

Some parents/carers have been raising some good questions about remote learning; I thought it would be useful to answer those questions so everyone could benefit.

Could I firstly say that these are ideas and suggestions, we are not counsellors or life coaches. There is plenty advice on the internet for you to follow up with.

Here are examples of actual questions that we have been asked:

How do I juggle remote learning and working from home?

We know that this is a real challenge, most of our staff are doing the same thing.

The best thing to do is plan - get your children to help and be involved in this. Over breakfast discuss what they're going to do that day and what you can help them with.

Try to set a timetable of when you can help the children learn and when you need to be working. For all the times you can't be with the children try to plan independent activities. This might be technology-based learning (please see the list with 60+ links to online learning) - children are surprisingly independent at this.

If your child keeps interrupting your working time with questions, be patient. Remember, at school we always encourage them to ask for help if they need it. Responding by asking good questions can help them become more independent, such as:

What else could you try?

What things have you got that could help you?

How else could you approach the problem?

If they are really struggling, ask them to do something else for a while until you are ready to help.

My child just won't do anything!

We know it can be a challenge motivating children to take part in learning, especially when they are at home. Here are some simple suggestions that have proved effective for other families:

Get dressed! Staying in your pyjamas is not a good start to the day. Try to keep to your normal morning routine of washing, breakfast and getting dressed so you are ready for the day.

Make a clear learning space - part of your dining table, a desk or space on the kitchen counter. Make sure it is away from the TV and keep it de-cluttered.

Write the date - write the full date somewhere prominent and keep it displayed.

*Build in small rewards - if you do this for 30 minutes you can ... (have 10 minutes ipad time)
Drink lots of water.*

Read for the first 20 minutes of the day.

Make a timetable for the day

Example time table for the day:

9.00 - reading

9.20 - wake and shake (dance, move, stretch, yoga)

9.30 - English tasks/project
10.30 - Break - get outside in the garden! (Snack)
11.00 - Maths tasks/project
12.00 - Look ahead to your afternoon - what are you going to do?
12.30 - Lunch and outdoor play
13.30 - Afternoon project
14.30 - Break - get outside in the garden (snack)
14.45 - Afternoon project
15.30 - Finish

*Younger children will need more regular breaks and movement. Ensure they get outside and drink lots of water

EYFS children can learn through play - set up some games, water play, and experiments for them to explore.

Get the children to take ownership of their learning - what do they want to learn about/do today?

Try a reward chart - we use merits and beads in school. When the child earns an agreed amount, they get a reward - such as a hot chocolate or time on their favourite computer game.

My partner is useless at helping the children!

Unfortunately, we can't provide you with a new partner! Be patient. Remember, not everyone is skilled at working with children. Encourage your partner to do what they are confident with first. Are they good at cooking, building, painting, dancing?

Once they have some successes under their belt, their confidence will grow and they will be more willing to try adding some maths to their cooking or writing instructions about their building project.

Most importantly, don't fall out over small things, reassess what is working and stick to that for the time being.

How do I keep my older children challenged with little ones around?

Again, this is a big challenge that we are all facing. Again, planning is key.

Get your older children to complete a timetable of their learning for the day and talk about how they are going to be independent. Get them to choose the topic of their learning - if they're into History, let them research and produce a project folder. They're far more likely to be engaged if they have ownership of the learning.

Get them to write down questions they don't know the answer to - then plan how they are going to find the answers. E.g. why do flowers turn to face the sun?

We know younger children are going to demand more of your time but make sure you factor in some time to see what your older children have done and provide praise and feedback that will challenge them. This should always be twice as much praise as criticism.

Upload your children's work to Class Dojo or email to your class teacher - they will be able to provide feedback too.

My child has special educational needs (SEN) and I'm not sure how to adapt the learning for them.

Have a look at the advice from Mr Williams, our SENDCO

Children with SEN often require teaching to be adapted in order for them to access the curriculum so I thought I would compile some basic tips to help you navigate the days ahead.

- If you are able to do nothing else, focus on the basics: reading, writing and maths.
- Game-based learning helps children to engage in their learning without you needing a teaching degree. Sites like Nessy (reading/spelling), Times Tables Rock Stars, RM Easi-maths are all useful. Sit alongside them to act as a guide and give praise often (praise the effort, not the outcome!).
- A full list of online learning should be available on your school's website.
- Keep sessions short with frequent breaks (these could be quick movement breaks, a game of rock, paper, scissors or eye-spy, etc).
- Build in plenty of repetition and revision (but not necessarily delivered the same way every time).
- It is OK to sometimes scribe for them or let them dictate their work into a device if writing is a struggle.
- Make Maths practical: play 'shops', monopoly, do some baking (if you can buy flour!), etc.
- Project-based work is accessible for all children and creative tasks are really rewarding.
- Watching an episode of Blue Planet or Horrible Histories can help you widen the curriculum without you needing to become an expert on the Victorians - sit with them and talk about what you're watching.
- Stick to a routine (important for a lot of SEN kids especially in the current situation).
- Build in plenty of physical activity during the day. Joe Wicks is presenting a PE lesson every morning at 9am on YouTube. See if you can keep up with your children!
- Think about awarding 'merits' for good effort, independent learning, neat handwriting, not annoying your sister, etc.

Most of all, if you manage to cover some of the basics every day, you will help your child keep the learning 'habit'.

I hope that these suggestions will provide some useful ideas to support remote learning from home. If you have any tips or secrets of success, please share them with us and each other.

Kind regards,

Mr Whittley