

One-page summary: School age (7-10 years)

What's normal at this age

- Recommended sleep: 9–12 hours a day; screens go with shorter, later sleep.
- Lies get more skilled with age (studied up to age 8).
- Homework arrives: in US studies, it was less tied to achievement before grade 7.
- Conflicts with friends and siblings; aggression from siblings or peers is linked with distress.
- Not too late: no sign that parenting programs work better if started younger.

What works, and why

- Real responsibility within your limits, with your reasons explained (linked with better achievement and well-being).
- Choice within limits, such as picking some of their own chores.
- A set homework time and place, with you nearby but not doing it (such rules had the strongest link with achievement).
- A family screen plan made together, with no screens near bedtime.
- Solving problems together (tested in children with serious behavior problems).
- Freedom in small steps, with a clear way to earn it back after a slip.

What backfires

- Hands-on homework help: linked with lower achievement, though not proven to cause it.
- Yelling (linked with more aggression) and shaming (linked with more anxiety).
- Promising money or prizes for things your child already enjoys.
- Spanking: in 6 countries, more physical discipline went with more aggression and anxiety.

Things you can say

"Homework starts at 5 at the kitchen table. I'm right here if you get stuck."

"Show me what you've tried. What could you try next?"

"Tablets charge in the kitchen at 8. Do you want a 5-minute warning?"

"Here are this week's jobs. Which two do you want?"

"Let's put that on the list for our family meeting."

"You've shown me I can trust you with this. You're ready for the next step."