



# CEDAR RIVER ACADEMY

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### DEVELOPING A HOMEWORK ROUTINE – BY JAN TITUS

The beginning of a new school year leads to many new routines at school as well as at home. This includes developing a routine for homework after school which can improve the remembering and understanding of work learned in the classroom setting, help students develop study skills, and promote positive character traits including responsibility and independence when properly monitored.

Since this is your child's responsibility, you may want to consider the following guidelines:

- **Include a specific time each day for family learning in your schedule.** Set aside 30 minutes each day for family learning when it's a quiet time for your child to complete their homework or read, (no T.V., video games, computer games, phones, etc.).
- **Assist your child only when they ask for help.** This gives your child the opportunity to develop independence and the sense of accomplishment allowing you a quiet time as well. You could ask to proof their work when they are done to assist them in a positive manner.
- **Only assist your child when they can explain the teacher's objective and instructions.** This ensures that your child knows it's important to listen to the teacher and that he/she understood the task assigned.
- **Provide assistance only when your child is not frustrated or angry.** When anger or frustration are present, divert your child's attention to another topic for a few minutes before having them continue. This gives them a chance to regroup. You may then provide assistance if they need help.
- **If the homework proves to be too difficult, be sure to report this to your child's teacher so he or she will know to review the specific topic.** The teacher will be able to explain the task in more detail and readjust the assigned homework, so your child will have a more complete understanding of the task, and you will be reassured of their understanding as well.
- **Let your child assume the responsibility for completing assignments and experience the consequences for irresponsible choices.** This is a huge growth experience for your child even if it is very difficult for you to witness. Children learn quickly that there are always consequences for an irresponsible choice.

## NOTES ON PARENTING STRATEGIES

To prevent dependency, have your quiet time separate from your child. Avoid sitting right next to them as they work. This will allow them to gain independence, learn more new skills, and develop more responsibility. Take the time to watch them grow on their own!

### READING FOR CITIZENSHIP – BY JAN TITUS

Through literature we have the ability provide children with models who demonstrate good citizenship. The following list includes recommended books that provide this for students:

#### Grades 2-3

**Just a Dream** by Chris Van Allsburg  
**Now One Foot, Now the Other** by Tomie de Paola  
**Washing the Willow Tree Loon** by Jacqueline Briggs Martin  
**A Day's Work** by Eve Bunting  
**City Green** by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan  
**Jamaica Louise James** by Amy Hest  
**Mrs. Katz and Tush** by Patricia Polacco  
**Pearl Moscowitz's Last Stand** by Arthur A. Levine  
**Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen** by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan  
**The Story of Ruby Bridges** by Robert Coles  
**Sato and the Elephants** by Juanita Havill and Jean and Mou-sein Tseng

#### Grades 4-6

**The Christmas Menorahs: How a Town Fought Hate** by Janice Cohn  
**Teammates** by Peter Golenbock  
**A Long Way to Go** by Zibby O'Neal  
**Come Back Salmon: How a Group of Dedicated Kids Adopted Pigeon Creek and Brought It Back to Life** by Molly Cone  
**Freedom's Children: Young Civil Rights Activists Tell Their Stories** edited by Ellen Levine  
**Checking on the Moon** by Jenny Davis  
**Just Like Martin** by Ossie Davis  
**The Unsinkable Molly Malone** by Mary Anderson

As teachers, it is important for us to remember what we do. Though we may not realize it, we are constantly being watched by children. If children see us being kind and courteous to others, they often imitate that behavior and “pay it forward”. Dorothy Law Nolte, Ph. D., wrote the following poem as a reminder for us to always be aware of what we do:

#### **Children Learn What They Live**

If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.  
If children live with ridicule, they learn to be shy.  
If children live with tolerance, they learn to be patient.  
If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.  
If children live with praise, they learn to appreciate.  
If children live with fairness, they learn justice.  
If children live with security, they learn faith.

## NOTES ON PARENTING STRATEGIES

If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.

If children live with acceptance, and friendship, they learn to find love in the world.

### READING FOR CITIZENSHIP — BY JAN TITUS

We are rapidly approaching the holiday season and this is a wonderful time to include your child in the preparations for your family's holiday customs and traditions. Children enjoy this time of year, feeling the excitement of the season, and feel valued by assisting you with some of your family traditions that make your holidays special. You may also have the opportunity to fill them with the spirit and the understanding of giving to others. Below are a few ways you can teach your child the importance of this:

- Assist your child in picking out a new toy for a child in need. (Have your child help wrap the gift and decorate the package.)
- Help your child collect canned goods to give to a local food bank.
- Suggest that your child save some of their allowance to donate to a specific shelter.
- Volunteer at a home-less shelter to serve dinner on one of the holidays and take your child with you so they can see and feel how nice it is to help others.
- Help your child understand the concept of compassion by explaining the difficult lives of others who don't have a home or enough food to eat.
- Create a "Thankful Tree" and have each member of your family write what they are thankful for on leaves to be placed on the tree.

These are great ways of teaching your child the values of generosity, compassion, and thankfulness. Your family may be developing new traditions that will be passed down to future generations. When children help others they learn to be confident in their ability to make a difference in their world.

### ROUTINE PROCEDURES CAN BRING CALM TO YOUR HOME — BY KRISTIE BRAME

Want things to go smoother in your house? Teaching children to follow procedures for routine behaviors is a trick teachers use to keep classrooms running smoothly. In prekindergarten and kindergarten that may mean putting the blocks back in a specific place. To help children follow the procedure, the teacher creates "shadows" for every shape of block and teaches children to return the blocks to the appropriate spot. At home, creating a space for everything allows children to put away their own things.

Calendars are a great tool for helping children predict daily activities. Small children might have a calendar with blue dots for school days and yellow dots for non-school days. Older children might keep track of project due dates, friends' birthdays, or special events. Older children also benefit from a planner that allows them to record homework assignments and daily tasks toward project completion.

It is important for children to learn the skills of time management early. They need practice and guidance in prioritizing what is most important and allowing enough time for that to happen. For example, a young child might procrastinate on putting away toys. Ask them to predict how long that will take. Then time them and compare the results. As children get a better understanding of how long it takes to do something, they will better understand the process. Older children often think that homework can be completed in the 10 minutes prior to bedtime. It is important for them to see the actual time it takes to complete each task, so they can plan better in the future.

While this process of teaching and learning is slow, it provides children with the opportunity to develop a skill that will serve them well for a lifetime. Completing complex tasks and managing competing demands for time in our personal and professional lives are critical skills for a successful life. Children who develop these skills early will have an advantage not only in school, but in life.