



Wee Learn



Wee Mentors (6+ years): Virtual Students Need Independence at Home

Sending kids back to school virtually can or will continue be a new challenge for students, teachers, and parents. How will my children handle virtual learning? Will they be able to log in and join the class on time? What if they don't do the work?

All this new access to student learning is bound to invite a new type of helicopter parenting. More like drone parenting: we have the technology to hover, survey and micromanage, now more than ever.

Strategies to Promote Independence During Virtual Learning:

Recognize the Benefits of Privacy. Parents have a choice here. Listen in, watch, and engage in the daily learning process or try to stay hand-off. When they talk during class and with their friends it is important not to listen all of the time. Let them have private conversations even if it leads to uncomfortable situations. These are the learning moments and taking that away from them may hinder their growth. The virtual spaces should be monitored by adults, so there is no need for us to monitor as well.

Track Learning With Parent Portals. This is where you may need to do a little research or contact someone at the school. Some, if not all online platforms have parent portals. The portals offer separate logins for parents so they can track their child's progress. It is better to login in as the parent rather than with the student's information because the parent portals are set up to show student progress and the student accounts are set up to support learning. Avoid the temptation to look through everything in the student portals. This will only lead to unnecessary involvement, again undermining the child's autonomy.

Let Teachers Handle Problems First. You are the parent, not the teacher. Teachers know how to manage large numbers of children. They know there will be kids who are late, kids who talk in class, and kids who don't turn in their homework on time. They have methods for helping students to be responsible. Allow your child to navigate this on their own and allow teachers to help them first. Failing a task is the best way for them to learn how to be responsible and the experience of overcoming the problem adds to their sense of achievement and boosts confidence. You may need to connect with their teachers to make sure they are aware of any problems.

Know When and How to Step In. Find out how it's going, ask them questions about how it is going (i.e., homework being done and handed in on time) If after a few times you notice this is not going well then it is time to step in. Second, check in with their teachers. Find out what they have noticed and if they have advice for next steps. Third, create a plan of accountability with your child. How will they remind themselves to do homework or get to meetings on time without your involvement? Talk with your child and come up with a plan they are willing to follow. Lastly, keep checking in and follow progress. Do not let the problem get out of hand.

Source: <https://bit.ly/3xzadZq>

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Celebrate! Virtual learning can be difficult and challenging for everyone involved. Let your child know you understand this and celebrate their successes. Recognize this is a trying situation and focus on what is going right instead of everything that is going wrong. The encouragement will go a long way to help them build confidence and learn resilience.

Above all remember, they have done it without you so far and that's a good thing. Schools inherently promote independence and parents need to put in the extra effort to replicate this. Your student does not need you to hold their hand all day at home. Believe in your child's ability to get through this school year and know that your school and teachers are doing their best to -help families through this. It will take the best efforts of us all.

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