

COVID-19 RESOURCE GUIDE

Distance Learning Resources for Parents

APRIL 2020

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Tips from Current and Former Teachers on Finishing out the School Year with Your Child While Working from Home

Most schools around the country closed in mid-March with only an indefinite timeline for reopening. Almost all states and the District of Columbia have closed school for the remainder of the academic year to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Two months into this new “normal,” many parents will likely have questions about how to support their child(ren)’s learning during this time to ensure that they continue to make academic progress:

- Now that we know we aren’t returning to school this year, how do I motivate my child to focus?
- My child is bored by the work provided from the school: **“We did this yesterday,”** or **“This is easy…”** What should I do?
- My child is confused by the work provided from the school: **“This isn’t how we do it at school!”** or **“I still don’t get it.”** I don’t fully understand the work either or how to explain it, what should I do?
- How can I support my student that has special needs?
- I have younger children in the house. How do I keep them occupied while I work on my own work or while I assist my older children?
- How do I help my child adapt to this new routine?
- How do I motivate my child to do work on days when s/he just doesn’t feel like it?

The answer to these questions may be obvious—“it depends.” Each child, family, and set of circumstances is different, so there is no catch-all answer. However, here are a few tips from a group of former and current teachers that may be useful in motivating you and your student(s) to finish out the year.

“Communicating, setting boundaries, and being transparent about everyone’s schedules can be especially helpful.”

COMMUNICATE EXPECTATIONS

It may be difficult to balance helping your student with their school work and your other priorities, such as your own work schedule. Communicating, setting boundaries, and being transparent about everyone’s schedules can help set these boundaries. Pictorial representations can be especially helpful for younger students, such as hanging a picture of a sun on your office door to indicate when they can come to you for help. Additionally, setting up designated “office hours” during the day will allow you to balance your work with your students’ learning.

KEEP A ROUTINE

Setting a daily routine or calendaring the rest of the academic year may help you and your student feel some control in this situation. This will also allow students to continue to adjust to the “new normal” by allowing them to understand the new set of expectations.

STRIVE FOR BURSTS OF FOCUS

Many parents struggle with having to micromanage students who have difficulty maintaining their focus. It is incredibly difficult for students to focus on one task for long periods of time. Their ability to do so increases with age, but even older students (and adults) can benefit from a combination of structured breaks and bursts of focus. This can be measured using a timer or a daily schedule that is broken up into multiple small windows of focus. Experts say that, for most age groups, blocks of 30 minutes are best for specific academic tasks (*i.e.*, self-guided writing exercises or math practice problems). When it comes to other independent tasks, younger children can build up to 1–1.5 hours of independent play (*i.e.*, playing with toys or simple art projects) and older children can build up to 2–3 hours. For example, you could set a timer for 30 minutes to focus on a specific task, after which your student can be allowed to take a ten minute break to do whatever they want. Setting deadlines for older students (*i.e.*, “the math assignment should be done by 12 p.m.”) and holding them to those deadlines may allow those students more independence to manage their own time while ensuring that their work gets done.

“Experts say that, for most age groups, **blocks of 30 minutes** are best for specific academic tasks.”

LOOKING TO SUPPLEMENT? DON'T OVERWHELM YOURSELF

If students are bored with their work, they may feel unmotivated to complete an assignment. Similarly, if students are struggling with their school work or feel defeated, they may resist attempting or completing an assignment. Parents can address these issues by supplementing their students' assignments with more or less challenging ones or by adjusting the assignment slightly (such as only having

“Don't overwhelm yourself with all of the downloadable materials available. Pick a few and build from there.”

students complete the odd numbered problems independently). Maintaining an active relationship with your child's regular teacher (not you) can also help you modify assignments or develop strategies to help your students with their work.

Experts suggest that when choosing to supplement school work, parents prioritize their student's greatest need and their greatest interest. In other words, don't overwhelm yourself with all of the downloadable materials available. Pick a few and build from there. Gauge which resources your students seem to enjoy and modify from there. Need to occupy the younger ones? Simplify, set boundaries, keep things accessible.

Timers, boundaries, and maintaining accessibility are crucial. As described above, it is difficult for younger learners to grasp the concept of time. Help them out by giving them a visual and auditory way to know how long a certain task will last and what they can look forward to when they complete the task or when the time expires. This does not necessarily have to be a “reward” (although, no judgment either way), but knowing what comes next will give them (and you) some peace. Another way to occupy younger learners is to simplify their “work” area, and keep things accessible. Experts suggest keeping play spaces simple by limiting them to 6–8 toys during their independent work/play time, and making accessible the tools needed for them to complete small tasks (think step stools or sponges by the sink for hand washing). This will allow them have some independence and will free up some of your time.

IT'S OKAY TO TAKE A BREAK

Everyone burnt out on a Tuesday? Don't be afraid to take a break. Things are stressful and sometimes an hour or a day off (when work and school needs allow) can help students reset and refocus. Other strategies include breaking up work time with physical activity, and alternating activities that are less appealing to students with those activities they enjoy more.

Bottom line—go easy on yourself. The goal for everyone during this time is to prevent educational-backsliding and to make sure that students are prepared to return to school as soon as it is safe to do so. Remember that you are not alone—your teachers and schools miss you and your student! Communicate openly with your students' teachers if you or your student has a need with which you think they can assist.

Finally, even though it may be far from easy on most days, try to view the situation as a positive learning experience for your students. Teaching strategies to manage time, helping your students react to adversity, and promoting positivity will help your learner cope with these changes and may even help them develop a new set of independent skills outside of the normal classroom setting.

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SOURCES

Input from several teachers, parents, and Teach For America teachers and alumni

<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200401-how-to-work-from-home-with-your-kids-during-coronavirus>

<https://people.com/parents/ideas-to-entertain-toddlers-while-working-from-home-coronavirus>

<https://childmind.org/article/giving-kids-with-adhd-support-and-structure-during-the-coronavirus-crisis>

<https://www.npr.org/2020/03/23/820228206/6-tips-for-homeschooling-during-coronavirus>

<https://www.yalemedicine.org/stories/8-tips-work-at-home-with-kids-covid-19>



Resources for Multiple Grade Levels

ZOOM

“HOW TO KEEP UNINVITED GUESTS OUT OF YOUR ZOOM EVENT”

Article by Zoom providing tips on preventing unwanted intruders from joining Zoom calls.

■ **No account required \ \ Free**

IBM

IBM SKILLS PRESENTS: “LET’S TALK SAFE TECH”

Recording of a presentation given by IBM on April 1, 2020 on safely using technology geared towards parents and children.

■ **No account required \ \ Free**

IBM SKILLS

Access to tech-related learning content including webinars and activities on various topics in the tech universe (AI, “A day in the life at a tech company,” etc.)

■ **No account required \ \ Free**

CODE.ORG

CODEBREAK

Resources including videos and activities related to computer science, including typing activities for all levels, videos on how computers work/the internet works, and self-paced courses.

■ **Account required \ \ Free**

GIRLS WHO CODE

CODE AT HOME

Computer science learning tools, including how to write code, debug, and programming stories. New activities will be released weekly.

■ **No account required \ \ Free**

AUDIBLE

START LISTENING

Free audio books for kids via Audible searchable by grade level and genre.

■ **No account required \ \ Free**

TEACH FOR AMERICA

COVID-19 EDUCATION RESOURCE HUB

List of resources compiled by TFA.

■ **No account required \ \ Free**

COVID-19 RESOURCES

List of resources compiled by TFA Miami-Dade broken up by topic, grade level, and subject matter.

■ **No account required \ \ Free**

LEARNING KEEPS GOING

FOR PARENTS

List of distance learning resources compiled by Learning Keeps Going.

■ **No account required \ \ Free**

WIDE OPEN SCHOOL

ONLINE TEACHING RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND FAMILIES

Access to distance learning resources and support, including compilation of resources from sponsors such as PBS, Zoom, National Geographic, and others.

■ **No account required** \ \ **Free**

CURRICULUM ASSOCIATES

DISTANCE LEARNING SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS DURING A SCHOOL CLOSURE

Access to free printable worksheets and activity packets. Organized by grade-level (Kindergarten-12th grade) and subject matter (reading and math only).

■ **No account required** \ \ **Free**

GREAT MINDS

KNOWLEDGE BUILDING ON THE GO

Daily instructional video lessons for English language arts (Grades K–8), math (Grades K–12), and science (Grades 3–5) as well as weekly resources that feature early readers (Grades K–2), plus written materials for math (Grades K–12).

■ **No account required** \ \ **Free**

NO RED INK

CURRICULUM LIBRARY

This one is geared more towards educators who need additional lesson plans in language arts/literacy, so may be beneficial for parents of students who are having to create literacy lessons from scratch. There lessons and activities broken up by grade level,

writing/grammar, and state standard (not sure every state is included). There are also lessons on citation (MLA) and ACT/SAT prep for older students.

■ **Account required** \ \ **Free**

EDPUZZLE

MATH VIDEO LESSONS FOR REMOTE TEACHING

Collection of (Kindergarten–12th grade) math and science videos. This link is helpful because it allows you to bypass the EdPuzzle sign up and go directly to the video. Feel free to reach out for a list of the corresponding Common Core standards (available for some videos).

■ **No account required** \ \ **Free**

SPED HOME SCHOOL

EMERGENCY AT-HOME SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCES

This site contains advice and sources that will be helpful for students with special needs. Some examples include “Free and Affordable Online Special Education Resources,” “10 Resources for Modified Instructional Reading Texts,” and “30 Free Online Assessment Tools for Evaluating your Struggling Learner.”

■ **No account required** \ \ **Free**



Resources for Early Childhood— Preschool through Kindergarten

KQED

AT-HOME LEARNING RESOURCES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

At-Home learning resources from PBS station in SoCal. KQED is broadcasting a California state standards-aligned educational television schedule, created by PBS SoCal/KCET and the Los Angeles Unified School District. This TV schedule was developed to help schools and districts bridge the digital divide and provide equitable access to learning for all students at home, regardless of access to internet or computers.

■ **No account required \ Free**

COX CAMPUS

DAILY LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR TODDLERS, PRESCHOOLERS, & FAMILIES

Access to Early Childhood and Pre-K level activities. Structured like a “normal” day in a pre-school classroom. From an Atlanta based language and literacy center.

■ **No account required \ Option to set up an account for weekly emails with lesson plans \ Free**

TALK, READ, & PLAY

From the same Atlanta based center for language and literacy, but seems to be more geared towards parents than kids (explains the importance of certain activities for the development of language skills of young students and includes ideas and resources for implementing).

■ **No account required \ Option to set up an account for weekly emails with lesson plans \ Free**

APPLETREE

DISTANCE LEARNING

Resources for teaching Early Childhood students from home (including daily schedule templates, flexible activity ideas that can be completed throughout the day/at various paces).

■ **No account required \ Free**

DETWILER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

BARBARA ROMAN

An Early Childhood education teacher has been recording her daily lessons (from home) and has made them publicly available via YouTube. These lessons appear to include read-a-louds, simple science projects, and journal time.

■ **No account required \ Free**

TINKERGARTEN

OUTDOOR CLASSES AND ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS

Resources and lesson plans for “outdoor learning.” Offered for 0–8 year olds. The activities are organized by age, skill and activity-time (half hour, one hour, etc.) The activities appear to be free, but the full day lessons seem to require an account.

■ **No account required for basic activities \ Free**

READY ROSIE | CREATIVE CURRICULUM | TEACHING STRATEGIES

HEALTHY AT HOME: A TOOLKIT FOR SUPPORTING FAMILIES IMPACTED BY COVID-19

Resources for early childhood students and parents on ways to learn from home. Videos and lesson ideas included in both English and Spanish.

■ **No account required \ English and Spanish language options available \ Free**

KHAN ACADEMY

KHAN ACADEMY KIDS

Free, fun educational app for young kids (Pre-K through 2nd or 3rd grade).

■ **Account and downloadable app required \ Free**



Resources for Elementary, Middle, or High School

THE MATH LEARNING CENTER

HOME LEARNING RESOURCES

Resources for elementary age (Pre-K through 5th grade) math. Broken up by grade level with links to activities and practice problems.

■ **No account required** \ **Free**

ZEARN

SUPPORTING CONTINUED MATH TEACHING AND LEARNING

Free access to full math lessons and activities for K–5th grade students.

■ **Account required** \ **Free**

GREATMINDS

KNOWLEDGE BUILDING ON THE GO

Free access to ELA (K–8th grade), math (K–12th grade), and science (3rd–5th grade) lessons and activities.

■ **No account required** \ **Free**

STRATEGIC EDUCATION RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP (SERP) INSTITUTE

EDUCATOR RESOURCES

This one is geared more towards educators for 4th grade through 12th grade who need additional lesson plans, but it may be beneficial for parents of students in those grades who are having to create lessons from scratch. There lessons and activities broken up by subject matter (literacy, social studies, math, science).

■ **No account required** \ **Educator position options for “Other” will work for parents** \ **Free**

KAPLAN

SAT & ACT PREP

Resources for SAT/ACT Prep, live and pre-recorded classes on YouTube.

■ **No account required** \ **Subscription option available** \ **Free**

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