

Home lab

As a young parent several years ago, I was constantly badgered with questions by my son. My husband, grandparents and me tried to answer them as best as we could. He learned to identify birds, animals and other things from those thick laminated books. He turned 3 and went to school and started his "learning." I saw him painstakingly join dots to write "A" and make straight lines and slanting lines. I forced him to do them perfectly, something I did not do when my daughter started school few years later. I remember remarking to my husband that our son's inquisitiveness had reduced and he is not "learning" anything new. His whats, whys, hows, and whens reduced, but luckily did not die.

Now, I wonder why parents are eager to send their kids back to school. **IF** you are stay-at-home parents or WFH parents, then consider this a blessing. Parents don't just feed, cloth, and vacation with kids. They are also teachers.

"Give the pupils something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking; learning naturally results," said John Dewey.

Convert your home into a lab. Nowadays there are thousands of mobile apps for everything. Download a night sky app (get a free one at first) show them the stars, constellations. You might have missed the NEOWISE comet but it is never too late to start. There is a whole universe out there to explore 😊.

Cook with your kids. Use fractions, addition and subtraction in the kitchen. Application in the real world, this is what it is. Exercise with them, run, walk, jog with them. If confined indoors follow some YouTube channel and do the same. Download Augmented Reality (AR) apps and do some fishing, or play with animals, walk through the galaxy, travel inside your body, brain, blood cells. Fascinating how technology has advanced.

Go outdoors if possible and start gardening. Show your kids how plants grow from the seed stage. You could use videos to fast forward things for them or to show the inner mechanisms. Teach them to identify climbers, tendrils, different types of flowers etc. You don't have to be an expert you can learn along with them.

Children learn more from who you are than from what you intentionally teach them. This is the time for some sincere and serious parenting. If you smoke, do it outside, not in front of them. If you drink, do it after they go to sleep.

Not attending school when the pandemic is still raging, will not put your child behind in their knowledge gain. People quote research saying that children will go behind 30-50% in Math or whatever. Pause and think. Who fixed those benchmarks? First and foremost, kids need to be healthy, and we need to be healthy to care for them. No point in education if they bring the disease home to you or their grandparents. Look broadly not through the lens of politics or economy.

Find ways to engage them, educate them and to keep the family safe and healthy. These are just y musings.