

Supporting Learning @ Home

A guide for parents & guardians

We have all had the conversation; “What did you do at school today?”... “errr, nothing /not much/stuff/I played on the monkey bars”. As parents and educators, we know the challenges that young people face when thinking about their learning and we know how important seeing learning growth is to motivation.

What a learner does, and what a learner learns, are not always the same thing. As parents and guardians with young people and children now learning at home, we have the opportunity to help them be clear in what they are going to learn, give support and space when needed during learning, and reflect on and celebrate learning growth moving forward.

No matter their age, learners derive motivation and joy from seeing their learning growth. Whether that is through succeeding in putting their jumper on the right way round, constructing sentences in their own handwriting, solving simultaneous equations or creating a work of art; reflecting on the journey and seeing growth is a huge motivator.

And let's face it, in a viral pandemic, we need all the motivation we can get!

As a parent or guardian, we appreciate that you have your own challenges which are undoubtedly amplified at the moment. That might be working from home, losing or having a reduced income, caring for family, feeling the strain of the outside world on your own mental health and many other challenges. We get it. We are feeling it too.

That is why we wanted to make this quick guide to supporting your children's learning and curiosity at home. We are not guaranteeing there will be no strained conversations, temper tantrums (from guardians and children alike) or a miraculous love of learning, but we truly believe (based on many combined years as educators and guardians) that they might just help.

But First...

1

Home schooling is not the same as having children learn at home?

The school is still responsible for the learning of your children. They will do their best (and remember the teachers and school leaders are living through the same struggles as you) to provide a learning pathway for your children. We know you will do your best to support that.

2

Time, routines and wellbeing are different now.

With no school bells telling children when to move on to the next thing, routine can sometimes slip. This may sound basic, but remembering to build in a routine like getting dressed and brushing your teeth before school can be really useful in helping children shift their mindset to learning. (We are not too embarrassed to admit that we too have had video meetings in our pyjamas...). Also making time for play (outdoor if possible), exercise, eating and keeping hydrated may seem basic, but we know how the day can fly by (or drag for an eternity) and you realise as an adult you have not drunk enough water. Wellbeing is first...learning comes next.

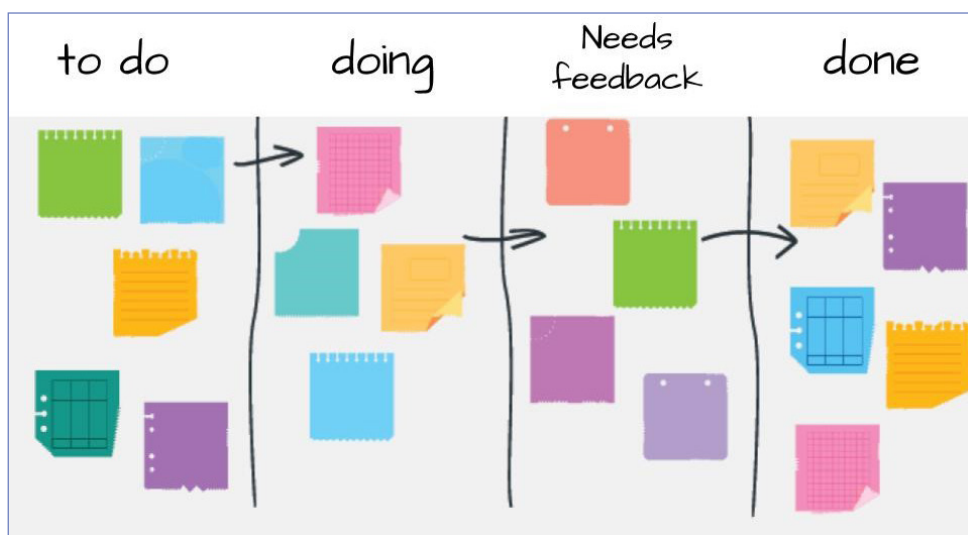
Top tips for helping children see their learning growth

1

Talk and plan

If you can, put aside 10 minutes at the start of the day to help set your child up for success. In that time you can:

- a. talk with your child about what they are going to learn that day. Not what they are going to do, but what they are going to learn. In school terms, we might call this “learning intentions” or “intended learning outcomes”.
- b. Help them to set learning goals for the day. Some of these goals may be around subjects (I am going to really focus on adding fractions today), skills (I am going to work on my handwriting) or behaviours (I am going to ask more questions today). So whether your child has frequent video calls with a teacher or whether they have big chunks of time working independently, they have a goal to work toward.
- c. Use a kanban board to create a “To do” “Doing” “Needs feedback” “Done” list (Google “simple kanban board” to find out more). This could be on a piece of paper, on a computer/tablet or on post-it notes. Spend some time at the start of the day creating the to do list of learning tasks and check in, when you can, to see if the learning tasks are progressing across the kanban board towards being done. You might also be able to help on the “needs feedback” tasks.



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2

Read the cues

Some children are constantly asking for help and others will even refuse the offer from their guardians. This is ok, but we really want to help our children get to the stage where they are willing to have a go at a learning task without needing help to get started and children who are also willing to ask for help when they get too stuck.

Full Brain!

When you are feeling like you can't focus, it may be because quite literally, your working memory is full. Working memory can generally hold between five and nine items (or chunks) of information at any one time. A simple approach to resetting your focus (or reducing the problem space in teacher nerd speak) is to break the problem or task down into parts. You might even step right away and reorganise the top drawer! This lightens the cognitive load, making learning more effective.

Our job is to read the cues; give space when they need it, support when they need it and, at times, just some hand holding and reassurance. Learning is an emotional process. Teachers in class are constantly juggling with this! We have a few tricks up our sleeves like the C3B4 ME rule: the child has to seek 3 other sources of help independently before they ask for help. This means they know they can get help, but they might try and figure out any struggles for themselves first.

Top tips for helping children see their learning growth

3 Reflect and celebrate

If you can, put aside 10 minutes at the start of the day to help set your child up for success. In that time you can:

- a. What was the most interesting thing you learned today? Can you teach it to me?
- b. What was the trickiest part of learning today? What could we do to make it less tricky?
- c. What questions do you still have from today that we can explore together or ask your teacher (or Google...)?
- d. What are you proudest of today? What did you do that you thought was really positive?
- e. How do you feel about learning today?

Most importantly, remember to celebrate learning. Whatever that learning is. And be kind to your children, their teachers and, importantly, yourself. We are all in this together and doing our best.

Best of luck!

