratulate.
2. Work with your child to decide on a time that works best i.e. after school, within the first hour after school, right after dinner etc.
3. Designate a quiet comfortable location with appropriate supplies and away from distractions.
4. Be available to help your child, but do not provide too much assistance. (Monitor progress every 15 min.). It is important that your child maintain "ownership" in the assignment.
5. Establish a routine.
6. Help your child plan ahead for lengthy projects--teach time management.
7. Establish the priority of timely homework completion.
8. Sometimes offering a snack will create more of a positive attitude toward the work.
9. Allow for a break if necessary (use a kitchen timer).
10. Develop an incentive system for a job well done.
11. Sometimes it is difficult for kids to complete homework because of other obligations they may have -- sports events/practices, piano lessons, doctors' appointments etc. You may find it helpful to put together a weekly calendar to keep track of those activities (see attached).
12. Use homework preferences when developing a homework schedule. Some children prefer to get disliked homework done first, while others prefer to do their easier work first.
13. A continuing problem completing home work should be discussed with your child's teacher.

FOUR BASIC PRINCIPLES TO ENHANCE STUDY SKILLS

- A. Make homework completion a positive experience. Associate it with love, affection, freedom, love and control.
- B. Use homework completion to teach organization skills and improve learning skills.
- C. Provide and enforce logical and meaningful consequences.

Taken from National Association of School Psychologist 1998

Resources:

- "Helping Children at Home and School"
- National Association of School Psychologists (1998)
- Website www.familyeducation.com (August 2000)
- Survey instruments from Oakdale staff (April 2000 and August 2000)
- Home/school surveys from Oakdale parents (November 1997,98,99)