

# Your Coronavirus Educational Activity Toolbox:

## 8 Great Tips to Help Parents Weather School Closing



School is out.

But it's not a snow day nor a vacation week.

You may be tempted to dump your daily routine and transition to a vacation mentality.

But this coronavirus hiatus from school and work has no definite end date and may cause anxiety.

**It's also an opportunity.**

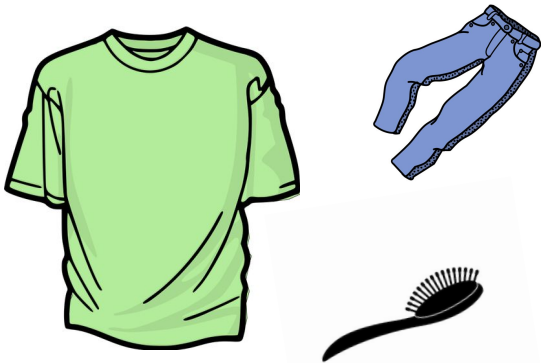
While our older children will likely be immersed in distance learning, we can reframe and restructure our younger children's schedule to create a daily routine.

The learning experience will be different than the formal school one, but I have created **8 great tips** to make the process easier for you and for them.





# Get them dressed... and dress yourself as well.



We all do better with routine which sets expectations.

While it may be tempting to lounge in your pajamas and allow your children to do the same, the lack of routine for everyone can be confusing, particularly when it lasts more than a few days.

**Lose the snow day mentality and think long term.**



# Create a schedule.



Do it with the kids or for them,  
depending on their age.

Use timers to allow for digital/TV time and  
digital detox time.

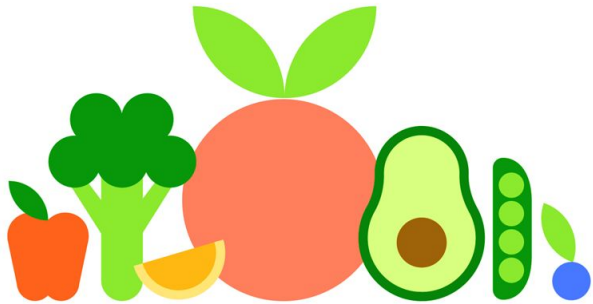
The timer is the equivalent of the school  
bell which helps children of all ages define  
the class "period."

Try to model their day at home to their  
day at school (as much as possible) with  
specified times for different activities.

And don't hesitate to give them jobs!  
They are used to having them at school.



# Redefine learning.



Unexpected prolonged school closing forces us to **rethink learning expectations.**

Involving children in daily chores, like setting the table or placing an online order for the supermarket, gives us the opportunity to teach some of the same skills they learn in school but in a different way.

For example, setting the table involves sequencing, aka what comes first, second, third.

Ordering online from the supermarket can be a lesson in making lists, using coupons to save money, estimating cost and setting a budget.

Baking brownies is a science lesson bathed in chocolate, with the opportunity to teach shapes as you cut them for yummy consumption.

**There is so much opportunity for informal learning. This is an important time to seize it.**



## Create a theme.



Teachers often design their weekly curriculum around a theme.

Follow their example and keep it up at home.

Your theme could incorporate letters, numbers, colors, holidays and animals to name a few. A personal favorite in my house is space exploration.

Involve your kids! They will love to incorporate their opinions and actively participate.

For guidance and inspiration, reach out to your kid's teachers, check Pinterest or Google.

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# Reshuffle the shelf.



Put away all the books and toys and then take out five each day to match your theme or your mood (if you have no time to have a theme).

This way old toys and books will feel new and you will avoid the temptation of ordering new ones.

At night, while the kids are sleeping, set up for the next day.

Your children will happily anticipate what has been selected for the new day's fun activities.

**Pro tip:** Leave one or two quiet activities in a visible spot in case your kids get up extra early.

This way they won't be tempted to turn on the TV. And hide the remote just in case 😊



**Do good.**



Nursing homes and assisted living facilities are restricting visitors to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

Schedule Facetime with older relatives to see how they are doing.

Or make them cards.

The creation of cards as well as the physical act of mailing can be interesting educational lessons as well as a generous gesture to bring joy to others.

Older neighbors may need help as well.

Seize the opportunity to teach citizenship by reaching out to neighbors who appear to need your help like taking out trash or walking pets.

This could set a nice neighborly precedent for the future.





# Think outside of the box.



While we stock up on toilet paper and cans of tuna, there should be plenty of boxes lying around.

Refrain from throwing them out since they can become valuable learning tools.

Tape them up and turn them into blocks.

Or paint them in the color of the day, decoupage them with magazine pics which follow your theme or turn them into an obstacle course for free play.



# Download audio books.



Listening to audio books is a perfect activity for kids while you are doing your work or catching up on chores.

Look into learning apps and websites.

This may be the perfect time to invest in educational apps such [as reading eggs](#).

Here are some of the ones we use in our online speech therapy sessions:

- [All Kids Network](#)
- [PBS](#)
- [ABCmouse](#)
- [Quia](#)

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