

The Homework Hubbub

Students are spending more time studying at home, but is that a good thing?

Homework is on the rise! Nine- to twelve-year-olds are spending 20 percent more time studying at home than they spent in 1997, according to a recent study from the University of Maryland. "Kids spend an average of 50 minutes to 75 minutes studying every day," says the study's author, Sandra L. Hofferth.

But is taking schoolwork home a good thing? Two recent books have education experts asking, is homework helpful?

In their new book, *The Case Against Homework*, writers Nancy Kalish and Sara Bennett write that homework keeps kids from participating in school sports and other after-school programs. "It's the youngest kids who seem to be getting the most homework," Bennett told *WR News*, "and they're the least ready to do it."

Alfie Kohn, the author of *The Homework Myth*, told *WR News* that "no scientific studies have shown that kids **benefit**¹ in any way from homework before high school." Kohn thinks that too much homework can take the fun out of learning.

Many education officials say homework is good for learning. "It's important [for kids] to get used to doing homework," Harris Cooper of Duke University told *WR News*. Cooper is one of the country's leading researchers on homework. He says practicing homework now will help kids in high school. Cooper suggests that students should expect to do 40 minutes of homework each day.

Many teachers see the value of homework as well. "I think homework is helpful to most kids. It gives them more responsibility," fourth-grade teacher Pepper Schrock of Orlando, Florida, told *WR News*. "I try to give meaningful projects as homework."

1 **benefit**: be provided with something useful or desirable