

When parents help too much

By Sharyn Lewis

How to help with homework without doing it for them



As an educator and mother of four children, there were many times when my children asked for help. As parents we want to see our kids succeed, but we need to make sure it is them who are succeeding and not us. Certainly we can support and assist them. But the question is how far do we go to help?

So, where do we draw the line? How can we effectively help our children to succeed without doing it for them? Here are some suggestions:

- Teach them how to use available resources
- Expose them to stimuli (travel, art, books, interesting people)
- Encourage them to be expressive
- Discuss, discuss, discuss!
- Make sure they clearly understand the assignment
- Warn them about plagiarism
- Choose topics that grab their interest
- Help them to manage their time and focus
- Break down the assignment into reachable mini-goals
- Teach them to self edit (you can edit but only to point out mistakes and areas for improvement. Don't rewrite for them.)
- Never expect a tutor do the work, rather to help your child think and correct mistakes (and explain the difference to your child)
- Know your children's capabilities and never make them feel inferior
- Do not compare your child to siblings or others
- Don't expect perfection; the teacher doesn't
- Praise their accomplishments
- Always treat a mark or grade as a learning curve and discuss how they can improve the next time
- Never blame the results on the teacher

Many of us are experts in areas and it may be difficult to hold back. Scientists may find it easier to help their children with their science project by doing it for them. Why not take them to your place of work? Let them discover exactly what you do, research

it and then do their own project. Give the equipment/background needed and let them discover. There is a difference between guidance and doing.

Our children never hesitated to ask us for advice but they have become independent adults and I truly believe it's because we let them do it on their own. Not everything always worked out as successfully as they wished, but they learned to improve, to create, to take criticism and to strive to be better. Just as you hold a hand, prop a back and offer encouraging cheers while your baby learns to sit, crawl, stand and walk, so your child will learn to read, write, problem solve, grasp new concepts, and complete assignments with support from you. Sometimes they'll fall but, more importantly, they'll have learned how to get back up on their own.

Sharyn Lewis is the owner of Qualified Tutors Inc. Call 905-763- 7134; 1-877-818-1811 or www.qualifiedtutors.com.