

Home schooling during the lockdown

Advice and tips for parents

The coronavirus pandemic has led to an unprecedented shutdown of schools across the world. As a result, many parents will find themselves quarantined at home with their children for an indefinite period of time, wondering how they are going to keep them amused and, more importantly, educated.

Here are some of our tips for first-time home-schooling parents.

Keep your expectations realistic

It's really tough teaching your own child, so be realistic about what you can achieve. You don't have to go straight from being a parent to delivering a full curriculum overnight - nobody would expect that. This is a fantastic opportunity for you as a parent to do the things teachers don't have time to do, to give your child some valuable one-to-one time, while your other children are gainfully occupied if you have more than one! Remember, you are the main educator for your child and you will continue to be the main educator for your child no matter what happens.

Keep their spirits up

You have to remember they are going through this as well. They will hear you talking about it, they will see you watching the news. The first thing to do is talk to them about it because you will be modeling for them what your response is to the situation. It won't be easy, you might not have all the answers, but if you as a parent are showing them this is how we cope with a pandemic then the child will feel more comfortable, secure and ready to learn.

Focus on the basics

One of the things parents might be thinking of doing in these first few weeks is introducing new information, new learning. Instead focus on the things your child already knows, what they have already learned. Practice the things they have learned in school over the last few months, make sure they don't lose that information. Strategies such as quick quizzes, retrieval practice, or even just talking about what they already know will help.



Don't expect scenes like this straight off the bat! (Image by [White77](#) from [Pixabay](#))

Follow their interests

This is not something teachers in school have much opportunity to do, but as parents you have the opportunity to follow their interests. What topics are they interested in? Do they like dinosaurs, sport, fantasy? Think about how you can use that topic as a jumping in point for some learning. Can they write about it, can you introduce some maths?

Don't just focus on the 'three rs'

Learning is not just maths and English. It's physical and mental health and wellbeing as well. Daily PE lessons will help children get regular exercise as well as help prepare them mentally for the day ahead and put them in a good space for learning. Using real life opportunities for learning, such as outdoor learning , games and exploration will also help support their emotional growth.

Let siblings help

If you have children with a wide age gap, get them involved with each other's learning. The younger children can learn from the older children, and the older children can develop a sense of

responsibility. This is a perfect opportunity to build those relationships. Every teacher would agree that if pupils came back to school feeling more resilient, more independent more able to take responsibility for their own learning then that's a huge achievement.

Set aside a suitable amount of time for learning

Though this is not a holiday, it is also not a normal situation. You shouldn't worry too much about trying to fit a whole school timetable into a day. Keep a routine – Monday to Friday are 'school' days but weekends and bank holidays are not. For young children (aged 3-5), an hour or two a day is fine. With older children you can do longer sessions but only as much as they feel able to do. They shouldn't be under pressure and getting stressed about this.