



## EMPLOYEE SERIES

### Tips for preparing your children for home schooling

As the COVID-19 pandemic has escalated, parents are now faced with the prospect of home schooling their children to prevent the spread of the virus and adhere to the social distancing requirements. Families need to adjust to these changes with parents now in a teaching role which could lead to some anxiety for parents and children. There are ways to relieve some of this stress and create a positive learning environment at home.

-  **Set up an adequate learning space.** Create an area within your home that can allow for your child to focus on learning with limited distractions. The advantage of having a learning area at home is that it can accommodate to your child's individual needs and preference to learning which cannot be allowed for in a school environment. Work with your child to decide what suits their individual needs best.
-  **Planning your child's learning.** Ensure you have the learning packages developed by your child's teacher so that it can be adapted to home learning. Keep in mind all children work at different paces and to different levels of achievement. Ensure you are being flexible with your child's current ability in terms of deadlines and timeframes for work to be completed.
-  **Be prepared with the technology needed for learning.** Check that your computer has the adequate programs to access the work that the school sends. This could include programs such as Adobe Acrobat Reader (this is free to download) or video players such as Adobe Flashplayer. If you come across programs that require a fee, you can check with your child's school if you can access the program under their license. Organisations are also offering some online programs and services at no cost during the COVID-19 period. Adobe is offering school IT administrators free access Creative Cloud facilities until May 2020.
-  **Educate yourself.** Check in with your children's school to ensure you have all the learning material needed. The learning material for each school year level is based on the Australian Curriculum. Information about the curriculum for each state within Australia can be found at the links listed on the last page of this document. It would be helpful to familiarize yourself with the relevant material for your children's year level.
-  **Set up rules and rewards together.** As your child would usually have rules and consequences in the school environment, it is important to incorporate guidelines for their behaviour in the home learning environment. Teachers also use rewards to help motivate children, which might be useful to incorporate as well to keep children enthused to learn.

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-  **Keep connected.** Ensure that your computer has access to teleconferencing programs, such as Zoom, Skype or Microsoft Teams for your children to use to connect to their teacher as well as peers. This might also be useful for you to utilize to open up communication with other parents to provide support to one another.
-  **Create structure and routine.** It is important to develop a school routine while completing schooling at home to ensure your child understands that they must complete work and this is not an extended school holiday. Aim to structure the day similar to the school's timetable as much as possible and incorporate regular breaks. Also remember all children work differently, some more autonomous and others needing more assistance.
-  **Allow your child space.** While it is important to support your children with their learning, make sure you also allow space for them to work independently to some degree as they would at school. If they become stuck on a part of their learning, work with them to find the answer instead of just telling them what the answer is. If your find your children struggling with a concept, try to take it a step back to ensure they understand the theory, for example if your child is completing fractions, make sure they understand division.
-  **Remember your role.** Don't lose sight of what your role is as a parent assisting your child with home learning, you are not his or her teacher. It is okay to not know the answer to some of the work your child is doing as you can use this time to help teach your child problem solving skills and team work to find the answer collaboratively.
-  **Be creative.** Allow some time for your child to be creative. Remember that school not just about reading, writing and solving mathematic problems, there are also subjects that allow children to play, build, design and discover. Make it part of your child's day to complete some activities that allow for this such as block play, arts and crafts, drawing, painting, sand play, pretend play, playing and listening to music, singing and dance. These activities will also help to break up the day for your child and yourself.
-  **Time outside.** Make sure that you and your child have some time outside of the home for fresh air and some sunlight. If it is safe to do so, go out for a walk to the local park or around your suburb. Otherwise, even 30 minutes outside in your back or front yard would be beneficial.
-  **Use positive thinking.** It is important to engage in positive thinking during this time to ensure that you are in a healthy mindset to support your child. Instead of thinking about the lack of control we all have during this time, look at this period of a unique opportunity to spend quality time with your child and the rest of your family.
-  **Take care of yourself.** Remember that your health and wellbeing is important during this time and keep up regular self-care practices and positive behaviours.

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## Fun educational home activities for children while home schooling

- Outside painting.** It's fun to do in your front or backyard but could also be done at the local park as a way to get out of the house. It is also far less messy outside!
- Photography.** Choose a photo theme every week (like birds, the ocean or a colour) and challenge the children how to think creatively about how to capture the theme in different ways
- Fun mathematics.** Use small items in the house to help teach your child mathematic skills such as food items or small toys to show your child addition or subtraction
- Reading activity.** For young children, write letters of the alphabet on sticky notes and ask your child to find objects in the house to place the stickies on that begin with that letter. For example, C for Couch
- Theme weeks.** Have days of the week that represent a certain theme such as “space week” this could be manifested in activities, education (facts about outer space) and games
- Writing short stories.** Ask your child to write a short story and then they could recite the story for the family after dinner. This will teach your child writing and public speaking skills;
- Cooking.** Incorporate cooking classes into their school timetable. This will allow children to have a break from book learning and get them moving around as well. This also helps take off the pressure of domestic duties for yourself – dinner sorted!
- Virtual “recess”.** Set up a time for your children to meet with their friends for morning tea online with the use of zoom or Microsoft teams. This will allow children to be connected to friends;
- Scavenger hunt.** If you have more than one child at home, you could create a scavenger hunt with a certain letter or theme such as find items in the house with the letter M or find items that were invented prior to 1990- this incorporates History as well!
- Science experiments.** There are simple science experiences that you can do at home to teach children about physics, chemistry or just to have a laugh! There are lots of examples of experiments that can be completed at home using household items on google;

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**Games.** Some children's games can be both fun and education! These include the following:

- Guess Who – Teaches children to ask questions and be inquisitive;
- Connect 4- Helps to teach young children how to count, strategy/planning and visual spatial skills;
- Monopoly: Starts to allow for children to think about money and budgeting. It also helps with mathematic skills – adding up costs and paying other players. It's also fun for the whole family!
- Scrabble- This game is all about spelling! This will help children to develop their vocabulary as they learn new words in a fun and interactive way;
- Trivial Pursuit- Children's knowledge in a variety of topics is tested as well as learning new information;
- Pictionary- As this game requires you to draw various pictures, it helps develop artistic skills as well as problem solving skills within a time limited space as the players need to guess what the picture is before the timer goes off;
- Game of Life: Teaches children various life skills and starts to help children think about their future life and career;
- Lego: The use of blocks to design various objects is beneficial for children to develop their visual spatial skills and fine motor skills.



References: WA Department of Education: <https://www.education.wa.edu.au/learning-at-home/learning-environment>, The home school hustle -David Roy - Lecture in Education at the University of Newcastle <https://2ser.com/the-homeschool-hustle/>, and Government of Western Australian- Western Australian Curriculum <https://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/teaching/curriculum-browser>, National Geographic: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/family/in-the-news/homeschooling-tips-coronavirus-shutdown/>

**Individual curriculums for each Australian state:**

**Australian Capital Territory:**

<https://www.education.act.gov.au/public-school-life/Our-Curriculum>

**New South Wales:**

<https://www.educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/understanding-the-curriculum/curriculum-syllabuses-NSW>

**Northern Territory:**

<https://nt.gov.au/learning/primary-and-secondary-students/nt-school-curriculum>

**Queensland:**

<https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/p-10/qld-curriculum>

**South Australia:**

<https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/education-and-learning/curriculum-and-learning/south-australian-curriculum>

**Tasmania:**

<https://www.education.tas.gov.au/students/school-and-colleges/curriculum/>

**Victoria:**

<https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au>

**Western Australia:**

<https://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/teaching/curriculum-browser>.

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