

From Struggles to Snuggles

Keep homework battles at bay
with these simple tips

功課愛作戰

Text | Wendy Lau



It's amazing how the mere mention of the word 'homework' sends stress levels sky-high, as exasperated parents try to get their children to finish their homework without the situation escalating into a full-scale tantrum, leaving both the child and the parent in a state of agitation. Homework battles are the bane of most students' and parents' lives. The good news is there are ways to go about making it less of a struggle. As a mother of two, I've been through the conflicts brought about by a combination of young children and homework, and after a lot of trial and error, managed to banish the battles. Turning struggles into snuggles and avoiding altercations with early years homework is a breeze with a few simple tactics.

令人驚訝的是，一提到「作業」二字，所有人的神經都會緊繃起來。雖然怒髮衝冠的父母特別想在事態不是那麼嚴重的情況下，讓孩子完成功課，可最終還是兩敗俱傷，父母和孩子都氣鼓鼓地坐在一邊。做作業時發生的戰鬥，幾乎是所有學生和父母生活的痛苦之源。其實，我們可以採取一些辦法將抗爭變成依偎。作為兩個孩子的母親，我也曾與兩個孩子和他們的功課艱苦作戰，苦不堪言。經過無數的挫折與失敗，我們終於擺脫了戰爭的陰影。下面幾個簡單策略，仿若一股清風，可以吹去家庭作業惹來的戰爭衝突和親子間的爭執。



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由英國來港已21年的Wendy熱愛教學，出版過16本書。其網站www.elite-kids-hk.com刊有許多幫助香港孩子取得好成績的文章。

Put yourself in your child's shoes

從孩子的角度思考問題

First and foremost, imagine the situation from their perspective. If you were two years old with a room full of toys or a drawer full of DVDs beckoning you, would you really want to sit at a table and mindlessly copy Chinese characters or English alphabet letters? When you get back from the office, do you want to sit down and work on more spreadsheets? No? So, it's no surprise that young kids lose it when they are forced to sit and do something mind-numbing. You know that doing the work is going to improve their hand-eye coordination and help them become proficient writers in the future. You may even be seeing way into the future and imagining them graduating from an Ivy League college. But in a preschooler's world the only thing that matters is "now". That's why you have to put fun into homework.

首先，也是最重要的，就是從他們的角度想像整個局面。如果你只有兩歲大，面前是一大堆的玩具和一抽屜的DVD光碟在召喚你，你真的願意坐在那裡，心無雜念地抄寫漢字或是英語字母嗎？從辦公室回來之後，你還願意坐在辦公桌後面，處理一大堆的試算表嗎？不會嗎？那孩子不想坐下來，做那些讓人心煩意亂的功課也就不奇怪了。當然，你是明白做功課可以提高他們手眼間的協調，幫助他們將來流利地寫一些東西。你或許還會一直幻想下去，看到他們站在Ivy League college的畢業講台上，發表畢業致辭。在一個學齡前小孩的世界裡，只有一件事情是最重要的，那就是「現在」。這就是為甚麼要在功課中添加有趣的元素。



Right time, right place

時間要選對 地點也要選對

Expecting your child to tackle homework when he or she is hungry or tired is a recipe for disaster. Make sure they've had a rest, a break with time to play and a snack before getting started. Make sure you assign a special location for your child to do his or her homework. For kindergarten children, it's a good idea to buy a small table. Take your child with you to buy it so they "own" part of the process. Empowering a child will make them much more likely to want to do their homework. Right from the beginning, label it the "homework" table. Make your child feel grown up because all kids want to feel grown up. Go to the stationery shop together and pick out some appropriate stationery to put on their desk/table. Place it somewhere with as few distractions as possible. Set a time every day for homework and use a timer to remind your child – they will soon be delighting in telling you it's homework time. (See below for more about timers).

如果孩子饑餓難耐或是困乏至極，你卻要他完成功課，這簡直是對人性的摧殘。開始做功課之前，請先讓孩子休息一下、玩一會兒，吃點甜點，然後再開始。為孩子安排特定的地點，讓他們安心做功課。對於幼稚園的孩子，買張小桌子就是不錯的主意。帶著孩子一起去買，這樣他們會有「參與其中」的感覺。這樣授予孩子權利，孩子就會更願意做功課。從一開始就在桌子上貼上「功課」的標籤。讓孩子有長大了的感覺，因為所有孩子都希望快點長大。去文具店，挑選一些合適的文具，放在孩子的書桌上。把孩子的小桌子放在不會讓他分心的地方。固定每天做功課的時間，使用計時器提醒孩子——他們很快就會高興地告訴你，該做功課了。（參看下面更多有關計時器的資訊）。

Fun and games

趣味和遊戲

The key to getting your child to enjoy homework is to make it seem like a game. Using a timer is easy and the perfect solution for the child who seems to take forever to finish their homework. Buy a simple timer. If you can find one that looks like a toy, it's even better. Or use your computer – there are some computer timers for which you can choose the alarm sound, like a dog barking. Again, empower your child - let him or her choose the sound. The more ownership they have the more motivated they will be. Set an appropriate time for the task. For example, for a three year old writing a sentence, allow five minutes then make it into a "game". Let's see if we can beat the timer. Ready! Get set! Go!

將功課變成遊戲是孩子享受其中的關鍵所在。計時器，簡單方便，也是給那些做功課要花很長時間的孩子開出的良方。買個簡單的計時器，要是能找到一個像玩具一樣的計時器，就更好了。或者用你的電腦也可以——電腦上有很多計時器，而且可以自由選擇鬧鈴聲音，如小狗「汪汪」叫的聲音。再次授權給孩子，讓他自己選擇聲音。屬於他們自己的東西越多，他們也就越容易參與其中。為孩子做功課設定恰當的時間。比如說，3歲的孩子造句子，可以給他5分鐘的時間，然後開始「遊戲」。看看是計時器先走到，還是寶寶先造好句子。準備！各就各位！開始！

Give oodles of positive reinforcement 給予孩子大量積極的鼓勵

The golden rule is to praise not criticise. When your child finishes his Chinese writing, make a point of praising him. Display it on your fridge. Show it to your husband when he gets home. Your child will pick up on this positive feeling. Give your child a big hug (snuggle not struggle – remember). Avoid criticising and never show anger on your face. For older children you can introduce a reward chart with stickers.

黃金法則就是讚揚，而不要指責。孩子完成語文書寫功課時，表現出讚揚他的姿態。把孩子完成的「大作」掛在冰箱上。老公回家時，跟他一起分享孩子的成果，孩子會感受到其中蘊含的積極情緒。給孩子一個大大的擁抱（請記著：是依偎，不是抗爭）。不要斥責孩子，永遠不要滿臉怒氣。對於大點兒的孩子，您可以採用標籤獎勵圖框。

Steer clear of negatives and threats 避開負面因素和威脅舉動

This takes some getting used to because “don’t” and “no” and “if you... you can’t...” tend to be part of most parents’ vocabulary. But if you can get out of that and “frame” everything you say related to homework in a positive way, you will see a huge difference. Remember that by associating not doing homework with a bad consequence such as not being able to play, you immediately create negative feelings linked with the word “homework”. This makes homework look like a chore and could have lasting implications. If you’ve done it already (and most of you will have) use positive reinforcement and framing to reverse the negative connotations.

父母總是習慣這樣做，大概是因為大多數父母趨向於使用「不要」、「不准」和「如果你...你就不能...」這樣的辭彙。可是，如果你跳出這個圈子，用積極向上的方式衡量與孩子做功課相關的一切事情，你就可以收到與以往大不相同的結果。請記著，如果你對孩子說，做不完功課就不准去玩耍，那你就是在將消極情緒與「功課」這個詞聯繫在一起。你會把功課變成家務瑣事，帶來長期不良影響。如果你已然這樣做了（大多數父母想必都已經這樣做過了），那就利用積極向上的鼓勵，將這些消極的因素扭轉過來。

These are some examples of reframed wording: 重新定義「功課」內涵的句子：

You haven’t done it properly. Do it again.
你的功課有點不對勁兒呢。再重做。

Well done for trying! I bet you can do it even better! Try again.
試試看就是不一樣！我相信你能做得更好！再試試看。

If you don’t finish your homework in the next 5 minutes, you won’t be allowed to watch TV!
再用5分鐘時間，寶貝要是做不完功課，就不可看電視了！

If you finish your work in the next 5 minutes (use the timer), you’ll have time to watch TV or choose a book for me to read to you.
再用5分鐘（指指計時器）可以做完功課的話，你就有時間看電視了，讓媽媽讀書給你聽也可以哦。

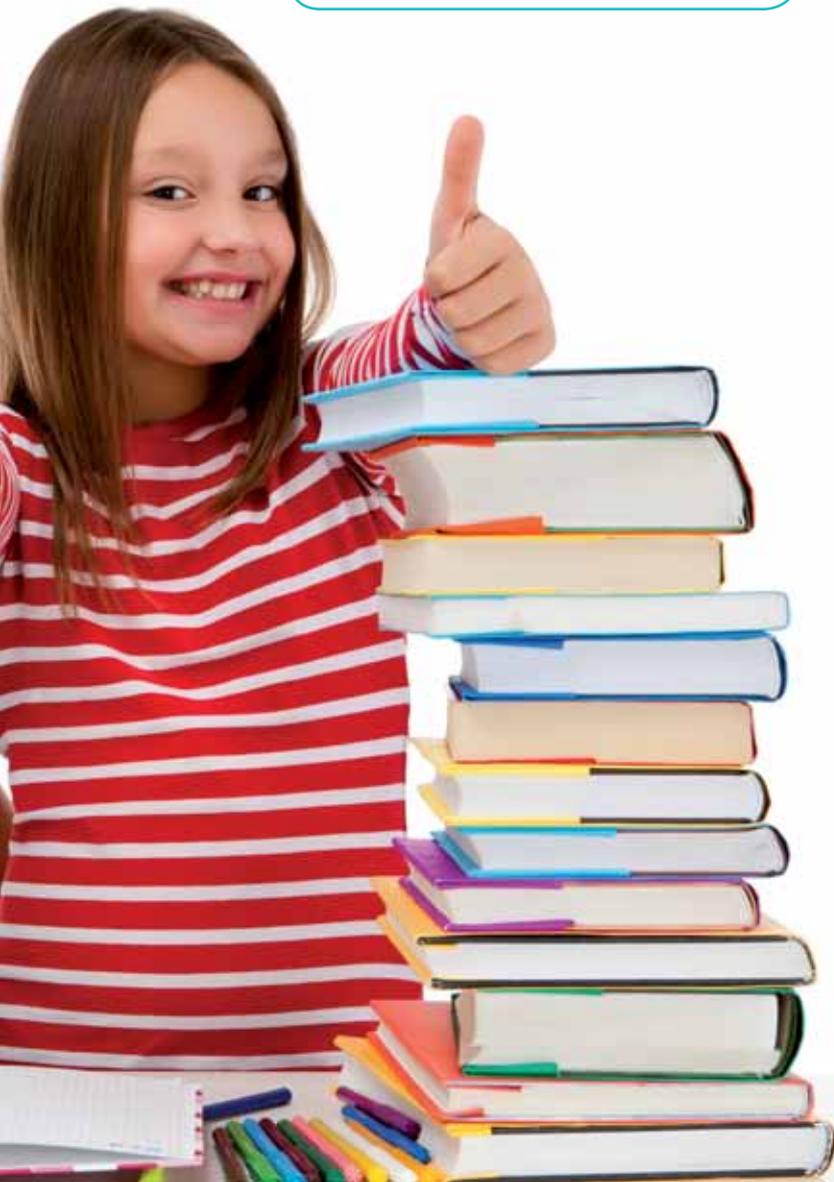




Be supportive 全力支持

Preschoolers and kindergarten age children generally need the presence of an adult to help them keep on task. Your role is to give praise and reinforcement and guide them where necessary. As your child moves into primary school, you should start training them to become more independent, otherwise you could end up with a situation where your child refuses to do homework without you at his or her side.

學齡前的或是上幼稚園的小孩子一般需要成人在身邊照顧著，才能完成功課。你的職責就是讚揚和鼓勵，在孩子不懂的地方，指點一下。不過，孩子上小學之後，就應該慢慢訓練孩子獨立完成作業的能力。不然，沒有你在身邊，他是不會自己做功課的。





Be assertive but positive 態度堅定，但要積極向上

Remember you are the boss. Your child needs rules and boundaries that you set. And remember that every child tests these boundaries (that's just part of growing up). Make a set of homework rules such as where and when to do it. When you speak, use the positive framing but say it assertively.

請記著，你是領導。孩子需要你為他們制定規則和界限。而且要記著，所有孩子都會向這些界限發出挑戰（這只是成長的一部分）。制定做功課的規則，如在哪裡、甚麼時候做功課等。跟孩子制定規則的時候，語氣要果斷自信，而且要保持積極的態度。

One final word 再牢騷一句

A key to raising a happy learner is an understanding of EQ. Visit this site to learn more about emotional intelligence and intrinsic motivation:

能否培養出樂於學習的孩子的關鍵在於瞭解EQ（情緒智商）。查看下面這個網址，瞭解更多有關情緒智商和內在動力的資訊：

www.emotional-intelligence-education.com/intrinsic-motivation.html



Homework can be futile or fruitful. You can easily make it the latter by avoiding battles, resulting in more snuggles than struggles and paving the way for a bright future for your child as a happy learner.

做功課可以是毫無效果，也可以是頗有成效的。只需簡單幾步，您就可以避免功課戰爭，讓孩子更加依戀您而不是與你抗衡；同時，也可以為孩子明朗的未來鋪平道路。

