

Starting a Distance Learning Routine can be stressful. Here are some tips for how you can set up your family for success!

Set up a positive learning environment for your Distance Learning routine:

Thinking about how to manage your family's Distance Learning activities can be overwhelming. Sometimes, just thinking about how to get started can get you off track and make it difficult to get things accomplished. Having a plan can reduce a lot of your worries, help everyone stay focused and give you a little extra free time to enjoy during your child's days away from school.

*If your family already has a good homework routine, you can tap into those strategies to help manage your child's distance learning activities. An important piece of your plan should be to set up a **routine** and stick to it! The second part will be to set some **goals and incentives** for your children as they manage these new expectations.*

Plan Your Routine:

It will be easier to get things completed when you have a planned routine to follow. This will make the work time go smoothly. It will also help your child feel comfortable and happy because it will feel like having a daily routine at school. Having a sense of order and knowing what to expect can help everyone stay calm, too.

1. Decide **where the children are going to work**. The location you select will depend on each child's learning style and the space your family has available. Think about where each person works best. Ask your child some questions: *Where do you work best? Do you need a quiet space? Do you work better with others or where someone is there to help you? Where is there space for you to get your work done?* Parents and children should talk together about the pros and cons of the options that are available. Then decide together about the best workspace.
2. Make a "**Distance Learning Center**" to keep all your learning materials. Fill your center with supplies the children will need to do their learning assignments. Examples: pens, pencils, markers, rulers, scissors, paper, calculator, etc. You can have the children decorate a shoebox or other container to hold the supplies. A bin or crate would also work well to store the materials the teachers sent home. Some students may like to keep a calendar in their Distance Learning Center to keep track of their daily work or any long-term assignments that may have been given. It is always a good idea to organize the materials every day. That way you can avoid having the materials become too distracting or cluttered.
3. **Set a work time** and stick to it. It helps to get into the habit of doing schoolwork at the same time every day. Plan it out. It will help if children don't

stay up too late or sleep in more than they would during a regular school day. Many children work best in the morning. The later it gets, the more tired a child becomes, and the work will probably take longer to complete.

4. **Set a daily schedule.** If possible, help your child review the assignments and make sure your child understands the directions. Follow the teacher's suggestion about how much time to spend on the assignment/activity. If your child is struggling to complete the assignment/activity, simply reach out to the teacher. Your teacher can give you suggestions for ways to modify the assignment, if needed.

Build Motivation by Setting Goals and Incentives

It may be difficult for children to put consistent effort into their schoolwork when trying to keep up with the demands of their changed routine. Some children will respond to setting personal goals to help them monitor their work completion. This can be as simple as: "I will complete my math assignment every day this week." Or "I will spend 15 minutes reading each day." Or "I will get my most challenging work done before doing my favorite activities."

Having something to look forward to when the work is completed can be a powerful incentive to get things done.

Incentives can be as simple as having a **scheduled break** after each assignment or after a designated amount of work time. This can be a snack break, wiggle break, dance party – anything that gives your child a chance to have some down time. Ask your child for insight about what works best.

Another simple incentive is to allow your child to have **choices** throughout the daily routine. Choices about the order of work completion, what to do during a scheduled break, the materials they use or even where they sit are simple ways to help your child feel empowered.

Celebrate when the work is done! You can easily incorporate fun activities to do when the day's assignments are completed. Children may enjoy earning a little extra screen time, contacting a friend or playing a game. It doesn't have to be complicated to be motivating.

These are difficult times for adults and children. Having such a drastic change in the routine can add additional stress for everyone.

Remember to include P. D. F. as part of your planned routine for the days ahead. **P = Play Time; D = Down Time; F = Family Time.** Include these things for everyone – including yourself!