

Top Tips from Parents for Home Learning

These tips have been put together by parents for parents – From The School Run

1. Don't try and replicate school

Home schooling isn't the same as mainstream schooling. And shouldn't try to be. Both have things the other can't offer. What teachers do in a classroom you can't always do at the kitchen table and vice versa. Work within your resources and abilities.

2. Establish a timetable that suits you and not someone else

Just because your sister-in-law has posted a colourful timetable detailing the Latin verbs her children will be learning before breakfast, doesn't mean this will work for you.

A timetable is useful and for some necessary but it must work for you and your family. Will your children learn best early in the morning? Then do more academic work then and focus on play/being outside later or vice versa if you're night owls.

3. Set the ground rules early on

It might be tempting to embrace the apocalyptic vibe and hunker down and watch films all day. Perhaps it even feels necessary for a bit. But unless you set some firm rules early on, it's going to be difficult to get back into a groove further down the line. Start doing at least some work from the word go and your authority will be easier to maintain.

4. Balance online time with offline time

You don't need to be online all day to get a good education. Yes, there are some fantastic resources online (including TheSchoolRun's, of course) and it's going to be a lifesaver in the coming months, but try to balance the online work with good old-fashioned books and practical, hands-on challenges (those bookshelves still need building?).

If you don't have a good supply of pens and paper, now's very much the time to get some in.

5. Get outside

Spend as much time outside as you can. Not just for your sanity but for general good health.

If you have a garden, take your learning out there. National Trust and RSPB grounds are currently still open (at the time of writing) and for now we're still able to go for long, educational walks.

6. Make the most of the one-to-one attention

You might not have time to spend eight hours a day teaching your children but, here's the thing: you don't have to if they're getting some one-to-one time.

One of the great advantages of home education is that the one-to-one time can be really concentrated and really beneficial – for a short time.

Enjoy the fact that you can spend some time explaining that particularly difficult maths concept to them in a way there might not have been time for at school.

7. Have confidence in yourself

Teachers do a wonderful job and they're experienced. But that doesn't mean you don't have a lot to offer too.

You might well have been learning pedagogical skills in your work without realising. Moreover, you know your children better than anyone else. Chances are you do know what motivates them and what excites them. Use this to your advantage and tailor your approach accordingly.

8. Speak to teachers

Many teachers have been offering their skills on different educational apps and email. Ask them questions, share concerns. They want us to get through this.

9. Buddy up with other parents

Join forces with other parent friends to share any online learning discoveries you make.

10. Relax

The entire population is in this together. Your children aren't going to miss out. If it all gets too much, curl up on the settee and read a book together.