

10 tips for parents: learning with children



By: Kristina Timm¹, Philipp Deing¹ and Dr. Sascha Borchers²

Learning from home – that is the motto for schoolchildren in the next few weeks in times of the corona virus. For this reason they are provided with training material by their teachers. How can parents adequately support their children during this period of home study? School psychologists of the Münster district government have ten tips for parents on how to aid their children in studying for school.

1. You are not a teacher

You cannot and are not expected to replace the school and the teachers. You may guide and help your child as best you can.

2. Structure the day

It is important to give the day a structure and to maintain many aspects of this structure from day to day in a similar way. Stick to fixed sleeping and waking times, breaks and meals as well as times for exercise and sports. We as humans – and especially children – benefit from this fixed rhythm.

3. Useful and structured practicing

Similar to any school morning, your child should work on the tasks daily for an agreed-on period of time. Discuss the “timetable” with your child. It makes more sense to work frequently in shorter periods. The ability of children to concentrate is limited! Together with your child, think about how much of the exercises it should do in one day.

4. Develop and deepen knowledge

Alternate between phases in which you help your child gain new knowledge and phases in which this knowledge is repeated and consolidated. Allow more time for repetition and consolidation than for the development of understanding of new content.

5. Practice vocabulary

First read out vocabulary aloud and then check it several times in writing until it is well memorized. Take a little break after every eight to ten new words; in total, children should not learn more than 30 to 40 per day. It is helpful to highlight words that are difficult to remember or to write these on separate flash cards and to repeat them regularly.

Watch the following video for inspiration: <https://youtu.be/mHINTOrPlqQ>

6. Dealing with conflicts

Sometimes parents feel unable to support their children in a helpful way: they may be „too close“ or even directly involved in learning problems. If they do not understand the learning problem, parents often assume laziness or become cross. In these cases, we recommend doing less for school and to first invest more in building the relationship. Today many topics can be found nicely prepared on the Internet. Using this tool – to a reasonable extent – you do not have to explain content to your child, but can leave it to the Internet.

7. Use educational media

Many TV broadcasters have changed their programs and bring interesting, well-prepared programs on school topics in the mornings. Use this to loosen up study periods. Many of these programs can afterwards also be found online in the media libraries.

8. If in doubt, ask the teacher

If in doubt, coordinate the content with the teacher. Send your questions by email or call the school. If your child has questions regarding the content, let it formulate these and send them to the teacher.

9. Conflict as an opportunity

Of course, now will also be a time of friction, conflicts and quarrels. That is natural, normal and a part of life. But we can use this friction positively: A well-resolved dispute, being able to take the time to find and discuss the causes of a conflict and to work out sound solutions together (keyword „family conference“) is effective on several levels: it grows and strengthens relationships, increases social competences and by doing so also the self-confidence. Use this opportunity!

10. Enjoy the “given” time

In crisis situations like this, not everything is bad. For example, it is helpful to consider what opportunities this situation offers. In the current case this opportunity is surely the newly “given time”: When else will we be able to spend as much time with our children as we do now?

This is time, that we can use for things for which we otherwise do not have the time: playing, reading, laughing, singing, cuddling and so much more. And it is also time for every one of us: time to read, listen to music, dream and do sports. For parents as well as for children, it is also an opportunity to calm down and reflect on what is essential. Enduring boredom is also a skill that has been lost in our society on the one hand and on the other hand directly promotes learning and creativity.

Contact

If you have any questions about the points above, the school advice centres in the Münster district government are available to you and happy to assist by phone or email. You can find the contact details at https://www.bezregmuenster.de/de/schule_und_bildung/gesundheit_krisenmanagement_an_schulen/Schulpsychologie/index.html under the keyword „Regionale und Schulpsychologische Beratungsstellen“

¹ Regional school advice centre of the district of Borken ² Specialist for school psychology district government Münster