

Learning at Home Guidelines for Parents

These are very challenging times for us all and we are in an unknown arena. Every household will have its own needs and its own challenges so the idea that one plan fits all is not feasible.

The most important thing at this moment in time is our physical health and our mental and emotional wellbeing. Continuing learning sits under these two priorities!

Teachers will provide a learning at home plan however what you do with it or how you use it is up to you. Please don't add to your stress levels or the anxiety in your home by battling over learning activities.

Keep households calm. Enjoy each other's company. Make pleasant memories. Find the silver lining!

Here are some tips that may support learning at home:

- Prepare a space designated for learning that's away from televisions and video games
- Set goals on what you want your children to accomplish each day; not just school activities, e.g. make their bed,
- Create a schedule and stick to it; routine is important.
- Be familiar with the learning plan set up and supplied by the teacher. Regular updates will be shared.
- Learning at Home will:
 - Provide a timetable for when children are expected to be in their online classrooms
 - An overview of tasks and activities that are to be completed as well as some optional / could do activities or ideas.
 - Provide regular communication with parents so you are aware of what is happening and when.
- Limit children's access to devices; we do not want children on devices all day.

[**Free Online Resources for Families**](#)

[**Parents Guide to Google Classroom**](#)

Top Tips For Tech At Home



Tiger Tech: Ready To Learn Top Tips for Healthy Tech At Home

"Fridge Friendly" Parent Resource



Prioritize Sleep

Keep devices out of bedrooms.
Plan for enough sleep.



Device Free Dinners

Prioritize personal connections
with Device Free Dinners.
Disconnect to reconnect! :-)



Charging Station

Set up a charging station in a
neutral location (not bedrooms)
in the house.



Common Sense

Visit commonsensemedia.org
for great advice, reviews and
resources for parents.



Time Limits

Agree sensible limits for
screens and tech.
Help your child prioritize their use
of time with tech. What needs to
be done? When?



Enjoy It Together!

Watch movies and play games
together. *What discussions do
they raise?*

As parents we can model the behaviours we want to teach.
Are we making the best tech choices for ourselves?

Produced April 2019 for the community of WAB. Icons from flaticon.com

Scan to find out more, or visit:
library.wab.edu/EdTech/Parents



What might Learning at Home look like? Tips for Parents

It's one thing to entertain your children all day on the weekends. It's another when you have seven days a week to fill for an indefinite period of time.

The secret to making learning at home work is to create a routine. Kids are used to following a schedule, so making a blueprint for the day will help everything fall into place. It's a lot easier than you might think. Grab a pen, paper and actually map out how the days will look at home. The goal is to keep kids busy and learning while allowing you to get other things done too.

Use school as the framework for your morning routine thinking about:

- When are they used to having breakfast? Snack? Morning tea? Lunch?
- Build in time outside; even on cooler days children can play and explore in their own environment.
- Break the day into small chunks much like school does with subjects.
- If your child has assigned schoolwork, do they work best in the morning or afternoon? For most children it's the morning and that frees the afternoons up to be a little less formal and structured.

Build in Play Blocks

Once you've mapped out times for things like food and school assignments, you're ready to fill in the rest of the day, and actually carving out time for dedicated child-led play is *huge* for kids. When a child is imagining, creating, building or inventing, they are doing some serious learning.

In your new daily schedule, have a few 15- to 30-minute blocks (more or less time depending on your child's age and play development) of dedicated child-led play. The more a child plays, the more they *learn* to play.

A few tips for effective playtime:

- Weed out the unused and broken toys: If it's hard to find the good toys, it's hard to find the good play.
- Find puzzles, colouring books, board games, blocks, lego, markers, paper - have them on hand.
- Move the "open-ended toys" to the front: Toys with lights and batteries that sing and talk won't hook your child into play as well as simple toys (think toys from your childhood – blocks, cars, dolls, kitchens...).
- Limit adult involvement: play is the *child's job*, not the adults. Accept some play invitations, but don't feel guilty about skipping others. Kids need to play independent of adults (independent doesn't mean unsupervised).

Limit time on devices!

- To keep your kids from "over-indulging" on screens make screen time predictable: have a set time in the schedule so children know when to expect screen time (like while you make breakfast or before nap time) and for how long.
- Turn it off: Follow through when the scheduled time for screens is over, and don't leave TV on as background noise. If the house feels too quiet, turn on some music instead.
- Outside of the scheduled time block, only use screens *when you (the parent) chooses it because you need it*. Save screens for big moments, like when you have a conference call or dinner prep isn't going well.

Here are four easy indoor activities perfect for breaking up a day:

- Box Road – Flatten out a box and draw a road in marker. Add blocks, trucks and other toys for kids to build a city.
- Toy-Washing Bin – Let your kids wash their plastic toys. Add tear-free bubbles, sponges, towels and other supplies.
- Trash Art – Find some recycled materials and let your kids paint them. Kids love painting random objects and making beautiful creations from them.



- Sticky Match-Up – Draw shapes, letters, numbers, words or math problems on sticky notes and hide them around the house for your child to find. Then have the child match them up on a “key” that hangs on the wall.



Reading to, reading by and reading with kids!

Study after study shows the [importance of reading to kids](#). Being home all day is a great chance to increase that habit.

Put in reading blocks. Fifteen to 20 minutes a day is a great place to start . Consider structuring this reading block in a few different ways: parent reads aloud, child reads aloud (if the child can read), and family silent reading time. And if your child wants to extend a reading period, don't worry too much about messing up the schedule. There's no such thing as too much reading, and you can always save a planned activity for the next day. We will be providing access to online reading books as well as sending other reading material home.

Of course even with the most perfectly planned schedule, you will still have days when you just can't muster the energy to come up with even the simplest activity and instead let them

watch another episode of their favorite show. **That's O.K too. Do what you need to do to get through that day.** You'll have your routine to go back to the next day. And the one after that, too.

Use the time at home to reinforce the basics

Can your child:

- Listen to and follow simple instructions.
- Communicate their needs.
- Understand and retell simple stories.
 - Nursery rhymes, poems, fairy tales
- Match and sort objects
 - By colour, shape, size, use, cost
- Identify basic patterns, shapes and colours.
- Identify some numbers and understand how numbers are used.
- Write their own name
 - Reading and writing are two of the hardest things a child will learn. The best way to start is to make sure they can write their own name. Use pencils, not pens. You can get them in the mood by doing lots of colouring with them, then starting to show them how to write letters.
- Know the alphabet
 - There are plenty of good toys and songs that will help, but it's not just about reciting the sounds. They also need to know the differences when it comes to writing them. Many kids get mixed up between writing "b" and "d" but be patient.
- Sing or recite songs
 - Learning simple songs and rhythms helps children develop learning skills. Don't be embarrassed about singing to your child, and do it often. You can start singing when they're still in the womb, as hearing is the first sense to develop.
- Take turns and share
 - The earlier a child learns to get on well with others, the better. You can start by congratulating them for sharing toys with other children. This means your child will not be the one who gets into fights with others at school over who gets to play with the toys.
- Be sensitive to others' feelings
 - A selfish child will not be popular, so ensure they know the difference between right and wrong. They need to be told from a young age that hitting another child is very bad.
- Dress and feed themselves
 - We feed them to avoid a mess and dress them because it's quicker for us. But in the classroom, a teacher will not be able to pay them as much attention.
- Join in group activities with other children
 - Many children are shy so boost their confidence by taking them to activities and parties, anywhere where there will be other kids around.
- Make up stories (even if they make no sense)
 - You can do this while you're driving, on the bus or before bedtime. It helps their language and communication skills, and you may be amazed at how much you enjoy making up a story.
- Complete activities on their own

- Children must learn to be independent, so you need to let them do things for themselves. If they're trying to build something with Lego don't be tempted to help them finish it off or make a suggestion. If they want to come to you for help they will.
- Join in general conversation at home
 - Family time is important. Have dinner with your child as often as possible. You could have a film night when you all watch a DVD together and then talk about it after.
 - Get the family around the table , no devices, share thoughts
 - Let kids help prepare the food.
- Focus their attention on one thing for a prolonged period
 - At a young age children have a short attention span but if this does not change as they get older, they will suffer at school. Get them to do activities they enjoy, such as painting, and they will learn to concentrate.
- Count and answer number-based questions
 - Put three potatoes on your plate, get your child to eat one and ask how many are left. Try counting everything for a day, including all your steps to the supermarket and the number of trees you walk past on the way.
- Tell the difference between past and future
 - You can help your child understand the concepts of past and future from a young age. Ask them about what they did yesterday and what they are looking forward to at the weekend.
 - You can ask what they had for lunch today. Also, make a calendar and write a letter to Santa.
- Ask lots of questions
 - Kids go through a phase of asking why all the time, but never ignore them, be patient and reward their curiosity.
 - And if you think they're asking why for the sake of it, then ask them a question in return. This engages them, and gets them thinking about the world.
- Differentiate between groups
 - Ask questions that refer to different categories. For example: "Why are some of these trees dropping leaves?" "Which animals eat meat and which don't?" Your child will learn about groups and categories without realising.
- Do a jigsaw
 - Jigsaws are great for logic skills. If they get tired of them, box them up and carry on another day.
- Be active
 - Take them to a park, an activity centre or soft-play area.
- Learn about healthy and unhealthy foods
 - Talk to your child about different healthy and unhealthy foods, and allow them to eat a variety of foods in moderation.
 - If they know they can eat sweets, but not every day, you will be amazed how often they choose to eat healthy fruit or veg instead. Let them get involved with cooking too.
- Be imaginative
 - Engage in your children's games and don't put them off by disregarding their wacky ideas.
 - Let them make the rules, so they can be in control for once. You will find they are much more creative as they grow up.
- Get messy with paints and crafts

- Put a mat down under the kitchen table or go outside in the summer. Modelling clay is another great aid, and this kind of creative play gives them the motor skills they need for writing.
- Make and move to music
 - Musical instruments are great for kids - it gets them moving and it's good for spatial, reasoning and motor skills.
 - Put the music on and dance together - have fun!

Have Some Fun

My Homeschooling Schedule

- 9am: Home Economics- Learn how to make me a decent Coffee.
 - 10am: Engineering: How to operate the hover and washing machine.
 - 11am: PE- Carrying rubbish/recycling out to bins.
 - 1pm: Chemistry- How to bleach and disinfect the bathroom.
 - 2pm: Geography- Lesson in where the items you have strewn across the floor ACTUALLY live.
 - 3pm: Orienteering: How to find wash basket.
 - 3.30pm: Horticulture: Chopping Veg.
 - 4.30pm: Science- Learn how hot water and Fairy liquid remove grease from Pans.
 - 5pm: After School club: Go to your room with you ipad and be quiet!
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BORED? START A BEAR HUNT!!!

My friend just informed me that her neighborhood is doing an awesome thing for kids and families going on walks: everyone who wants to participate will put teddy bears in their windows so families can go on a "bear hunt" and spot bears. My toddler adores the Going on a Bear Hunt book, so we are all thrilled and eager to participate. Just wanted to share this idea in case others want to start Bear Hunts in their neighborhoods!

We're Going on a Bear Hunt

Michael Rosen Helen Oxenbury



After all of this is over,
all that will really matter
is how well we treated
each other

