

THE HUMAN RESTORATION PROJECT

Inspired by the writings of Alfie Kohn, who stated:

“the idea of supporting such educators by convening a brain trust of leading theorists, researchers, and practitioners to create — and then disseminate — concise defenses of various features of progressive education. I imagined a set of handouts, each consisting of a single (double-sided) sheet that responded to a common question. The idea was to lay out the case briskly, making liberal use of bullet points and offering a short bibliography at the end for anyone who wanted more information.”

Our “Why Sheets” are concise explanations of implementing progressive practice into a school or classroom. If you’d like to modify this document (as this is for an entire school, or you’d like it to be more personalized), a [Google Document is available here](#).

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Homework Policy

Dear families,

This year we will not be assigning homework for students. We care about your child and want to ensure they lead healthy, fulfilling lives once they leave our facility. That being said, we understand if you have concerns. This decision has not been taken lightly and we want to assure you that students will be just as, if not more, prepared for their futures without assigning work at home. Below we have laid out substantive research supporting this shift. Please reach out to our school with any questions or concerns. We can't wait to see your child grow and develop this year!

Reasoning and Research

Despite the use of homework for decades in education, its negative effect on children is well documented. We see that children develop a negative connotation with completing additional work, which often transforms a parent into the “enforcer” for each task. This leads to not only frustration from all sides, but a loss of a love of learning.

Often, we hear that parents are worried that this will leave their children “left behind” others who complete additional work, but research heavily suggests this is not the case:

- In 2006, researchers David Baker and Gerald Letendre found that American middle school students have more homework than their peers in Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. However, this did not correlate with any achievement: test scores were highest for countries assigning the *least* homework (Denmark, Czech Republic) and lowest for those with the *most* (Iran, Thailand.)

There was *no* correlation of academic achievement and homework practice with elementary school students, and any moderate correlation diminished after any substantial amount assigned in middle or high school.¹

- In 1991, Valerie Cool and Timothy Keith analyzed hundreds of high school student responses to the value of homework in relation to their success, and initially concluded that homework meant higher success. However, they later factored in quality of instruction, motivation, and class choices, and found that homework had no meaningful effect on achievement.²

Further Reading


Kids May Be Right After All:
Homework Stinks by Alfie Kohn
Available free via Web.

Why I Think All Schools Should Abolish
Homework (TIME) by Vicki Abeles.
Available free via Web.

You, Your Child, and School by Ken
Robinson

Citations

1. National Differences, Global Similarities: World Culture and the Future of Schooling. Baker, David & LeTendre, Gerald. 2005.
2. Testing a Model of School Learning. Contemporary Educational Policy. Cool, Valerie & Keith, Timothy. 1991.
3. End Homework Now. Educational Leadership. Etta Kralovec & John Buell. 2001.
4. Understanding the Pathways to Purpose. The Journal of Positive Psychology. Hill, Patrick; Sumner, Rachel; & Burrow, Anthony. 2014.
5. Does Homework Really Improve Achievement? Arkansas Tech University. Costley, Kevin. 2013.
6. How American Children Spend Their Time. Journal of Marriage and Family. Hofferth, Sandra & Sandberg, John. 2004.
7. Examining the Effects of a School-wide Reading Culture on the Engagement of Middle School Students. RMLE. Daniels, Erika & Steres, Michael. 2011.
8. Sleep and Student Performance at School. Journal of School Health. Taras, Howard & Potts-Datema, William. 2005.



Our main concern is that a heavy homework load causes unneeded stress and deprives a child of their natural inclination to explore and learn. Children are increasingly anxious and lack time to let their curiosity take hold:

- From 1998-2001, Etta Kralovec did a series of studies on how homework impacts family life. She found that parents felt their children needed to complete homework, but it resulted in a loss of important family time. In addition, over 50% of subjects noted that homework led to stress, struggle, and serious familial arguments.³
- In 2014, Patrick Hill researched the effect of “purpose-finding” among individuals. Essentially, when given time to explore and authentically pursue a passion (beyond school time), children tend to develop lifelong goals. Those with passionate interests tend to have better well-being throughout their entire lives.⁴

Given this research, among hundreds of other articles, we no longer believe that homework is beneficial to our student body. Because the correlation of homework assignment and academic success is minor at best (and even then, only for high schoolers), the negative impact outweighs this outcome.⁵

Based off the recommendations by educator Ken Robinson, we believe that in lieu of homework, students should:

1. **Spend time with their families:** the single strongest predictor of academic success and fewer behavioral problems for a child, 3-12 years old, is eating as a family.⁶ Make planned time during the day to catch up with your child, talk to them about what they’re learning, and encourage them to achieve.
2. **Play outside or create something,** preferably without a screen. Let them dive into their passions and plan a trip to a library, park, or museum. Explore free online resources to discover new skills and interests.
3. **Read by themselves or with their family:** one of the best ways to learn about the world is developing a lifelong love of reading. Children who prioritize reading are more motivated to learn and see drastically improved academic outcomes.⁷
4. **Sleep well:** elementary students should sleep at least 10 hours each night and adolescents, 9 hours.⁸ Being awake and ready to tackle each day keeps us energized and healthy.

Through all this, we want to assure you *we care*. We want every child to be academically prepared without sacrificing their childhood. Curiosity, discovery, exploration, play, relaxation, socializing, and all the in-betweens that result from free time is paramount to your child’s success in life, and we want to enable that to happen.

Questions and Concerns

We would love to meet with you in person to discuss our decision to eliminate homework. Please reach out to us and schedule a meeting or phone call.
