

How to build healthy habits and refrain from multitasking:

Discuss the importance of staying focused. Explain to children that they'll be able to finish homework quicker and will learn better if they stay focused on one task at a time. Agree on unplugging, disconnecting and minimising any digital distraction. Explain that focusing is a skill and will be hard at first but will ultimately pay off.

1. Clear the child's desk from anything that is not connected to homework.
2. Encourage them to finish one task, before heading on to the next one.
3. When doing a computer-based assignment, help them to reduce the open tabs and programmes to a minimum. Keep only the ones that are actively used. No online games, no shopping or social media should be open. The ones that play music are great, but not the ones that play videos.
4. Switch off or/and remove all other devices that can potentially bring distraction.
5. As multitasking puts us in a 'flow' and makes us lose orientation in time, set reasonable time limits for the homework.
6. If a child needs a break between the tasks, make them do physical or creative activities, rather than using technology. Playing an online game or scrolling through YouTube is a distraction, but not the break the tired brain needs.
7. Model behaviour yourself: put away the phone and make eye contact every time your child wants to talk to you. If you are doing something urgent and your child is bombarding you with requests, take time to explain that the requests are important, and you'd like to pay full attention and respond properly; so, when you finish your task you'll address them. Under no circumstances text and drive, especially not for the sake of multitasking.