

Tips for Empowering Kids for Remote Learning:

As we've all done our best to transition to a very different system of living in the last several months, parents and children have had to shift, stretch and pull together like never before. With the remote learning system being facilitated by our incredible teachers, many parents are asking for tips to help best support their child's academic growth and emotional resilience.



Parent/Caregiver Tips:

Empower your child's brain and body by making sure their bodies are calm and their brains are receptive to learning and engaging with others by:

- Practice checking your and your child's energy level 10 minutes before class meeting or class work is to start. A fun craft activity to help you do this can be found at <https://thewholekidandkaboodle.com/engineplates/>
- Offer a crunchy snack like pretzels or carrots and encourage use of a water bottle during the meeting.
- Provide the child with over ear headphones to minimize distraction. There are tons of fun, soft ear covering options available inexpensively online.
- Simplify surroundings. Remove distractions from their learning area. If kids are struggling to stay focused it may help to find a place where the screen is in the corner of the room to act as a visual shield for environmental distractions. In addition, kids who are playing with toys during a video session often have difficulty paying attention. Limit anything in the hands, and remind kiddos they can have their toys when the session is completed. Some kids might benefit from a weighted blanket or lap pad to help them feel more settled. If you don't have one of these, a heavy book or dictionary may work.
- Get comfy! Watch where your child naturally feels most comfortable and focused. For some kids, it might work well to be at the kitchen table or on their bed. For other kids, they might really flourish working under the kitchen table or cozied up in a blanket fort in their closet. A variety of options can be helpful for some children and for some kids, consistency is key.
- If child chooses to sit in a chair at a table, make sure they are seated in a supportive chair with their feet on the ground. If their feet don't reach the ground, try making a footrest from a sturdy box or even old phone books duct taped together. Tracking on a screen is tricky, placing feet on the ground or on a stool supports postural stability and visual tracking. If kids aren't currently doing any seated table-time activities, this would be a great time to implement tasks (play doh, coloring, etc.) to give kids practice of sitting in a chair during a task while at home.
- Remember- postural stability is important. Children should have a 90 degree angle in their hips and knees while sitting, and the screen should be directly in line with their eyes.

- If your child really struggles with being still during the session, some families have had great success taking a drive and letting the child participate via phone or tablet from their car seat or while held snugly by their seatbelt. Other options might include a fidget, such as a wiggle seat or a therapy band tied between the front legs of the chair.
- Let your child hear you speak positively about their efforts and the efforts of their teachers. They will take their cues from you and if you are excited and engaged they are much more likely to get there as well.
- Develop a schedule that works for your family. Avoid comparing what is possible for your child and family with what anyone is boasting about on social media. Some kids are independent learners and can manage their schoolwork largely on their own. This isn't the case for many children, and they will need parent/caregiver support to do their assignments. Breaking expectations down into manageable bits can work well when things start to feel overwhelming. Remember, there is nothing more important than for kids to feel safe and adored by their adult.
- Managing stress levels for both kids and parents sounds easier than it feels right now. Adding in extra connection through laughter, cuddles and enjoying shared activities can help get you back on track. Things like listening to music, singing and dancing have the added boost of calming our brainstem when we feel stressed. A stressed, overwhelmed parent trying to help a stressed, overwhelmed child is a recipe for disaster. Don't hesitate to take a break, regroup and remember that you can try it again tomorrow.
- Increase your child's sense of connection by helping facilitate a quick one on one with a peer or their teacher. Some kids love to chat by video and some kids light up at the idea of drawing a picture and dropping it in the mail. Chat with your child about how they'd most like to stay connected.
- Ask for what you need. If you are experiencing repeated technological issues, make sure to let your child's school know about these issues. They may be able to offer a hotspot or loaner laptop to help get your child back into the virtual classroom.

Next Steps:

If you start to notice that your child is struggling with online learning from home, it may be helpful to contact their previous teacher about how they noticed your child learned best in the classroom and what they can modify in expectations for classwork. Your pediatrician, a local therapist or school counselor may also be a source of support.

Additional Resources:

[How to Set Up a Virtual or Homeschool Learning Space for Kids](#)

[Social and Emotional Learning: Strategies for Parents](#)

[This is our Season of Coaching our Children Through Disappointment](#)