

8 Tips for Families Navigating Virtual Learning

1. Limit Distractions

A “digital quarantine” might be necessary to keep your child’s attention focused on their schoolwork. You should limit their use of their devices, other than what is needed to complete their work, until their schoolwork is done. If you choose, you can allow your child to play on a device during a designated break, but make them aware that they only have a limited amount of time until they need to get back to work.



2. Make Space for Learning

Many adults have a specific area of the home in which they do work, and it’s important that you create a similar space for your child. Your children will achieve their best work in a quiet, comfortable, and dedicated space that is strictly devoted to learning. This space should be a different set-up than where they normally play games or watch television.

3. Maintain Breaks

Routines and schedules are extremely important for children at school, and this is no different in their at-home school. Children will function best if they maintain their routine as close to normal as possible. Setting alarms similar to those they would encounter at school can be helpful for keeping them on a schedule. Around lunch time, encourage them to get up, get some fresh air, go for a walk or bike ride, or have a snack so that they are not sedentary for the entire day.

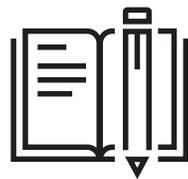


4. Allow Time to Interact with Friends, Virtually

Your children are used to lots of social contact at school, so they will definitely feel the effects of being distanced from them even after a few days. While it might not be safe for your kids to see their friends in person, you should allow them to interact with them online, beyond social media or text messaging. Video chats are often the closest thing to seeing someone in person, and are a great way to get in social time without endangering yourself or others. If your child does not regularly video chat with their friends, you can speak with other parents to set up a video chat playdate.

5. Balance Screen Time

Overuse of screen time can have adverse impacts on young brains, so it’s important to mix it up during a time like this. It’s likely that your children will want to continue to use a screen of some sort during their breaks from doing work, so it’s important to limit screen time by mixing in old school mediums as well. Hopefully teachers have sent home hard copy packets that they are able to work from. If not, print out anything you can for your child. As much as possible, parents should encourage print and book reading and, if possible, request textbooks from your child’s school.



6. Keep in Touch with Other Parents

Social distancing is important during this time, but staying in touch with others via virtual communication is very important. Each parent that has a child home is going to be going through a new experience. Check in with other parents to see what they’ve found effective, and ask if they need help as well.

7. Don’t Underestimate the Power of a Schedule

If you and your children are all doing work from your home, it’s likely that this is the first time that has ever happened. A schedule, for your work and your child’s work, is extremely important. To start, experts recommend keeping them on the same or similar sleeping schedule that they have when they are going into school. If a schedule was not provided by their teachers, help them write one for not only each day, but each week, as well. Having a clear vision of what is expected of your child will help them see that just because they are home does not mean they don’t have work to do. Experts recommend helping them prioritize and learn to create goals, tasks, and deadlines, just like adults do when they go to work.



8. Remember to Schedule Time for Fun

While this is most certainly not a vacation, it’s important to have some fun with your children while they are at home. It’s rare that you have this much time with your children, so use it as an opportunity to bond. Experts at Children and Screens recommend organizing a tournament, family card games, charades, or chess, or getting outside for a hike or walk together.