

# AEA Viewpoint

## Joint Research Helps to Bridge the Middle School Homework Divide

New research commissioned by LeapFrog in conjunction with the National Education Association reveals that 86 percent of middle school students say that they still turn to parents for homework help. These and other results of "The Great Homework Divide Survey" illustrate the reliance of "tweens"—widely recognized as children ages 9 through 12—on regular parent involvement. This finding is contrary to the conventional wisdom that tweens are eager to exercise their budding independence.

Parents' and students' responses indicate that they are both struggling to adjust to the demands of the middle school workload, which is both heavier and more varied than grade school assignments:

- Two-thirds of parents (66 percent) say that their middle school student seeks their help with homework.

- More than one-half of middle school students (57 percent) and their parents (59 percent) report that parents spend at least one hour a night helping them with homework.

- Parents also report helping their middle school students with homework almost two and one-half nights a week on average.

"Middle School is an ideal time for parents to recommit to their children's academic success by fostering positive attitudes about homework," said NEA president Reg Weaver. "Children can learn to approach the heavier homework load responsibly. And parents can act as motivators to encourage their children's critical thinking skills and help develop fundamental study habits that will serve them for life."

NEA has created tips for bridging the Great Homework Divide at

[www.nea.org/parents](http://www.nea.org/parents)

- **Be Prepared.** Assume your children will have studying to do every night and help them create a distraction-free homework zone.

- **Understand teachers' policies and expectations.** Encourage your children to ask their teachers questions, reminding them that an in-person visit before or after school is often most effective.

- **Be available and teach by example.** Check in with your children and be a sounding board or source for advice.

- **Inspire Learning outside school.** Nurture your children's personal interests, perhaps finding activities that parallel what they are studying in school, thus fostering their enthusiasm for learning as a life-long endeavor.

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