



Coronavirus and Learning from Home: Tips to Support Success for K-12 Students and Families

As schools and places of work make decisions about learning and working remotely, families and students are tasked with figuring out how to manage it all. In many, if not most, scenarios, online learning has become the solution of choice for schools that are stepping up and getting creative to support students. This can be a big adjustment and uncomfortable for families. We would encourage you to first focus on your student's health and well-being and then turn to academics with the tips below. Students are receptive to learning when they feel safe and secure. **You've got this!**

Here are some tips for successful at home instruction:

- **Convey calm.** In the case of coronavirus or any other crisis we encourage you to first assess and address the safety and well-being of your student. In any crisis, first make sure your child knows they are safe, resilient, and that they are not alone. Encourage your child to talk to you about what they are feeling and respond with empathy and understanding. As a parent, you can help dispel feelings of anxiety by reassuring their safety and security.
- **Create a Family Plan for Success.** Students work well with, and are used to, routines, so keep them going at home. It is very likely that your child's teacher will assign a list of lessons or activities with due dates, as well as some time for real-time online experiences. Take time to plan ahead with your student and discuss expectations for completing schoolwork and attending classes at home. Beyond helping your student, a schedule will help you manage the whole family including anyone who is working or learning at home.
 - **Ensure you know the expectations that your student's teacher (or school) has** for completing their schoolwork from home and how teachers can be reached (phone, email, class website).
 - **Prepare a schedule** of what needs to be completed each day/week (older students can assist or create the schedule themselves). Remember that part of effective scheduling is building breaks into the day and not trying to put too much learning into one block. A general rule of thumb is 30 to 50 minutes of learning and then a break. Breaks may need to be more frequent for younger students.
 - **Preview lessons and assignments** with your student; ensure understanding of what needs to be done by asking the student to describe the assignment to you.
 - **Review and reflect on the day.** Cap the day with some time to ask students to show you what they worked on and ask them a few questions about what they learned.
 - **Don't miss live lessons.** Ensure that your student attends any live, synchronous online classes or collaborative activities that the teacher schedules. These are important opportunities for learning and collaborating with their peers.
 - And if you are working from home, **make sure your child knows when you are available and unavailable to help them.** You're in this experience together and clear expectations will help both you and your child.



- **Organize your space.** Students are more invested in learning when they have a dedicated school space, even if it's just a corner of a room. Aim for a place that is free from distractions and noise. If you have more than one child, consider different spaces for each child to help with focus. The learning space should be:
 - **Quiet** — away from distractions like television or siblings engaged in other activities.
 - **Monitored** — while learning online is done with a healthy amount of independence, you should be able to check-in easily to monitor progress.
 - **Comfortable** — within your learning space, students might want to move from desk to a cozy chair or the floor. As long as your child is progressing through the work, seating changes may help refocus attention.
- **Encourage a Growth Mindset.** Learning from home can be challenging for students, and they may feel frustrated or overwhelmed without the immediate support from the teacher they are used to having at school. They might demonstrate what educators call a “fixed mindset” about their ability to learn from home and be a self-directed learner. Encourage your student to persist through difficult work. Praise their accomplishments and if needed, reach out and rely on your child’s teacher for help. If students struggle with an assignment use statements such as:
 - Tell me what you’ve tried so far.
 - What else can you try?
 - What have you learned so far?

A student with a “growth mindset” believes that success comes with effort and that they can learn and improve with perseverance and hard work.

- **Set Goals for Learning.** If your child is struggling with completing tasks or assignments, try helping them by saying, “let’s set some goals together to help you complete this work.” Goals should be challenging but attainable with clear steps to achieve the goal. For example, a reading and writing assignment goal might be made up of the following: #1 read the chapter, #2 take notes on the chapter, #3 complete the writing assignment associated with the chapter. Consider ways in which you can help monitor progress towards goals—anything from a simple checklist to a chart with star stickers.
- **Give Students Ownership.** Learners who learn to take charge of their own learning are often more successful. When making your schedule, let your student make decisions about their activities and day. For example, let them decide if they would rather do math or reading first. Ask them how much they think they should do each day to meet the teacher’s expectations.
- **Read.** If technology is not being your friend and you find yourself offline without access to lessons, read. One local school implemented a “Read Your Heart Out Day,” which could easily be replicated at home. Students wear their pajamas, camp out in the living room with favorite stuffed animals and read all day. Consider reading the same book as your child and discussing the story or material together or have your child read aloud to you to reinforce comprehension.
- **Socialize.** Remember that much of your child’s time at school is about having fun, connecting with new ideas and friends. With technology kids can be anywhere in the world without having to leave home. Take virtual field trips to museums or foreign countries, play interactive games, and video call with friends and family. Explore [Discovery Education](#) and [Education World](#) for ideas.
- **Ask for Help.** Your child’s teacher(s) and the district have shared contact information, please do not hesitate to reach out for support. This is an unprecedented time and parents aren’t expected to go-it-alone.