



# HELPING KIDS WITH HOMEWORK

PART 2

Words Deb Hopper

Design Oleksandra Zuieva



**M**ost children bring varying degrees of homework home as early as Kindergarten through to the end of high school. Encouraging and teaching children how to settle and ground themselves after a full day of learning, can be trying and emotional for both parents and your child. In GHG™ September issue, we talked about the importance of understanding the best times of the day when your child has higher energy levels and so choose the best times to encourage homework. This could be straight after school, after some exercise or down time, later at night or even early in the morning.

**This month, we look at five top tips for helping a child settle into homework. Some of the ways to help them may include:**

**1. Sending them outside to play for 20 minutes.**

Giving them time for a run around, a swing in the back yard, climbing a tree or visiting a park on the way home from school really fills their nervous system, which can help them get ready for homework. If your child attends after school care, talk to the carers and ask how much movement and active play time your child participates in. If they are choosing more sedentary activities, liaise with the staff for ways for them to encourage movement and active play while in their care. This will make homework time easier for you.

**2. Have some warm up games available for your child.**

Have some playdough, plasticine or therapy putty available for them to play with while

you are putting dinner on. This won't feel like homework for your child, it will help to strengthen their hands ready for writing and it can be quite therapeutic and calming.

**3. Seek your child's opinion about the environment.**

Talk to your child about what kind of environment they find easier to concentrate in. For some it will be silence, for others it will be with background music. Take interest in helping your child to understand that everyone is different and suggest trialling different set ups while they find out what works for them.



#### 4. Set up a comfortable physical environment with your child.

Make sure there is good lighting and that the chair provides good posture with feet touching the floor. It may be helpful to have a foot rest or smaller table and chair for younger children. Also create a comfortable and organised place for them to do their homework. This might be in their bedroom, at the breakfast bar, or at a small table in the living room close to the family's activities. The best space will be different for children of different ages. Younger children love to be near their parents, whereas older children like to have their own space and need more space for setting up books and study materials. If you need to buy a chair or desk lamp, involve your child in going to the store to help choose one. Provide helpful organising tools such as pen holders in trays and help teach them how to use it. You have many more years' experience in being organised. Take a little time and share your ideas with your child.

#### 5. Encourage your child to have a drink of water before starting homework.

Having regular sips of water keep them hydrated for improved concentration but the sipping action also helps the nervous system to keep calm and the brain alert. Also encourage them to have their drink bottle on the desk while doing homework

By using a combination of setting goals and looking after a child's sensory needs, you will support them to be able to start, concentrate and complete homework time with much less fuss, making the evening more fun!

[GHG Disclaimer – please read](#)

# EDITOR'S CHOICE

## REDUCING MELTDOWNS & IMPROVING CONCENTRATION: The Just Right Kids Technique

by Deb Hopper

Teach your child:

- to understand & recognise emotions
- to learn to control emotions & behaviour
- to reduce tantrums & meltdowns
- to be able to sit in class, listen & learn
- to feel happy, safe & emotionally secure



**PLUS:** FREE "Just Right Kids" Circle Self-regulation model to print & stick on your fridge & BONUS of Deb's web training videos.

Paperback Published 2016

RRP \$21.95  
Now \$20.80

Buy from [booktopia](#)

Booktopia may vary prices from those published.  
Postage \$6.95 per order AUST/NZ

*Deb Hopper is an occupational therapist, author and workshop presenter. She is passionate about empowering parents and educators to understand the underlying reasons of why children struggle with behaviour, self-esteem and sensory processing difficulties. Deb is the co-author of the CD Sensory Songs for Tots, and author of **Reducing Meltdowns and Improving Concentration: The Just Right Kids Technique Model**. Deb can be contacted via her [website](#).*



SUBSCRIBE to GHG | 3