

MCEC COVID-19 Resources for PARENTS

Adapting to a Virtual Learning Environment:

10 Best Practices

COVID-19 has forced many families around the globe to embrace virtual learning. Here are 10 best practices.

1. Stick to a routine. Children thrive on routines because they know what to expect. Especially during times of uncertainty, these simply routines bring stability and predictability back to our lives.
2. Make a schedule that fits the needs of your child. Keep in mind that younger children may only be able to focus for 10 or 15 minutes. Color-coded schedules are a good visual. Post it somewhere visible like the refrigerator. A schedule helps kids stay on track and feel a sense of accomplishment after they are done. Work on this schedule together with each child to help them learn planning and time management skills. Consider using apps to set a reminder for tasks or use a notepad. Incorporate daily activities and breaks into your schedule.
3. Strive for balance. Create an activity list with your children that is tailored to your family's needs and wants. Include everybody in coming up with ideas for managing chores and fun activities. Learning can have many platforms, not just virtual. Think about letting them help with cooking, for example. Give kids an area of responsibility outside of learning. Mastering tasks builds their competence and confidence – both essential components in fostering resilient children. Make sure that you also make time for yourself to unwind.
4. Read daily. It is one of the most important and effective ways that contribute to a child's future academic success. [Growing Great Readers](#) is a free webinar that offers a variety of tips and resources for military families. Also, check out the [MWR library system](#) for eBooks and [audiobooks](#) options.
5. Designate a place for virtual learning and studying. This is especially important if you have more than one child trying to be online at the same time. Make sure your student has a quiet, well-lit place to work, with little distraction. Also, put together a homework kit like a plastic box that includes all the material they need.



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6. Watch the media consumption. Sometimes the go-to solution for children is to use the screen and play games if they are frustrated or bored. Help your child come up with individual solutions that they can turn to when they experience stress or boredom without turning to the screen. Learning that skill will serve them throughout their lives! The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) has several tips for parents. A good way to find some high-quality programming for children is to check out [PBS](#) or [Common Sense Media](#) and their recommendations.
7. Regular, yet shorter, study periods teach children to succeed in the long term. Start with the most difficult subject first that will require the most effort and mental energy. Once we get the most difficult work out of the way, it will be much easier to complete the rest. This method can help students feel good about their accomplishment and can motivate them to stick with their plan.
8. When your student asks for help, provide guidance, but not answers. Make sure that your child understands the assignment, especially the directions. If your student needs help, consider using other resources like the [Khan Academy](#) or [Tutor.com](#).
9. Motivate. Intrinsic motivation comes from within us. This is the motivation that gets us over obstacles and carries us through tough times. We want our kids to develop this kind of motivation not just for virtual learning but for life. Help your child understand natural consequences without being critical or scolding them. Identify moments when they are doing their assignments by themselves or finishing their homework without procrastinating and point out how staying on track opened more free time for them. Praise your kids but be careful about how you praise; we want to focus on effort and growth more than on a specific outcome. For example, instead of saying, "I'm so proud you've got 100%," try saying, "You spent so much time working through that assignment and look how that paid off. Great job!"
10. See challenges as opportunities. It might be a challenge for your child to adapt to virtual learning. If that is the case, reach out to the school and ask for help. Remember you are not alone in this journey and other families may share the same challenges. Check out resources online including the [MCEC Parent Resources](#). Help your military-connected child see changes and challenges as opportunities to stretch ourselves. They help us grow and learn because they take us out of our comfort zones; they help us encounter new experiences and force us to look at new opportunities.

