



Caring For and Supporting School Age Children This Fall

Tips for working with families and navigating challenges of remote learning.

- 1 Rules and expectations need to be clear.** Even with school-agers who have been attending your program for a while, it is important to spell out the “rules of the road” when it comes to schedules and breaks, hygiene, and behavior. You will have more buy in and compliance if your school agers and you generate the rules together. Make a written agreement with each child or youth.
- 2 Set up a dedicated, separate workspace area for your school agers.** Is it large enough and uncluttered? How good is the lighting? Does each school ager have a place to keep their school materials, perhaps a backpack or storage tub? Are there sufficient outlets for electronic devices?
- 3 Expand learning areas with materials to enrich the school curriculum.** This could include math and science materials, books, headphones with microphone, extension cords, and so on.
- 4 Build a partnership from the start with each child’s teacher and parents.** Have a virtual meeting or phone call with them.
- 5 Advocate for what you need.** Many school districts are supplying families with materials that they need for their children to succeed with remote learning. Speak up if you need chairs and desks, tablets, a hotspot, a headsets and microphones, etc.
- 6 Create a calendar to stay on track for each school age child.** The calendar could be on paper, on your phone, or on a whiteboard. Also, use a white board or cork board & write down everyone’s class call times. Have login information handy.



- 7** *To keep school agers motivated and healthy, both physically and mentally, build in breaks for them – a bare minimum of one hour daily.* They will need outdoor and active time. They will also benefit from chances to do music and movement activities, art, and age appropriate games and puzzles.
- 8** *During their school sessions, provide them with sensory materials to use to aid their concentration* – for instance, stress balls, putty, and squishy toys.
- 9** *Frequently check in with your school agers about their feelings.* This shows them that you care and gives them (and you) valuable information that makes it easier for them to focus on learning.
- 10** *Use rituals to mark the beginning and end of the “school” day.* A special badge or clothing may also help remind the school agers when they are and aren’t in school, with their differing expectations.
- 11** *Remember that every child is unique!* Their individual temperaments matter. So do their characteristic responses to stress. So do their ages – appropriate expectations for an eight-year-old will not work for a five-year-old.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Riley Children’s Health;

<https://www.rileychildrens.org/health-info/growth-development-6-11-years>

WA Kids Assessment, ages 6 through 12;

<https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/wakids/pubdocs/referenceguidefortheconnectionsofwakidsobjectives8x11.pdf>

Center for Youth Program Quality;

http://cypq.org/products_and_services/research

School’s Out Washington;

<https://www.schoolsoutwashington.org/>

SPS Fall Planning 2020;

https://www.seattleschools.org/district/calendars/news/what_s_new/planning_for_re-entry

Free downloads from BigLife Journal;

<https://biglifejournal.com/pages/freebies>

YOUTH PROGRAM QUALITY INITIATIVE (YPQI) - SAFE & SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

<https://bit.ly/31AwZCg>