

# More Homework Draws Parental, Professional Criticism

Increasing homework loads has some parents concerned about disappearing personal time for their children.

A University of Michigan study found that in 1997 elementary students were spending 50 percent more time on homework than they had 15 years earlier.

In 1999, the [U.S. Department of Education](#) reported that nearly three-quarters of American 9-year-olds had homework daily. The department noted that the 1999 figure was up from less than two-thirds in 1984.

American students do about as much homework as their peers in Asia, and more than students in Germany, the *St. Petersburg Times* reported.

But many parents and educators alike wonder if increasing the quantity of homework is actually increasing the quality of education.

Harris Cooper, a University of Missouri psychology professor, told *Better Homes and Gardens* that the increase in homework is in response to the efforts of many states to establish a more rigorous curriculum and to hold schools accountable for student performance and standardized test results.

Even more significant than these, Cooper said, is the fact that high-achieving, affluent parents are determined to get their kids into the best colleges, and that is where the homework loads are the heaviest.

Etta Kralovec, co-author of *The End of Homework*, said in her book that no research supports the notion that more homework leads to better-educated students.

“We’ve been looking at school-reform practices for years, and we know what works: pre-kindergarten, smaller class sizes, more resources for teachers in the

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classroom,” Kralovec told *Better Homes and Gardens*. But, she added, those reforms cost money, and it costs nothing to add more homework and create the appearance of rigor.

Kralovec called it “school reform on the cheap.”

But according to Public Agenda, homework critics are in the minority.

A recent Public Agenda survey found that 63 percent of U.S. parents thought their children were getting the right amount of homework. About 25 percent said their children were not getting enough homework, while 10 percent said their children had too much homework.

In the meantime, students and parents have a wealth of resources on the Internet to aid in homework.

*Jodi Mathews is BCE’s communications director.*

Check out these homework help sites:

[Fact Monster](#)

[BJ Pinchbeck’s](#)

[Cybersleuth Kids](#)

[KidsInfo](#)