



Distance Learning: Tips for Making It Work While Working from Home

1. Create routine and predictability

Children need routine and predictability in order to feel safe. This is especially important during a time of crisis, and even more so when there's no definitive timeline for returning to school, in the brick and mortar sense. Therefore, it's important to create a structure and flow to the day that kids can expect. This could be a daily schedule that involves regular times for bathing, eating, school-work/learning activities, and socializing. Post the schedule where everyone can see it. Experts recommend establishing a set time for going to sleep, and maintaining the same bedtime routine your kids are used to.

2. Try to flex your management style

Truth: It's REALLY HARD to work from home when you have the kids with you. But if this is a lengthy quarantine situation, we have to find ways to make it work. You may need to allow more screen time than usual. You may need to accept that the house won't be as clean as you'd like. You might make dinner more basic so you don't have to stress about prep or cleanup. You have work to do, and that's going to require letting some things go, within reason. Try to ignore what you can and save your interventions for when you really need them.

3. Recognize that learning can come in different forms

Depending on your child's age, they may have academics they're expected to keep up with at home. At the same time, reading with your child, doing hands-on projects, baking and playing board games can also be educational. If your school hasn't sent home any materials, or you're looking for supplemental resources, there are a number of great learning materials online. To explore age-appropriate educational and activity-based websites, please click on the links below:

<http://www.parentslead.org/COVID-19/early-child>
<http://www.parentslead.org/COVID-19/preschool>
<http://www.parentslead.org/COVID-19/elementary>
<http://www.parentslead.org/COVID-19/middle-school>
<http://www.parentslead.org/COVID-19/high-school>

4. Ask your kids to rise to the occasion

Kids like to feel that they have an important role. Help them understand that in this unusual time, we ALL need to pitch in to get through it. By staying home from school and social distancing they are helping to keep the community safe. By cooperating and being respectful of their family members' time and privacy, they are helping to keep peace and harmony in the home. If your kids don't have a few chores yet, this is a great time to start. Who knows, they may be ready to take on more responsibility than you thought—especially when doing things on their behalf to avoid missing the school bus isn't an excuse. Giving kids opportunities for independence and autonomy is a win-win!



5. Limit your child's anxiety by managing your own

You're in closer quarters. While kids will have varying levels of awareness about the scope of concern over COVID-19, they will for sure be picking up on our anxieties—either through our behaviors or conversations with other adults. Talk to your kids about what is going on, without being overly dramatic. You can explain why we are practicing "social distancing" and use this as a teachable moment in prevention. Think about what helps you manage anxiety—e.g., meditation, humor, music, journaling—and offer age-appropriate versions of these techniques to your child.

6. Find ways to make special memories

This is a time we are bound to remember for the rest of our lives. For kids especially, it's important to look back and think that, despite the fear and disruption to routine, we also came together as a family. Maybe it's throwing an ice cream sundae party, having a lip sync battle, making thank you cards for first responders, or delivering groceries to an elderly neighbor. Or maybe you start the tradition of a weekly family movie night or an annual Zoom family reunion. Enlist everyone's help and come up with something special.

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