

Parent Supports and Guidance for At Home Learning



While this may be a difficult time for children and families, this can also be a wonderful opportunity to learn new things about each other, work together, and enjoy each other's company. Parents, you do not need to become teachers but rather take this time to be present in each other's lives because simple, daily interactions with your child will make a world of difference who they become, how they manage stress, the ways in which they communicate and capacity for knowledge they possess. Here are some ways to make this time more enjoyable and manageable for everyone.

When we have each other,
we have everything



for
the

How Can Parents Help?

- ❑ **Work with your child to create a daily schedule.** Creating routine and consistency will help everyone stay on track for managing work loads, staying organized and reducing stress.
- ❑ **Create routines.** What will the morning look like now, what are we going to do during the day, how will we manage school at home, what will the bedtime routine be? Routines will help create structure in an ever changing time and will help with the transition back to school when this time comes.
- ❑ **Give your child clear expectations.** It is okay to tell your child what you need from them while they are home. Clear expectations reduce stress because children know exactly what to expect. It may even help to write these down and hang them on the wall/fridge.
- ❑ **Use Positive Praise.** Let your child know when they are engaging in appropriate behavior and meeting your expectations while they are home. Acknowledge/reinforce the behavior you want to see more of. (ie. I love how you said good morning to me today, way to be on track brushing your teeth all on your own this morning, that was really responsible of you to do your work without being asked, etc.)
- ❑ **Create a reward chart with your child.** We all look forward to positive reinforcement. If your child is following through with your expectations, reinforce that. This can be as simple as hot chocolate together, they get to pick the movie you watch, they get 10 minute of mom/dad time, they get to pick the game, they get to tell the family a joke, sing you a song, etc. If you have fun with it, they will too.
- ❑ **Ask your child to participate in chores.** There will be more bodies in the house which means more mess so asking them to help around the house can benefit everyone and give them a sense of responsibility and teamwork.
- ❑ **Set realistic consequences and follow through with them.** Let's face it, being home together for an extended period of time can also cause some conflict. Clear expectations and rewards can help to prevent this, but if necessary, provide clear consequences. If you chose this _____ then this _____ will happen. Make sure you choose consequences that match the behavior, are realistic and something you can follow through on. For example, telling them they will stay in their room for the rest of the

break may not be realistic. Options such as time outs (set # of minutes corresponding with their age), loss of an item/privilege for a set amount of time or until an expectation is met, cleaning up/fixing a poor choice, restitution or apologizing, talking with you about the choice they made, how it wasn't the best choice and what they can do instead next time may be more beneficial options.

- ❑ **Talk with your child about his/her choices.** It is important for your child to know that what they do is their choice. If they are making good choices, good things are happening for them. If they choose not to, then the consequence is something they chose (ie. a lower grade when they return to school, not

feeling prepared with academic expectations, fighting with a sibling, not following your directions, etc.) It is not done by the adult to them, but rather a consequence of a choice they made.

- ❑ **Talk with your child about his/her feelings.** It is crucial during this time that we continue to check in with each other. How is your child feeling on a daily basis? Plan a time to check in, maybe as part of a bedtime routine. Remind your child that ALL feelings are normal and okay during this time and talking about them can help to relieve those big emotions.
- ❑ **Model appropriate behavior.** This is a time when children will be looking to parents on how to respond in a time of crisis. Be aware of the language you're using and the stress you may be feeling. If you make it a big deal, your children will feel that as well. It reminds me of when a toddler falls on the ground. If you are encouraging and supportive (you're okay, you can do this) they find the strength to continue. If you scream and rush to their side, they feel the stress and panic that I must not be okay. This is a perfect opportunity to model reciprocity, flexibility, trust in each other and
- ❑ **Talk about the things we can and can't control.** So many things are changing and unknown. This can cause a lot of stress. One way to reduce this is to think about the things we do and do not have control over. What steps can we take to provide ourselves stability, assurance and support. It may even help to write down lists of baby steps during this time and cross one off at a time.
- ❑ **Monitor your child's use of technology.** With all of this extra time, an easy way to occupy ourselves is with technology. Be cautious of the amount of time and the content of material your child is using. Helping your child to set limits and boundaries will ease the transition back to school hours as well as create opportunities for social interaction and bonding at home. Refer to this article from the Mayo Clinic for more specifics in supporting healthy [Screen Time Usage](#).
- ❑ **Look for the positive.** The more we think about negative things, worries and what could go wrong, the more we create negative feelings. Focusing on positive thoughts creates a mindset for positive emotions. Help your child to think about the positive that can come from this. If this is a challenge, even starting with things that make you happy can help (ie. my happy thoughts, my favorites-food, candy, show, game, animals, place, etc). If nothing else, start with a smile!

Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it.

- Charles R. Swindoll

- ❑ **Enjoy this time together.** It's not very often that the world gets put on hold and we have extra time to spend with our families. Make the most of it and have fun together.



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