



Counselor's Corner

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Ways to Assist Your Child with Distance Learning:

The switch to hybrid learning has not always been easy for parents, children and teachers. At Vanderbilt University, Professor Ilana Horn has been studying the challenges of pandemic teaching. Though her research hasn't been published yet, she's finding, "motivation is a huge issue." So how can parents help kids focus and make the most of what their teachers offer remotely? One way is by understanding that a handful of feelings have been shown to enhance motivation: a sense of safety, meaningfulness, competence, belonging, autonomy and connection. What different children need will differ, of course, but a few evidence-based guidelines can help caregivers improve distance learning. Research has shown the following items are important to assist students in staying motivated and focused while working from home.

- **Create the best space possible for your child with limited distractions**

To create a feeling of belonging, have your child pin up artwork or otherwise personalize their learning space. Help children feel more autonomous by keeping the materials they'll need on hand in their learning space.

- **Establish rules and goals**

Students work better when expectations are clear. Think about posting rules and goals in your child's work space at home.

- **Rely on routines and systems to get and stay organized**

Instead of just creating checklists or setting timers, problem-solve solutions like these alongside your child to increase their buy-in. What works for you, may not work for your child.

- **Relationships**

There is no better way to give kids a sense of meaning, connection and belonging than to intertwine schoolwork with supportive relationships. Foster your relationship with your child's teacher(s) as well as encouraging bonds to develop between the teacher and your child. Help your child, when possible, with getting involved in social activities – both virtual and when able to socially distance.

- **Stay Positive**

Distance learning can be frustrating for parents and their children. Children, especially young children, look to their parents to figure out how to react to new or intimidating situations. If their parent seems skeptical or defeated, then they're likely to follow suit.

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