

STAYING HEALTHY

Tips for Virtual Learning

Jess Eaton M.S. | August 2020

ESTABLISH A ROUTINE



While this may only be a temporary situation, kids thrive on routines & knowing what to expect in life. Get ready in the morning just like you would a normal school day. Ring a bell or play a “pump up” song to signify the start of the school day.

Remember, your routine may be different than your neighbor’s or your routine last August. Do what works for you & your family during this time.

GIVE CHILDREN A SENSE OF CONTROL



Humans function better physically & emotionally when they have a sense of control over things in their lives. Help your children find areas in their life where they can have control & can make safe, reasonable choices during this uncertain time.

Even simple choices like deciding which room to study in or what fruit they want with their lunch can help reduce stress & provide hope. Furthermore, help them to set short term, achievable, & concrete goals to give kids something to work for & allow for a greater sense of agency. Empowerment is essential for our growing children.

GET MOVING



Movement & exercise have far reaching benefits for our mood & physical health. It can calm our nervous system during stressful times & enhance self-esteem.

Make recess or PE a requirement in your day. If its rainy, turn on the music & have a dance party in between classes. Even a little bit can go a long way.

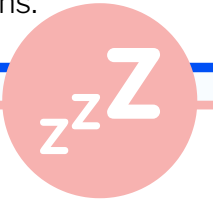
BE A ROLE MODEL



Our behaviors & attitudes influence how kids make sense of the world. They find balance from our stability. Engage in self-care. It will help your mental health but also show your children that is important to take care of oneself.

Show your kids that your attitude dictates how you react to setback & difficulty. Demonstrate to your kids that we can find ways to shine in difficult situations.

GET ENOUGH SLEEP



Your routine should include a consistent sleep schedule. Sleep helps mood, memory, & thinking skills, which are all essential to a successful school day.

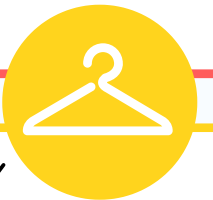
ALLOW FOR BOREDOM



While routine is good, don’t feel the pressure to plan every second of your child’s day. Allow for unscheduled time.

Creativity can flourish during moments of boredom. It can also give kids the chance to try something new & further empower them to make their own choices.

DRESS FOR YOUR DAY



Research suggests that simply getting dressed for your day can improve self-esteem & productivity, while giving you a sense of purpose!

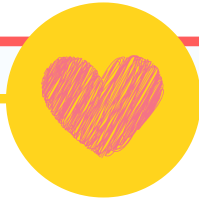
ACKNOWLEDGE THIS IS DIFFICULT



Help your children identify & validate emotions associated with this situation. Naming emotions makes them less powerful. Be present & reflect their feelings. This conveys empathy & helps your children feel understood. Let them know that you may feel the same way.

You don't need to "fix" them but simply nurture them. Acknowledge that feelings & this situation are temporary & changing. Perspective is powerful. Like almost everything, this too shall pass.

FOCUS ON OPTIMISM, KINDNESS, & GRATITUDE



While it sounds hokey, engaging in positive thinking, participating in acts of kindness, & focusing on gratitude have tremendous benefits for physical & mental health. Research shows that these three magic ingredients in life improve sleep, overall happiness levels, self-esteem, & brain functioning. These skills are both teachable & contagious!

SOCIALIZE DAILY & SAFELY



Satisfying relationships lead to happier, healthier, & longer lives, so it is important to maintain friendships during this time. Focus on strengthening quality relationships; in other words, focus on those friends who leave you feeling happy & peaceful.

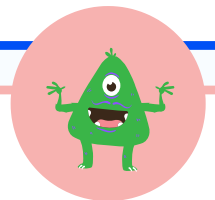
Get creative on ways to interact safely, whether it's through FaceTime or driveway distance gatherings. It is possible to socialize safely.



GO OUTSIDE





The simple act of being in nature can reduce anxiety & improve cognition. Have your children do their daily reading on the porch, take your dog on a walk, or simply lay in the grass for a short break in the day. Your brain & body will thank you.

BE SILLY & FIND THE FUN



Mary Poppins had it right when she said, "In every job that must be done, there is an element of fun!" Research supports that all people, not just kids, need fun, laughter, & play. Do what you can to elicit an extra smile or giggle each day, & I promise that everyone will benefit!

BACK TO SCHOOL CHECKLIST

-  Get back on a normal sleep schedule
-  Have a "family meeting" to discuss routines & expectations
-  Designate or set up a study area
-  Do something to build excitement related to the new school situation

