

Help Your Child Take Responsibility for Belongings & Schoolwork



Your child did his math assignment—you watched him work on it for half an hour. But after the bus left, you found the worksheet on the kitchen table.

Your daughter suddenly remembers there's a history assignment due tomorrow. But she can't do it—she left the book at school.

Situations like these drive parents and teachers crazy. Fortunately, there are ways to help your child learn to take responsibility for belongings and schoolwork.

QuickTips

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Make Sure Materials Get Home

“I can't do my assignment. I left my notebook at school.” Sound familiar? Here's a tip developed by a middle school teacher to make sure the right books and supplies get home from school:

- **Tell your child to organize his locker.** Have him stack his books and binders so the spines are visible.
- **Give your child a supply of small self-stick notes.** Ask him to carry these to every class.
- **Have your child write the assignment** on the self-stick notes and stick them on the needed book, binder or other material at the end of each class.

At the end of the day when everyone is in a rush to catch the bus, your child can relax. All he needs to do is take out the items with notes stuck to them. He'll have the supplies—and the assignments—ready to go.



Don't Make It Easy To Forget!

If your child has forgotten to bring a needed item home, don't drive her to school to retrieve it. If she loses a library book, don't rush out to replace it. If you constantly retrieve homework or replace lost items, you deny your child a chance to learn to take responsibility for her belongings through experiencing the consequences of not having them.

Be a Good Role Model

Show your child that you have to take responsibility for your belongings as well. You have to remember to take your briefcase, purse or toolbox with you. And if you work at home, you must remember to put materials away properly so you can find them again.



Make Sure Assignments Get to School

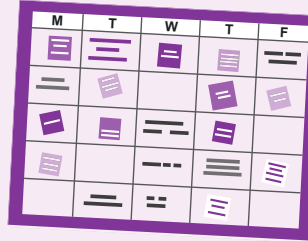
For many children, getting ready for school each day involves a daily scavenger hunt: Where's my worksheet? Who took my lunch bag?

You can save time and tempers. All you need is a cardboard box for each child. The box needs to be big enough to hold everything your child takes to school each day. (Boxes from the supermarket are ideal.)

Have each child choose a place for her box—near the front door or in her room. Every afternoon, the first task is to place all belongings in the box. When assignments are finished, they go in the box, too. In the morning, the box is the last stop before heading out the door.

Make Remembering EASIER

- **Get a large calendar** for the entire family. Use different colors to keep track of each person's activities. Add things like major tests and big school projects. Help your child get into the habit of checking the calendar each day before and after school.
- **Post a family bulletin board** by the door. Tack anything your child needs to remember to the bulletin board.



A Notebook Helps Kids Get Organized

As your child grows older, give him a large three-ring notebook for school. Use dividers to separate the work for each class. You may also want to help him create some "pockets" for holding papers. Expect him to carry the notebook with him to every class—and to bring it home every day. Each evening, as your child finishes assignments for a class, have him put everything into the notebook. Corrected homework and tests go back into the notebook or the pockets, making it easier to find them when studying for tests. If all of his schoolwork is in one place, it will be harder for him to forget it at school or at home.

Figure Out Why Your Child is Forgetting

Despite all your efforts, your child always seems to forget to bring home his schoolwork. Ask yourself:

- **Is my child looking for attention?** If so, don't react when your child tells you he's forgotten. Stay calm—and let him accept the consequences.
- **Is the assignment too hard?** Talk with the teacher. Is your child the only one having problems? Is he capable of doing the work? What extra help could he receive?
- **Does he understand the importance of doing all assigned work?** Ask for a three-way conference with you, your child and the teacher. Have the teacher explain the importance of completing schoolwork now—and in the future.

You Can Promote Responsibility

Children respond to their parents' expectations. If you *expect* your child to be responsible for her belongings and schoolwork, and if you *show* her some ways to do it, she is more likely to do her best to be responsible.

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One of a series of QuickTips® from The Parent Institute®
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