

Strategies for Remote Learning Success

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Managing Work Space and Materials

- Materials
 - Roundup materials for school and for breaks, and give them a home
 - Digital Support
 - Headphones – Noise Insulating (Noise Protection Type and Audio Headphones with Microphone. Some products can do both.)
 - Chargers
 - Visual timer (more on this later)
 - Traditional School Materials- art supplies, flash cards, math manipulatives
 - Break Basket- fidget toys, fun self-directed activities
 - Clipboard- allows for a change of scenery
 - Caddy/ basket for supplies
 - This is a great opportunity for modeling the behavior we expect. When possible, work alongside them and keep your materials together.
- Comfort is Key
 - Screen is at eye level.
 - Feet are supported.
 - Materials are within reach.
 - You don't need a fancy ergonomic desk, use a box to get the screen a little higher, use a box for their feet.

Managing Time, Priorities and Breaks

- Visual Timers- helps to have an actual timer, not the phone app.
 - Help develop internal clock- most young children have no idea how long it takes to do something. This warps their sense of what is possible.
 - Improve pacing and time management skills- using a timer regularly can help us all see what is possible in 5, 10, and 30-minute increments.
 - Clear communicator of expectations- i.e. "I have a call and can't help you for the next 30 minutes. You can play until this timer ends, then it is time for us to make lunch together."
 - Make less preferred tasks more tolerable- "You don't have to clean up everything, but do your absolute best for 5 minutes."
 - Again, model using time wisely. Talk about how long it takes to flip laundry, make a grocery list, or prep dinner.
- Structure
 - Family Meeting- preview the week and schedule mini-meetings

- Share what days are going to full, and when you may have extra time to spend with them.
 - Make short “appointments” with your child during the course of your work week. Put it on both of your calendars. Stick to it. Appointments should be a mix of academic and non-academic time.
 - Quantity vs. Quality- foster independence and make connections
 - If you only have 10 minutes of free time to connect with your child during the day- let’s spend it connecting, not helping to find a sharpened pencil.
 - When we teach our kids to do for themselves, we are investing in our future quality time.
 - Model making the most of your time together, even in short bursts. 5 minutes of math facts or 10 minutes of read aloud makes a huge difference.
 - Structure your time- the school day MUST END.
 - We all have a lot to do besides schoolwork, and there needs to be clear time for all of it. Make time and plan for chores, play, and open-ended curiosity.
- Strategies to Stick with Structure
 - Anchor top priorities to existing routines.
 - Identify each child’s area of focus for the week or month. Decide how to work on it and what daily routine to use as your anchor.
 - i.e. mastering multiplication facts: 5-minute drill after each meal. Reading aloud while an adult makes dinner.
 - Teach them when to skip something and when to stop working.
 - If they get stuck on one question, circle and skip it. If they feel lost and are getting upset, stop and find something in the break basket to do for 10 minutes.
 - Build in a few academic check-ins, and a few non-academic check-ins into the weekly schedule. We know spending time with them is more important than our all staff call -- show your child this is true by making appointments with them. 10-15 minutes is all it takes. **Keep these appointments.**
- About Screen time...
 - Whenever possible, do not pull your child from a highly preferred activity to do something they aren’t excited about.
 - It never goes well. (Imagine pausing a great movie or live sporting event to scrub pans or organize paperwork- add in a kid’s difficulty with delayed gratification and we have BIG FEELINGS and low engagement).
 - Save video games, iPad, YouTube, etc. until after the academic goals for the day have been met.

- *Whatever boundaries your family sets for passive screen time, stick to it. We are in a slow-moving crisis that will probably keep us all inside after the weather turns, and what our kids need most is consistency and balance.*

Managing Connections

- All the hats: Managing the complex relationship that comes with being the teacher, too.
 - Communicate clear expectations.
 - What are the must do's?
 - When is self-directed play happening?
 - Where does the iPad go when we sign off for the day?
 - Make every expectation super clear.
 - Any task they are expected to do on their own should be practiced, a lot.
 - Praise effort, not outcomes.
 - Praising effort leaves space for open discussion about errors and confusion.
 - I know this is TOUGH. We need to be the teacher when they don't know, or are overwhelmed. If we heaped praise on them last week for getting everything right, they will believe the opposite is coming when everything goes wrong (even if you never prove this theory true).
 - Instead, focus on their effort, the time they spent on it and what they can learn from working through it.
 - As the parent and the teacher, your feedback is more loaded than ever before. Talk about their process and how hard they worked.
 - Find other places to offer praise and encouragement.
 - When the school day ends, it ends.
 - We can't do Spanish drills every waking minute. If certain study tasks are outside the school hours, everyone knows the plan during the family meeting. Beyond those established school work sessions, just be their parent and one of the only people they can play with right now.
 - To the extent possible, model this with your own work. Make time spent together worthwhile.

Troubleshooting and Building Skills

- Digital skills
 - Checking simple daily calendar and using links in the meetings to join a TEAMS call.
 - Using mute and unmute effectively.
 - Charging and properly storing all devices.
 - What to do if TEAMS crashes?
- Home skills
 - Ready to go snacks -- set up for independence.

- Daily chores- again following the idea of doing this before a highly preferred activity.
- Preparing for the week ahead -- as part of the family meeting.

Challenges Can Always be Opportunities

- Model the attitude and engagement you want your kids to have toward distance learning.
- Set realistic goals and explain how your family will get there. Name all the challenges.
- See the opportunities. We can focus on how hard this is. A lot of us are facing incredible obstacles. But there are always some silver linings and opportunities. Whenever possible, focus on those and model seeing the good.

3 Things Our Kids need every day

- Clear Expectations
- Balance of autonomy and support
- Room to struggle and grow