Distance Learning Tips for Parents

Make space for learning
Many adults have a specific area of the home in which they do work, and it’s important that you create a similar space for your child. Your children will achieve their best work in a quiet, comfortable, and dedicated space that is strictly devoted to learning. This space should be a different set-up than where they normally play games or watch television.

Help students ‘own’ their learning
No one expects parents to be full-time teachers or to be educational and content matter experts. Provide support and encouragement and expect your children to do their part. Struggling is allowed and encouraged! Don’t help too much. Becoming independent takes lots of practice.

Help only as long as your child is doing most of the work. Say the following to yourself over and over again: This is my child’s work. Not mine! Each time they achieve something difficult on their own, their self-esteem soars and they are better prepared for the real world.

Don’t underestimate the power of a schedule
A schedule, for your work and your child’s work, is extremely important. To start, experts recommend keeping them on the same or similar sleeping schedule that they have when they are going into school. If a schedule was not provided by their teachers, help them write one for not only each day, but each week, as well. Having a clear vision of what is expected of your child will help them see that just because they are home does not mean they don’t have work to do. Experts recommend helping them prioritize and learn to create goals, tasks, and deadlines, just like adults do when they go to work.

Begin and end the day by checking-in
In the morning, you might ask:
• What classes/subject do you have today?
• Do you have any assessments?
• How will you spend your time?
• What resources do you need?
• What can I do to help?

At the end of the day you might ask:
• How far did you get in your learning tasks today?
• What did you discover? What was hard?
• What could we do to make tomorrow better?

These brief grounding conversations matter. Checking in students to process instructions they received from their teachers, and it helps them organize themselves and set priorities – older students too. Not all students thrive in distance learning, some struggle with too much independence or lack of structure. These check-in routines can help avoid later challenges and disappointments. They help students develop self-management and executive functioning that are essential skills for life. Parents are good life coaches.
Maintain breaks
Routines and schedules are extremely important for children at school, and this is no different in their at-home school. Children will function best if they maintain their routine as close to normal as possible. Setting alarms similar to those they would encounter at school can be helpful for keeping them on a schedule. Around lunch time, encourage them to get up, get some fresh air, go for a walk or bike ride, or have a snack so that they are not sedentary for the entire day.

Limit distraction
A “digital quarantine” might be necessary to keep your child’s attention focused on their schoolwork. You should limit their use of their devices, other than what is needed to complete their work, until their schoolwork is done. If you choose, you can allow your child to play on a device during a designated break but make them aware that they only have a limited amount of time until they need to get back to work.

Remember to schedule time for fun
While this is most certainly not a vacation, it’s important to have some fun with your children while they are at home. It’s rare that you have this much time with your children, so use it as an opportunity to bond. Experts at Children and Screens recommend organizing a tournament, family card games, charades, or chess, or getting outside for a hike or walk together.

Sources:


Additional Resources:
Middle and High School Tips -
https://www.connectionsacademy.com/support/resources/article/8-top-tips-for-student-success-in-online-school