

Tips for Learning at Home

As many parents are now organizing a learn at home strategy, we are compiling additional supports for parents of elementary school aged children to access in coordination with the recommendations from your child's school.

It's important to remember a few key points before you start:

- Work on a plan that fits into your family's new stay at home experience. Your school may offer a schedule and we have sample schedules below. Some children do well with a work plan approach and others may need a more structured schedule.
- Remember that your child's school builds in time for "extras"- PE, library, lunch, recess, music, art, etc. These are equally important and we offer ideas for these below.
- Look for resources to help your child connect virtually to friends, family, and even their teachers.
- Use daily activities such as cooking, baking, cleaning, crafts, etc. to teach (see ideas below).
- This gives you a chance to participate in your child's learning. Brainstorm activities of their interests or spending more time focusing on areas where they may need help.

Being available to help your child continue to be a student:

- This is a stressful time! Parents and children are coping with a change in their day to day life. Be patient and gentle with yourself and your child.
- Identify the signs that you are stressed: (physiological signs such as heart rate increasing, sweating, stomach clenching), (psychological signs such as racing thoughts, catastrophic thinking, extreme anxiety, fear, anger)
- When you feel overwhelmed, take a moment, practice coping strategies to cope: take control of your self-talk, use deep breathing, counting to 10 to calm your physical stress, take time to exercise, do a meditation, consider a gratitude practice. You can teach your children positive coping strategies.
- Taking care of your self is important. Get high quality sleep, eat healthfully, reach out for social support, even if virtually.
- If you need additional support, contact your primary care physician. New options such as tele-health or phone support may be options.

Understanding grade specific learning goals via California Common Core Standards:

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/>

Educational standards describe what students should know and be able to do in each subject in each grade. In California, the State Board of Education decides on the standards for all students, from kindergarten through high school.

Since 2010, a number of states across the nation have adopted the same standards for English and math. These standards are called the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Having the same standards helps all students get a good education, even if they change schools or move to a different state. Teachers, parents, and education experts designed the standards to prepare students for success in college and the workplace.

Creating a schedule that works for your family:

Strategies for making a schedule:

- Develop a learning structure with your child's buy-in
- Brainstorm learning topics that interest your child and create lists of interesting topics to fill in around core learning areas (language arts, math, science, social studies)
- Identify non-academic options during the school day for exercise and fun

Example Wildcard Learning topics:

Greek Mythology
The states in the US
California's water supply
Landforms in the US

Example Physical Education Choices

Yoga
Bike Ride
Hike outside
Playing catch

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

| Time | Learning Target | Curriculum |
|-------------|------------------------|---|
| 8:00-8:20 | Reading/Language Arts | Lexia Core 5 |
| 8:30-9:00 | Math | Worksheets from school packet or teacher's recommendations or Khan Academy |
| 9:00-9:15 | Stretch and move break | |
| 9:15-10:00 | Science | All about the digestive system-Lesson from education.com https://www.education.com/lesson-plan/all-about-the-digestive-system/ |
| 9:45-10:30 | Art | Craft, coloring, building |
| 10:30-10:45 | Snack | |
| 10:45-11:30 | Social Studies/History | Early America-Becoming America From Khan History curricula |
| 11:30-1:00 | Lunch/Recess | Lunch-bike ride |
| 1:00-1:45 | Free reading | Book of choice |
| 1:45-2:15 | Recipe Research | Focus on Irish dishes-END OF SCHOOL DAY |
| 5:30 | Family life | Help with dinner prep, picking up house, feeding and exercising dog |

SAMPLE WORK PLAN

| Learning Target | Curriculum |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Reading/Language Arts | Write an opinion paper on if you should have a cell phone. |
| Math | Khan Academy |
| Science | All about the digestive system-Lesson from education.com https://www.education.com/lesson-plan/all-about-the-digestive-system/ |
| Art | Craft, coloring, building |
| Social Studies/History | Early America-Becoming America From Khan History curricula |
| Free reading for 30 minutes | Book of choice |
| Recipe Research | Focus on Irish dishes-END OF SCHOOL DAY |

The work plan approach does not set specific times that a child needs to complete their work, but instead given them some choice with a list that they must complete in each subject area for that day.

Consider using a timer to structure your time

Visual timers work well for children, with a favorite being the Time Timer (www.timetimer.com). Set the timer and say "When the red is gone ___ happens." For instance, set the timer to 30 and say, "When the red is gone, free reading time is over." Set the timer for 20 minutes and say "When the red is gone, your break is over." Setting visual limits for children can help them transition more easily.



Additional ideas for promoting learning at home (source: Moore, Kerry (2020) from social media)

Use this opportunity to promote learning at home in other ways beyond academics. If your child(ren) already does chores, expand their skills. Teach them some household tasks that they haven't yet learned to carry out, then let them practice! Laundry, vacuuming, washing toys and collectibles, putting air in bike tires and other bike maintenance.

Invite your children to invent a game. Extra points if it pertains to something they are studying! They can draw the boards, create the pieces, make up and test the rules. Play the game as a family after dinner, and ask the child what they liked about it and what parts weren't as fun as they'd hoped. Have them make changes and play the game again.

Have the child write down either the names of people they would like to know more about, or categories of people. For example, inventors, scientists, women in history, etc.) Put the slips of paper in a jar, and each week the child draws out one slip, then uses the internet to research that person or people, and create a way to tell the family about them at dinner. Could be written report, clay or paper diorama, a play to act out, an illustrated book, etc. The family listens with attention and asks further questions.

If you have a yard, order some seeds and let your child start a plot. Radishes are wonderfully quick and rewarding; spinach, and sugar peas are delicious and tolerate cool weather.

Ask your child(ren) what interests them in history, and look for historical fiction about that person, era, or event. Once a child is interested, from having read or listened to a great book, then they can research more about the topic.

Have your child choose a book (from an approved list, if you want) read it, and write a book report. Specify that the report shouldn't be a synopsis of the plot, but should share how they felt about the book. What did you really like? What parts were boring, or scary, or sad? IF you were in the character's place, what would you have done? What parts of the writing seemed the best to you? How did you feel about the illustrations?

Put each child in charge of one meal per week. They have to come up with a menu (using what you have available), prepare and serve the meal. For smaller children or beginners, you can walk them through each step; for older kids, help as needed but let them make their own mistakes too.

Play geography games online-- it's fun and children usually beat the adults. You can identify all the states, the countries, etc. and try to improve your times.

Learn a new craft or hobby together-- sewing, felting, beading, making lego models, building cardboard dioramas, painting in acrylics-- order supplies online. Get out glue guns (low temperature) and assemble a bunch of recyclables, natural objects, stray bits and pieces, for building.

Puzzles (real-life and online), word games, card games, building toys, etc. Draw and cut out paper dolls and their clothes.

If you (or your child) likes computer games, sit down and play one together. Share a game you love and talk about why you like it. Let your child teach you about one that they love. Watch a movie together, or listen to music and dance or draw to it.

Choose a family book (if you don't already have one) and listen to it together or take turns reading it aloud. Talk about it the way you do at book club—in a relaxed way. Taking time to listen to and talk with your child can make this time at home one that you will always remember.

There are also a wealth of resources available for learning at home. This google spreadsheet offers many ideas by subject as found online, as well as non-internet based activities. In addition, there is a schedule of many activities that are offered by time, such as watching animals at the Monterey Bay Aquarium. The amount of these may be overwhelming, so we have narrowed down our top choices for each category:

Math:

- **Khan Academy (via <https://www.khanacademy.org/> or an app):** This is a free resource for math, science, the arts, humanities, and test prep (All ages)
- **Math Reflex (via <https://www.reflexmath.com/>):** Offers a 60-day free trial to help with math fluency. (Ages 7+)
- **Math Tango (available via the app store):** Offers a variety of math games (Ages 5-10)
- **ABCya (available at <https://www.abcya.com/> and via the app store):** Offers a variety of math and reading games (free or premium membership options) (All ages)
- **Brainpop or jrbrainpop (via <https://jr.brainpop.com> or <https://www.brainpop.com/>):** Offers a variety of videos and exercises in all subject areas (All ages)

Reading:

- **Audible (via www.audible.com):** Audible is offering free audiobook access to children during school closings. (All ages)
- **Scholastic (via <https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html>):** Scholastic is offering a variety of free resources to help you child with reading (All ages)
- Contact your local library to find out how you can check out books and read them online.
- **EPIC books (via <https://www.getepic.com/>):** Offers a variety of digital books for children ages 4-12. Has a 30 day free trial or you may gain access for free via your teacher.
- **Stories from Space (via <https://storytimefromspace.com/ada-lace-part-1/>):** Have your child watch an astronaut read their favorite book.
- **ABCya (available at <https://www.abcya.com/> and via the app store):** Offers a variety of math and reading games (free or premium membership options) (All ages)
- **Storyonline (via <https://www.storylineonline.net/>):** Celebrities are reading books to children online via this website
- **Raz Kids (via <https://www.raz-kids.com/>):** Offers a variety of leveled books and quizzes to children from K-5 for free for the rest of this year)
- **Brainpop or jrbrainpop (via <https://jr.brainpop.com> or <https://www.brainpop.com/>):** Offers a variety of videos and exercises in all subject areas (All ages)

Science

- **Mystery Science** (via <https://mysteryscience.com/>): Offers a variety of science work for children K-5 with free access for the rest of the year
- **Khan Academy** (via <https://www.khanacademy.org/> or an app): This is a free resource for math, science, the arts, humanities, and test prep (All ages)
- **Watch Animals for free online via a variety of sites:**
 - **Animal Cams at the Houston Zoo** <https://www.houstonzoo.org/explore/webcams/>
 - **Georgia Aquarium:** <https://www.georgiaaquarium.org/webcam/beluga-whale-webcam/>
 - **Monterey Bay Aquarium:** <https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/live-cams>
 - **Atlanta Zoo Panda Cam:** <https://zooatlanta.org/panda-cam/>
 - **San Diego Zoo** <https://kids.sandiegozoo.org/>
- **The California Academy of Science** (via <https://www.calacademy.org/educators/lesson-plans?fbclid=IwAR2agINjQ4ip2zR9zminkbS6PwIPnsr2t5VhoUusL0Qtfx96Lt2qKk3b1pY>): Offers a variety of science lessons for children of All ages.
- **Kids Discover** (via <https://online.kidsdiscover.com/>): Learn about a variety of science/social studies topics (Ages 5-12)
- **National Geographic Kids** (via <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/>): Learn about a variety of science topics via National Geographic

Social Studies

- **Take a museum virtual tour or a tour of a natural wonder**
 - **The Louve** <https://www.louvre.fr/en/visites-en-ligne>
 - **Great Wall of China** <https://www.thechinaguide.com/destination/great-wall-of-china>
 - **Yellowstone** <https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/photosmultimedia/virtualtours.htm>
 - **Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum:** <https://www.guggenheim.org/collection-online>
 - **Museum of Natural History:** <https://naturalhistory2.si.edu/vt3/NMNH/>
- **Khan Academy** (via <https://www.khanacademy.org/> or an app): This is a free resource for math, science, the arts, humanities, and test prep (All ages)
- **Wonderopolis** (<https://wonderopolis.org/>): Learn about a variety of topics and get answers to questions that are fun for all ages.

Art/Creation

- **Mr. Jenions's art room** (via <http://msjesionart.weebly.com/>): Offers a variety of art projects (All ages)
- **Lunch Doodles with MoWilliams** (via <https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/mo-willems/>). Famous author Mo Williams offers a session of Lunch Doodles each day. These sessions are available to stream online after (All ages).
- **Milwaukee Art Museum** (via <https://mam.org/athome/>): Offers free art lesson plans as well as online tours (All ages).
- **Metropolitan Opera** (via <https://www.metopera.org/>): Stream opera for free online (All ages)

Music/movement

- **Go Noodle** (via <https://www.gonoodle.com/>): Offers hundreds of movement activities for children (All ages)
- **Cosmic Kids** (via <https://www.cosmickids.com/>): Offers mindfulness and yoga videos for kids (All ages)

Other ideas:

- **Teach your child coding for free** (via <https://scratch.mit.edu/>)
- **Learn another language for free** (via <https://www.duolingo.com/>)
- **Learn how to play chess with other children** (<https://www.chesskid.com/>)

In addition, the website [understood.org](https://www.understood.org) also has a great list of games and apps for helping all children learn, as well as children with learning challenges (attention, difficulty with reading, writing, math, etc). There is something for all ages.

Two websites www.themeasuredmom.com and www.thisreadingmama.com also provide numerous free resources for printable games and fun ideas for working with your child in all subject areas. Check out Ted Talks for Kids at https://www.ted.com/playlists/86/talks_to_watch_with_kids.

You can also find specific apps for your child through Common Sense media . Common sense media has reviewed 10 free websites for elementary school aged children. Here are their reviews. <https://www.commonsense.org/education/top-picks/10-great-free-websites-for-elementary-school>

UNC has also created online toolkits for support individuals with autism during the COVID-19 epidemic at <https://ed.unc.edu/2020/03/19/unc-team-creates-online-toolkit-for-those-supporting-individuals-with-autism-during-covid-19-epidemic/>.

What about television?

All of us need a break at times and it is OK to turn on the television for learning. Just remember that the more television a child watches, the more movement they are going to need to get out their energy. Here are some of the best learning shows:

- Check out PBS kids- Sesame Street, Daniel Tigers Neighborhood, Dinosaur Train, Peg & Cat, Word World and Wild Kratts are a few favorites. (Ages 2+) (available via a free app)
- Leapfrog- Shows such as Letter Factory, Phonics Farm, Adventures in Shapeville, etc. (Ages 2-6) (Some available via Netflix and Amazon prime)
- Storybots/Storybots Super Songs- This fun Television show introduces a variety of educational topics. (ages 3-8) (Available on Netflix)
- Brainchild- From germs and emotions to social media and more, it's the science of your world explained in a way that's relatable (Ages 5+) (Available on Netflix)
- Xavier Riddle and the Secret Museum- teaches children about figures in history through cartoons (age 5+) (Available on PBS Kids)
- Who Was Show- brings historical figures to life based on the series "Who Was?" (Ages 6+) (Available on Netflix)
- Magic School Bus Rides Again- teaches you about science concepts based on the series "Magic School Bus" (Ages 5+) (Available on Netflix)

Podcasts:

Podcasts are another great learning tool for children. Here are a few great ones below:

- Story Pirates
- Brains On! Science Podcast
- WOW in the World
- Simon's Science Adventure Story
- Reading Bug Adventures Podcast (<https://www.thereadingbug.com/adventures>)
- But Why! A Podcast for Curious Kids