



Wee Learn



Wee Mentors (6+ years): How Parents Can Help Their Kids While Managing Distance Learning

Many parents at the start of the pandemic have had to learn to become teachers, and they were not prepared for it. They felt overwhelmed, anxious, and scared at times. Here are some tips that can help parents and children manage and feel less stressed about distance learning:

Start with fun. Try to have some fun before you get started, this will help your child and yourself to be more relaxed and ready to start the day.

Build a routine. Kids do best when the world is predictable and refine them as needed. Think of them as provisional routines, which over time can become sturdy.

Trust the teachers. Your child's teacher is providing all they need. Teachers are trying to figure out the best system for doing this without overwhelming kids and their families. If a child is desperate for supplemental work, fine, but otherwise, stick to what the teachers require.

If you are stumped, turn it over to the teachers. Making sense of and then explaining concepts that parents (might have) learned 30 years ago could be impossible. This is the time for kids to contact their teachers and seek guidance and direction.

Take frequent ten-minute walks, without a phone. Managing kids and their schoolwork at home, sometimes while juggling a job, will be frustrating. It also may be boring, if possible, retreat to the outdoors and walk, unburdened by smartphones.

Remember to wait. Children take more time to process questions than adults might realize. You must pause and give them time to consider an answer and resist the urge to jump in giving them clues to get to the right answer. Being patient with a child's answer encourages thinking and builds confidence. Consciously waiting for kids to respond will also prevent parents from doing the work for them.

Stifle your own perfectionism. Maybe their letter 'e' looks kind of wonky or it took them a long time to figure out 4x8, stay positive, offer upbeat feedback with as much specific detail as possible not just a generic "good job" and the child will be more apt to keep practicing. Repetition will lead to improvement which will inspire intrinsic motivation.

Reinforce positively. Parents forget how powerful praise can be, it's the best way to motivate and teach. Being upbeat during a global crisis might be unnatural, especially when parents themselves feel like freaking out, but highlighting what's right works for kids.

Keep it low-key. It is fine if your child does not finish something, everyone is learning and adapting to distance learning, and there is something comforting to know that no child or parents are alone during these new times. Reach out to other families who are in the same boat as you or reach out to your child's teacher for support and guidance.

Parents recognize that fallout from the virus, including distance learning can be an adjustment for the whole family, it is important to support each other and keep the lines of communication open. Teamwork is the key to success in overcoming obstacles for distance learning.

Source: <https://bit.ly/32RXC55>

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