

Does almost every day feel like a blur? Do you often find yourself wishing you had five or six more hands so you could juggle everything that comes your way? Conscientious parents in today's world face a dizzying array of competing demands upon their time and energy. When everything heading our way feels like an ultimate essential, it can be tough to determine where to place our priorities.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would we at Love and Logic rank the importance of homework, grades, sports, chores, and parent-child relationships? As you read, keep in mind that these rankings are based on empirical research as well as decades of experience with thousands of parents, educators, and other professionals... and of course my own subconscious biases. Ultimately, all of us have to decide what's best for our unique children, families, and schools.

Homework

1-----2-----{3}-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

Homework is important, but nearly 100 years of research has failed to give it a stellar grade. Much of the debate reflects researchers' difficulty determining how much homework is done by kids... and how much is primarily done by their parents.

Provide a time and place for your children to complete their homework. Help them as long as it is fun for both of you... and as long as they are doing most of the work. Because homework only receives a three on the scale, let them be responsible for either getting it done or explaining to their teacher why they haven't. Never fight with your kids over homework.

See: Trautwein, U., & Koller, O. (2003). The relationship between homework and achievement—still much of a mystery. *Educational Psychology Review*, 15, 115-145.

Grades

1-----2-----3-----4-----{5}-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

Grades are important but not as important as developing character and a passion for learning. Besides, too many kids begin to gravitate toward easier subjects and classes because they are more concerned with GPA rather than true intellectual growth.

Sports (and other healthy extracurricular activities)

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----{8}-----9-----10

Kids who participate in sports, music lessons, and other healthy extracurricular activities are far less likely to become involved in drugs, sex, and other damaging behaviors. They also tend to do better in school!

See: Stephens, L. J., & Schaben, L. A. (2002, March). The effect of interscholastic sports participation on academic achievement of middle level school activities. *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, 86, 34-42.

Chores

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----{10}

Yes! Chores are more important than homework, grades, and extracurricular activities. Chores... completed without chronic reminders and without pay... help our kids feel more tightly connected to the family team. Chores also help them to develop perseverance, combat entitlement, and build healthy self-

esteem. In a Love and Logic home, kids get to do their homework and participate in extracurricular activities after they have finished contributing to the family.

Parent-Child Relationships

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----{10}

Love and Logic is all about developing healthy relationships... relationships that last a lifetime. Why? Because there's nothing more important to life-long success than our children viewing us as being simultaneously loving and strong. Too frequently this relationship is sacrificed in an attempt to nag, threaten, or punish kids into doing their homework and getting good grades.

Conclusion

There are many paths to success. Some kids go the traditional route, finding relatively easy success in learning and in school. Others struggle with school yet develop valuable skills through other avenues. When all is said and done, the priorities should always be placed on improving relationships, building good character, and helping kids learn to focus on their strengths.



Thanks for reading! Our goal is to help as many families as possible. If this is a benefit, [forward it to a friend](#).

Dr. Charles Fay