



FALL 2019



TAKE CARE

HEALTHY TIPS FOR FALL

It's that time of year again! The start of the school year is an exciting time as it is a time of new beginnings. For many children, the beginning of the school year may be the most stressful time of year. Change, even positive change, is hard for many children. Your child may be starting school as a kindergartner or starting at a new school. Even if your child is returning to the same school, she/he is still facing a lot of change. Each new school year brings new teachers, new classmates, new routines and new expectations. Here are some tips to help you navigate this exciting time!



The Children's Health Foundation is a non-profit organization that partners with your Pediatrician to develop quality health care programs in our community. We work together to foster the highest quality care for children, to raise awareness on health issues, and to achieve better children's health outcomes. Please ask your provider for more information.

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The Homework Battle: 5 Tips for Keeping Your Child on Track

By Shannon Odell, PsyD

Going back to school after a long summer break can be tough on the entire family. As a psychologist at a busy pediatric primary care practice, the weeks leading up to school tend to be full of frantic calls from parents, and increased depression/anxiety/behavioral outbursts from kids. Going back to school tends to be a mixed bag, full of new routines, increased stress, and adjusting to new teacher's expectations. One of the most stressful aspects of the return to school is managing homework. Parents often tell me that they dread the "homework battle" and frequently ask how to keep their children on track academically without engaging in the nightly struggle. The truth of the matter is, every child is different and will require different levels of assistance based on his/her abilities and motivation. I've compiled some basic tips for managing the homework struggle at any age.

1. **Set up a regular time and place for schoolwork.** Research shows that kids do best with routines in all aspects of their life (going to bed, getting ready for school), and homework is no different. Having a routine for your child or teen can help them stay on track with finishing their assignments and getting a jump start on big projects. I recommend that parents and kids work together to figure out their ideal place and time for homework--within reason (for instance, doing homework in front of the TV shouldn't be an option). Some kids need a break when they get home from school, others do best when they keep going and save the fun activities until after their homework is done. The more they're able to participate in choosing a time and place, the more likely they'll be to follow through.

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2. Minimize distractions. As adults, we are frequently distracted by our screens throughout the workday, with the ding-ing of text and email notifications interrupting productivity (the Do Not Disturb function exists on smartphones for this very reason) and the temptations of social media or our favorite news website distracting us from the task at hand. Children are no different, and in fact don't have the brain reserves that we adults have to sustain attention with these all-too-tempting distractions. Cell phones should be kept elsewhere or turned off during homework time, text messages can be read and returned later. Other online distractions, such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, etc. should be saved until after homework is completed. Same for video games, TV, and any screen on which your child can access Netflix.

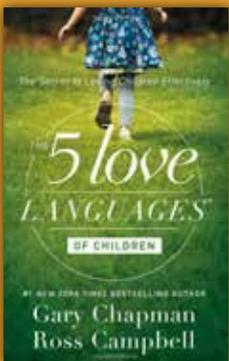
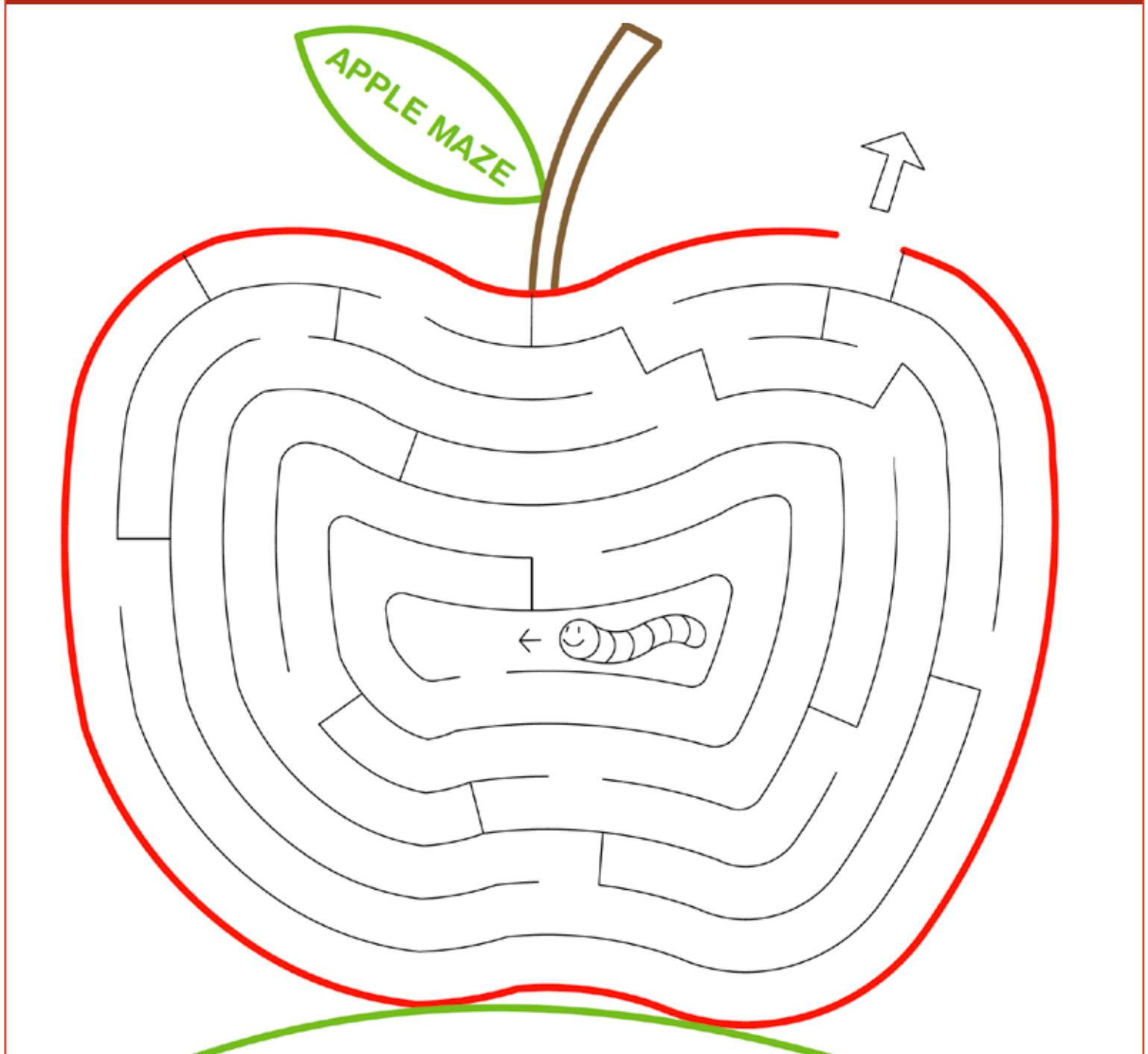
3. Allow some independence. Homework isn't just about practicing the skills they learned in school. It also allows kids and teens to learn how to organize themselves and manage their time. As parents, you can help them learn these important life lessons. Assist your child to come up with a homework plan for the night (if needed) and see if they can do it on their own. Have them come to you for help if they need it but provide them the opportunity to develop the skills for themselves. Age is the primary determining factor in how much "hands on" assistance kids need from their parents: young children typically require a greater amount of supervision and as children progress through school they need less assistance from parents (but may still benefit from some oversight). Teenagers might do better with a weekly check-in from parents to provide them more autonomy.

4. Remember that these are their grades, not yours. As a parent, it's not helpful to your children (or your sanity) to be more invested in your child's grades than your child is. Homework/studying has natural consequences, meaning that if they choose not to study or do homework, the grade they earn will reflect their lack of effort. It's important to let them make these choices so that they can learn from their successes AND their mistakes. It's better to learn this lesson sooner rather than later, and saves you from engaging in the homework battle.

5. School performance is not the only thing you should focus on. I hear from many kids that they feel their parents talk about school "all the time," which tells me that there's really important things having nothing to do with school that aren't being talked about. If you feel like school has become the primary topic of conversation in your house, try to find a balance. Being a student is only part of what makes up your child's identity. It's important to remember that there's a complicated, wonderful, interesting human being living in your house that wants you to recognize those other parts, too.

There's no one right way to do homework and it's important to allow your child's individual learning style to develop. Sometimes it can be challenging to watch your children make decisions that are different from how you might approach a situation, but that's also how children learn. Offer support when needed while also allowing them to develop their own methods independently. It can reduce conflict and make the homework battle a thing of the past. Happy studying!

Help the worm to find its way out of the apple!



Fall book recommendation

Featuring: *The 5 Love Languages of Children*, *The Secret to Loving Children Effectively*

The #1 New York Times bestselling *The 5 Love Languages* has helped millions of couples learn the secret to building a love that lasts. Now discover how to speak your child's love language in a way that he or she understands. Dr. Gary Chapman and Dr. Ross Campbell help you build a foundation of unconditional love for your child.

Discover your child's primary language—then speak it—and you will be well on your way to a stronger relationship with your flourishing child.

Nutritious Nibbles

Alphabet Soup

Pack a thermos of Alphabet Soup (with or without chicken), and you can spend school lunchtime spelling out your vocabulary words! Or the names of your friends. Or the ingredients of this familiar, comforting soup.



HANDS-ON TIME

45 minutes

MAKES:

10-12 cups

TOTAL TIME

1 hour

INGREDIENTS

KITCHEN GEAR

Cutting board
Sharp knife (adult needed)
Measuring spoons
Measuring cup
Large heavy-bottomed pot
Large spoon

1 tablespoon vegetable or olive oil
1 yellow onion, peeled and chopped
2 celery stalks, sliced
2 carrots, scrubbed and sliced
1 teaspoon dried thyme
8 cups low-sodium chicken broth
1/2 cup alphabet-shaped pasta
2 cups cooked, shredded chicken, from a home-cooked or rotisserie chicken (if you'd like)
pinch kosher salt

INSTRUCTIONS

Wash your hands with soap and water, then gather all your equipment and ingredients and put them on a counter.

1. Put the pot on the stove and turn the heat to medium. When it is hot, carefully add the oil.
2. Add the onion, celery, carrots, and thyme, and cook until the vegetables are starting to soften, stirring occasionally, 10-15 minutes.
3. Add the chicken broth, turn the heat up to high and bring to a boil. Turn the heat down to low, and cook, uncovered, until the vegetables are tender and no longer float on the top, about 30 minutes.
4. Add the alphabet-shaped pasta and cook until tender, about 8 minutes (or follow the cooking time on the package directions).
5. Add the chicken, if using, and stir until heated throughout, about 1 minute. Taste the soup and add a pinch of salt if you think it needs it. Serve right away or cover and refrigerate up to 3 days.

GET CREATIVE:

- **Lemony Alphabet Soup:**
When you add the stock, add 1 bay leaf and 1 strip lemon zest (use a vegetable peeler or a sharp knife to remove it from the lemon). Remove both before serving and add a squeeze of fresh lemon juice.
 - **Herby Alphabet Soup:**
Instead of the dried thyme, use 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning blend, or add 1 teaspoon dried marjoram (or 1 tablespoon chopped fresh marjoram), 1 teaspoon dried rosemary (or 1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary), and 1 teaspoon dried thyme (or 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme). If you're using dried herbs, add them when you cook the vegetables. If you're using fresh herbs, stir them in right before serving.
- Garlic-Ginger Alphabet Soup:**
When you cook the vegetables, add 1 tablespoon chopped fresh ginger and 1 to 2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced.
- **Curried Alphabet Soup**
When you cook the vegetables, add 1 apple, cored and diced, 1-2 tablespoons curry powder, and 1 tomato, diced. Stir in cup unsweetened, shredded coconut and 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro leaves just before serving.
 - **Pesto Alphabet Soup:**
Just before serving, swirl in 1-2 tablespoons pesto.