

5 homeschooling tips to help your child learn during quarantine

March 20 2020, by David Roy



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A [number of schools](#) in Australia [have shut](#) after students and staff tested positive for COVID-19. And [some private schools](#) have moved to online classes pre-emptively.

Many [parents are keeping their children home](#) as a precaution for various reasons. Attendance in schools has fallen, by as [much as 50% in some](#).

The [current medical advice](#) is for schools to remain open and for children to go to [school](#), unless they are unwell. But if your [child](#) is staying [home](#) from school, you may be wondering how you can support their learning.

Here are some things you can do to help your child learn from home.

1. Set up a learning space

Create an area in the house for your child to be able to focus on learning. There are no clear guidelines on what a learning area should look like. In fact schools have found creating [learning areas or spaces](#) to be a challenge. This is because every child has individual ways of learning, so what works for one may not work for another.

Home learning has an advantage in that it can cater to the individual child. As long as the student can focus and be safe, there are no limits to where the learning can take place. Feel free to allow [children different places to learn](#), whether lying on the ground or sitting at a table—whatever works best for them.

But try to limit distractions. Turning the TV off and switching off app notifications will help.

2. Think about the technology you'll need

It's worth checking what programs you will need to access the work the school send. You may need [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) (which is free) or

any specific video players such as [Abode Flashplayer](#).

If they are not free, it's worth checking if the school has a shared license or access package you can use. Companies are offering some [online programs and services free](#) during the COVID-19 period. Adobe, for instance, is [offering school IT administrators free access](#) to its Creative Cloud facilities until May 2020.

You may also need to download teleconferencing facilities such as [Zoom](#) or [Skype](#) that teachers may use to deliver lessons. These are free, but make sure you are downloading from the official developers, as some other sites may expose your computer to malware.

3. Create a structure

Make sure your children do not just see this as an extended holiday but as normal school, from home. It's important to create a structure.

Mainstream schools have a timetabled structure throughout the week, so rather than disrupting your child's routine, you might wish to follow your child's school routine.

There is no specific time students should spend studying however, given different students of different ages will complete tasks and grasp concepts at different rates.

The advice is to aim for the time frames provided by the schools, and then be flexible depending on how your child is progressing.

Communication is key. Keep checking in with your children as to how they are progressing, offering help as they feel they need it.

This is how teachers work continually throughout the day with the 20 to

30 children in their classroom.

We all need to process new learning so allow children time to relax between learning periods. But there are no hard and fast rules over how many breaks they should have or how long these should be. Research shows [giving children freedom](#) to choose how they learn, and how long for, can increase their motivation.

4. Get to know what your child should know

If your child's school has moved to online learning, as a supervising adult you will be more a teacher's aide or facilitator rather than a replacement teacher. It's likely schools will provide learning materials, although some may not if the school is still open and your child is staying home for other reasons. It's worth checking with the school, either way.

For each year level schools apply their state mandated curriculum based on the [Australian Curriculum](#) to create a year long program of work. Any work sent home by the school will be based on the appropriate age and stage of the curriculum to ensure students maintain their progression.

This is key, in particular, for year 11 and 12 students who must maintain focus on their studies for the end of year exams.

It can be useful to know why schools choose certain types of work for students to do. So you may wish to browse through the state and territory curriculum documents ([NSW](#), [VIC](#), [WA](#), [SA](#), [ACT](#), [NT](#), [TAS](#) and [QLD](#))

Key to understanding these sometimes confusing and complex documents is looking for [outcomes](#) and indicators—such as this for [year 5 English](#). You can find all of this information in the relevant [year level and subject category](#).

Outcomes are, in simplest form, the goal a child is to achieve at a certain level. Indicators are the suggested ways your child will show their achievements.

All aspects of the Australian Curriculum can be [downloaded](#) as required. States and territory regulators offer guides to understand each curriculum, such as [Victoria](#).

5. Be around to help, but don't get in the way

States and territories are putting [supporting information](#) online for how the parents can be a teacher's guide and facilitator.

If your child is finding a particular task difficult, be available to make suggestions and [answer questions](#), but try to let them do things themselves as much as possible.

If you don't know the answer, work with your child to discover a solution. Let your child, where possible, [self regulate](#) – that is to take control of their own learning and not rely on you.

You may need to take your child back a step to reinforce a concept before they move onto a new one. An example might be in long division, where reinforcing decimal points, or even subtraction, needs to be revised first.

If all else fails...

There are many online support activities for children learning from home. Where possible try to only use those from official education authorities. The NSW home schooling regulator ([NESA](#)) has published some links for home schooling families, that anyone can use.

If you are lost in what to do, then encourage your child to read. Model reading, get your children books and discuss them. Developing a love for reading in your [children](#) will help them in all learning areas, no matter how long they don't physically go into school.

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