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**Do Kids Have Too Much Homework**

**By Jonathon Hardcastle**

In the late 90s, feature stories began appearing in the national media about children and parents

who were so overwhelmed by the amount of homework that it was destroying their family life and causing psychological damage. The evidence presented in these stories was often anecdotal, profiling just one or two families. However, the articles were published in enough respected publications that they sparked a national debate on whether children have too much homework. Schools scrambled to create homework policies, parents held protests, and children began to receive sharply mixed messages on the value of homework.

In all the fuss, people never realized that the information contained the articles simply wasn't true. In 2003, the Brown Center on Educational Policy at the prestigious Brookings Institution released a report that shattered the perception that American students are staggering under an unreasonable load of homework. In fact, they found just the opposite: American students probably don't spend enough time on homework. Gathering data from a number of studies that had been performed in the late 90s, the Brown Center drew four startling conclusions.

Typical students, from kindergarten to high school, don't spend more than an hour a day doing homework. In fact, pointing to a study done by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, the Brown report found that more than two-thirds of college freshmen did five hours or less of homework during their final year of high school.

The report also analyzed studies and concluded that the homework load for the average student has not increased appreciably since the 1980s. This is in direct opposition to the anecdotal evidence cited in the article of homework increasing to as much as three hours per night.

However, a study performed in 1997 by Michigan State University showed that children at that time were spending just over two hours per week on study, which could include activities other than homework. Interestingly, this study is often used to prove that students have too much homework, since the weekly hours spent on study increased over the life of the study by 23 minutes. The Brown Center postulates that this statistical increase was actually caused by children who previously had no homework at all and because they had advanced in grade, now had homework.

## Do Kids Have Too Much Homework

Finally, the Brown report found that, contrary to the articles' portrayal of militant parents protesting homework, most parents are satisfied with the amount of homework their children receive. In fact, if parents were dissatisfied with the amount of homework their children had, it was because they felt it wasn't enough.

Jonathon Hardcastle writes articles for

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### **Moms: 7 Tips to Organize Your School Kids**

**By Barbara Myers**

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Moms: 7 Tips to Organize Your School Kids

1. Place near the door a rack for outerwear and a shelf or mat for shoes. Have kids deposit their coats, hats, gloves, shoes upon entering. Each evening, they replace with tomorrow's shoes and jackets.
2. Have kids empty their backpacks when they arrive home. Provide a basket in which they can place anything for parents' review.
3. Make sure your kids have a well-lit place to do homework. Teach them to use in/out trays to ensure no homework is missed.
4. Give them chores. Teachers report that kids who regularly do chores at home are more responsible in the classroom.
5. Help kids manage their time. Teach them to list all their responsibilities (chores, homework, soccer practice) and how much time each will take.
6. Prepare each evening. Pick out clothes and shoes. Pack lunches. Set out breakfast. Place backpack by the door.

7. Make an out-the-door checklist. Note everything they need to take to school. Post it on the door.

Barbara Myers is a professional organizer and author of The Complete Guide to Organized Parenting. FREE "50 Ways to Manage Your Time" Tips Booklet. Visit <http://www.ineedmoretime.com>



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