

Distance Learning Tips and Resources

by Lisa Mehta

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1. The most important focus is **SELF CARE**.

Here is a simple daily checklist to use as a guide throughout each day.

***EXERCISE AND SUN**

***HEALTHY FOOD AND WATER**

***FUN AND LAUGHTER**

***CONNECTION WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

***LEARNING**

***CREATIVITY**

***SLEEP**

Remember you are going to have some bad days and some good days and so is/are your child/children. It is totally normal and doesn't mean you are failing as a parent. Distance learning is TOUGH especially since we don't have the freedom of choice that we normally do.

2. Be a positive **ROLE MODEL**

Inevitably, working very closely with your child and seeing them struggle, will most likely trigger you. Be patient with them and yourself. Homeschooling is a learning opportunity for the parents to learn about yourself and relearn what you learned in school. You don't have to know everything and it is ok to make mistakes. Allow your child to explain and teach you. It will strengthen their understanding of the content. You are modeling how to handle challenges for your kids. Tell them a story about when you struggled.

3. Have a **MORNING ROUTINE**

As much as you can continue your regular morning routine. When you feel ready for the day even though you have nowhere to go, it will start you off on a positive step.

4. Create a **DAILY SCHEDULE** for your family.

Setting the expectations of the day helps kids feel more safe and grounded. As much as possible, make time visible. You can either schedule hour by hour or just make a list for things they need to get done to create a FLOW. Post it on the wall or fridge so you all can see. Enlist older kids to make a schedule for themselves. Set alarms for specific online class times. When your kids know what is next it gives them a sense of ease and security especially now.

5. How to handle **ACADEMICS**

a. If your child has recorded lessons, the amount of time that it might take for them to do the homework might be way less than you think because they are working at their own pace or way more than you think because they might need some extra scaffolding. Homeschoolers are not “in school” for 6 hours/day because typically work can be condensed.

b. If you can, keep the amount of schoolwork as reasonable as possible. We are all stressed and their brain might not be able to learn if they are in a fight flight or freeze mode.

c. Experiment with spending a little bit more time on high interest or challenging subjects. It is ok not to get to every subject each day. Use the gift of time to decrease overwhelm and allow child to find their own pace.

d. Set specific school hours. Talk with an older child and see what hours they are most alert and ready and if you can shift the school hours accordingly. Think outside normal school hours, especially for teens who might work better later in the day.

e. Try co working with your kids. Pour some herbal tea. Listen to some study music. Set a timer to do work together in the same room or table.

f. Start with 17 min and then work up to 27 min increments depending on child and work load if child is having a hard time getting started. Make the amount of time odd to make it fun! For younger kids, give them some fun activity to do with you while you get some work done. If they see you work, they will want to emulate you even if it is for 10 min. Use technology wisely and deliberately if you need extended amounts of work time. Include some educational documentaries or Youtube channels. I have listed some at the end.

g. If you have a close friend, switch kids for a little bit and help them with their homework online. It might be beneficial for kid and adult. Maybe you are a math wiz and your friend is a wonderful writer. Use each other’s strengths.

h. Allow your kids movement breaks while doing homework, especially if they have hours of online homework. Encourage student to be ACTIVE during class-take notes, draw pictures related to the subject or participate in conversation.

i. Set up a virtual study hall for your kids with their friends. The adults can take turns moderating, if needed. Have your older kids help your younger kids.

j. Work outside, if you can, or by a sunny window to take advantage of the sun and fresh air.

k. Use a daily to do list for daily tasks. Use a calendar to track events, tests, project due dates, etc.

l. Practice a "Set Up Routine"- Get everything you need out to get work started. Open the webpage, book page, get writing utensils, open notebooks, etc. beforehand so kids can sit down and get started right away.

m. For kids who are having a hard time getting started, ask "What is the next smallest task you could do right now?" Chunk the work down into more manageable tasks.

n. Let their teacher know if your child has too much homework and is struggling. Teachers are still trying to figure out how much work to give and how to adjust. They might appreciate the feedback.

o. Schedule time to check in with each child during the day regarding schoolwork. If you make it clear when you'll be available for help then they will have more patience (over time) to wait. You can check in more often during the day or in a big chunk of time one time a day.

6. **INHALE, EXHALE!** Allow yourself to be in the present moment. This is so cliché and SO important. When you are working with your kids they pick up your energy so staying as grounded and connected as possible is extremely helpful. See the top of the page for a self care checklist.

7. Use small intangible rewards (not bribes) to motivate when necessary. You can even play a song or have a quick dance party when they finish an assignment. Or even yell "YES, you did it! You rock!"

8. Show **CURIOSITY**: Take this time to get to know more about what your child is learning at school. What is he/she excited about learning? Why do they like it? What do you want to learn more about? Why do you like/don't like a specific

teacher? (Don't use this time to evaluate and judge their performance. Learn more about their experience)

9. Create a school space/hub. Establish a specific place for all of their papers, books, computer chargers, writing utensils, etc. for easy access and finding.

10. Draft technology agreements to use specifically during this time to decrease arguing and disconnection. We are all using tech more so it is important to pay attention to how you feel when you have been online a lot. Blue light from a screen also tires the eyes and can overload a sensitive brain.

11. Brainstorm a list of screen-free activities- Collect ideas from the whole family and post it somewhere so you can remember easily.

12. Allow your kids to be bored- Remember when we were kids how much time we had to be bored and what creative ideas came from it? This is the perfect time for your kids to have that same opportunity. Observe what they do with their time.

13. Create daily **ANCHORS** to help establish predictability: eat meals together, play a game together, go for walk, etc. at the same time each day.

14. Learn about something new and teach each other.

15. Start a **GRATITUDE** practice sometime during your day. It is even more important than ever to keep focused on what we have during this time.

16. Look at or watch old family photos and videos together.

17. Have a dance party or sing karaoke. Take turns picking the songs. Singing calms your vagus nerve which innervates all of your organs. If you are stressed it sends stress signals to your organs.

18. Start a family book club. Make a special drink and/or snack while you read and discuss the book. Or just create a screen-free family reading time.

19. Create a family music playlist so you can get to know each other's music preferences. Maybe you'll find common ground somewhere.

20. Play a song at the end of the day to signal the end of schoolwork.

21. Borrow audiobooks from the library. My kids love listening to books. Sometimes they listen intently and sometimes they play while listening.

22. Write in journals each day to help your kids process or uncover their feelings. It could be just writing what you did today, writing down words that come to mind, or writing about feelings. Make it as easy as possible for kids. Young kids can draw pictures daily.

YOU'VE GOT THIS!!!!

If you would like to get back to enjoying your child rather than managing them OR If your child needs help with time management, procrastination or needs effective study skills to work smarter rather than harder or more, please contact:

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RESOURCES

A. This is podcast has some really helpful insights on accepting kids where they are at and offers practical strategies to address differently wired kids.
<https://tiltparenting.com>

B. The Parent Footprint Podcast- I have learned so much as a parent and about my kids from this podcast. This has been my SEL curriculum.
<https://parentfootprint.com/podcast/>

C. Take a virtual tours of museums around the world.
[https://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours?
utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=social-share-
article&utm_content=20200313&fbclid=IwAR0pucXJJz-
kYz9HeSEYeNZvI9CY8H7EfRuHcmg1wijM34BTTEvYAeruC4](https://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=social-share-article&utm_content=20200313&fbclid=IwAR0pucXJJz-kYz9HeSEYeNZvI9CY8H7EfRuHcmg1wijM34BTTEvYAeruC4)

D. A list of educational Youtube channels.
<https://teachbesideme.com/30-best-educational-youtube-channels-to-supplement-your-teaching/>

E. For athletes, here are some discussion guides for sports movies. Invite teammates.
<https://devzone.positivecoach.org/browse/%22movie%20discussion%22>

F. Wonderful blog for book lists, board games and screen-free ideas.
<https://www.whatdowedoallday.com/>

G. I love the variety of crafts and coloring inspiration.
<https://www.redtedart.com/stuck-in-doors-guide-to-red-ted-art/>

H. Schools use this resource and we have too. You can print out the articles if your child needs a break from the screen. This can be a jumping off point for discussion or inquiry.
www.newsela.com

I. Find lesson plans from teachers around the country.
<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/>

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J. Source of critical thinking workbooks and apps. I love their resources.
<https://www.criticalthinking.com/>

K. Find hands on math activities here. I also love that she has some math related books. We have read the Sir Cumference series and done her accompanying activities. Reading and math-CHECK! CHECK!
<https://mathgeekmama.com/?s=sir+cumference>

L. Would you like your kids to be able to curate accurate information. Check out this website. You can also find guides to navigating tech with your kids and movie ratings.
<https://www.common sense media.org/blog/how-to-spot-fake-news-and-teach-kids-to-be-media-savvy>

M. Jo Boaler from Stanford has growth mindset based math resources.
<https://www.youcubed.org/week-inspirational-math/>

N. If you have an older child who is creative or a child who has a hard time taking notes in class, check out the skills of sketchnoting!
<https://www.verbaltovisual.com/sketchnoting/>

O. Her iPhone agreement letter to her son went viral. If you need some help navigating tech usage with your children, go here for tips and advice to start the conversation.
<https://www.janellburleyhofmann.com/>

P. This website specializes in online classes. We have taken many classes using this platform. The quality varies between teachers.
<https://outschool.com>

Q. You might be able to find something simple yet perfect for your child. I have used their graphic organizers to help my kids with organizing their ideas before they write. This is free until March 31.
<https://www.teachervision.com/subjects/language-arts-writing>

R. This particular blog page teaches kids different levels of thinking. You can use these questions when asking your child about what they read about or learned in school. Critical thinking and deeper levels of learning is so important to teach our kids.

<https://teachingmadepractical.com/questions-main-idea/>

S. If you want your kids to learn about how to cook and you don't want to teach them, check this out.

<https://kidscookrealfood.com/>

T. The Story of the World -This is an overview of history told as a story. My kids especially liked the first two periods. This is not a perfect history curriculum. I liked it for the story quality and main events reference. If you are a big history buff you might find inconsistencies.

<https://welltrainedmind.com/landing/story-of-the-world/?v=7516fd43adaa>

U. Free science videos

<https://mysterydoug.com/>

V. This website curates quality, thought-provoking videos. Definitely a wonderful use of screen time.

<https://thekidshouldseethis.com/>

W. For tips about teaching kids to learn to read. This company provides a lot of free resources that apply to ALL kinds of learners.

<https://resources.allaboutlearningpress.com/>

X. Logic of English curriculum Reading, writing, spelling curriculum.

<https://www.logicofenglish.com/>

Y. www.rainbowresource.com Company that provides homeschool curriculum. Great site to use to find new sources to research.

Z. www.homeschoolbuyerscoop.com A group buy sight for apps, programs and curriculum.

...if you need some resources for younger kids, contact me. There are a myriad of resources out there and sometimes it is overwhelming trying to choose which one is best. I am happy to share some that I have liked to give you a starting point.

