

COVID-19: LEARNING AT HOME & ROUTINES

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School days are highly structured while most households aren't.

With kids out of school, what can families do to help kids get through the day?

- Develop a schedule and write it down. It doesn't have to be fancy nor does it have to be detailed. It should highlight the main activities for the day. It can be written on a marker board, a piece of notebook paper, or printed from a computer.
 - Older kids can use a written schedule; younger kids do better with a visual schedule
 - Activities don't have to have an assigned start/end time. For kids, knowing what is coming next (and after that) is most helpful
 - Make time on the schedule for any online learning activities provided by the school district
 - Follow work-based tasks (like chores/academics) with more fun activities or breaks
 - Go over the schedule with the kids at the start of the day. Build in times where the kids can choose from several different options, to give them some sense of control
 - As you complete activities, cross/check them off the schedule
 - Give advanced notice of before moving on to the next step: "In five minutes, snack will be finished and we will start our afternoon school work"
- It's OK to loosen restrictions on screen time for now. Older children and teens may use this to stay connected with their friends. Younger children can engage in learning activities
- Include movement breaks throughout the day, especially during longer learning activities or between activities.
- For younger children, playing is learning! Even if they're not engaged in academic instruction, it's good to let younger children play on their own (with supervision). Older children/teens can do crafts and hobbies. Play doesn't need to be directed or guided by adults
- While there are restrictions on in-person interactions, it's OK to go outside! Kids can play in the yard (with appropriate supervision) or families can take walks together

- Be flexible; just because you have a schedule, doesn't mean that you must follow it. Sometimes plans change, sometimes friends unexpectedly call to video chat, and sometimes you think of a great idea and want to add it onto the schedule. Learning to be flexible is a part of life
- Incorporate kids into daily activities: even preschoolers can start helping with daily tasks, such as cleaning, preparing for meals, etc. Keep tasks appropriate for their age and ability and will likely need practice
- Have clear expectations. While "go clean your room" might work for some kids, others may need to be told "Go clean your room: put stuffed animals on the bed, put clothes in the hamper, put books on the shelf, and put toys back in the closet. Come get me when you're done so I can see how great it looks!"
- Sleep schedules and bed time routines are still important. Here's an example:
 - 7:40: Heads-up that bedtime is about to start
 - 7:45: Screens off/books closed/crafts finished (30-seconds to save work/sign-off/find a bookmark/etc.)
 - Use the bathroom
 - Put on pajamas
 - Take medicine
 - Get toothbrush and brush teeth for 3 minutes
 - Read, listen to calm music or some other non-screen activity to settle into bed
 - Bedtime!
- Find a routine or schedule that you like? Feel free to make a more durable/permanent version of it! Laminate it so you can use dry-erase markers to check off steps, have older kids decorate it as a craft, etc.