

COPING WITH COVID-19

Supporting Children with Online Learning

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Moving to online learning has been an unexpected result of COVID-19. Not simply students, but parents and teachers feel overwhelmed with learning new technologies and adjusting to online learning environments. As many schools have implemented some type of virtual education component, parents and caregivers are in need of strategies for supporting students as they make the transition to virtual education.

SET ROUTINE AND EXPECTATIONS

Whether at home or in-person, establishing a consistent daily routine signals what to expect day-to-day. It will help to reduce stress or anxiety around the unknown, a common feeling during these times. Create and post a schedule that specifies the routine for the day. Include meals, school sessions, and relaxation time to connect with family.

CREATE SUITABLE SPACE



Students need a space free of clutter, noise, and other distractions to complete their daily work. Carve out a workspace for students to set up as if it were their desk at school. This space should include all the supplies they need and be in close proximity to outlets and WIFI connections.

BUILD DIGITAL COMPETENCY

Learning online requires a basic understanding of new technologies, which can be stressful for those who have less familiarity with online learning platforms. Reach out to your child's teacher to talk

about the online learning platform they will be using. Spend some time on your own exploring the online learning environment. Set up the webcam and audio and access the materials for your child's class.

THINK OUTSIDE OF THE BOX

There is no doubt that online learning comes with challenges. Sitting in front of a computer all day can lead to boredom and virtual burn out. It is important to think of creative ways to reduce sedentary time. During their learning breaks, get your kids moving. Make time for a game, have conversation during lunch, or put on some music and dance. Find ways to safely get kids active with friends through socially-distanced neighborhood nature walks or backyard fitness challenges.

CELEBRATE SUCCESSES

Little or big, celebrating positive moments provide encouragement for continued hard work. There are several ways to celebrate successes. One way is to celebrate the start of the school year as you



normally would through back-to-school shopping, picking out a “first day of school” outfit, and sharing a special meal to honor advancing to the next grade. or a good grade on a report card. Another way is daily check-ins to applaud examples of children being a good citizen, working hard, or being a model student. Make a plan for how you will celebrate a good grade on a major assignment or a positive report card.

BE MINDFUL OF EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Stress is inherent in life, but especially in facing new learning requirements in uncertain and unprecedented times. Consider the social and emotional health of children and be mindful of the signs of distress. Signs may include excessive worry, crying, sleep troubles, difficulty concentrating, and other behavioral problems like tantrums or reverting to past behaviors (like bedwetting). If you see children struggling, reach out to the school’s

CONCLUSION

Transitioning learning online will initially be nerve-wrecking for all involved. Remind yourself that you are not alone in this new adventure. Reach out to your supportive network of other parents, friends, or teachers for help along the way. Be flexible and patient with yourself and children. We are all in this together!

Additional Resources

1. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (2020). Back to school planning: Checklists to guide parents, guardians, and caregivers. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/y5s42en4>
2. National Center for Learning Disabilities (2020). Parent’s guide to virtual learning: 4 actions to improve your child’s experience from the National Center for Learning Disabilities. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/tzvdcq>

administration to see what supportive services are available.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

There are valid concerns regarding how students with disabilities will navigate online learning. The first place to start is to discuss with your child’s school how special education services will be employed online (504 Plan) and then adjust the individualized education plan (IEP) to an online learning environment. Students with disabilities will need extra help in managing the less-structured nature of online learning, which is why posted schedules and reminders of the daily routine will be beneficial. Students will also benefit from individualized conferences between the student and teacher to help students stay engaged. Video-conferences will also help teachers to pick up verbal or non-verbal cues that the student needs extra assistance.



For General Health Information: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

TN COVID-19 Information: <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov.html>

TN Mental Health Hotline: 1-855-274-7471

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