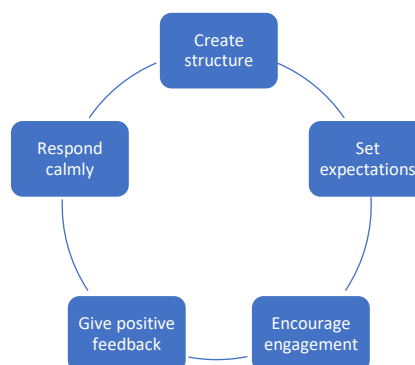


Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL)

Learning at home – 5 tips for parents

“Working, parenting and teaching are three different jobs that cannot be done at the same time. Do the best you can. When you have to pick, because at some point you will, choose connection. Pick playing a game over arguing over an academic assignment. Pick teaching your child to do laundry rather than feeling frustrated that they aren’t helping. Pick laughing, and snuggling, and reminding them that they are safe.” (Dr Emily King)



While your child is learning at home there are some simple things you can do to ensure that both you and your child cope in the new situation that we all find ourselves in. The good news is that there are some tried and tested strategies that do not need any special qualifications and which you can put into practice straight away.

1. Create structure

When students are at school they follow a number of routines which help them to stay organised and focused. For example, teachers may have routines about how to enter the classroom, how to get ready for lessons and how to move from one activity to another. When students cannot attend school they may have fewer predictable routines, which can cause anxiety and increase unwanted behaviours. To combat these issues families can set up a home schedule with specific times for school work, family time, chores and leisure time. Parents can sit down with their children to develop a simple timetable for the week. An example and a blank schedule that you can use or adapt are provided at the end of this document. Here are some guidelines to get you started:

1. Start by entering all the non-negotiable tasks – these are the jobs that have to be done each week.
2. Allow times for personal care, eating and exercise.
3. Include some free choice time each morning and afternoon. Make a list of choice activities, with input from your child. It is ok to add to this list or make changes as time goes on.
4. Use 15-30 minute intervals for younger children and 1 – 2 hour intervals for older students.
5. Discuss and make changes if something is not working well.
6. Put the schedule up in a prominent location so it can be referred to regularly.

2. Set expectations

Students are used to following rules when they are at school. Rules help students to meet expectations so that everyone can learn and get along together. Families can use the school's



expectations to develop rules for home to help all family members to work, learn and get along. Make a table like the one below. Write the school expectations in the left hand column, or develop your own expectations for home. Next, write your home routines or activities in the first row. As a family, decide on one or two rules which will help everyone to meet your home expectations. Make sure that everyone understands the rules and can give examples. You can turn this into a game with younger children!

Expectations	School work	Family time	Everyday jobs
<i>Respect each other</i>	Follow the instructions given	Speak politely	Do your assigned tasks without complaining
<i>Do your best</i>	Complete set tasks	Join in	Do your jobs well
<i>Be a team player</i>	Let others do their work	Show interest in others	Take your turn

3. Encourage engagement

Parents play an important role in motivating students and increasing their involvement in activities. You can encourage your children to actively engage by asking for their input into the daily schedule, allowing some choices, encouraging your child to pursue interests such as reading, drawing or music, and by regularly checking in with them on how they are going. It's also important to maintain regular contact with classroom teachers to find out what students are working on and to let teachers know about successes and challenges. Your school will let you know how and when they intend communicating with students and families. Make sure you let the school know your preferred methods of communication and don't be afraid to contact the school with any questions.

4. Give positive feedback

Giving positive feedback has been shown to increase wanted behaviour and help maintain positive relationships. Not only does it work, but it is quick and easy to do. Simply comment in a positive and specific way when your child demonstrates a behaviour that you want to see more of. The table below provides some examples. You can adapt the wording, depending on whether you are providing feedback to a younger or older child. Remember to give feedback sincerely.

Behaviour you want to see	Positive feedback example
Child packs up toys when asked	"You are being a great helper by packing up straight away."
Teenager leaves phone off and talks to family	"It's great to have you join in at family time."
Child gets on with school work while parents are busy	"Thank you for being so responsible and independent – we're very proud of you."

5. Respond calmly

When children display unwanted behaviours (and they will!) it is important to remain calm and to briefly correct the behaviour without giving too much attention. Simply remind your child of the behaviour you want to see and provide positive feedback as soon as you see it. For example, "Jacob, it's time for school work. Turn the iPad off and come to the table." When Jacob comes to the table, say, "Thanks for being ready to work." Try to avoid being drawn into a confrontation – give your child time to comply and follow up later if you need to, but try to avoid yelling or making threats as these can make it worse.

Example schedule

Day/time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.30 – 9.00	Get ready				
9.00 – 9.30	School work				
9.30 – 10.00					
10.00 – 10.30	Snack				
10.30 – 11.00	Reading	Times tables	Art	Music	Reading
11.00 – 11.30	Choice activity				
12.00 – 12.30	Lunch				
12.30 – 1.00	School work				
1.00 – 1.30					
1.30 – 2.00	Tidy room	Clean fish tank	Tidy room	Empty dishwasher	Tidy room
2.00 – 2.30	Exercise				Family Game
2.30 – 3.00	Choice activity				

Blank schedule - week

Day/time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8 - 9					
9 - 10					
10 - 11					
11 - 12					
12 - 1					
1 - 2					
2 - 3					
3 - 4					

Blank schedule – day

Day:	Activity	List of options for choice activities
8.00 – 8.30		
8.30 – 9.00		
9.00 – 9.30		
9.30 – 10.00		
10.00 – 10.30		
10.30 – 11.00		
11.00 – 11.30		
12.00 – 12.30		
12.30 – 1.00		
1.00 – 1.30		
1.30 – 2.00		
2.00 – 2.30		
2.30 – 3.00		