

Adventures at AIMS...coming together as a community

Are you down with or done with homework?

Since the early 20th century, attitudes toward homework have alternated between the belief that homework creates disciplined minds to homework interferes with other home activities (Marzano & Pickering, 2007). Still others suggest that the benefits of homework are dependent on what type is given, when it is given and the purpose of the assignments. The American Montessori Society (AMS) takes no official position on giving or not giving homework to students.

Dr. Betsy Coe, Executive Director of Houston Montessori, suggests that educators give no homework at the elementary level or decide to follow the “10 minute rule” (Bagby & Sulak, 2014). By using the 10 minute rule, teachers would assign homework by 10 minutes for each grade level. For instance, third graders would receive no more than 30 minutes of homework. However, it is my belief that this 10 minute rule requires a codicil. The teacher needs to “follow the child” and consider each child’s own work pace. An assignment for one 8-year-old child may take only 10 minutes to complete and yet for another 8-year-old 30 minutes. One size does not fit all. It hardly makes sense to give all students in the same grade level the same assignment since it is highly unlikely it will match the needs of each individual child. Typically, this is what is found in traditional schools. Montessori teachers have an advantage over traditional schools when it comes to meeting the needs of students individually in the classroom. It is no different for homework.

We believe that homework is meant to be interesting assignments that expand on the topics that the children are pursuing in class and which invite parents and children to work together. Homework is intended to afford students the opportunity to practice and reinforce skills introduced in the classroom. Homework should never become a battleground between adult and child. One of our goals as parents and teachers should be to help the children learn how to get organized, budget time, and follow through until the work is completed.