

## Ten Tips for Learning at Home

When school is out of session, parents search for ways to keep children learning. Here are some suggestions:

- 1 Don't try to recreate school.**

While school districts may send home packets of curriculum materials or access to online resources, parents should try to avoid the tendency to re-create school at home. Parents should consider that children learn from other experiences as well as from structured academic exercises. Parents should be flexible and recognize they may have to adjust the schedule.
- 2 Avoid the Snow Day Mentality.**

The lack of routine can be confusing to a child, so while it may be easier to lounge in pajamas, it is important to try to preserve as much of a routine as possible. Getting dressed in the morning is one way of maintaining that sense of normalcy.
- 3 Create a Space.**

Designate an area as a place for lessons, arts and crafts, and journaling activities.
- 4 Set a Schedule.**

Most children thrive on a schedule or routine. Ask your child about their typical school day and work with them to create a schedule that will be achievable for both you and your child. Consider using a timer with your schedule to assist with transitioning from activities.
- 5 Use Online Learning Resources.**

There are many online resources that can help children as they learn from home. The Mississippi Department of Education has compiled resources that allow children to access free read alouds, take virtual field trips, practice or review skills, and much more at [mdek12.org/LearningAtHome](https://mdek12.org/LearningAtHome).
- 6 Sync your Schedules.**

If you must work from home, be sure to discuss your expectations: when you have to take a call, or you are working on an assignment. Align your schedules so that they are working independently when you are working from home.
- 7 Expand your Definition of Learning.**

It is never too early to introduce life skills to children. This will allow them to develop a sense of responsibility for the household. There are appropriate chores for every age-range. Young children can sort socks and silverware, load the dishwasher, sweep or vacuum, or even make the bed. Older children can mow the lawn, cook meals, or wash and fold clothes. The *Family Guides for Student Success* provide suggested activities that reinforce reading and math skills in Pre-K – 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

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### Structured and Unstructured Play.

Play is vital for children’s development.

Parents should be sure to allow some time for free play or unstructured play. Children have conversations with siblings and others in the home during play that may give parents insight into their emotional health or anxieties. Encourage children to rekindle their imaginations by providing building blocks, costumes, or art supplies.

Structured play involves following rules or instructions to reach a goal. Lego-themed sets, board games, and puzzles encourage children to focus on a task and use problem-solving skills while bolstering confidence, encouraging resilience, and helping them to learn to communicate.

Older children need some time for play as well. There are several activities that can allow both younger and older students together time. It is important to balance screen “play” time and screen-free “play” time.

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### Make room for reflection.

Children need a way to process information, thoughts, and feelings. Give your child an opportunity to journal about new experiences, or if your child is too young, set aside a time for you and your child to co-journal, then discuss how they are feeling and their concerns. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association (SAMHSA) has developed *Tips for Talking with Children*, which includes guidance for talking your children about their fear and anxiety.

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### Be the Cheerleader.

Share your enthusiasm for learning. Telling your child to "keep up the hard work" or "try one more time" encourages perseverance and builds motivation.

## COVID-19 INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE



*Centers for Disease Control  
COVID-19 Information and  
Guidance*



*Mississippi State Department  
of Health (MSDH) COVID-19  
Information*

**MSDH Coronavirus Hotline**  
877.978.6453; 8am–5pm,  
Monday through Friday



*U.S. Department of Education  
COVID-19 Information and  
Resources*