A GUIDE TO DISTANCE LEARNING *For Parents*

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DISTANCE LEARNING
For Parents

Due to the recent events in our nation and around the world, teachers, students, and families are experiencing something they've never experienced before. Distance learning due to the COVID-19 is uncharted territory, and we are all doing our best to protect ourselves and those around us physically, mentally, and emotionally.

My hope is that this guide provides families with support on how they can navigate distance learning with their children. Whether your school is providing virtual learning experiences, packets of resources and worksheets, optional learning activities, or nothing at all, the information in this guide may help parents and caregivers provide students with a fun, engaging, and supportive environment while learning at home.

In this guide you will find the following:

- Tips for creating a "classroom" environment at home
- Sample schedule and routine
- A list of educational resources websites that may support online learning
- A list of non-digital and meaningful activities that spark students' curiosity and creativity
- A list of brain break activities to reset students' focus and engagement

Thank you for providing your child with support during this time. If you need additional tips, resources, or support, please don't hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher.

Please enjoy this time with your children and stay healthy!

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"Classroom" Environment Tips

Here are a few things to consider when developing your learning environment at home:

Set up a Learning Routine & Structure:

Routines and structures may help children transition from learning at school to learning at home. While learning at home may look different than learning at school, you can create a predictable routine that helps to maintain consistent expectations and help students feel safe. To create a routine that works for your children, consider the expectations given from your children's teacher. This guide provides a sample routine that you may use as a guide to create your own.

Create a Physical Learning Space:

Set up a designated workspace for students before getting started every day. Make sure your child has all his or her materials ready including pencils, glue sticks, scissors, digital devices, books, etc. Please note that while some children may be able to work in various areas around the house, other children may need a consistent work area as it may help them decipher between work and play time. While students are working, be sure to limit any distractions including the TV and additional devices.

Provide Mental Breaks:

People of all ages need time to reset and refocus. Younger children may need more breaks than older children. Gauge your children's level of attention and focus during specific tasks and offer "brain breaks" as needed. This guide provides a list of brain break activities that you can use throughout your day. You may also decide to break up tasks into smaller chunks to make it more manageable. Visual timers can also be a great tool for time management.

Make Learning Fun:

At-home learning provides a great opportunity for you to connect with your children and make learning fun! This guide provides a list of digital resources as well as non-digital activities that can spark students' curiosity and creativity. Think about what your child is most interested in and most excited to learn about, then give them opportunities to explore those topics! Sometimes when we let our children take the lead, that's when they learn the best!

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Other Tips and Tricks

Give Them Choice:

Let your children make decisions about where they work and in what order they will complete their assignments. This will help them take ownership of their learning and keep them motivated. If you feel like they will need a little guidance in making appropriate decisions, you can give them two choices and let them choose from there!

Give Them Space, Then Check-In

Show that you believe in your children's abilities and independence by giving them space to learn and complete their assignments on their own. Check-in every 15 to 30 minutes to check their work, offer feedback, and give additional instructions.

Offer Positive Reinforcements:

Give your children praise! It's not always easy to stay focused and motivated to learn when life seems more unpredictable than usual! Consider praising your children's efforts, rather than accomplishments. Praising effort sends the message that you value their learning more than their performance, which can increase their growth mindset and overall effort. If necessary, offer small rewards. Sometimes younger children need that extra support to stay on task, complete assignments, and do their best. Stickers, extra free time, and even homemade coupons can be very motivating for some children!

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Sample Schedule

Below you will find a sample daily schedule for your children. The following page has a blank schedule that you may use to create your own schedule that works for your and your family. Please also remember that your routine and schedule may need to be adjusted over time as you better understand the learning expectations from your school and how your children learn best.

Before 8:30am	Morning Routine: Wake up, eat breakfast, make your bed, get dressed, brush your teeth, etc.
8:30-9:00	Morning walk outside with the family
9:00- 10:30	Academic Time (may include a few Brain Breaks)
10:30- 11:00	Snack/Free Time
11- 12:00	Academic Time (may include a few Brain Breaks)
12:00- 1:00	Lunch/Free Time
1:00- 1:30	Quiet Time - reading, puzzles, nap, etc.
1:30-2:30	Academic Time (may include a few Brain Breaks)
2:30-3:30	Creative Time - Legos, drawing, crafting, music, cook, etc.
3:30-4:00	Afternoon Fresh Air - Bikes, walk the dog, play outside
4-4:30	Chore Time
4:30-5:30	Family Time/Extracurricular Activities
5:30-6:30	Dinner
6:30- 7:30	Free TV/Games Time
7:30	Bedtime Routine - bath, brush teeth, put PJs on, book. Etc.
8:00	Bedtime - all kids
9:00	Bedtime - all kids who follow the daily schedule and don't fight :)

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Daily Schedule

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Digital Resources

Below are a few educational websites that offered free memberships and subscriptions in the Spring of 2020. These resources may or may not still be free, but they can help to support your children's online learning. Click the name of each resource to be linked to their websites. A list of educational resources can be found here.

- **Brain Pop/Brain Pop Jr.** – Educational videos, quizzes, and activities for all subject areas
- **Discovery Education** – K-12 content resources with on-demand teaching strategies
- **PBS SoCal** - Prepared broadcast programming and accompanying digital resources
- **The Real time Curriculum Project/National Geographic** – Relevant content to today's events that may be useful for discussions and activities
- **Scholastic Learn at Home** – Day-to-day projects and assignments that include digital books, videos, and activities
- **Starfall** – Fun reading and math activities for K-3 students
- **Highlights Kids** – Educational games, activities, and content for all subject areas
- **Time for Kids** – Currently offering a free family newsletter on how to engage your kids while learning at home
- **Phonics Hero** – Systematic phonics instruction for those learning to read
- **Mystery Science** – Simple, engaging, and hands-on science lessons and activities
- **ST Math** – Instructional K-8 math program that incorporates visual games and puzzles

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Non-Digital Activities

Learning at home provides a great opportunity for students to participate in meaningful activities that encourage curiosity and creativity! Here are a few fun ideas to get started:

- Interview a family member
- Create a musical instrument using materials found in your home
- Alphabetize everyday items such as books, spices, DVDs, etc.
- Make dinner with the family
- Create a dance to your favorite song
- Make letters or words using items found in your home or backyard such as sticks
- Make an indoor fort using blankets, towels, and pillows
- Write your own book or comic book strip
- Call a grandparent and ask them to teach you a song they used to sing
- Play a board game or create your own
- Organize bookshelves, bins, drawers, or cabinets
- Write a list of things you are thankful for
- Design different paper airplanes and see which one flies the best
- Plant some herbs or flowers in your backyard
- Create a nature notebook
- Draw a family tree
- Take pictures of everyday items using different angles
- Make a snowflake collage
- Build a robot using recycled materials
- Create new lyrics to trending songs
- Stargaze
- Play charades
- Participate in improv
- Create a puppet show using socks or paper lunch bags
- Write down silly things your family pet might say throughout the day
- Write a poem
- Collect leaves and sort them based on their color, shape, or texture
- Pretend you are an alien from another planet and create your own language
- Measure items in your home
- Create your own jokes

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Brain Break Activities

Here are some fun brain break activities. Feel free to print, cut, and place them in a container of your choice. When your child needs a brain break, have them pick one out!

Create a secret handshake with a friend, family member, or caregiver	Play a card game
Take a walk outside to the end of the block and back	Sing karaoke
3 minutes of free time	Walk around your house like an animal of your choice
Play Hot Potato	Sing the alphabet in silly ways
Have a dance-off competition	Pretend jump rope for 2 minutes
Do 10 jumping jacks, 10 pushups, and 10 sit-ups	Play tic-tac-toe
Play Rock-Paper-Scissors	Sing and dance to "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes"
Draw a picture of your favorite animal	Do the Macarena
Go outside and play catch	Skip around the room
Shake your sillies out!	Play the Hokey Pokey
Jog in place	Jump as high as you can 10 times
Have a stretch break	See how long you can balance on each leg

GoNoodle is also an excellent free online resource to explore for Brain Breaks. This website has hundreds of movement and mindfulness videos that students can participate in throughout the day!

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THANK YOU!

Thank you for your download! I hope this guide helps you in your at-home learning adventure. If you have any questions or see an error, feel free to email me at atrailblazingteacher@gmail.com. If you are interested in other products and resources, feel free to check out my TPT store here. If you follow my store, you will receive notifications for updated and new products!

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Terms of Use: You may not alter this document in any way; however, feel free to share this with any parent or caregiver who you feel may benefit from it! My hope is that this helps to elevate or minimize stress for parents and encourages students to persevere while learning at home.

Stay healthy, my friends!

Much love,
A Trailblazing Teacher

Thank you to the following: