**Learning At Home**

Through online and other communication sources, the Ministry of Education, the School Boards, Schools and Teachers have offered supports for parents and students for learning at home during this current pandemic.

Another online source you might find informative, helpful and very practical is from New Zealand. <https://parents.education.govt.nz/supporting-learning-at-home> It provides lots of ideas about helping our kids to develop key competencies through simple activities that will support learning in reading, writing and math. It suggests activities for all age levels.

**Some Additional Learning Activities to Consider**:

* All daily routines in your homes can become “learning experiences” for kids. For example, cooking, baking, cleaning, laundry, creating shopping lists, yard work, farm work, pet care etc. all include teachable moments and life skill learning that lasts a lifetime.
* Board and card games, puzzles, charades, I Spy, etc.at age appropriate levels can involve reading, thinking, problem solving, math, strategizing, planning ahead, learning positive competitor skills, winning and losing, persistence, communication with others and teamwork.
* Reading of various materials (storybooks, chapter books, magazines for kids and adults, newspapers, sports articles, manuals) stimulate a love of reading, offer lots to discuss (what, when, where, why, what next), broaden the mind, and promote higher level thinking skills.
* Kids love to be read to and may even enjoy reading to parents
* Watching TV shows / movies together provide lots of opportunities for discussion and enlightening conversation about the content. Adults just need to ask some questions to get the conversation going. (How would you have solved that problem? What part of the movie did you like/dislike? Have you ever experienced anything like that? What was your favourite holiday?)
* Many everyday activities can involve math. Make the activities age appropriate. Counting (forwards/backwards by 1’s, 2’s, 5’s, etc. using large or small numbers, finding how numbers are used throughout the house and neighbourhood, prices of foods and other items, household bills, measuring in baking and measuring things around the house, studying time (reading clock, setting schedule for the day, list of favourite TV shows and times they begin), making lists of things to buy and adding up the costs, playing store and making change. For young children sorting buttons or other small objects into categories by size, colour, shape etc. is good. Organizing “junk” drawers, toys, clothes, books etc. is a worthwhile activity.
* Writing and language activities can be practical learning experiences. Help young children to make lists of favourite things, names of friends, phone numbers or write words or sentences about their day (sort of a diary), or write a post card, text or email to a friend, grandparent etc. Have a child look around the house for things that start with a certain letter (Make a list of “s” words, “t” words etc.) Find things that start with the same letter as their name. Cut letters and words out of old magazines and make words or sentences. (Older kids could cut out letters/words and use them to create codes or treasure hunt clues.) Kids sometimes will “buy into” writing a sentence or two about the favourite part of each day or what they learned that day (a diary of sorts).

In no way does this list include every worthwhile learning activity that can be done at home. My hope is that it will offer some supportive “food for thought”, during this time we are isolating at home and have more time to spend engaging in activities together with our kids.

Keep in mind that all students are “in the same boat” and that the teachers and School Boards are fully aware that some “catch up” will be necessary when students are able to return to school. Wishing you good health and emotional strength and well-being.

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