

TAKE
A SIDE

Debate

Directions: Read the article. Study the facts. Decide what you think. Write an opinion essay.



Should Parents Help Kids With Homework?

Homework can be stressful. But help from Mom and Dad might be the wrong answer.

Eleven-year-old Emily had been stressed for days about her school project: a PowerPoint presentation on the life of J. K. Rowling. Busy with swim-team practices and religious school, she had barely had time to work on it. So she was grateful when, the night before it was due, her dad swooped in to save her.

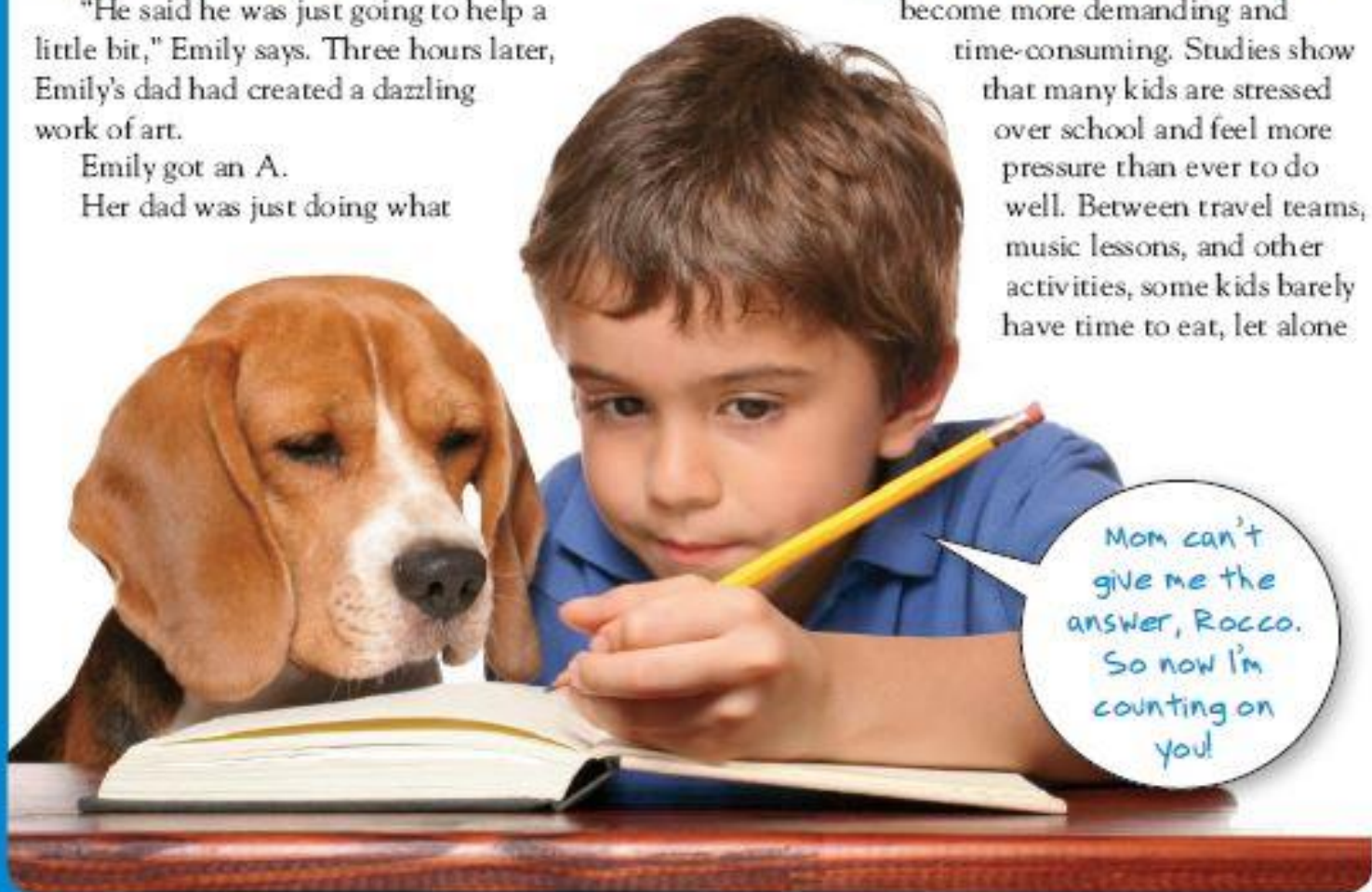
"He said he was just going to help a little bit," Emily says. Three hours later, Emily's dad had created a dazzling work of art.

Emily got an A.

Her dad was just doing what

many dedicated parents do every night, right? Whether it's correcting long-division problems, giving hints on vocabulary worksheets, or "proofing" big projects like Emily's, many parents feel it is their duty to help their children with schoolwork. And it's easy to see why kids need the help.

In most U.S. schools, homework has become more demanding and time-consuming. Studies show that many kids are stressed over school and feel more pressure than ever to do well. Between travel teams, music lessons, and other activities, some kids barely have time to eat, let alone



do an hour or more of homework per night. No wonder homework often turns into a team effort between kids and parents.

But could all of this helping actually be hurting kids?

Practice Makes Perfect

Many experts say yes, especially when parents cross the line between helping and *doing*. Pointing out math mistakes is fine—unless a mom then reveals the right answers. Proofing a project is helpful, unless a father takes over. (Hear us, Emily's dad?)

"I give homework for students to practice what they have learned," says fourth-grade teacher Maura Sackett. Many educators agree

that if students can't do the homework, they should let the teacher know so they can get the extra help they need. Plus, part of growing up is learning to balance outside activities and the demands of schoolwork.

A recent study by two university professors, called *The Broken Compass: Parental Involvement With Children's Education*, found that kids who got extensive homework help from their parents actually scored *worse* on standardized tests than kids who managed homework on their own.

So what's the answer to this difficult problem?

Maybe you should ask your parents—or maybe not! ■

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Should parents help kids with homework?

Go back to the article and find information to support each side. Write the information on the lines below.

YES Nowadays, kids need a boost!

- 1 _____

- 2 _____

- 3 _____

NO Homework is for kids alone!

- 1 _____

- 2 _____

- 3 _____

Study the points on both sides of the argument—and think about your own opinion. State your opinion in one sentence below. It can become the thesis statement for an opinion essay on this topic.

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