



How to Support Student Learning at Home

Families and caregivers play a critical role in learning at home. Because no two families are alike, families can support their children in a variety of ways.



Student, family and community physical, mental and emotional well-being are most important! As schools close and the news cycle is dominated by information about COVID-19, it may be frightening or confusing to children. Take care of your child's emotional and health needs during this time. Do not neglect your own needs, and reach out to available community networks and resources.

Home-based learning is unique and should not try to re-create school. Trying to support school-like learning in a home setting may frustrate families without leading to real and lasting learning. Instead, work with your child to have meaningful learning experiences that connect to your home lives, interests and identities. Some everyday activities that can promote meaningful learning could include cooking, baking, cleaning, reading together, building, painting and drawing, and taking a walk outside your home.

Use technology in smart ways. Meaningful learning can happen with or without devices or access to the internet. If you have access to the internet and a device students can use, technology and internet access can help students dive into learning at home. People learn best when they can figure things out together. Consider using devices and internet access to help learners find information they can use to figure something out, to make connections with others to build ideas and get feedback, to share their thinking and to stay socially connected with their peers.

Actions to Take

- **Model the Learning Process.** You don't have to be an expert in all content areas! One of the most supportive things you can do is to be a partner in your child's activities, investigations and thinking. Think out loud or describe what you are doing as you do it, whether it is fixing something, planning a balanced meal, taking care of pets or doing other household activities.
- **Be a Thought Partner and Talk.** Support your children's reasoning by talking with them about their learning. You can ask your child questions such as "What do you notice? What do you wonder? Why do you think that's happening? What can you teach me about this?" Let your learners bounce ideas off of you. Remember, you don't need to know the answer; just help them surface current understanding, deepen their thinking and identify and figure out next steps to figure out more.
- **Focus on Learning in Everyday Life.** Many daily activities you regularly do can open up all sorts of questions that may lead to your children making sense of something they observe in the world and solving problems they encounter.
- **Connect Learning to Your Work or That of Your Family.** There may be many ways to engage your child as part of your own work that can contribute to meaningful learning. In your work or that of another family member, how do you find the answers to your questions? How do you communicate techniques, processes or ideas? What problems or challenges might you face? Share your work and allow your child to think and work with you in a meaningful, career-related context.
- **Build from the Content-related Interests of Your Children.** You know your children; consider whether they have personal, family or community interests that they do not always get to pursue in school and let them do a project related to that interest. Think about challenges facing your community, ideas or activities your child is passionate about or even ideas that have come from previous experiences. Learning is everywhere!
- **Learning Should Attend to the Physical, Mental and Emotional Needs of Your Children.** Work with your child to manage healthy lengths of time spent in learning. Together, discuss and encourage healthful nutritional habits, physical activity and the amount of sleep needed for optimal learning to occur. Additionally, promote activities that encourage your children to discuss how they are feeling and attend to their emotions.
- **Don't Stress about Creating a Perfect Home Learning Experience.** This situation is stressful and might be scary for your child and your family. Learning happens all the time—when we are gardening, building the best fort we can, making art, reading novels, writing stories, playing games and taking a walk outside. Engage your child in activities you love doing together, and explore what you can learn through those experiences. Your family might even look back on this time as some of the most meaningful learning experiences!



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