



Top 5 tips

Schooling at home



Having children at home doing their schooling is a new experience for many parents and carers all over the world at the moment. Here are LiteracyPlanet's top five tips to keep you sane, your learners on track, and make it work in your home:

1. Routine

Encourage your child to go through the same routine every morning as if they were going to regular school; get up on time, get ready, have breakfast, dress in appropriate clothes, and be ready to start at their computer at the same time each morning.

2. Learning space

Your child might be fortunate enough to have an ideal space with a desk in their own bedroom, but if not choose and create a space in the home that will give them the best possible environment for learning, with minimum distractions, and make it their 'school HQ'. Maybe somewhere quieter (or find some noise-cancelling headphones?), with good lighting, and a bit out of the way. It might also help to have a clear desk or shelf nearby to arrange resources.

3. Schedule

Children like structure. Organise the day into a schedule, and involve your child to give them some leadership and ownership of their school day, and so they have buy-in. This will also give them an opportunity to develop their soft skills, like teamwork and effective communication. Include breaks to suit their personality and age, such as more frequent breaks for younger children and longer learning sessions for older children. Visual aids can be helpful too, like a printout of the schedule on the wall, or - if there's more flexibility in their week - a schedule with rearrangeable subject cards pinned on a corkboard.

4. Be realistic

At home, staying on task for the equivalent of a full school day can be a challenge for many children (and their parents and carers!), and may not actually be necessary to achieve their learning for the day. Choose a reasonable amount of time for your child to be on their computer, engaged in active learning. Without the usual between-class breaks and other school activities, it may be about 4-5 hours each day. And while schools may be implementing ways to enable parents to get more involved in their child's learning if you were not a subject expert before, you are not expected to be one now, and schools also understand that many parents still have their own work to do. Do what you can to be available for your child and help them find solutions if they ask, but otherwise, allow them to manage their work as much as they can on their own (and don't feel guilty about it!).

5. Explore resources

There are excellent online education resources available, like LiteracyPlanet for English of course, and people and organisations around the world have responded to this global situation by offering children new and special virtual experiences. Explore online, and help your child take advantage of what is available that interests them. Examples include storytime readings for #OperationStorytime, by well-known authors on their Instagram feeds, or on Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. Many zoos and museums are offering virtual tours, webcasts and digital resources. Children can even enjoy subject lessons from world experts, like biology with Sir David Attenborough and science with Professor Brian Cox, via the BBC's Bitesize Daily website!

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