

HOMESCHOOLING HINTS



DURING COVID-19 SCHOOL CLOSURES

This is a guide to provide tips, advice, and guidance for parents and caregivers homeschooling children during the COVID-19 outbreak



DON'T TRY TO RECREATE SCHOOL AT HOME

No matter how much you create a school environment, your kids will still see you as their caregiver, which is a different relationship to the one they have with their teacher. Creating expectations tailored to a homeschool environment will help you find the balance and discover what this relationship looks like.



SET EXPECTATIONS

- Create a daily checklist of what you want to achieve that day. Discuss any materials that your child's teacher has provided and collectively decide what you will work on each day. Use a separate book for this to keep track of progress and get your child to take ownership of their tasks by filling out the checklist themselves.
- Be realistic about what you can achieve. Starting out, decide on what you need to cover in a day, assess how much you actually covered and use that as a guide for creating your daily checklists going forward. You will might be surprised at how little, or maybe how much can be achieved in a day. Take your time to understand what is realistic and don't stress - this is a short term solution.
- Celebrate the achievements. Tick off the checklist as you go and spend some time at the end of each day discussing what went well with your child and what you can improve on for the next day.



HOMESCHOOL TIME IS DIFFERENT TO SCHOOL TIME

During the school day, there is a lot of downtime for students where they're socialising, playing and having some mental space to let a lesson sink in. Examples of when this occurs are in between tasks and lessons, if they finish a task early and scheduled breaks. There are two things to take away here:

- Your child will need breaks to regain their focus. Breaks can be short water stops, a run around the garden, or longer breaks to go to the park.
- You can fit a lot more into a homeschooling day, even with these breaks, so don't feel like you have to fill a traditional school day's worth of time with learning.



CLASSROOM VS. 1:1 LEARNING

It's important to remember that your child is very used to working independently without one-on-one attention. The school system is designed for children to learn to work with others and independently in the classroom. Because of this, a student isn't always having one-on-one time with their teacher.

A good balance at home is to use the one-on-one opportunity that comes with homeschooling to learn more about your child, but also not feel guilty about leaving them to work on tasks and projects on their own. Creating structure and clear expectations when you leave them to work independently helps to avoid kids getting distracted or frustrated with the task. Being close to assist will help them stay on task.

TAKE TIME WITH 'WHY' QUESTIONS

It can be tempting to move on from the 'Why?' questions that are inevitable when you're interacting in a learning environment. Often you'll feel like you need to complete the task at hand instead. However, a real advantage of temporary homeschooling is being able to slow down and concentrate on what your child is curious about.

Let the question become the lesson, explore it together and have fun with it! It's a great way of engaging your child with learning.

TEACH WHAT YOU KNOW AND LOVE

To create the best learning experience for your child, teach what you know and love. Don't feel concerned that you can't deliver on skills in certain areas, whether it's maths or science. Your child's teacher will have a plan for when they return to school to ensure that they are meeting those learning standards.

This period of home-based learning is a chance for your child to develop a new learning style and learn about new things. This kind of diversity is an excellent part of their development. Think about the skills that you are good at. If you have a hobby, like cooking, art or gardening, use this.

If you're working remotely from home, consider how you can show your kids what your work day looks like. Kids love being treated like adults and this is also a chance to understand one another better.

USE A SIMPLE TEACHING FRAMEWORK

I do, we do, you do. This is a simple framework when teaching your child something new. You demonstrate the skill to your child, then you do it together, then let them explore it for themselves.

Keeping to this structure means you don't have to worry about whether you're explaining enough to your child or letting them have enough of a go. If they struggle with the 'you do' part of the framework, just repeat and you'll get there.

MAKE USE OF FREE RESOURCES

If you have access to the internet and a computer or mobile device, there are great how-to tutorials in apps and online for a wide range of skills and interests. Create a student-centred learning environment. Find something that your child is interested in, whether it's a tutorial on how to animate cartoons, baking a cake, or creating a home movie using some video software you might already have.

KEEP CALM, THIS WILL PASS!

This is a temporary measure to protect us all. Your child's teachers are experts and will have a plan for when the school reopens.

This interruption will not likely have a large impact on your child's education in the scheme of 12 years of formal education. In fact, they may become more resilient learners.

If there is one thing you can do, encourage your child to explore and learn about the things they really want to!

