12 Tips
Supporting Families to Help Children Learn and Develop at Home during the COVID-19 Crisis
1. Take your time

- As parents/caretakers, you know your children best; trust your instincts.
- No need to start helping your children to learn from home on day one.
- Take time to adjust and prepare your home.
- Help children understand they will be learning in new ways for some time.
- Adopt a positive attitude and take heart that you are not alone!
2. Progress not perfection

- Strive to do better today than you did yesterday.
- Your best ideas just might not really go as planned; that’s really okay!
- Be kind and patient with yourself during this time; you’re doing amazing.
- There is no ready-made roadmap to address the many challenges ahead.
- Your main responsibility is to keep our families healthy and safe at this time.
3. Accept a new pace

- You do not need to become a fulltime teacher and cover an entire curriculum.
- Children are not focused on academics for the whole day in school.
- Focus on helping your children to feel safe, loved, and comfortable.
- Focus on helping children engage in learning activities that they love and enjoy.
- Remain patient with yourselves while becoming a new facilitator of learning.
4. Create a daily routine as a family

- A daily routine should be a 'work-in-progress' that can always improve.
- A daily routine should help children focus and transition to new learning tasks.
- Becoming comfortable with a new daily routine can take a few weeks.
- Develop the daily routine with all family members to gain buy-in.
- A daily routine should remain flexible, but be consistent over time to help kids.
5. Be mindful of attention spans

- If you are working remotely, request your colleagues to consider shorter virtual meetings during optimal attentive learning times for your children.

- Older children can focus on an activity for about 45 minutes to 1 hour.

- Younger children can engage in learning activities between 20-30 minutes.

- Babies and toddlers may focus on an activity for 5-10 minutes.

- Being respectful of children’s needs requires being respectful to yourselves.
6. Get daily fresh air

• Fresh air helps children (and caretakers) to destress, relax, and re-center.
• Find that daily moment of breathing in fresh air as a family.
• Take short walks, play outside in front of your home, or explore new areas.
• If you can’t go out, open windows or doors to let the fresh air inside.
7. Keep exercising

- Physical movement is so important to maintaining everyone's health.
- Take at least 30 minutes a day to get some sort of exercise as a family.
- Don't be afraid to be creative in new family fitness routines.
- Exercise will help you and your family members de-stress and remain positive.
- Turn up the music and go for it! Your kids will absolutely love this time with you!
8. Take time as parents and caretakers for yourselves

• It is important for each parent to take time, daily, for themselves and relax.
• Reach out to your friends, talk to family members, or simply sit back and rest.
• If possible, consider starting or participating in virtual parenting social circles.
• Remember to eat and drink regularly; meals are very important for adults, too.
• Consider learning something new just for you.
9. Limit screen time

- **Maintaining social connections is important and a great use of screen time!**
- Children should not be on their electronic screens for most of the day.
- If children need the electronics for their work from school, allow it.
- If they watch a movie or show, perhaps have a conversation about it afterwards.
- Keep a watchful eye on the online content that children are accessing.
10. Children are learning all the time

- Children are wired to keep learning new things, all the time, anywhere.
- "Less is more" when designing new learning activities for children.
- Enable children to independently play and explore something they love.
- Create multi-day challenges for your children to make progress on each day.
- Don't be afraid to ask your children to learn how to teach you something new.
11. Talk about COVID-19

• It is important to keep talking to your children about COVID-19.

• Give them space to tell you what they already know and what they’ve heard.

• Be honest and respond to their questions as best as you can.

• If you don't know the answer, that's okay; just say so and learn together.

• Take a break and build ‘COVID-19 free' time into your daily routines.
12. Learning to be grateful for one another, together

- Remember that the greatest lesson of all is learning to be grateful for one another.
- Help children to reflect on what they have, rather than what they do not have.
- Invite children to write, draw, and talk about things and people they are grateful for.
- Encourage children to give ‘surprise small acts of kindness’ for each family member.
- Think of ‘small acts of kindness’ you can give to your children as ‘surprise moments’.
Thank you.
Stay safe.
Stay well.
Stay together.

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