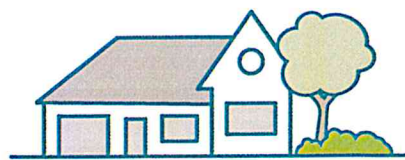


SETTING UP FOR LEARNING AT HOME



You don't need to be an expert or educator to help your child to learn at home.

Your child's school, preschool or children's centre will help you find learning activities for your child to do at home.

You can help support your child by providing a quiet comfortable space for them child to learn.



What to expect from your child's teacher

Your child's principal, preschool director or teacher should continue communicating with you through normal communication channels. They can help you find learning activities for your child to do at home.

How you can support your child

Students need routine and certainty.

You can support your child by:

- creating clear routines and expectations
- providing a safe and quiet space to work in
- supervising them at a level appropriate to their development
- checking in with them often to help manage and pace their work
- monitoring how much time they spend online and balancing this with physical activity
- checking communications from teachers and staying in contact with your child's school or early learning centre.



Set up a learning space at home

Every home is different. A quiet and comfortable learning space will help your child learn.

Some students may have usual places where they do their homework. This space might not be suitable to study or learn at for a long time.

The best learning space is:

- a shared family space, such as a lounge room or dining room (not in their bedroom)
- a place that can be quiet at times
- near a strong internet or wifi signal
- somewhere that an adult is present and monitoring the learning
- near the items your child needs for learning, including stationery and power points
- free from trip hazards
- open, with natural light and without glare
- somewhere with a comfortable chair and desk or table.

Create routines and expectations

Setting up expectations and routines will help your child learn.

You can do this by:

- maintaining normal morning and evening routines
- structuring the day with regular mealtimes and bedtimes
- setting up the day based on their regular schedule or timetable
- starting and ending each day with a 'check-in'
- making sure they understand what's expected of them
- encouraging regular food and drink break times throughout the day, as well as small breaks for stretching or to move around
- checking in with them throughout the day to help keep them focused and on track.

Communicate with your child and stay connected

You can stay involved with your child's learning by asking them questions. This helps them to manage the instructions they receive from the school and to set priorities for their learning.

At the start of the day, ask:

- What are you learning today?
- What are your learning targets or goals?
- How will you be spending your time?
- What resources do you need?
- What support do you need?

At the end of the day, ask:

- What did you learn from today?
- What did you like about today's activities?
- What was challenging? How can we work through the challenge?
- What went well today? Why were they good?
- Are you ok? Do you need to ask your teacher for something?
- Do you need help with something to help tomorrow be more successful?



Make the most of everyday activities in your household

There are lots of things to learn about in the home. One example is cooking. Involve your child in the process. This could include reading recipes, measuring ingredients, taste testing, or reviewing. Continue to communicate with your child by asking questions before, during and after the activity. Keep them focused and on track.



Connect with your child's teacher, classmates and school

Set up new ways to communicate, and maintain existing ways your child catches up with their friends and teacher. This could be on the phone, a video call, through email or an old-fashioned post card or pen-pal.

Doing this will help students to feel connected to others and not isolated.



Connect with extended family

Don't forget to continue connecting with extended family and loved ones. You and your child can share the learning that has been happening in your home.



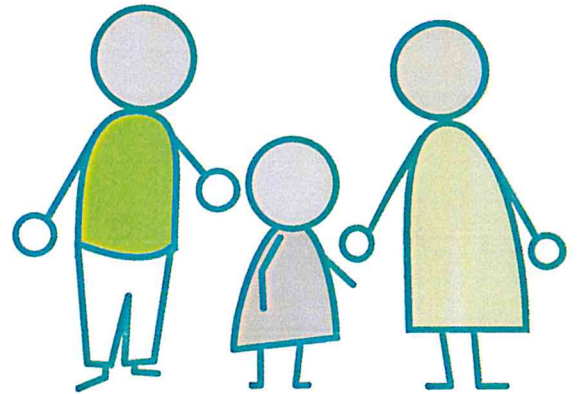
Support your child's wellbeing

Learning from home for a long time can cause stress and anxiety.

Find out how you can support your child's wellbeing while learning at home at the Advice for families section of ourlearning.sa.edu.au.

PREPARING FOR ONLINE LEARNING

Information for parents and caregivers



Online learning aims to complement the learning resources teachers already have in place to ensure continuity of learning between home and school.

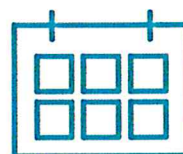
This guide has been prepared to help you support your child with online learning. It contains practical advice and information about available support if you need it.

Many schools across the state currently use a learning management system (LMS) to support teaching and learning so you may already be familiar with some of these tools. Getting the most out of the move to online learning for your child means being prepared.



Learning environment

- Consider creating a dedicated study space where distractions can be minimised.
- Set your child up at a desk or table with an appropriate chair.
- Ensure the environment is appropriate if your child will be using live video streams.



Structure

- Your school will provide specific details around learning activities, assessments and timelines. Ensure you monitor these communications and that your child understands their teacher's expectations and sticks to a routine.
- Check in regularly with your child to see how they're adjusting, how their learning is progressing and that they're practicing safe online habits.



Technology

Your child will need:

- A suitable device such as a desktop PC, laptop, iPad or tablet capable of handling word processing and video calls simultaneously. If you do not have one, speak to your child's school to see if they can assist. Hard copy resources may also be provided.
- Specific software required for your child's learning. Please note all students from year 3 and up have access to Office 365, which includes tools such as Microsoft Word and Excel.
- A reliable home internet connection.
- Access to their learning management system or school portal, including web addresses, user IDs and passwords.
- Consider the need for a webcam if this does not come as standard hardware on your PC or laptop.



Support

- Contact your school if you are having issues accessing the internet or a suitable device for your child. They will support you with an alternative solution.
- To reset passwords and access technical support for your school's preferred learning management system, contact your child's school.
- Visit [Our Learning SA](#) for resources to support continued learning between school and home.
- Access up to date information on the [Department for Education website](#) (including announcements and useful links).
- Remember your child's teacher remains your first point of contact for questions around their learning and progress.

PREPARING FOR ONLINE LEARNING

Information for students



Create a study area

- Work with your parents/caregivers to find a suitable space within your home and mark out your study space.
- Customise it – add photos and make it comfortable!
- Make sure you have enough stationery (pens, highlighters, notebooks etc) and the correct resources to study from.

Keep your workspace tidy

- It's hard to be disciplined to work at home, and even harder if the place is messy.
- Set a timer! Do a quick 10 minute clean up before you start to learn – it helps create a calmer learning environment.

Plan your day

- Ensure you have a clear understanding of what your tasks are for that day and when your breaks are.
- Set yourself a daily goal for what you would like to achieve by the end of the day.
- Make sure you know your logins and passwords for the sites and resources you may need to access.



Keep in contact with your teacher/s

- Make sure you follow the learning plans designed by your teachers, stick to due dates and submit things on time.
- Remember you can always contact your teacher for help – just schedule in a convenient time with them as they may be helping another student.

Take regular breaks

- Taking regular breaks during the day keeps your mind fresh and is one of the easiest ways to ensure you can concentrate and focus on your learning.

Exercise

- Step away from your laptop every hour or so and do some exercise. Play with the dog in the back garden, do a 10 minute exercise or practice your dance skills! All of this helps to keep your mind and body healthy.

Eat well

- Make sure you are eating a variety of fresh vegetables and fruit, along with lots of other nutritional foods. A healthy balanced diet is really important to our physical and mental wellbeing.



Keep socialising

- Use online systems and apps to maintain positive social contact.
- Post on discussion boards and read other student's posts, you are all probably feeling the same.
- Set up informal discussions via online apps if you can. Choose your topic and spend some time discussing ideas, analysing texts together and swapping study tips.

Be respectful and understanding of each other

- As with all social media platforms, a simple misunderstanding in writing can quickly escalate.
- On discussion forums you may find that some people who don't normally speak up in class now have more to say. This is a good thing! Be clear in your communication and allow everyone to have a voice.
- Listen to each other and if you are unsure of something that has been said, ask a question.
- Remember, the same behaviours and expectations apply as if you were in the classroom.



Reach out for help

- Not everyone has access to a laptop and reliable internet. You might also be missing physical resources such as libraries and laboratories. Get in touch with your teacher if you don't have access to the right equipment.

Finish your learning for the day

- It's important to have a clear cut-off point when you finish studying for the day.
- Pack up your study materials at the end of the day if you can, so that you can separate school from home.
- Go and do another fun task that you enjoy!

READING WITH YOUR CHILDREN

Reading has always been an important skill - today it's more important than ever. You can create a rich literacy environment at home by reading with your child.

Children develop literacy through shared reading experiences, as well as reading instruction. Both of these things are important for children to become fluent readers.

This fact sheet explains what you can do at home to support children who are learning to read.

Support from schools

Don't feel like you need to take the place of your child's teacher. They will support you with books and resources to help your child practise reading at home. These will be matched to the letters, sounds and words that your child has been taught.

How to support your child's reading at home

Reading to your child will help them with their learning before and when they start school. If your child has started reading, you can listen to them read, or read together with them. These are great ways to create routine and comforting contact with family. It's also lots of fun.

For young children, being read to or watching you read and write helps them:

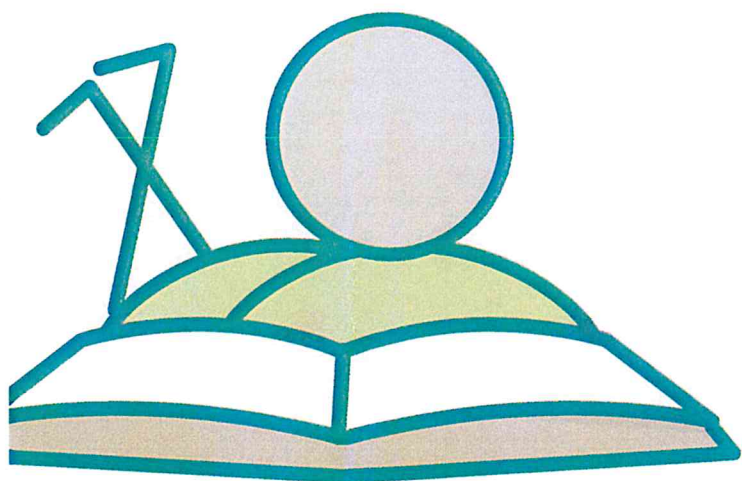
- understand how language works
- understand why reading is important
- develop early skills toward reading.

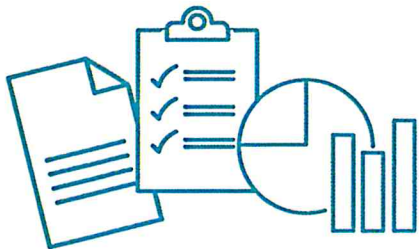
Children who are just beginning to read

With children who are just beginning to learn to read, you can focus on explaining:

- how we hold the book
- that the print is the part of the book we read
- reading the text from left to right
- that sentences are made up of words and punctuation.

Involve your child in everyday conversations and activities that include reading. For example, sharing a story, using a recipe, making a shopping list or reading street signs. These activities will help your child understand how reading and writing are used for lots of different everyday purposes and that we read other texts as well as books.





Children who know how print works

If your child knows how print works, you can focus on specific features of the book, like:

- headings and sub headings
- captions
- lists
- understanding diagrams or graphs
- text size and shape.

Reading out loud is important

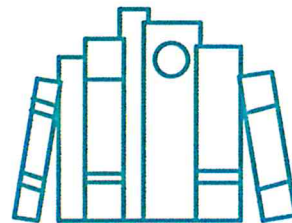
Reading to your child is a wonderful way to support their literacy development by:

- exposing them to new vocabulary
- building their knowledge of various subjects
- delving into topics that interest them.

It will also familiarise them with the sounds, shapes and processes of reading and writing. It can also be fun – like performance art!

If you're reading a familiar story, your child can join in, complete rhymes, or tap along to a beat. Don't worry about reading the same story more than once. Children love to hear stories over and over again.

Sharing songs and rhymes provides another opportunity for them to listen to and reproduce the sounds in our language.



Finding and choosing something to read

Make sure there's a wide range of reading material for your child at home – fiction and non-fiction books. School and second hand shops can be great places to find books. You could also swap books with other families.

Try to choose books together with your child. Talking about books will help them feel comfortable and familiar.

A new book can be a great treat or present.

Reading in your home language

If your home language isn't English, it's important to read to your child in your home language. Experience shows that using your home language will help your child learn to read in English.

Make time for reading every day

Make reading together a special time away from interruptions like television or phones. Your child will value the time spent together. It's also an excellent way to take a break from screen time.

If your child is tired or restless, keep the session short – approximately 5 minutes. When they are feeling up to it, you can extend the time. 5 to 10 minutes every day is better than one 20 minute session a week.



Reading together with your child

Use the books from your child's teacher

When practising reading at home, use the books provided by your child's teacher. The book will be matched to the letters, sounds and words that they have taught your child

Talk about what you're reading

As you and your child are reading, talk about what has happened so far and ask them what they think might happen next.

When you've finished the book, talk and ask questions about the story and the pictures.

Take turns reading harder books together

When reading a harder book together, take turns. The learning reader can read the simpler or repetitive parts. The experienced reader can read a paragraph or a page.

When you find a new word, pause to give your child time to work out the word. Don't let them guess the word. If it is a word your child hasn't heard before, say it out loud and ask them to repeat it to you. This way, you can check their pronunciation of the word.

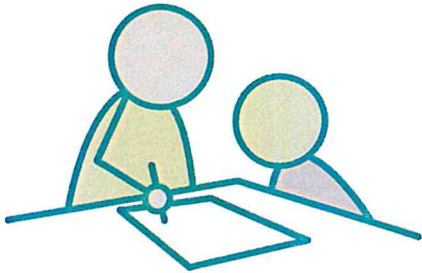
Things to keep in mind when reading together

Support your child to:

- sound out the whole word using letter sounds (don't guess the word)
- blend the sounds in the word together (for example h-o-p hop, sh-e-ll shell, ch-i-ck-e-n chicken)
- repeat the word
- reread the sentence to maintain the meaning of the text
- explain the meaning of the word – some words have more than one meaning
- praise your child for trying, mistakes are part of learning.

With children who are learning to read, use letter tiles to pull out words from the story you are reading. Have your child build the word and read it back to you. Build up to short sentences.

Your child needs to feel successful when learning to read. Give them lots of praise and encouragement. By providing our children with lots of opportunities to practice we can help them feel confident, not anxious.



Reading is everywhere

You can find teachable moments everywhere throughout your day.

Some ways you can include reading in your everyday activities are:

- playing games such as 'I spy...something beginning with d'
- asking your child to read out simple recipes when you cook together
- doing word puzzles or crosswords together
- reading everyday materials like letterbox leaflets, brochures, labels, magazines and street signs together
- playing board games together, read the rules or the board
- asking your child to retell information you've read to them
- providing plastic letters, crayons, pencils, pens and writing paper
- encouraging your child to hold pencils and crayons.

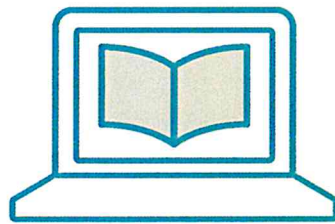


Make time for interaction with friends and family

Sharing stories orally and using new vocabulary helps children to build their confidence with language.

One way they can do this is by reading with friends and family over the phone, or through video chat.

This is a good chance for them to reread familiar books, and practice for fluency. Your child might enjoy performing the story, or reading it in funny voices.



Online reading resources

Our Learning SA website (ourlearning.sa.edu.au) has lots of resources you can use to support your child's literacy.

Some good places to start are:

- [the prior to school section](#)
- [the English area of the reception to year 2 section.](#)

STAYING HEALTHY AND ACTIVE WHILE LEARNING AT HOME

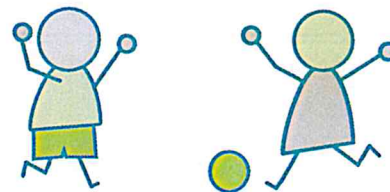
Learning from home for a long time can cause stress and anxiety. Here are some tips to help you look after your child's nutrition, fitness and mental health.



Make sure everyone understands what's happening

Talk openly and calmly to your child and the entire family about the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to learn from home. Understanding the situation will help to reduce anxiety.

Find out about how to talk to your child about COVID-19 under the Advice for families section on ourlearning.sa.edu.au



Exercise regularly

Exercise is proven to de-stress us and get our blood pumping around our body and brain. This helps us focus and learn. Exercise can also trigger the release of mood improving hormones.

If your child is feeling restless, they might need to get up and move around. It's important to exercise every day and find time for short movement breaks in-between learning.

Some ways you can do this are:

- physical activity apps
- dancing
- floor exercises
- yoga
- walking around the backyard
- home exercise equipment
- playing with the family pet
- a daily fitness challenge
- using home exercise equipment appropriate to your child's age to do a family workout
- playing ball games or playing with other sporting equipment
- a good old dance in the lounge room.



Connect with family, loved ones and friends

Encourage your child to keep in regular contact with loved ones, family and friends. They could do this via phone, email or social media (where appropriate). This will help them to feel connected and not isolated.

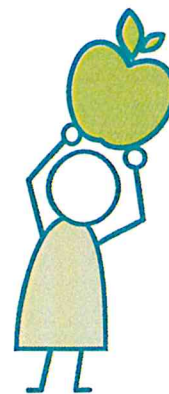


Make room for some downtime

You know your child best – check in with them regularly. If you notice they're feeling a bit anxious about learning, it's ok to take a break and do something different. You could try another activity that your child is passionate about or just have some downtime.

Some downtime activities are:

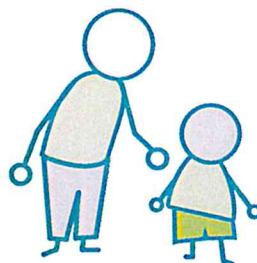
- playing with a favourite toy
- listening to music
- reading
- gratitude jars
- acts of kindness
- walking around the backyard
- spending time in nature.



Eat and sleep healthily

We know that sleep and nutrition are really important. You can make sure your child is well-rested and getting the food they need to fuel their learning by:

- keeping regular healthy eating habits, meal times and normal bedtime routines in place
- starting your day on a positive note – get up, get dressed, have a healthy breakfast, and have your morning 'check-in' chat
- scheduling recess and lunch breaks during the day
- encouraging extra healthy snack times, full of fresh fruit or vegetables
- making sure your child has access to plenty of drinking water throughout the day.



Listen carefully to your child

Respond to and answer your child's concerns or worries by listening carefully and asking questions before responding. This will help you to work out what's wrong and respond clearly.

Make sure you meet their problem with sympathy and care. Answer calmly and confidently. If you need to step away from the situation, let your child know that you need some adult thinking time and will come back to their question.

It's ok to take time to stop and breath – to relax, ground yourself and find some stillness.

Make sure your home is set up for learning

It's important to make sure your child has a good environment to study in.

Find out more about setting your home up for learning under the Advice for families section on ourlearning.sa.edu.au