

Helping children with schoolwork

(e.g., homework assignments or projects) is sometimes a challenge for families as well as for children. However, it can also be an opportunity for parents and carers to get to know what children are learning at school and to support their learning. Children learn better when they have opportunities to share and practise at home what they are learning at school.

It is not necessary for parents or carers to have all the answers when children have difficulties with their schoolwork. If adults simply provide children with the answers, children miss out on the chance to learn and think for themselves. Parents and carers can help children by guiding their learning and thinking and supporting them to try for themselves.

Helping children to think through tasks supports their learning. Teaching skills for thinking helps children think for themselves.

Helping to build children's learning

In just the same way that scaffolding provides temporary support to a building, parents and carers can also 'scaffold' children's learning. For some things, children may need lots of support. This is especially the case when they are learning new things. As children's abilities develop, they gradually become more independent in their learning and parents and carers can start to withdraw their 'scaffolding'.

Tips for scaffolding children's learning:

- Provide a challenge that is *just* beyond what your child can already do easily by him or herself.
- Give prompts.
- Ask questions.
- Model the steps involved.
- Praise your child for attempting the task, not just for succeeding.
- Watch to see if your child is struggling or becoming frustrated, as these may be signs that the task is too hard.