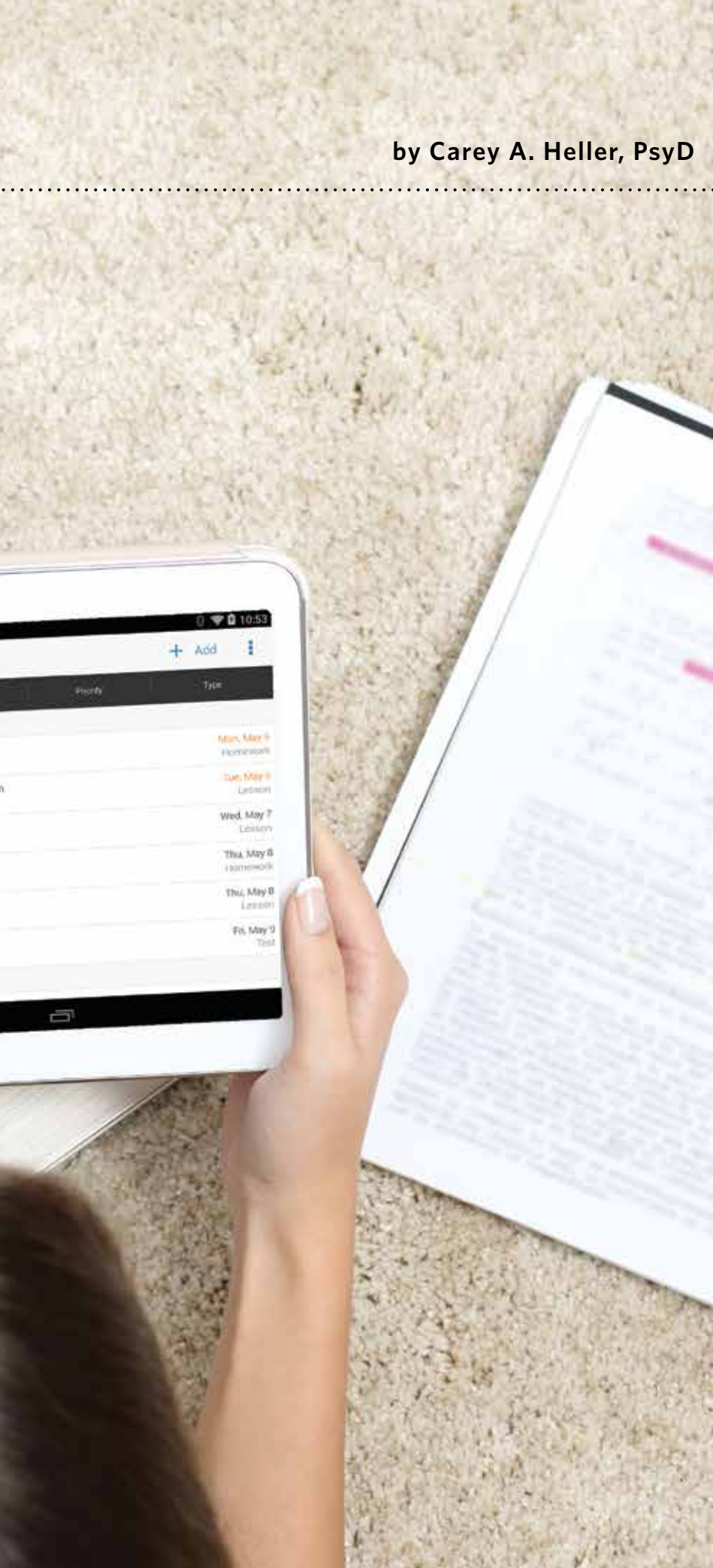


How to Use Homework Apps Effectively



by Carey A. Heller, PsyD



APPS CAN HELP children and teens do many things today, from keeping better track of their homework to being more efficient and organized in completing tasks. While it is great to know about many of the apps that are available, the information rarely focuses on how to use specific apps effectively. This article will consider two apps in depth and discuss how you can help your child or teen get the full benefit of each one.

MyHomework

MyHomework is a comprehensive electronic planner that comes in the form of an app (iOS, Android, Windows) or can be accessed via a web browser on a computer.

Key features

- Can create an account, which will sync information inputted across devices (phone, tablet, computer).
- Most options involved (class, type of assignment, due date) are input via a pull-down menu, which makes it very quick to input new assignments.
Can view assignments in multiple ways:
 - By class
 - By due date
 - By priority
 - By type (such as exam, paper, reading)
- Teachers or tutors can create a teacher account and input assignments for students
- Parents, tutors, etc. have the ability to login and view assignments.
- On smartphones and tablets, can sync app notifications with built-in calendars

Getting the most out of the app

Students should set it up initially by creating an account so that information can be accessed from any device.

- All classes should be input.
- If your child's or teen's school uses block scheduling, or even if they do not, entering the schedule for each class into the program can be helpful (for example, if the student needs to figure out what assignments aren't due until after study hall on a given day).
- All school-related tasks should be entered, including
 - Daily assignments (math worksheet, etc.)
 - Reading
 - Dates of exams/tasks to study for exams
 - Any classwork that needs to be finished for homework
 - If all tasks are not included, it makes it more difficult to truly plan effectively to complete everything.
- If helpful, students should attach assignment instructions, previous versions of assignment (such as draft of paper) to the assignment listing in the app for easy access.
- To keep track of assignments completed versus handed in, students should develop a system that works for them. For example, they can write "complete" in the assignment description next to the assignment and mark the assignment as completed in the program only after it is handed in. When needed, students can use the notes section and write the method in which the assignment was handed in (for example, "in bin" or "electronically").

MobisileNotes

MobisileNotes is an aesthetically pleasing and highly functional notes app (iOS, Android, browser-based) that provides options to make checklists, write down instructions, and add calendar notifications when used on smartphones or tablets.

Key features

- If a child or teen creates an account, they can access their notes from any mobile device or a computer. In addition, they can share specific notes with other people or email notes to people even if they do not use MobisileNotes.

- Types out text and can turn it into a checklist during or afterward.
- Syncs with built-in calendars for notifications.

Getting the most out of the app

Choose how you are going to use the app.

- Full planner
 - Have one note with a list of long-term assignments.
 - Create a template that can be filled in daily with daily assignments.
 - Add in components of long-term assignments that will be completed on specific days.
- To-do list
 - While viewing a planner, list out which assignments will be completed today.
 - Create a separate to-do list for each day of the week.
 - Input assignments that do not finish into a list on another day.
 - When feasible, put assignments that will be completed later in the week on the appropriate list for the day.

General recommendations

Any tools your child or teen implements should be as easy and quick to use as possible. If it takes too long to input assignments, he or she will be far less likely to follow through on adding items consistently.

Most students should have a planner to record assignments as well as a written to-do list to plan out task completion. If they just have a planner, they have to rely a lot on mentally organizing their completion plan, which can make it harder to accurately plan as well as increase the chances of forgetting about assignments. Furthermore, they must include all assignments. If some tasks are written down and others are just remembered, most students find it far more difficult to keep accurate track of their assignments and to follow through on completing them. Finally, they strongly benefit from estimating how long assignments will take to complete.

No matter how your student keeps track of and plans assignments, it is imperative to give him or her autonomy in choosing which format works best. Give

your child or teen the opportunity to test different organizational systems, even if you think their choice might not be the best method. This will help motivate them to take an active role in setting up and following through on an organizational system. Taking ownership in choosing and developing their own tools will likely make your child or teen better able to adapt those tools as responsibilities and circumstances change over time. 📌

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