TASK INITIATION - HOME ROUTINE

Homework Battles: How to Get Kids to Do Homework Independently

Watch my short video first (under 2 minutes).
It walks you through everything here. These pages are your reminder sheet. Watch the video here

Dear parents, you are doing your best.

If homework time ends in tears (yours or theirs), please hear this: **this is not your fault.**

- You are juggling work, meals, dinner, laundry and siblings.
- You may be struggling yourself with organizing, anxiety and feeling overwhelmed.
- And your child has already had a very long day.
- Feeling tired and overwhelmed doesn't mean you're failing. It means you care, and you're carrying a lot.
- This guide is here to **MAKE YOUR LOAD LIGHTER**, not to add more to your list.

Why it's happening

- **School and home are different, and that's okay.** School has a team of adults, a set schedule and tools built into every hour of every day. Even with all these structures in place, school is far from perfect. Home is meant to be a place to rest, not a second classroom.
- **Your child has been "holding it together" all day.** Home is their safe place, so that's where the tiredness and big feelings come out. That's a sign they trust you.
- **Starting feels impossible.** Face-down on the table, crawling under furniture or running off to hide is a way to escape a task that feels too big. It's not defiance.

Continued on the next page →

🤝 First, lighten your load: talk with your child's school

- If your child has a diagnosis (ADHD, autism, a learning difference, anxiety or sensory needs) or is behind grade level, they can have **accommodations or modifications** to help them with routines like homework.
- Ask the teacher for a **home and school agreement**, for example:
  - homework reduced to **10 minutes**, or
  - **no homework** for now.
- Ask for it to be written down (in the IEP), so everyone follows the same plan.

You can say: "Because of my child's sensory, anxiety and regulation needs, homework time is very hard at home. Can we agree on 10 minutes a night, or no homework for now?"

👀 Visuals are the foundation

- For children with ADHD, autism or undiagnosed learning differences, **visuals are how they understand**.
- Pair **one simple step** with **a clear picture or word**. It bridges the gap, so your child can actually take in and remember what you asked.

★ **Many strategies are similar.** They repeat on purpose: familiar tools are easy to use, they bring safety and build success.

Instead of: "Get your homework out, sit down and start question 1."

Try: Step 1. 📖 "Open book." Easy and clear.

"Words disappear. Visuals stick."

The 4 strategies are on the next page →

4 Strategies

1 First: move and snack. Then: homework, same time, same place, for 10 minutes with a visual timer

- After school, energy crashes. Offer a crunchy or chewy snack first (pretzels, apple slices, cheese, crackers).
- Let them move after sitting all day (play outside, bike, trampoline).
- Homework at the same time and place every day, on a picture schedule (for example, 4:30 PM at the kitchen table).
- TV off and tablets in another room before you start.
- Talk about the new routine the night before, in the calm, not the storm.



Move first

2 A visual timer they can see

- To a child, "five more minutes" is invisible and confusing, and that causes stress.
- A Visual Timer shows time **physically shrinking**, so your child can see how much is left. That helps them feel safe and ready for what's next.
- Set it for the time you agreed with the school (for example, 10 minutes).
- When the timer beeps, homework is over, even if it isn't finished.



Visual Timer

3 Sit close for the first step

- Starting is the hardest part, not finishing.
- Use a slide-button chart, one picture step at a time: open book ✓, write name ✓, do question 1 ✓.
- Once they're moving, quietly step back.



Slide chart

Strategy 4 on the next page →

4 Under the table? Join them.

- Don't pull them out. That quickly becomes a power struggle.
- Slide down beside them with a small whiteboard and start there.
- "Your slider is waiting on the table. Let's check how much time is left."



Stay close, stay calm

🧰 The same tools at home and at school

- Having the same **evidence-based sensory and learning tools** in both places is vital for your child's physical and emotional growth.
- When the tools are the same, your child feels safe and knows what to expect, wherever they are.
- **If the school isn't using these visual tools, advocate for your child.** Insist they are included in the IEP, and visit the class to see if they are being used. That is your right as a parent.

⏳	🟢	✅	🪑
Visual timer	TheraPutty	Slider chart	Spin cushion

Try saying

Instead of: "We're not doing anything else until this homework is done."

Try: "Homework is 10 minutes, then it's over. Let's start."

Instead of: "Get out from under there and do your work."

Try: "I'll sit right here with you. Let's open the book."

Instead of telling yourself: "I'm failing at this."

Try: "We're both tired. Small steps count."

3 KEYS FOR SUCCESS WITH ANY STRATEGY

1. **Teach in the calm, never in the storm.** During a meltdown the brain can't learn, so practise new skills when your child is calm.
2. **Make it effortless.** The easiest way wins, so make the new skill easier than the old behaviour (one picture card, one step, ex: open book, one question).
3. **Reinforce the smallest success, right away.** Catch it. Praise it. The moment it happens.

Progress can be messy. Celebrate every little success. You've got this.

These anonymized cases describe generalized patterns of behaviours. They're not a substitute for an individualised behaviour assessment by a qualified professional, and shouldn't be applied directly to a specific child without that judgement.
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TRANSITIONS

Child Running Away Between Classes & Activities: Support Strategies

Watch my short video first (under 2 minutes).
It walks you through everything here. These pages are your reminder sheet. Watch the video here

Dear parents and teachers, you are doing your best.

If the end of every activity turns into a chase, please hear this: **this is not your fault.**

- **Parents:** you are juggling work, meals, dinner, laundry and siblings. You may be struggling yourself with organizing, anxiety and feeling overwhelmed.
- **Teachers:** you are juggling a full class, many different needs and very little time.
- And your child is having a very hard day.
- Feeling tired and overwhelmed doesn't mean you're failing. It means you care, and you're carrying a lot.
- This guide is here to **MAKE YOUR LOAD LIGHTER**, not to add more to your list.

Why it's happening

- **In-between moments are the hardest part of the day.** Math, lunch or a board game have rules and a clear end. The "in-between" moments don't. Even with lots of structure in place, these gaps happen many times a day, at school and at home. That's okay.
- **Running is about worry, not about you.** Not knowing what's coming next feels scary. Running (desk to desk, to the window, into the hallway) is the fastest way out of that feeling. It's not attention-seeking or defiance.
- **Their body is asking for help.** A busy, noisy room can feel overwhelming, especially when they're tired. Running is how their body copes.

Continued on the next page →

🤝 First, lighten your load: one plan for home and school

- If your child has a diagnosis (ADHD, autism, a learning difference, anxiety or sensory needs) or is behind grade level, they can have **accommodations or modifications** to help them with changes between activities.
- Ask for a **home and school agreement**, for example:
  - a **visual warning** before every change (a 2-minute timer), and
  - a **landing spot** to go to when an activity ends.
- Ask for it to be written down (in the IEP), so everyone follows the same plan.

You can say: "Because of my child's anxiety and regulation needs, changes between activities are very hard. Can we agree on a visual warning before each change, and a spot for them to go to?"

👀 Visuals are the foundation

- For children with ADHD, autism or undiagnosed learning differences, **visuals are how they understand**.
- Pair **one simple step** with **a clear picture or word**. It bridges the gap, so the child can actually take in and remember what you asked.

★ **Many strategies are similar.** They repeat on purpose: familiar tools are easy to use, they bring safety and build success.

Instead of: "Clean up, line up and get ready for gym."

Try: Step 1. 📍 "Go to your spot."

Easy and clear.

"Words disappear. Visuals stick."

The 4 strategies are on the next page →

4 Strategies

1 A landing pad: a spot to go to

- Put a bright floor spot by the door or teacher's desk (Floor Spot Markers), and a "Landing Pad" card on their desk.
- The second an activity ends, the child goes to their spot to hear what's next.
- They know exactly where their body belongs, so they feel safe.



Floor spots

2 An "almost time" signal they can see

- To a child, "two more minutes" is invisible and confusing, and that causes stress.
- A Visual Countdown Timer shows time **physically shrinking**, so they can see how much is left. That helps them feel safe and ready for what's next.
- Add a transition song or dim the lights slightly, so they wind down before being asked to move.



Visual timer

3 A job to carry

- A child carrying something important can't easily run.
- "Math is finished. You're our book carrier today. Please take this bin to the reading corner."
- A weighted item (a ball, a bin of books) calms the body and focuses the mind.

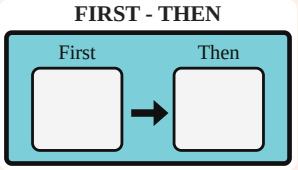


A job to carry

Strategy 4 on the next page →

4 Show what's next, and don't chase

- Keep a small First/Then/Next picture strip on their desk (free visuals in our Resource Library).
- If running starts, don't chase or grab. It can turn into a fun chasing game.
- Calmly walk to a natural checkpoint, like the doorway, and meet them there.



First/Then board

🧰 The same tools at home and at school

- Having the same **evidence-based sensory and learning tools** in both places is vital for the child's physical and emotional growth.
- When the tools are the same, the child feels safe and knows what to expect, wherever they are.
- **If the school isn't using these visual tools, advocate for your child.** Insist they are included in the IEP, and visit the class to see if they are being used. That is your right as a parent.

⏳ Visual timer	➡️ First/Then board	📍 Floor spots	🟢 TheraPutty

Try saying

Instead of: "Put your things away right now, hurry up!"

Try: "Let's go to your landing pad."

Instead of: "Stop running, come back here!"

Try: "I'll meet you at the door."

Instead of telling yourself: "They never listen to me."

Try: "This is worry, not defiance. Small steps count."

3 KEYS FOR SUCCESS WITH ANY STRATEGY

1. **Teach in the calm, never in the storm.** During a meltdown the brain can't learn, so practise new skills when the child is calm.
2. **Make it effortless.** The easiest way wins, so make the new skill easier than the old behaviour (one picture card, one step, ex: open book, one question).
3. **Reinforce the smallest success, right away.** Catch it. Praise it. The moment it happens.

Progress can be messy. Celebrate every little success. You've got this.

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SENSORY NEEDS - HOME & SCHOOL

Sensory Seeking Behavior: Why Kids Crash Into Walls and Furniture

Watch my short video first (under 2 minutes).
It walks you through everything here. These pages are your reminder sheet. Watch the video here

Dear parents and teachers, you are doing your best.

If your child is always crashing, tackling and bumping into things, please hear this: **this is not your fault.** It isn't bad parenting, and it isn't a bad class.

- **Parents:** you are juggling work, meals, dinner, laundry and siblings. You may be struggling yourself with organizing, anxiety and feeling overwhelmed.
- **Teachers:** you are juggling a full class, many different needs and very little time.
- And your child is having a very hard day.
- Feeling tired and overwhelmed doesn't mean you're failing. It means you care, and you're carrying a lot.
- This guide is here to **MAKE YOUR LOAD LIGHTER**, not to add more to your list.

Why it's happening

- **Their body is asking for pressure.** Their muscles and joints don't send clear signals, so their brain can't easily tell where their body is.
- **Crashing helps them feel calm and grounded.** Throwing themselves onto furniture gives them the deep, firm pressure they need. It's a real physical need they aren't choosing. It's not aggression, defiance or carelessness.
- **Sitting still builds it up.** After a long time sitting at school, the need to move gets bigger, and it often comes out at home, their safe place. That's okay.

Continued on the next page →

🤝 First, lighten your load: one plan for home and school

- If your child has a diagnosis (ADHD, autism, a learning difference, anxiety or sensory needs) or is behind grade level, they can have **accommodations or modifications** to help them with sensory needs.
- Ask for a **home and school agreement**, for example:
  - **movement breaks** built into the day (for example, every 30 minutes), and
  - a **chair band or spin cushion** at their desk.
- Ask for it to be written down (in the IEP), so everyone follows the same plan.

You can say: "Because of my child's sensory and regulation needs, sitting still for a long time is very hard. Can we add movement breaks and a chair band to their day?"

👀 Visuals are the foundation

- For children with ADHD, autism or undiagnosed learning differences, **visuals are how they understand**.
- Pair **one simple step** with **a clear picture or word**. It bridges the gap, so the child can actually take in and remember what you asked.

★ **Many strategies are similar.** They repeat on purpose: familiar tools are easy to use, they bring safety and build success.

Instead of: "Stop crashing! Calm down and sit down."

Try: Step 1. 💪 "Wall push-ups."

Easy and clear.

“Words disappear. Visuals stick.”

The 4 strategies are on the next page →

4 Strategies

1 Planned movement breaks

- Trampoline, playground climbing or wall push-ups at set times every day, before the urge builds.
- Use a Visual Timer to show when the next break is. Their body can see that relief is coming.
- The Zones of Regulation book helps explain that some bodies need "heavy work" to stay calm.



Big movement first

2 A crash pad landing zone

- A thick mattress or a pile of pillows against an open wall.
- When the urge comes: 3 "superman landings" or heavy rolls on the pad. Always with an adult watching.
- At school: regular visits to the sensory room, if there is one.



Crash pad

3 Heavy work jobs

- Carry something heavy, do wall push-ups, push a cart of books, carry the groceries.
- Pushing and pulling work like a natural brake for the body.
- Thank them right away: "Thanks for helping, great job!"



Heavy work job

Strategy 4 on the next page →

4 A stretchy band on the chair

- Tie a Sensory Chair Band across the front legs of their chair.
- They can kick, push or pull it quietly while staying seated.
- Their body gets the pressure it needs without leaving the seat.



Chair band

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- Having the same **evidence-based sensory and learning tools** in both places is vital for the child's physical and emotional growth.
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- **If the school isn't using these visual tools, advocate for your child.** Insist they are included in the IEP, and visit the class to see if they are being used. That is your right as a parent.

🪑 Spin cushion	🦵 Chair band	🟢 TheraPutty	⏳ Visual timer

Try saying

Instead of: "Stop being so rough! You're going to hurt someone."

Try: "Your body needs a big squeeze right now. Let's go to the crash pad."

Instead of: "Sit still and stop crashing into things."

Try: "I can see your body wants to move. Let's do a few wall pushes first."

Instead of telling yourself: "Everyone thinks I can't handle this child."

Try: "Their body needs this. I'm helping them get it safely."

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