

Free!

Homeschool Survival Guide



Just 10
tips
...
you've
got this!!!

Dear Parent(s),

I always say that no one likes change but a wet baby. And here we all are, dealing with HUGE changes in our lives. We are all trying to find our way through a maze of uncertainty.

I am a teacher with many years of experience. Here is my best advice on how to make the homeschool experience manageable and pleasant for both you and your child(ren).

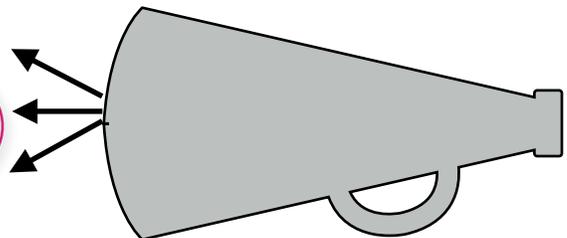
**First,
Breathe!**



Yes, breathe. Remember, first and foremost, our children are watching. They are studying how we are handling the day-to-day of Coronavirus and learning from us how to navigate through stressful situations. So, stay calm...you've got this!

As you are planning how to homeschool, be aware that what educational research tells us is that in typical situations,

a child's attention span
= AGE + 1



So, if your child is 7 years old, you have about 8 minutes for them to sit still and pay attention to something you want them to learn.

2.

Their attention span is longer for things they select, so one key to success is to hide the learning behind some fun. For example, if you are struggling to get your third grader to do a worksheet of math problems, allow them to take some colored chalk outside and solve them on the sidewalk. Sometimes a simple shift in location can help.

3.

Speaking of location, ask your child to help you select a special spot in your home. Make it his/her “**Investigation Station**”. It doesn’t need to be big, but this should be a spot where you can see and supervise if needed. It should have good light. When your child is settled in here, turn off the TV, radio, gaming systems. Be present and involved; the message you send when you are close by is that this is important.

4.

See if you can find a small box or a shoe box. Allow your child to decorate it and personalize it. This is “**Supply Central**”. Fill it with paper, pencils, a small pencil sharpener, scissors, glue stick, crayons/markers/colored pencils. The advantage to having supplies on hand is that it reduces the “Mom, I don’t have ...” or “Dad, I can’t find...” moments that interrupt the learning. If you have fewer than 10-15 minutes of attention span, you want to be able to maximize those moments.

5.

Another good idea is to have a small lunch bag that is filled with the snacks for the day. We all like nibbles, so find some **healthy** things that your child likes to eat and

a bottle of water. **NOTE:** Nothing nourishes the brain better than water! These are the snacks for the day... when the snacks are gone, that is it for the day. I promise, if you don't provide more the first time your child eats them all by 10:30 a.m., your child will figure it out. Keep in mind that they don't have access to random food all day while they are in school, so they'll survive.

6. Is your child driving you crazy asking 100 questions about the work? Here is my solution. At the beginning of each day, give them 10 pennies, or 10 Goldfish® crackers, or 10 M&Ms®; it doesn't matter what you choose, but it needs to be something your child likes. Each time they ask a schoolwork question, they have to turn one over to you. At the end of the day, they can have whatever pennies or crackers or candies are left.

7. Chunk the work. The goal is for you to enjoy this time with your child and for your child to have a special memory of that time in 2020 when school moved home. Rather than have a crying child and an angry parent, take the 30 spelling words or the fifteen math problems and divide them into small segments of five. Do five and take a break. When the five problems are completed, give lots of praise. No opinion is more important to your child than yours... even if they tell you otherwise!

8. I like to rely on the research, and it tells us to alternate active and quiet activities. So, when your child gets fidgety and it is time to take a break, take one! Go outside for a quick walk or a few jumping jacks. The giggles are healthy!



9.

Relax and celebrate this time you've been given with your child; they will be grown before you know it! Here are some fun ways to sneak in some learning:

- Pick a chapter book and read it together. Stop to ask questions, talk about how the characters are feeling, predict what might happen next. Ask your child to explain his/her answers.
- Get out in the kitchen and bake cookies or a cake together. Cooking is a great way to sneak in some math: measurement, fractions, greater than/less than.
- Making clay or slime to play with also makes some precious memories.
- Go outdoors! Have a backyard scavenger hunt. Search for three different leaves, a long stick and a short stick, four different shapes of leaves, something orange, a weed, a bug, something square, an abandoned nest, a spider web...you get the idea.
- Watch a cartoon or a movie together. Make it a time to talk to your child. Stop the movie periodically to talk about what is happening, discuss the characters, think of possible solutions to the problem the characters are having. Share some popcorn and snuggle...priceless!

10.

Reach out if you need help. Your child's teacher is a person who loves your child almost as much as you do. They want you and your child to be successful. So now...

Just Breathe!

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Jennifer C. Walts