



Y5 – 2nd
GRADE

Wayfinder

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Tips to help children learn and develop at home

PROGRESS NOT PERFECTION

Your best ideas might not go as planned; that's really okay! Be kind and patient with yourself during this time – there is no ready-made roadmap to address the many challenges ahead.

ACCEPT A NEW PACE

Remain patient with yourself while becoming a new facilitator of learning. Remember that children are not focused on academics for the whole day in school. Focus on helping children engage in learning activities that they love and enjoy.

CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS LEARNING

Children are wired to keep learning new things, all the time, anywhere. Enable children to independently play and explore something they love.

TAKE TIME AS PARENTS AND CARETAKERS FOR YOURSELVES

It is important for each parent to take time, daily, for themselves and relax. Reach out to your friends, talk to family members or simply sit back and rest.

GET DAILY FRESH AIR & EXERCISE

Fresh air and movement helps children (and caretakers) to destress, relax, and re-center. Take short walks, play outside in front of your home or just turn up the music and go for it! Your kids will absolutely love this time with you.



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Helping families manage their day during Covid-19

"These are unprecedented times." Are you tired of hearing that phrase? Repeated ad nauseum by reporters, politicians and everyone in between when referring to the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the words may be true but do little in the way of assisting students to learn and succeed during such times. While not attending school in a brick and mortar building, and adhering Michigan's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" mandate, students and their families have been asked to bypass the customary traditional education process and suddenly manage large amounts of unstructured time in their day while continuing on their learning journey. In an effort to support families during these "unprecedented times," this resource details suggestions for helping your student manage their daily routine, schoolwork and expectations.

YOUR CHILD'S DAILY SCHEDULE

Create a schedule that works for your family. Many parents are working from home, sharing devices and possibly experiencing high levels of stress. Your schedule does not need to match another family's schedule, and that is okay! Distance learning is new for all of us, and your daily routine can be a "work in progress" that can always be modified.

The important part of having a schedule is the consistency it provides for your child. Here are some suggestions to help you create the best schedule for your child:

- Consider starting the day with a morning check-in meeting to review a checklist of the day's activities and to gauge their mood.
- Create 20-30 minute blocks of learning time for students to work on their lessons.
- Build frequent brain breaks into their schedule to allow the brain time to rest and process the information learned.
- Include time to get outside and be active during the day, which does wonders to improve mood, attention span and sleep.
- Encourage passions and unstructured play – these are important learning opportunities.
- Research shows that younger students perform best on analytical tasks earlier in the day, so you may want to schedule activities like math in the morning.
- Set regular bedtimes and wakeups during the school week.

Encouraging healthy habits

Children will do better during this stressful time if they get adequate sleep, eat healthy meals and exercise regularly. Keeping a consistent sleep schedule, with set times to wake up and go to bed, is especially important to maintaining a positive mood and the ability to fulfill academic expectations.

Daily Wellness Checklist

- Did I get 9-11 hours of sleep last night?
- Did I eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables?
- Did I get outside for at least 60 minutes of fresh air and activity?
- Did I drink enough water? (50% of your body weight in ounces)
- Did I challenge myself to get outside of my comfort zone?
- Did I do something fun and relaxing?
- Was I social? Did I reach out to a friend, cousin, grandparent, etc. by phone, text, email, FaceTime or write a letter?

Try to ensure that a good portion of leisure time activity is active, both mentally and physically. "Passive observation and watching of content is fine within limits, but don't let your child's mind go numb by consuming excessive amounts of content that does not require thought."

Activities for wellbeing and learning

These learning activities can be done at home and are designed to complement formal distance learning

Oral or written journaling

Both you and your child can talk or write through your feelings: "Today I am feeling...", "Today I am grateful for...", "I know I am strong because...", "When I grow up I want to...", "If I were the leader of this country I would...", "My happiest day was..."

Feelings Faces

Children can create drawings of faces, each expressing a different emotion – happy, sad, angry, worried, etc. At the beginning of each day you can ask your child to select the face that shows how she or he is feeling today. After your child selects one of the faces, give her or him the opportunity to explain why she or he is feeling this way.

Word or picture web

In the middle of a piece of paper, your child can draw a picture of themselves or write their name. Draw lines coming from the center and ask your child to write words or draw pictures to describe how they are feeling about the pandemic. Once finished, ask your child to explain their drawing. Discuss how their feelings have changed before and during the pandemic and give support.

Belly breathing

Practice this to help your children (and you!) feel calm. Say in a calm slow voice and practice alongside your child: "Put both your hands gently on your bellies. Sit up straight but relaxed. Close your eyes if you like. Now let's breath in slowly and feel our bellies fill up with air. Our bellies should get nice and round. And now breath out and feel your bellies get small again, slowly."

Count from 1 to 5 slowly while you both breathe in, and then count back

from 5 down to 1 as you both breathe out. Repeat 4 times. When finished, ask your child how he or she feels. Share how you are feeling too.

Muscle relaxing

Ask your child to sit in a comfortable position. Ask them to pretend to be "frozen" by tightening their arms. Then, ask them to slowly "melt" by relaxing their arms, and imagine their stress or anger melting away. You can repeat this exercise with different body parts - such as clenching your fists, then relaxing them; shrugging up your shoulders, then letting them drop down; tightening your leg muscles, then relaxing them

Family questions

Ask each member of your family to answer one question about each other. You can turn it into a game by guessing who each person is describing. Here are some questions: "My favorite thing about you is...", "Something I learned from you is...", "I am proud of you when...", "I look forward to seeing you because..."

Telling a story

Reading a book or telling traditional folktales to help children who are fighting to resolve their conflicts is a great way to talk about relationships, conflict and cooperation with children. Talking about these topics during the pandemic is especially important, as it can be stressful for children to stay home, not see friends and have a very different routine. Those stresses can lead to feelings of frustration for everyone and fights among siblings. Explain to your child that you all have to be more patient and kinder with each



Taking time to talk

Let your child's questions about the pandemic guide you. Answer their questions truthfully, but don't offer unnecessary details or facts. Don't avoid giving them the information that experts indicate as crucial to your children's well-being. Often, children and youth do not talk about their concerns because they are confused or don't want to worry loved ones.

"Younger children absorb scary information in waves. They ask questions, listen, play, and then repeat the cycle."

Children always feel empowered if they can control some aspects of their life. A sense of control reduces fear.

other, and quicker to say I'm sorry when you've done something to upset someone.

If there is a conflict in the story being told, here are some questions to ask: What caused the conflict? What do you think will happen next? Would you have made the same decisions, why or why not? Do you agree with the way the conflict was solved? How could things have been done differently?



Embracing Technology to Stay Connected

Technology rules shouldn't completely go out the window – parents should still be mindful of what platforms their children are using and to make sure they are being safe.

But, it's OK to somewhat relax on the rules since kids will now rely on technology daily and for longer periods for school. With Michigan's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" mandate, in-person contact with friends is limited, but parents can help kids stay connected with their friends and extended family using technology. Encourage appropriate and reasonable use of phones, tablets and computers for staying connected. "Social contact is very important for children," says Dr. Gallagher. "Youth that are connected to other children are happier, less anxious and have more fun."

Meditation and Mindfulness Websites & Apps



[headspace.com/mi](https://www.headspace.com/mi) - Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced the **Stay Home, Stay Mindful** website in partnership with Headspace, a global leader in mindfulness and meditation, and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to provide a new, free mental health resource for Michiganders. **Headspace: Meditation & Sleep** is also available as an app.



<https://www.aloyoga.com/pages/alo-gives> - Alo Yoga's nonprofit Alo Gives is dedicated to bringing movement and mindfulness to kids of all ages.



Stop, Breathe & Think Kids: Focus, Calm & Sleep – This app is geared toward kids age 5 through 10, and features 15 short video meditation "missions," each of which last between two and eight minutes.



Smiling Mind - Smiling Mind is an Australian nonprofit offering mindfulness and meditation programs for all ages.

In addition, YouTube has many channels of nature sounds/meditation music that can be utilized for studying, relaxation or to assist with sleep. Examples: Nature Soundscapes, Relaxing Sounds of Nature, Nature Healing Society and more.

Sources

12 Tips Supporting Families to Help Children Learn and Develop at Home during the Covid-19 Crisis

https://www.akdn.org/sites/akdn/files/media/documents/various_documents/resource_2_-_akdn_covid-19_-_12_tips_-_supporting_families_to_help_children.pdf

Aga Khan Foundation

Daily Wellness Checklist

Creekside Lifetime Fitness Team

Helping Children Cope With Changes Resulting From COVID-19

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19>

National Association of School Psychologists



Parenting in a Pandemic: Tips to Keep the Calm at Home

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/Pages/Positive-Parenting-and-COVID-19-10-Tips.aspx>

Healthychildren.org, American Academy of Pediatrics

Tips for parents and caregivers during COVID-19 School Closures: Supporting children's wellbeing and learning

<https://app.mhpss.net/?get=354/tips-for-parents-and-caregivers-during-covid-19-school-closures-supporting-childrens-wellbeing-and-learning.pdf>

The MHPSS Collaborative & Save the Children

Using positive discipline

Everyone is more anxious and worried during the pandemic. Younger children may not have the words to describe their feelings. They're more likely to act out their stress, anxiety or fear through their behavior (which can, in turn, upset parents, particularly if they are already stressed). Here are some ways you can help your children manage their emotions and behavior:

Redirect bad behavior. Sometimes children misbehave because they are bored or don't know any better. Find something else for them to do.

Creative play. Suggest your children draw pictures of ways your family is staying safe. Make a collage and hang it up to remind everyone. Or, build an indoor fort or castle to keep the germs at bay, bringing in favorite stuffed animals or toys.

Direct your attention. Attention--to reinforce good behaviors and discourage others--is a powerful tool. Notice good behavior and point it out, praising success and good tries. Explaining clear expectations, particularly with older children, can help with this.

Use rewards & privileges to reinforce good behaviors (completing school assignments, chores, getting along with siblings, etc.) that wouldn't normally be given during less stressful times.

Know when not to respond. As long as your child isn't doing something dangerous and gets attention for good behavior, ignoring bad behavior can be an effective way of stopping it.

Use time-outs. This discipline tool works best by warning children they will get a time-out if they don't stop. Remind them what they did wrong in as few words—and with as little emotion—as possible. Then, remove them from the situation for a pre-set length of time (1 minute per year of age is a good guide).

