

TOP TEN TIPS

CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR VIRTUAL LEARNER

OVERVIEW

Regardless of the model being accessed, this year is new and different in many ways. Based on feedback from families, input from staff and observations of students along with general best practices, we created a Top 10 list of ideas as a resource to navigate this new normal. You are doing great and we hope this offers either reassurance of all you are already doing or maybe a new idea or two for you to consider.

SCREEN TIME

Encourage screen breaks. Look for natural times during the class or have your child put a note in the Chat feature that they need a short break. The teacher might have one coming up and this builds their communication and planning skills.

HEALTHY HABITS

During the break, have them get up, stretch, hydrate, get some fresh air, or anything that gets them away from a screen and giving their eyes, brain and body some attention. They can still listen.

MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

Ask your student what materials they need to have ready for the next day. Place Zoom links on their calendar, have links to websites open and arrange apps by class. Make sure they have paper, writing utensils and a place to clearly note any assignment discussed during class.

PRINTED MATERIALS

Looking at and manipulating materials can be helpful for some students. If you need printed materials, let your child's classroom teacher and case manager know. We will do what we can to support this.

REVIEWING THE 'TO DO' LIST

At the end of each day, review the list of assignments and what is needed for the next day. Compare this to Canvas and SeeSaw. Have your child check their email and any shared google doc their teachers might use. The older the child, the more independent they should be with this process. If they miss one, the natural consequences of the grade are a powerful teaching tool and motivator. Its ok to miss an occasional assignment. It is when the frequency rises that caution and assistance are needed.

ENVIRONMENT

Maintain a quiet environment. Schools eliminated bells, announcements and other interruptions because we recognize the value of uninterrupted time. White noise or calming music can be good ways to drown out construction, traffic or other noise that may make it difficult to concentrate. Dedicated space and materials at hand are also helpful in establishing a routine and being prepared to focus on learning rather than using mental energy trying to find the needed materials.

ZOOM SESSIONS

If your child is currently overwhelmed or having behavioral challenges, we don't want to reinforce avoidance but you know best how they are doing at any given time. As above with screen time, if you know your child needs a break or a few minutes to collect themselves, let us know. We are fine with turning off the camera or muting when we know why it's needed.

Secondary families, make sure your child attends office hours, flex and transition skills regularly. Even if they don't have questions, sometimes listening to what other students ask can be helpful. We don't ask what we don't know to ask.

FACILITATE RATHER THAN DO

It's not your job as parent to be prepared. You can help teach your child these important skills through specific strategies.

When assisting your child, ask probing questions rather than provide the answer. "Where can you look for answers?" "Who can help you with this?" "What could you ask your teacher?" are all probing questions that teach problem solving.

Instead of asking "Do you have your math paper?" or reminding with "Don't forget your math paper.", ask "What do you need to have for this class?" (or math class if more specificity is needed).

Need more ideas or more specifics - check with your child's Case Manager. We want to be helpful!

WORKLOAD

If your child has too much work, let us know! We don't want to overburden or overwork any student or family and we may not realize you are overwhelmed until you reach your breaking point. If you can get to some of the work, just tell us. If your child doesn't understand and needs clarification, have them or teach them how to communicate this to the teacher. We want to work with you and an open dialogue with collaborative problem solving is always our goal. Tell us what has you concerned or stressed so we can come up with ideas. And give yourself permission to make a judgement call on how much is too much when home has a lot going on.

HANG IN THERE!

Know that children are highly resilient. We have been amazed at how quickly students have bounced back, are accepting of the new safety protocols and are able to adapt to the new schedule. We will continue to do all we can to keep them moving forward, help them learn from their mistakes (the best teaching tool) and give them what they need.