Remote learning for parents: tips and advice for remote education

How do I motivate my child who is struggling to adapt?

Break the day down into chunks and write out a routine that children can see. Include a time to exercise, to play or read alone and to be outside. Also, waking up at the same time and keeping to the same bedtime routine as a normal school-day will support the transition into remote education.

Create the best space possible. Having all equipment close to hand and your child's work displayed on the wall would signal that this is a 'learning space' and removing any distractions will make a big difference. If a straight-backed chair and desk aren't available, try making a "work throne" out of pillows on your child's bed each morning, or find a small enclosed space to help reduce distractions.

Take breaks. When you feel they are needed, encourage a quiet time where they can rest in their bedrooms, play with a game by themselves, listen to an audiobook or read. This way everyone gets a break and space to recharge. Try having a selection of healthy snacks out on the kitchen table so a child can help themselves to a snack after a lesson ends.

Stay positive. Children look to their parents to figure out how to react to new or intimidating situations. If their parent seems sceptical or defeated, then they're likely to follow suit. Staying as positive about distance learning as you can will help your child to maintain a 'can do' attitude to the tasks set.

What can I do to reduce screen-time?

Make it practical. If you have been set a task to add numbers up to twenty, go outside and find twenty leaves to use for the calculations. If your task is to write a diary entry as Harry Potter, go and pretend to be wizards around your house to get those imaginations fired up. If spelling is a task, how about getting messy with some finger painting or shaving foam? This will help your child 'unlock' more ideas and extend the learning over a longer time period.

My child completes the tasks in 5 minutes and is really bored. What do I do?

Use what you already have. Supplement the activities set by the teacher with other tasks that can be completed more regularly. Read the next chapter of their home-reading book, spend time writing out that tricky 7x table and coming up with ways to memorise it, record a message to their teacher explaining their understanding of the task, complete an exercise routine based around the task or create a poster or set of instructions to teach somebody else the skill.

How do I keep my child safe online?

Read the guidance from the National Online Safety website at:

https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/10-top-tips-remote-learning-for-parents.

Some of the advice is:

- Ensure they are using the school's communication channels.
- Familiarise yourself with the relevant school policies.
- Monitor your child's communication and online activity.
- Implement safety controls and privacy restrictions on apps and software.

I have three children who are all remote learning – what do I do?

Prioritise and strip back. Look at the tasks your children have been set. Which of those are going to need your support and which can be done independently? Can the tasks be arranged in a way that one or two children can be completing independent tasks allowing you one-to-one time with the other?

Combine activities. Are any of the different children's tasks similar, for example both writing a different diary entry? Could these be combined into the same activity to be completed as a whole family? Bringing everyone together for a shared task can be an extremely effective way to work around everybody's wants and needs and create a sense of togetherness.

We don't have a printer, so how do we complete these worksheets?

Use what you have at hand. A pen and paper will be all you need for most tasks. Once children have watched or read through the instructions, you can either keep the task displayed on the screen or write out some questions or activities of your own, based on the topic.

The worksheets are there as a guide, but teachers fully understand that fewer and fewer people have a printer nowadays. Either display the worksheet on the screen to work from, or use it as a guide to create a similar sheet on a piece of paper.

The work is too difficult and they can't do it, what do I do?

Speak to the teacher. Use the contact methods your school will have given to you to send a message through. Bear with them in what will undoubtedly be a really busy time, but they will be able to support you in adjusting these tasks if your child is still struggling and may be able to offer further teaching to those who are finding it difficult.

Give it your best shot. It may be that they aren't getting everything right, but the learning journey is always full of mistakes. If your child is happy to, persist with the task and you may find that they develop their understanding as they continue with the activity. We rarely expect pupils to get *everything* right, mistakes are an important part of the learning journey!

The adults at home are all working, what do we do?

Make the teacher aware. They may be able to offer your child additional support or adapt the task to be more independent.

Be flexible. If the working day is more difficult, prioritise which home learning tasks you think will need adult support. Could one of these be completed first thing in the morning or once the working day has finished?

Speak with your employer. Can they be flexible with your work hours or make allowances for you to be able to work around your children.