



See page 4: free
online Parent
Workshop on Thurs.
10/8, 6:30pm!

Ideas for Learning at Home

Practical Ideas from Educational Therapy

Practical Tips for Switching from “Parent” to “Teaching Aide”

With so many learners doing all or most of their school online, you may be both parent and teaching assistant. Academic skills and life skills overlap in this environment, often making it a challenge for parents to fulfill both roles.

Successful Learning at Home requires *process before objectives*



Defining roles before learning helps build ways to think about the process of learning. This is separate from goals like “good grades” or “staying focused” because without intending it, these goals can overwhelm or discourage.

Step 1. Parents: Define Your Purpose

Start by writing up your purpose as Teaching Aide/Learning Assistant (it’s different from your role as parent). Make it clear, simple, and flexible. Use it to reflect upon as you help your learner at home.

Some examples:

- “My job is to be online computer support and an instructional aide”
- “I’m here so my child has the best learning environment to support them at home, and to set up and help with the tech they need”
- “My job is to help enrich this two-dimensional learning experience with home support until in-person learning starts up again for my child”

Step 2. Child/Learner: Define Your Purpose

Help your child write up their purpose as well. This is different from a goal which may not feel “doable” to start. Goals like “good grades” or being “focused” are different than a *purpose* for learning.

Examples could be:

- “I want to make sure I have the things I need to make learning more successful”
- “I want to get thru school more efficiently and without a hassle”
- “I want to finish math in high school so I don’t have to do it in college”
- “I want to have more fun during school so the hours go more quickly”

For your child’s purpose, you can assist by scribing for them, helping with examples, and supporting them to start or complete the activity.



Step 3. Define the Space & the Time: Make It Dynamic

During this time of online, ‘2-d’ learning, it’s critical to make the environment as dynamic as possible. Use of a dedicated learning space, visual cues, and scripts defining roles can all help here. Something large can help, too.

As you review the area where your learner is working, look for ways to add more dynamic elements beyond being on a laptop.

Step 3 continued...

Add Something Big

Review the area where your learner is working. Can you add more dynamic elements beyond a laptop? Ideas:

- A larger monitor or TV instead of a laptop
- A large, clear workspace (*not in a bedroom*). No clutter is important, especially for good attending and focusing. A designated learning area - a corner of a room or even a new area in a garage - can be used.



Space command-systems aren't needed, but bigger is better at making learning dynamic. A large screen is often better than a laptop. Also helpful: movement, visual signals, and reviewing and re-defining roles.

Add a Visual Signal

Have your learner come up with a visual signal to use each school day to indicate that "learning time" has begun. This is a way for them to also see that you're also "on" and ready to help with their learning:

- Turn on a small light as a visual clue
- Hang up a small flag
- Set a special stuffed animal on the table, or another symbol to indicate readiness to support



Visual cues can be fun, comforting, bright, noticeable ... or all of the above...

Have a Consistent "Learning Time"

Studies show that consistency and a solid schedule is important to learning. Be sure they're agreed to and understood. A few rules:

- Review and define the time before and after learning, too. Use the opportunity to notice things that may affect learning, e.g. "do you do better with schoolwork if you shower before school?" or "do you do better if you read the material before starting the homework?" etc. Just notice and note.
- Schedule breaks - and make them real breaks, e.g., "when do you want a break?" Or "do you want to do an hour of homework after school and your half-hour break?"



- Once your schedule is set, be sure you "interact" with your roles. Remind your learner of your role during this time as the aide/assistant. (Work out what to call your support role with your child.)

Step 4. *Parents: Be Clear When You Are Changing Your Role*

Script Out Your Role

When you switch from being parent to being "teaching assistant" or "instructional aide," stop to explain your role. This advance notice helps your learner get ready.

Continued on next page

Script Out Your Role, continued:

Have a mini script that reinforces the idea that you're getting ready to switch from being parent to learning assistant:

- "We'll start school in 10 minutes. You're the learner, and I'll be the assistant."

Next, have some ideas for how to introduce your support role and school time:

- "OK: Now I'm your learning assistant. I'm here to help when needed."
- "For today's learning, do you have everything you need? Is there anything I can do to help you today?"
- Offer attending and focusing support: "Would you like me to check in with you every 10 minutes to ask if you need help?"

Repeat After Breaks

When it's break time, remember to go back to your parent/child roles. For instance, with a lunch break or a movement break, the dynamics can change: you can relax out of the "learning assistant" role.

When you start up again, use a quick reminder to define your role change: a verbal reminder, setting up the visual cue again, etc.



It's all a balance: having some cues, scripts, and notes can be helpful. Keeping a schedule at specific times can be very effective.

Step 5. At the end of the learning day: give a positive reflection!

Building a new way of learning at home isn't always easy. No matter the results, take a moment when you're both done to reflect with your learner, and remember:

- No negative reflections. Find something positive to say. You can also keep in mind questions that you can ask (instead of statements). Example: "How did it go today?"



- Use the reflection time to restate the purpose (your learner's purpose and then the learning assistant's purpose). Try asking if they noticed things while working, such as:
 - "What worked to help you stay alert?"
 - "What ways might we try to improve staying alert?"
 - "What things made attending difficult? What seemed to help?"
 - "What things helped with efficiency?"
 - "What things would you want to add or change for tomorrow?"

It's important to keep a log or notebook (email or notebook) for the learning assistant and learner. Use it to document ideas and successes.

Step 6. Time to Repeat Again Tomorrow

This is difficult work, so give yourself and your learner kudos for working on this, staying curious, and shaking off difficult attempts.

You get to try it again the next day. Review your purpose, and then include the visual cue, the script about your role change and theirs, and any ideas from the previous day you wanted to review or change.

Parents & Learning Assistants: Join a video zoom for ideas to support learning

Join John Fleming for “**More Ways to Make Home Learning Effective**”

Email office@dls-learning.com for link for the event: **Thurs., Oct. 8th at 6:30pm!**

Join DLS Director and founder John Fleming on Thurs. 10/8 at 6:30pm for a presentation and discussion of how to implement home learning support. He'll cover this topic more in-depth, along with ideas for:

- How to stay in your role after the 1st 20 minutes... after the 1st hour
- What to try if your learner tunes out
- How to provide support if you're helping long distance
- What to do if your patience is running out
- And other “What If's” with suggestions

Please email us your questions: John will answer as many as he can! (e: office@dls-learning.com)

We've been hearing from parents & we're here to help

Supporting learning is a complex and exhilarating experience - and one that also requires time, tools, and support for the whole team. Some parents are creating more frequent, shorter sessions as a way to get consistent support for their learners as they are back in classes.

We'll send practical tips from educational therapy monthly as we support parents and teams in whole new roles. Want them via email? Send your request to info@dls-learning.com and we'll send via email instead.



Garrick Wahlstrand works on executive functioning support online with a learner



DLS is here to support learning with online sessions of multiple kinds, from reading to writing to math to executive functioning and organization.

DLS Support is available

With school back in swing, DLS offers the following online support:

- Executive functioning support / organizational support
- Extra Tutoring and Study Halls (after ET or tutoring appointments)
- Extra educational therapy sessions - short sessions more frequently
- Coaching for parents supporting their learners
- In person? We are slowly contacting our assessment waiting list, and will resume testing in October, with other support in person to come.

For more information:
E: office@dls-learning.com
Ph: (831) 429-5987
www.dls-learning.com



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