

For Parents:

Here are steps you can follow to see if your child's homework is related to standards. If possible, do this with a partner or group.



Step 1 **Obtain Copies of Your State or Local Standards.**

Obtain the standards that apply to your child's school level (elementary, middle or high school) and grade. Standards are frequently written for grade spans, for example, grades K-4, 5-8, and 9-12. In these cases, always look at the standards in your child's grade span: if your child is in the third grade, you would work with the standards for the grade K-4 group.

If your state or district has standards for each grade level, you want to look at the appropriate grade level AND the grade above. The point is to always refer to what your child should be working toward.

Step 2 **Obtain a Copy of the Homework Assignment from Your Child or the Teacher.**

Try to get the assignment in written form, even if it is only "read the chapter and answer the questions at the end."

Step 3 **Ask the Teacher the Following Questions about the Homework Assignment:**

- 1. What is the purpose of the assignment?**
For example, your child's teacher may assign math word problems so that students can practice using math in everyday situations. Or nightly reading is required so your child will develop into a better reader
- 2. Is it clear what is your child supposed to learn by doing the work?**
Your child may be learning specific information for social studies. A science experiment may be developing understanding about the water cycle.

Whatever the assignment, you and your child should know its purpose: what students will learn by completing it.



Step 4 **Examine the Standards**

Look for the standards that apply to your child's grade level in that academic area (math, reading, science, and so on).

Did you find standards that relate to the homework assignment?

Don't be surprised if you don't find any. Just make a note of the fact.

Step 5 **What Action Should You Take?**

If you didn't find a standard, you should think about how you will talk to the teacher about it. If you don't understand the connection with the work your child has to do, think about the right questions to ask.

For example, "What did you want my child to learn from this assignment? Is there a standard that relates to the learning goal of the assignment?"

As we said it's best to do this in groups of parents, but if you can't get a group together, just go through the steps yourself once or twice a week.

Keep in mind that the more familiar you become with the standards, the easier this gets. It's important to monitor your child's homework regularly throughout the year.

What's different about standards?

Most states and districts have adopted new academic standards. These standards are public statements about what all students should know and be able to do at certain points in their schooling

Because these new standards raise the bar on student achievement, schools and teachers will need to reexamine their practices to make sure that all students are prepared to meet them.

Learn more about how the No Child Left Behind Act supports high standards for all students.

Why is it important for homework to reflect standards?

Parents often ask "How can I make sure that my child will keep up with the work if we raise academic standards?" One strategy is to make sure that homework assignments reflect high academic standards. Research and common sense tell us that students who have regular and academically rigorous homework learn more than students who do not.

How can I tell if my child's homework reflects high academic standards?

You can get copies of the content standards used in your district and examine them to see if you can find standards that match the learning goals in the homework

Some states and districts require schools to distribute copies of standards to all of their parents. Others have them available in the schools, in public libraries and on the internet for parents to review. Check with your school about how to get your state or local standards.

Parents and teachers need each other if students are to achieve the standards!

The Education Trust is a national, nonprofit organization that works for the high academic achievement of all students at all levels, kindergarten through college. While we know that all schools and colleges could do more on behalf of their students our work focuses on those serving low-income, Latino, African American and Native American youth.



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Does my child's homework meet high standards?

*A guide for parents to help
their children achieve*

