



How to Prepare Your Children for Remote Instruction

By Educator Barnes – July 27, 2020

This week, some Indianapolis students will begin the 2020-21 school year. This includes my twin sons. Their district, Washington Township, has decided to reopen remotely. The difference between the upcoming school year and the previous school year is that we have all had some experience with remote learning whether that was students completing packets or

engaging in academics online. For the sake of our children, we should learn from mistakes and mishaps to ensure this upcoming school year can be the best that it can be. Here are some recommendations based on my experience and the experiences of other parents.

1. Understand the remote learning plan.

Parents need to know what the remote learning schedule is. They also need to know how to use the learning management system their children will use. My school is using Google classroom as a hub for learning, and my sons' school is using Canvas. Washington Township is having a session for parents to learn how to use Canvas. If parents don't understand the platform, they should reach out to the teacher for help.

2. Have a designated learning space.

Children should have a place in the home that is solely for completing school work. This could be the same place they completed homework when students were attending school in-person. This location should be free and clear of distractions. I also recommend the space be in the line of parents' view. My husband and I discovered that our children did more work and completed work more productively while in close proximity to us. With the requirements for remote learning being more rigorous than when schools first closed, it is important that students are keeping up with their work.

3. Give your children the tools they need to be successful.

The downside to having children in the line of their parents' view is that they may be distracted by their parents working. One of our sons was able to work; our other son was not able to work. We got our sons headphones. This allowed them to listen to their own teacher on the computer and be in the same room, and it canceled out the extra noise so they could work and not hear us on our Zoom calls. We also faced their table where we could see their computer screen. This held them accountable, and all we were seeing were the back of their heads which means they weren't looking at us and getting distracted by what we were doing.

4. Buy back to school supplies.

Just like students need supplies in the classroom to learn, they also need supplies at home. Recently, I purchased Ticonderoga pencils. Teachers love these pencils. Buy them. I also purchased some notebooks, folders, and paper. Even though classes are online, children may

need scratch paper to solve math problems or a journal to keep notes. Children need back to school supplies, even while working remotely.

5. Take advantage of free food.

If the school district is offering free food for lunch and breakfast for everyone, parents should consider picking up a package. My sons have eaten lunch from home since preschool, so we are not necessarily a fan of school food. However, convenience matters. If a child cannot make his or her own lunch and the parents don't have time while they are working, they should think about picking up food, so children can grab it right out of the fridge when lunchtime appears on their schedule.

6. Talk to your children about their day.

When children were going to school in-person, one of the popular questions was, "How was your day?" I will be the first to admit that I stopped asking this question daily because we were all in the house together. Then, when I started asking again, I learned how my sons were feeling and what anxieties they had. Ask this question daily to keep a pulse on your child's feelings and thoughts about school.

7. Monitor your children's grades.

This time students are being graded just like they would if they were in person. They won't just receive a grade equal to or higher than the grade they had before. Parents should communicate with their children's teachers when they become concerned. They shouldn't wait until the quarter ends.

As the 2020-21 school year gets going, I might have to add to this list. Parents, what worked for you when the school buildings closed that you plan to keep on doing? Please share in the comments or on social media where this piece is posted so we can help each other out.