

## **Work With Teachers On Managing Holiday Homework**

*The Straits Times Forum Online Story (April 24, 2013)*

I WAS left confused by last Saturday's article ("Homework: Helpful or a headache?").

What is the main concern? Are the parents who were interviewed unhappy over their children's holiday homework, concerned about the heavy commitment to co-curricular activities (CCAs), or both? Should we then reduce their children's workload and time spent in school?

We are making a mountain out of a molehill. The solution is for students to work with their teachers on the issue. If there are too many assignments from different teachers, this should be communicated to the educators so extensions can be granted.

CCAs should not be perceived as burdens because participants should be motivated by passion or interest. They should understand the need for practice and training sessions, and have the dedication to do well in their endeavours. Staff in charge of CCAs can exercise flexibility if their students inform them of family events in advance.

Complaints such as "even my family life is controlled by school" and "our vacations have to match her CCA schedule" sound selfish. What do parents expect? For schools to plan programmes around their personal schedules and for family holidays or demands to take precedence over the general preferences of a class or activity group?

Many of the "problems" or concerns highlighted in the article could be alleviated if some parents exercised greater empathy for their children's teachers.

The children might think they are entitled to a homework-less, CCA-less holiday and that they should be enjoying themselves all the time. This self-serving mentality - thinking that they deserve these privileges, instead of having to earn them - should not be allowed to manifest itself.

Parents can play their part too. The holidays present wonderful opportunities to learn the importance of time management and prioritising. If a child adopts a positive attitude and is empowered to make the right decisions, a proper school-life balance is possible.

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