

## PARENTING

## Homework help enhances learning

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

Homework can be a walk in the park, or at least lead to one if parents help their children do their assignments, counsels the U.S. Department of Education.

The department urges parents to reward children's progress in homework, occasionally giving them such treats as pizza or taking them to the park when they have successfully completed homework on a regular basis.

For several years, the department has stressed the need for parents to help their children with homework.

"(W)e know that children who spend more time on homework, on average, do better in school, and that the academic benefits increase as children move into upper grades," former Assistant Secretary Sharon P. Robinson wrote in the foreword to the 2000 department homework guide. She added that parents can benefit as well from helping their children do homework.

"Homework can help parents learn about their children's education and communicate both with their children and the schools," she wrote. "And it can encourage a lifelong love of learning."

In a piece she wrote for the Internet site <http://school.discovery.com/>, Judy Caragher, an elementary school teacher in Auburn-dale, Mass., urged parents to select a regular time for their children to do their homework. Parents should consider a child's specific characteristics and needs before determining such a time, she wrote.

"Does she need to run around and get rid of some pent up energy after school?" Caragher's article asked. "Does he need some 'down time?' Homework time should not be a punishment, and there are many different ways to schedule it."

Recently, the Department of Education has posted a series of pages devoted exclusively to homework that can be found online at [www.nclb.gov/parents/homework](http://www.nclb.gov/parents/homework). First and foremost, the department urges parents to make sure their children have quiet, well-lit places to do their homework.

"Avoid having your child do homework with the television on or in places with other distractions such as people coming and going," the Web page urges.

The department also counsels parents to provide whatever materials the child needs, including paper, pencils and a dictionary, and to be positive about homework.

"The attitude you express about homework will be the attitude your child acquires," the department states, adding that parents should watch for signs of frustration in children, which might mean that a short break is in order.

The department also offers the following tips for parents who want to help their children with math and reading:



## Math tips:

- At the beginning of the year, ask your child's teacher for a list of suggestions that will enable you to help your child with math homework.
- If you don't understand your child's math assignments, engage in frequent communication with his or her teacher.
- Use such household chores as cooking and repair activities as opportunities for reinforcing math learning.

## Reading tips:

- Have your child read aloud to you every night.
  - As your child reads, point out spelling and sound patterns such as cat, pat, hat.
  - Ask your child to tell you in his or her own words what happened in a story. Whenever your child reads a story, ask him or her to pause occasionally to tell you about the characters and events in the story.
- "However you help your child with homework, don't lose sight of whose assignment it really is," Caragher's article concluded. "Editing, rewriting, and changing answers may enhance the quality of the work but not the learning experience. ... Keep in mind that while we all want success for our children, the ultimate goal is independence."


## Family Events

- **AUG. 15-17** — Children's show: "Winnie-the-Pooh", Bristol Valley Theater, 151 S. Main St., Naples, 11 a.m., \$5; 585/374-6318.
- **FRI, AUG. 16** — Family fun: "Women's African Drum & Dance Circle ASHA", Sagawa Park, Erie & Main Sts., Brockport, 7-8 p.m., free; 585/637-3984.
- **AUG. 16, 23, 30** — Walking tour: of downtown Rochester, meet at City Hall, 30 Church St., Rochester, noon-12:50 p.m. or 4:45-6 p.m.; \$5; call Mariana 585/271-7368.
- **AUG. 17-18** — Exhibit opening: "Global Shoes", from 40+ countries, family foot-related festivities, Strong Museum, One Manhattan Sq., Rochester, Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. noon-5 p.m.; \$6 adults, \$5 seniors, students, children 2-17, under 2 free; 585/263-2702.
- **AUG. 17, 24, 31** — Star show: "Awesome Stars!", ages 6-11, Strassburgh Planetarium, 657 East Ave., Rochester, 1 p.m., \$4 adults, \$2.50 students/seniors; 585/271-1880.
- **AUG. 18, 25** — Transportation exhibit & train ride: New York Museum of Transportation, Industry Depot, Rt. 251, Knah, rides every 30 minutes starting 11:30 a.m.; last trip 4 p.m.; \$5 adults, \$4 seniors 65+, \$3 ages 5-13, under 5 free; 585/533-1113; [www.nytransportation.org](http://www.nytransportation.org).
- **WED, AUG. 21** — Kids' program: "19th Century Festival", Cool Kids at High Falls, Granite Mills Park, next to pedestrian bridge, High Falls District, State & Platt Sts., Rochester, 7 p.m., free; 585/637-3984.
- **THU, AUG. 22** — Concert: "Caliente", Latin rhythms, Sagawa Park, Erie & Main Sts., Brockport, 7-9 p.m., free; 585/637-3984.
- **SEP. 6-8** — Irish festival: Camp Eastman, Irondequoit, Irish food, entertainment, children's activities, Fri. 4-11 p.m., Sat. noon-11 p.m.; Sun. 11 a.m.-Mass, gates open noon-6 p.m.; \$5, under 8 free; 585/254-0786; [www.rochesteririshfestival.org](http://www.rochesteririshfestival.org).
- **THRU DEC. 2002** — Exhibit: ExploraZone 2, science interactives, Rochester Museum & Science Center, 657 East Ave., Rochester, Mon-Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. noon-5 p.m.; \$7 adults, \$6 seniors, college students, \$5 3-18, under 3 free; 585/271-1880.
- **ONGOING** — Exhibit: "Geo-Zoom! and Riding Train", fun activity stations for children to learn about geography & transportation, Strong Museum, One Manhattan Sq., Rochester, Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. noon-5 p.m.; \$6 adults, \$5 students, seniors, children ages 2-17, under 2 free; 585/263-2700.

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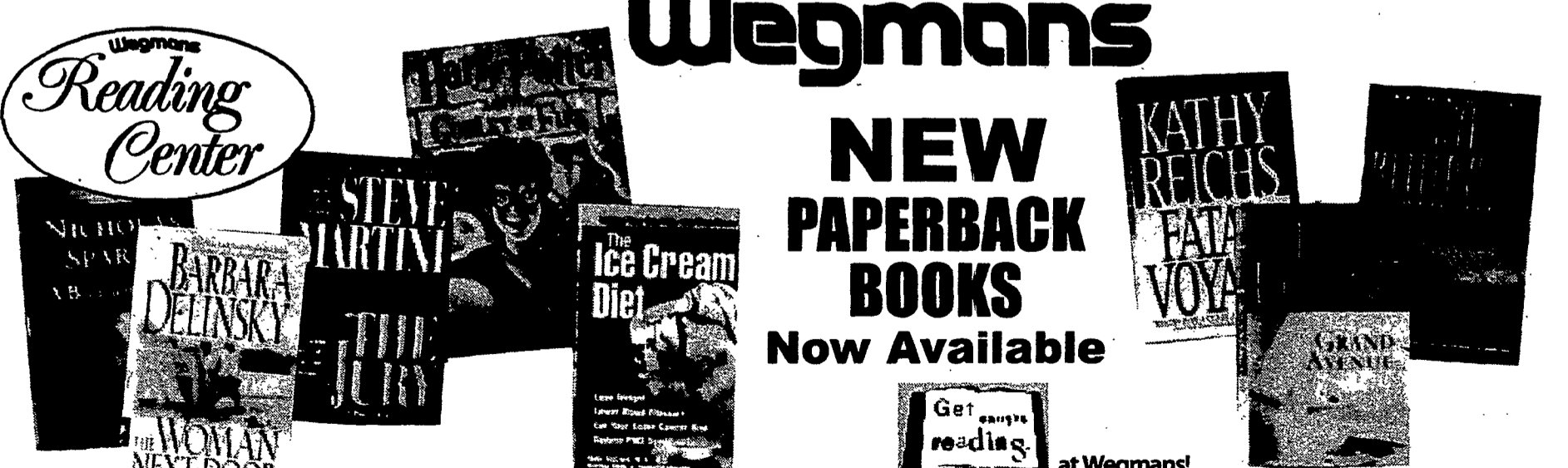
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