12 Tips
Supporting Families to Help Children Learn and Develop at Home during the COVID-19 Crisis
1. Take your time

- **As parents/caretakers, you know your children best; trust your instincts.**
- No need to start helping your children to learn from home on day one.
- Take time to adjust and prepare your home.
- Help children understand they will be learning in new ways for some time.
- Adopt a positive attitude and take heart that you are not alone!
2. Progress not perfection

- Strive to do better today than you did yesterday.
- Your best ideas just might not really go as planned; that’s really okay!
- Be kind and patient with yourself during this time; you’re doing amazing.
- There is no ready-made roadmap to address the many challenges ahead.
- Your main responsibility is to keep our families healthy and safe at this time.
3. Accept a new pace

- **You do not need to become a fulltime teacher and cover an entire curriculum.**
- Children are not focused on academics for the whole day in school.
- Focus on helping your children to feel safe, loved, and comfortable.
- Focus on helping children engage in learning activities that they love and enjoy.
- Remain patient with yourselves while becoming a new facilitator of learning.
4. Create a daily routine as a family

- A daily routine should be a 'work-in-progress' that can always improve.
- A daily routine should help children focus and transition to new learning tasks.
- Becoming comfortable with a new daily routine can take a few weeks.
- Develop the daily routine with all family members to gain buy-in.
- A daily routine should remain flexible, but be consistent over time to help kids.
12 TIPS FOR SUPPORTING FAMILIES TO HELP CHILDREN LEARN AND DEVELOP AT HOME DURING COVID-19

5. Be mindful of attention spans

• If you are working remotely, request your colleagues to consider shorter virtual meetings during optimal attentive learning times for your children.

• Older children can focus on an activity for about 45 minutes to 1 hour.

• Younger children can engage in learning activities between 20-30 minutes.

• Babies and toddlers may focus on an activity for 5-10 minutes.

• Being respectful of children's needs requires being respectful to yourselves.
• **Fresh air helps children (and caretakers) to destress, relax, and re-center.**

• Find that daily moment of breathing in fresh air as a family.

• Take short walks, play outside in front of your home, or explore new areas.

• If you can’t go out, open windows or doors to let the fresh air inside.
7. Keep exercising

- Physical movement is so important to maintaining everyone's health.
- Take at least 30 minutes a day to get some sort of exercise as a family.
- Don't be afraid to be creative in new family fitness routines.
- Exercise will help you and your family members de-stress and remain positive.
- Turn up the music and go for it! Your kids will absolutely love this time with you!
8. Take time as parents and caretakers for yourselves

- It is important for each parent to take time, daily, for themselves and relax.
- Reach out to your friends, talk to family members, or simply sit back and rest.
- If possible, consider starting or participating in virtual parenting social circles.
- Remember to eat and drink regularly; meals are very important for adults, too.
- Consider learning something new just for you.
9. Limit screen time

- **Maintaining social connections** is important and a great use of screen time!
- Children should not be on their electronic screens for most of the day.
- If children need the electronics for their work from school, allow it.
- If they watch a movie or show, perhaps have a conversation about it afterwards.
- Keep a watchful eye on the online content that children are accessing.
10. Children are learning all the time

- Children are wired to keep learning new things, all the time, anywhere.
- "Less is more" when designing new learning activities for children.
- Enable children to independently play and explore something they love.
- Create multi-day challenges for your children to make progress on each day.
- Don't be afraid to ask your children to learn how to teach you something new.
11. Talk about COVID-19

It is important to keep talking to your children about COVID-19.

Give them space to tell you what they already know and what they’ve heard.

Be honest and respond to their questions as best as you can.

If you don't know the answer, that's okay; just say so and learn together.

Take a break and build ‘COVID-19 free' time into your daily routines.
12. Learning to be grateful for one another, together

- Remember that the greatest lesson of all is learning to be grateful for one another.
- Help children to reflect on what they have, rather than what they do not have.
- Invite children to write, draw, and talk about things and people they are grateful for.
- Encourage children to give ‘surprise small acts of kindness’ for each family member.
- Think of ‘small acts of kindness’ you can give to your children as ‘surprise moments’.
Thank you.
Stay safe.
Stay well.
Stay together.

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