



Get Ready for School Reading Tips and More for Parents

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, parents have become more involved with their child's education than ever before. They have had to become partners with their child's teachers as remote learning from home was implemented. As the school year begins, here are some tips to help parents prepare and support their child's readiness for learning whether that learning will take place in a school or home environment.

- **Rest and Nutrition** is essential. A set bedtime schedule and nutritious meals will help your child feel rested, alert and ready to learn.
- **Reestablish a Routine** that will help your child adjust to a full-day schedule if they will be reentering the school environment, or set a daily routine schedule at home similar to the one followed at school. Setting a consistent time for your child to wake-up in the morning, dress, eat breakfast, and given tasks to perform, adds a structure to their day similar to the schedule followed at school
- **Establish Good Hygiene Habits** to follow at home or school. Teach your child to wash their hands frequently throughout the day for 20 seconds (about the time it takes to sing the Happy Birthday song). If your child returns to school, since you will not be there to remind them to wash their hands, you need to emphasize why it is important to do so and remind your child not to touch their face, especially their nose, mouth and eyes.
- **Talk to Your Child** about how they feel about returning to a school setting or continuing with remote learning from home. Develop strategies that will help your child cope with anxiety and fears that may arise when returning to school, or result from learning at home and not being able to socialize with their classmates. Teach your child to practice deep breathing techniques when they feel anxious, or to visualize pleasant images in their mind of being with family, friends or a favorite pet.
- **Practice Strategies with Your Child to Develop Active Listening Skills** to avoid the many distractions encountered if they return to the classroom where paying attention and listening is harder than in a one-to-one learning setting at home. Back in school with teachers and classmates, your child will need to make eye contact, listen to others and not interrupt. Play the Telephone Game, Simon Says or similar games and activities that will help develop your child's listening and attention skills.

- **Set Learning Goals** by discussing with your child what he or she would like to accomplish during the upcoming school year. Setting goals helps them develop the valuable skill of goal setting. For example, if your child struggles with reading fluently, discuss how you can work together on specific strategies to help them become a more fluent reader such as reading the same books over and over again.
- **Stay in Touch with Your Child's Teachers** so that you can ask questions about your child's progress and receive guidance on how to best support their learning whether it is at home or in the classroom, and stay informed with changes that impact schools remaining closed or reopening. Staying in touch with parent and community groups is also an excellent way to support one another with home schooling.
- **Have Books Everywhere to Emphasize Reading** is important. Reading is the foundational skill needed for everything your child will do, even math! Making books a part of everyday activities adds to your child being familiar with books and encourages everyday reading. Entice your child to read by having a large selection of books and magazines at their reading level throughout the home, in the car, and ready to take everywhere.
- **Create a Cozy Reading Area** in your home for you and your child to read together that is distraction free where your child can concentrate and you can help him or her practice reading. Practice reinforces a positive attitude and enjoyment for reading. Devote 20 to 40 minutes each day to family reading time. The more practice your child has reading, the better reader he or she will become. Reading builds verbal, listening, and creative skills, which are important for academic success.
- **Be Patient, Encouraging and Supportive** when reading with your child so that he or she never feels embarrassed or ashamed to read with you. Select books that are at your child's reading level so that they experience success. Usually 5 + mistakes made by the reader on one page indicates the book is too hard, and no mistakes or only one mistake per page that it is too easy. Make sure to praise your child when they are able to sound out a difficult word, self-corrects, re-reads a sentence, asks questions or makes comments while reading.
- **Take Advantage of Your Local Virtual Public Library Services** to check out e-books, videos, audio books, online story times, free homework tutorial programing, etc., to enhance your child's learning experience at school, as well as develop and nurture their love and enjoyment of books and reading during leisure time at home.
- **Most Importantly Tell Your Child** often how much you enjoy reading with him or her. Your attention lets them know **they are loved and special!**