

keeping learning going...

how can we maintain the balance between
being a parent of a child and their teacher?

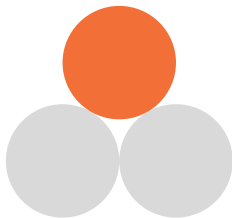


why is this important?

Remember, you are a parent of your child first. A member of their teaching team second.

This means that their lead teacher will be the person who will be figuring out what your child should be learning, and what their activities look like across a week. They will be following curriculum guidelines, creating new lessons and assessing work, just as they always have. They will be engaging in professional learning to foster the best outcomes for students during this challenging time. You, however, will be providing the love and support your child needs in what is a challenging and anxious time. That may be by creating the right learning spaces and communicating regularly with their teacher, but there also may be times when you are doing some direct teaching. In this toolkit we focus on helping you find the right balance for all of this.

key ideas in this kit



the head

Planning and prioritising your day.



the heart

Supporting our souls (and our children's).



the hands

Process and tools to make each day easier.

the head

reflection

Parents are the single greatest influence on their child's learning. So, if you have any doubts about what to do, the best place to start is simply by being a parent. Get involved, take an interest and be the best support you can be. As a parent, you're also a natural teacher. You've been teaching your child since they were born.

Reflect on a time when you taught your child a new skill - perhaps riding a bike or kicking a football. What worked well? How did it make them feel? What could have gone better?

tools

- **Trust yourself:** Your mindset is the number one thing here! Remember, you know your child better than anyone else and, because you understand them inside out, you will be best placed to know what makes them tick.
- **Forgive yourself:** Most parents are not trained teachers so this will be a whole new learning experience for you. You will probably make mistakes, but you will almost certainly be a great teacher for your child. If you don't get it right every time, just remember that no one does, not even the most experienced teachers. At the very least, start strong and finish strong, and know that there may be some rough patches in the middle!
- **Learn together:** You may not be the expert in teaching maths, but you will know more than you think. In fact, one of the most important ways to teach your child is to model being a learner yourself. If you can't remember how to solve a tricky maths question, there are lots of ways you can find out. Khan Academy is a great resource with really clear videos and explanations on a whole bunch of topics.

the head

- **Get inspired:** Learning can be so much fun. Model your love of learning in front of your children. Maybe do an online learning course on Udemy during the lockdown (there are free ones available due to COVID19) and bore your family by telling them all about it! There are so many available on all sorts of subjects. Show them how you're mastering a skill or taking on a new challenge.

action

Make sure you have a really strong idea about the content your child is learning this term. Consider contacting their lead teacher to find out good resources for that content and enjoy learning about what your child is going to learn about.

reflection

One minute things were normal, next minute schools were cancelled and people had to work from home! This is an incredibly emotionally and mentally challenging time. It's important to recognise the mental challenges we are all facing. Just as we are feeling anxious about our jobs and well-being, our children are also feeding off our anxiety. They might also be worried about catching the virus and I'm sure they're desperately missing seeing their friends and being involved in the school community.

Reflect on how you've spoken to your children about the current situation. Have you explained to them what is happening? Have they challenged you about not seeing their friends or their grandparents and how have you responded?

tools

- **Explicit love!** The best teachers show a lot of warmth, kindness and understanding to their students. When you're teaching them, don't think you have to be the tough disciplinarian. Love them, be patient and be kind. They are in this with you too. They will have lots of difficulties and uncertainties, so work together and make it as positive as you can. Give them a hug if they need it, suggest a brain break and give them plenty of praise when things go well.
- **Take an interest.** If you do nothing else, just take a genuine interest in what they are learning about, actively listen to your child and have some great conversations with them!
- **Make it fun.** Kids learn best when they are enjoying what they are doing. Find fun and engaging ways you can add to what they are learning. It might be a book or a story, or something you found online. Praise them when they have done well, notice the things they are improving on and get them to tell you things they love. Enjoy the time you have together. There will definitely be bumps along the way, but it isn't often we can have this 1:1 time to really engage with our child's learning.

the heart

- **Foster connection.** What significant relationships does your child have? Try and nurture these relationships with their friends or other relatives. Set up Zoom calls and give them some privacy to chat if you think they need it. Make sure they're not cut off from their world and they will be happier and more willing to persist with online learning.
- **Mental health breaks.** If they need a break - give it to them. Maybe they need to sleep in one morning; maybe they want McDonalds for lunch one day. Make sure you give your children little morale boosters every now and then to keep them going through this challenging time. And make sure you also set aside time to care for yourself, whether it be yoga, meditation, exercise, or just finding a quiet space to read and switch off.

action

Monitor carefully your whole family's mental health. If people are struggling, talk to them about what might make this time easier. Your child's school also has access to agencies that can provide professional support, so contact your child's teacher or the relevant well-being staff member to access that support.

the hands

reflection

Kids love structure. Not only does it give them a sense of security, it also gives them space to take risks in their learning, develop their creative side and build independence. Work with your child to co-create the structures, but always remember to be flexible and realistic. You wouldn't expect a 6 year old to sit still and read for 90 minutes!

What routines help you in your daily life? Why has it been helpful to you and how can you model this to your child?

tools

- **Have a routine.** Create a clear and easy to follow routine that everyone knows and understands. It is probably best if you co-create this routine with your child, and in many cases it may even work well if they create their own routines and timetables. It is very important that you all agree on it and lock it in! Your school might send out a suggested timetable, so you can use that as a guide, but remember to maintain some flexibility here.
- **Schedules.** Plenty of people are suggesting daily schedules online. If sticking up a learning schedule on the fridge works for your family - that's great! Make sure you have a look at what the school is suggesting and that your child is online and involved in live learning when they need to be. As a general rule of thumb, variety is the key. There needs to be some screen time, some outside time, some exercising opportunities, some creative time (think arts and crafts), some socialising time and some down-time. It's great to establish something where your child feels secure by knowing what's expected and when.

the hands

- **Be flexible.** If you feel that they need a break, give them one! That might be as simple as doing some exercise, or maybe moving onto another area of learning. There is an art to creating an ebb and flow throughout the day and even within a lesson. Again, trust your instincts on this. Have a jar of activities for some brain breaks. Go for a run around the house, do star jumps or dance to your favourite song. Have 'bonkers' time by putting on some loud music and dancing around the living room (join in and have some fun with them for a while!). Be mindful that there will be 'dead time' during the day when the school work set has been completed. Have a look at [The Definitive Guide to Staying at Home with Kids through the Coronavirus by TechPixies](#) it's got some great links to online learning resources.
- **Organisation.** Remote learning is brand new for your kids so we can't expect them to self manage and organise themselves straight away. Give them some support in getting their resources ready - pens, pencils, paper, books (printer ink!) will all need to be sorted. Get them to arrange their workspace (with your help!) so that they are organised and ready to work when the school day starts.
- **Switch off.** You can't be in teacher mode all day! Switch off. Go outside and play games. Be lighthearted and have fun well away from the daily routine. Have a 'rose, bud, thorn' conversation with your kids at the end of the day. In other words, talk about the best thing that happened (rose), the things that are improving and growing (bud) and the tricky things that are still getting in the way or need more work (thorn).

action

Co-create a daily routine with your child. If you can, let them have a go at designing one first and then add your ideas and suggestions. The more ownership they have over this, the more likely they will follow it.

thank you for all you do to educate our children

the EC crew



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**professional learning +
support that changes schools**

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