

Ty Ankrom's Here's What I Think ...

Recently, a second-grade teacher told the parents of her students that she wouldn't assign homework (www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/brandy-young-texas-teacher-no-homework-letter-note-facebook-viral_us_57b60aede4b03d5136871eb7). Her letter went viral on social media.

In essence, Godley, Texas, teacher Brandy Young hoped that if her students weren't doing homework, they could have more family time.

Dr. Lisa Asta, a pediatrician in Walnut Creek, Calif., agrees that schoolchildren have too much homework.

In an online report by US News, Asta was quoted on the hardship that children experience from excessive homework.

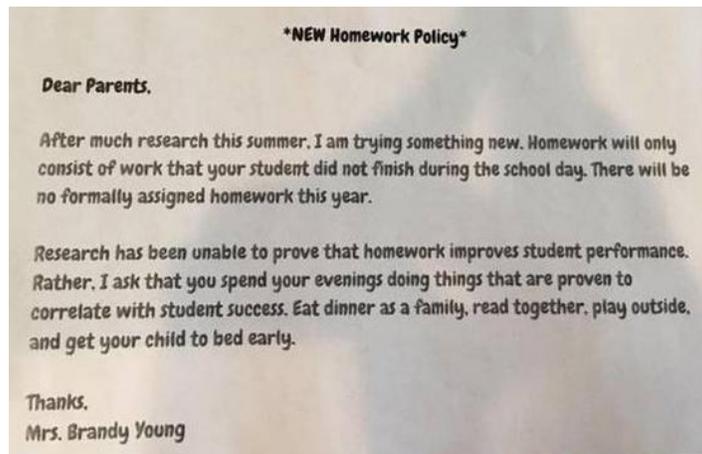
Too much homework and too many structured activities can adversely affect young people, she said.

Specifically, Asta said, kids aren't getting healthful breakfasts, enough sleep or time for free play.



An overcrowded schedule was one of 10 health threats the article cited that children can face. Asta also spoke of the ramifications of poor nutrition on students. A physical ailment, such as headaches, can then affect student performance.

Lea Theodore, president of the American Psychological Association's Division of School Psychology, recommended that parents teach children about good eating habits, provide healthful snacks and model the behavior they want their children to follow.



Parents also can model healthful behavior by being active. Unfortunately, many schools have had to cut recess and that all-important unstructured free play time is being lost.

Parents can encourage their kids to join them in an activity, preferably outside.

Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit*



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Disorder, wrote, "Time in nature is not leisure time; it's an essential investment in our children's health (and also, by the way, in our own)."

Louv also has made a connection between less time in nature and a more stressed society.

A survey cited in the US News article found that "teens' self-reported stress levels are higher than those of adults during the school year."

To read the entire article, go to <http://health.usnews.com/wellness/slideshows/10-of-the-biggest-health-threats-facing-your-kids-this-school-year>.

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