

10 QUICK TIPS TO HELP YOU FACILITATE YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING AT HOME



1. SURVEY THE LANDSCAPE

Start by talking to your children about their current workload from school to figure out where they are with their work. There is no point spoon feeding them something they can do with ease or pushing them to complete a task they are clearly struggling to understand.

2. SET A LEARNING OBJECTIVE

When supporting your kid to grasp or recap on a school topic, it is helpful to have a clear learning objective before you start. This helps you and your children stay on track and know when you've arrived at your destination, so you don't end up flogging a dead horse. Having said that, if your children expresses deeper interest in a particular subject, by all means gather extra resources and encourage them to learn more about it.

3. ENGAGE AND COACH, DON'T TEACH

Tease out what your children know by asking questions and take it from there. This minimises the power struggle and also shows that you respect their minds and trust that they have something to contribute. You won't know how much they know unless you ask.

Use your knowledge of how your children learn best to create an exciting and personalised programme. Different people, children or not, learn best by different methods or a combination thereof: some learn best by touching things (kinaesthetic learners), some like to listen (auditory learners), whilst others prefer to read

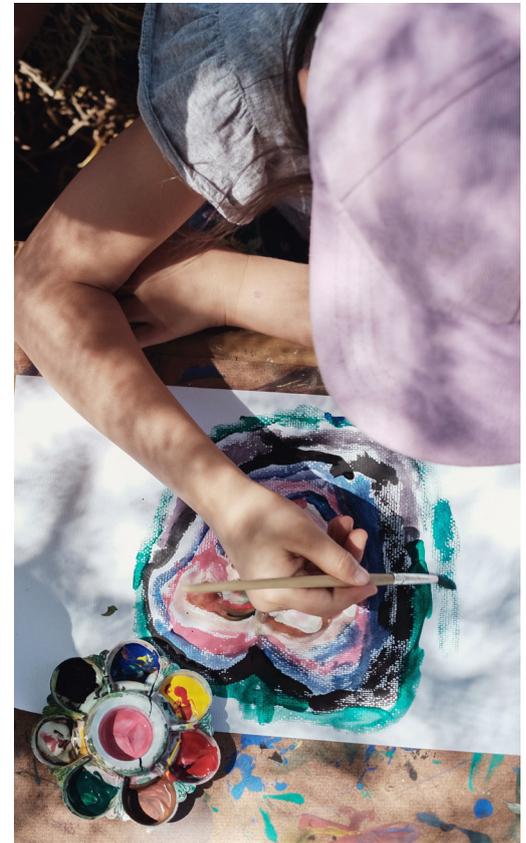
(theoretic learners) or to visualise what they are learning (visual learners). If you don't know which your children prefer, create a combination of video clips, short excerpts, games, pictures, songs and films to introduce a new topic. The variety will help you discover which kind of learners they are and set you up for success in the future.

4. LIGHT UP THE SPARK WITH A GOOD TOPIC INTRO

Present new topics as a challenge or a problem to solve and give your children time to figure it out themselves. Use various illustrations, metaphors or physical representations. For example, you could use Lego to introduce perimeters or cutting cupcakes to introduce fractions.

Keep your explanation of new topics brief and ask questions to tease out what they already know about the topic (I can't stress enough that asking is the best way to find out).

Use a variety of sources to make your point, but for schoolwork start with the sources or workbooks given by the school to ensure you stay in line with the curriculum and pitch the information at the right level. If they get it right away, add complexity until they surpass the knowledge or skill objective. Source your introductory videos ahead of time and make a playlist. This saves you time during the lesson and keeps your children focused on their studies. Check that they understand the topic by asking them to narrate what they've learnt, then fill in the gaps yourself.



5. MAKE LEARNING FUN WITH CREATIVE EXPRESSION

The secret sauce to making academic work fun is sprinkling in a good dose of creative or practical application to capture the child's interpretation of what he/she has learnt. The list of learning application activities/projects to choose from is endless; you could get your child to act, build, code, draw, design, investigate, model, paint, sculpt, sew, write and much more). Draw from their interests to decide on the medium. The trick is to keep the task simple, achievable for their age and within a realistic timeframe. Unless it is part of their independent work, 45 minutes to an hour is enough time for a project. Your key role for creative sessions is to provide the guidelines, the resources and the right atmosphere. Then step back, go do your work and watch them get into flow. Once it's done try to focus your feedback on their effort and not the outcome to encourage a growth mindset.

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6. MANAGE THE SCREEN-TIME RABBIT HOLE

Unless your children are extremely disciplined and self-controlled, manage their access to the internet during school-work time. It's a never-ending rabbit hole, even when begun with the best intentions. One way you could do this as mentioned above, is to prepare your learning resources on a play list, folder or print out ahead of time, set time limits research or inputting work into google classroom and other school-work portals.

7. TURN ON THE ENCHANTMENT

The advantage of working from home for adults and children is being around your creature comforts. Nobody knows how to offer those comforts in the magical and timely way better than parents and caregivers. So, take advantage of how well you know your children and offer them something to warm their hearts as they slog away. Bring in hot drinks and snacks or let them listen to music if it doesn't distract them. Punctuate the frustrations with movement breaks and good humour. Have rewards and treats dangling at the end of each day.

At the same time as the above, be cautious about not overdoing it. Being in a familiar environment is a double-edged sword that can be as distracting as it is comforting.

8. KEEP THE SESSIONS SHORT AND SWEET!

Keep desk work short to avoid boredom and frustrations. School subjects are often kept within 40-55 minutes, so it might be worth using that as your baseline depending on age.

Try to limit your formal learning per day to no more than 3 or 4 hours depending on their age

(much lower for your much younger children). A good guide would be to have an hour each for Maths, English and an in-depth topic study, with extra time in the afternoon for creative expression opportunities.

9. DISPLAY THEIR WORK

Make them feel proud by displaying their best work on a wall or display folder. You could also share their work, with permission of course, with friends or make a narrative of it on social media. I often use Instagram to reflect or capture significant moments or milestones in my son's learning journey. I also use it to make sense of my learning or the lessons we had both learnt. I have captured some of these narratives as examples, on my insta stories on the website.

10. CARPE DIEM! OWN YOUR SCHEDULE

Ultimately, you as a parent or caregiver are responsible for managing the temperature in your home. Do not allow, with the best intentions, the demands of work, school, tutors and various do-gooders offering free virtual activities for your children to control how you and your child (ren) live in your home. Bear in mind what is ultimately important to you and your family during these difficult times.

Make time for rest, reflection and being present.

Take control of your daily schedule. Create a schedule that flows with rhythm of your family' values. Your schedule should take into consideration the demands of your entire family not just your children's learning. Try to reconcile your children' activities with your work, caring for relatives and friends as well as family bonding or downtime. These are critical and unprecedented times, with heavy thoughts weighing on our minds. Whilst it is important to do our best to protect

our children's hearts from said prevailing fears, it is also important that we let them know this is a historic moment in their lives and therefore some things have to wait.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Finally, in case it hasn't dawned on you yet, now that you are home with your family full time, the housework will be endless. Plan ahead for it. Get the family involved and don't underestimate it. If nothing else gives you permission to slow down and skip some children or social media activities, this should. It is perfectly OK to let your children play or have free time especially in the afternoon whilst you take some much needed time to recalibrate or catch up with work. This is why free time, nap time (for younger children) and early bedtimes are a must.

ABOUT HOMEGROWN SONSHINE

Homegrown Sunshine™ is a London based home education consultancy dedicated to helping parents new to home education navigate and craft their unique home learning journeys, with confidence, peace and ease.

We offer a rich menu of inspiring content, learning resources, events and personal coaching service to help parents design wholesome and well-rounded curricula that educate the whole child for the future.

Our vision is to inspire and support parents and caregivers to be intentional in raising considerate, confident, creative and well-rounded future leaders from the comfort and safety of their homes.

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