

RESOURCES FOR KIDS

Are your kids also "working from home?" Here are some resources that can help.

If you're a parent, you know that keeping kids engaged and excited about learning can sometimes be a difficult prospect, even under normal conditions. But as schools across Canada close to help stop the spread of COVID-19, the task of keeping your kids motivated to learn likely feels even more daunting.

There are no perfect solutions. If you are looking for resources that will keep your child occupied while you work from home, we have some tips that can help you manage your child's learning during this time.

Re-orient your perspective

Here are some tips to take care of yourself while managing your workload and the added responsibility of your child's learning.

Be understanding

Both you and your child are in uncharted territory. It's important to be gentle with them as they adjust to a different learning experience, but it's also important to be gentle with yourself. You will not become a teacher overnight. And that's okay. Focus on keeping your child engaged and eager to learn while you both try your best to adjust to your new normal.

Be flexible

You will have to adjust the way you work during this time. Spending valuable learning time with your child during your lunch break can be one option to manage your child's learning needs. Another alternative if you have a co-parent is to switch off responsibility for watching the kids throughout the day or on alternate days.

Plan for learning

There will inevitably be interruptions to your day. Accounting for periods of time where you will need to be focused on your child can help you plan around your work schedule and ensure that you're giving your child your full attention.

Adjust as you go along

In line with being flexible, recognizing that something you start out doing isn't working anymore can be helpful in managing the situation. A major consideration are screen time rules. You may find that loosening the rules here can help everyone manage the situation better. Or, you may find that your child needs more of our attention than you previously planned for. Making adjustments as you go along will help you make the most of this uncertain situation.

Manage your child's learning

Every child is different, but these are some ways to balance your child's learning needs with your work responsibilities.

Establish a routine

Try to maintain their previous morning routine to give your child some semblance of normality. Even if it doesn't match exactly, make time for breakfast and have them get dressed every day. A routine that they recognize can be useful to remind your child that you are also still going to work. This can be accompanied by an explanation that even though it looks different, you are still "at work."

Schedule their (and your) time

Your child is used to a schedule at school, so one way to signal that this isn't a *total* vacation is to set a schedule at home. Let older kids draft their own schedules and work with younger kids to come up with a plan that reflects their interests and learning styles.

A schedule is also a helpful way to set expectations. It can help communicate screen time parameters and account for any deadlines set by your child's school. For older kids, a schedule also gives everyone enough structure so that they can hold questions until they know you are available.

Have a dedicated space for learning

Much like the advice for new remote workers, setting up a well-stocked, dedicated space for learning can help your child get into the right mindset for more academic activities.

Encourage autonomy

Remember that everyone is adjusting to being home. Giving your child — especially older ones — a level of autonomy will help them feel like they have control over their lives. It's also a great learning experience. Something like letting kids prepare their own lunch can teach valuable life skills. Independent learning and problem-solving are two other important life skills that you can foster during this time; loosening learning expectations and letting your child pursue one of their interests can go a long way towards instilling in your child a sense of inquisitiveness that will be valuable for the rest of their lives.

Follow the curriculum

Take a cue from your child's teachers. Have your child complete homework that has been assigned to them. Take advantage of online resources that your child's teachers have provided or that they have access to through the school's subscription.

You can also find curriculum expectations for many provinces online (search: “[province] grade [number] curriculum”). Don’t worry about trying to teach your child according to the expectations laid out in the curriculum, but use the learning expectations as inspiration for new activities.

Get active

To help kids use up some of their energy, help them get active. If feasible and safe, encourage them to go outside and explore. If staying in, consider online exercise classes aimed at kids such as [P.E. With Joe](#) or yoga videos with [Cosmic Kids](#).

Learning Resources

Remember: depending on how old your child is, their ability to sit and work on schoolwork is far below your ability to sit at your computer and work all day. Short bursts of productive time are the name of the game.

Fill the day with a variety of activities for your child. [Child-led learning](#) can be a valuable concept to explore during this time; encouraging a love of learning by providing many opportunities for your child to try something new or pursue an interest is one way to make the most of the situation.

Baking is a great example of an out-of-the-box learning opportunity for kids. It teaches fractions, gives your child an opportunity to work on following instructions and produces a yummy snack at the end of it. Other activities that work different muscles include arts and craft, outdoor exploration and creating a comic.

There are also many online resources that can help keep your children engaged and learning. Here’s a very partial list of the resources out there.

- Check out the free resources available through your local library.
- Find local parenting pages on Facebook, many of which have active communities for sharing resources.
- For even more ideas, check out [sample learning from home schedules](#) from HuffPost.
- [Scholastic Learn at Home](#) offers free learning resources in weekly installments for multiple learning levels.
- [Tech for Learners](#) provides a searchable list of products and services offered by EdTech companies.
- [YouTube Learning](#) has gathered educational resources in one place.
- A number of paid resources have made their products available for free for students during this time, including [Audible](#) and [Adobe Creative Cloud](#).
- Many Canadian media companies have educational resources available for kids. These include:

- CBC's educational streaming platform curio.ca is now free for families.
- [The National Film Board of Canada](#) has an education section that provides lesson plans and film playlists for older students.
- You can also check out provincial kids television channels for their educational resources: [TVOKids](#) from Ontario, [Télé-Québec Coucou](#), and [Knowledge: Kids](#) from British Columbia.

Many other institutions are offering free content to keep your kids entertained. Here are a few ideas:

- Canadian children's authors and illustrators are [sharing their work online](#).
- The [Cincinnati Zoo](#) posts videos of their animals with an accompanying educational activity.
- Tune in for [LUNCH DOODLES with Mo Willems](#) to draw along with this author and illustrator.