



Tips and Techniques

Homework and Grandmother's Law

Scripture Verse: *And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.* (Romans 4:21 KJV)

Grades: 1-12

Overview: Simply stated, Grandmother's Law says, "Eat your vegetables first, and then you can have your dessert." You could always count on Grandmother keeping her word. This proven law has been effective in not only seeing that Johnny ate his vegetables, but that he took out the trash, cleaned up his room, raked the leaves, washed the windows, and a host of other household chores. Applying this law helps remove many of the hassles associated with getting a child to do something that they would otherwise not want to do, or at least not willing to make it a priority. Grandmother was applying a behavior – reward contingency, the principle that behavior is a function of its consequences. Grandmother knew that providing a positive consequence (getting a dessert) would increase the likelihood of her grandchildren eating their vegetables. As her grandchildren ate their vegetables (first), she told them the importance of vegetables and how they have beneficial effects on the body's general functions, how they were high in vitamin and mineral content, and essential for normal growth and vitality, healthy skin, for protection against diseases, and good eye sight. And "don't forget to eat your carrots; rabbits eat carrots so they can see in the dark."

Establish a Baseline

Design a 3 x 5 card that would allow the student to keep track of the amount of homework study time they engage in. Use a new card for each day of the week; have the student record daily study time for two weeks. Spot check the accuracy of the record. Finally, compute the average minutes per school day. This average constitutes the student's study time record baseline.

Study Time Record		
Subject	Time	
	Start	Finish

State Grandmother's Law

Identify an activity that the student enjoys doing, for example watching television. Make television viewing time contingent on homework time whether or not homework is assigned. Utilizing the baseline study time, for example 10 minutes, one could make each minute of homework study time redeemable for 4 minutes of television viewing time. Other contingencies might include playing video games, going outside to play with friends, or any other rewarding activity.

Extra Rewards

Parents should also keep their own time log. Give extra rewards when parents record is within 2 minutes of the child's study time record.