

How Parents/Guardians Can Help Children Learn At Home

To help our students continue their learning at home and to support them in every way we possibly can while schools remain closed during this global health pandemic, we want to provide some additional advice to our parents/guardians. Our additional shared goal is to avoid, or at least diminish, the learning loss that could otherwise occur during a prolonged period of time out of school.

Teachers are already reaching out frequently to our students and families to maintain a connection and to suggest resources and activities that they can engage in. Teachers are holding on-line and video sessions providing lessons, supporting students' emotional well-being, helping students with learning packets and so much more.

We also acknowledge the very important role that parents and families can play in the education of their children. It is in this spirit that we offer the following recommendations based on the professional knowledge and on collective wisdom of teachers:

Spend time with your child. Especially for young children, nothing matters more than the amount of time spent with caring and nurturing adults. So, to the extent possible, do things together. Really listen to what they express. Make them feel important enough to deserve your time and attention.

Recognize that learning is not limited to the classroom. What happens before and after school, and especially at home, has a strong impact on what happens in the classroom. Find ways to expose children to interesting, meaningful and real-to-life activities from which they could learn.

Encourage reading. Just 30 minutes of reading each day contributes to improved performance in all academic subjects. So read with your child, if you can, or encourage independent reading that you could recommend or that your child selects.

Develop good routines. Set regular times for learning as well as a quiet and well-lighted space for reading or for doing schoolwork – but not in bed or in front of the television.

Put a premium on projects. Based on your child's interests and passions, encourage long term projects and application of knowledge. Examples might be starting a diary or a journal, learning photography or setting long term goals and developing a plan to achieve them.

Urge your child to try hard. Success is often a result of effort, not just innate ability. Children are empowered when they believe that they can achieve their goals if they try hard enough.

Create opportunities for success. High self-esteem is not only the cause of success but also the result of success. The job of teachers and parents, therefore, is to invent tasks at which children can succeed – without lowering standards or diminishing rigor.

Set a good example. Remember that we cannot teach what we do not model. Children pay more attention to our actions than our words.

Even while schools are closed, there are lots of opportunities right at home to engage children in activities that promote learning, imagination and creative thinking. The key is to make good use of time. Try doing something special and interesting that increases children's knowledge and skills.

As educators, we know that parents love their children and want them to become all that they can be. And when it comes to educating our children, there can be no greater nor more natural partnership than that between parents and teachers.

So, for the sake of your children, let's continue to nurture them and help them during these challenging times.