

ANDERSON CREEK ACADEMY

24 GOOD IDEAS TO HELP WITH DISTANCE LEARNING

Part One: Items 1-12

1. Create **ONE PLACE** to be the only place where school work is completed.
2. Create a **STORAGE BOX** for all the supplies that your child should need for school work.
3. Create a **SCHEDULE** for when it's time to work and when it's time to play.
4. Create a **REWARDING ACTIVITY** for the time period immediately following schoolwork.
5. Be clear on your **EXPECTATIONS** as to what "you" will do and what you expect your child to do.
6. **ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO ASK FOR HELP**, regardless of your expectations but not too many times.
7. **PLACE A BREAK BETWEEN SUBJECTS** but not between tasks unless you are sure it's needed.
8. **SNACKS AND BEVERAGES** are great, if they are available at the start and available throughout.
9. **TWO OR MORE CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE THE SAME "SCHOOL TIME" SCHEDULE.**
10. **CHECK WORK** it's a big part of doing distant learning and has always been part of assignments.
11. **HAVE YOUR CHILD TELL YOU IN SUMMARY WHAT THEY COMPLETED** at the end of school time.
12. **GET DRESSED IN DAY CLOTHES** but not in pajamas or clothes you wouldn't wear to school.

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STRATEGY ONE

SETTING

It is best to pick ONE location in your home that is not used for much more than “school work”. If you have a desk, you already do this, confine ALL work to that desk area. Try not to use that area for anything but school work. If you don’t have a desk, and most homes don’t, then the kitchen table or a bar area will work just fine. In that case, the space will unavoidably be used for different purposes. It’s ok. But try to avoid allowing a child to sit on the couch or in their favorite bean bag chair or lying in bed. These (couch, chair, bean bag, bed) sound reasonable as your child is “comfortable”. These are not only NOT NECESSARY, but they are also counterproductive. The more casual (comfortable) locations actually promote a less than studious body posture and a less serious approach to the work at hand. They will be fine sitting at your table or another area for the period of time they will be completing school work. Trust me.

CHOOSE ONE SPOT TO BE A CHILD’S WORK AREA

FOR ALL SCHOOL WORK COMPLETED AT HOME

The environment at school is well established “per subject”. Teachers are well aware and establish as a child enters their room that “this is the room where I learn about math” or “this is the room where I learn to read”. Or for that matter, “this is the room where I play dodge ball and run and participate in sports”. In each environment, students arrive and “know what to expect” and “what is expected of them”. This is a well-researched and accepted fact that is often called “stage setting”.

During the “distant learning” era that we find ourselves in, it will be helpful to include this concept as you create a “learning location” for your child in your home setting. Yes, it is very easy to allow a child to simply pick a location and let them be comfortable and complete their work. We simply know this does not work. If it’s working for you, congratulations! Don’t change a thing.

Usually, children are not inclined to get their materials together, get started, work independently, complete their work, stay in one place, and then check their work. This is not unusual, this is the norm.

However, the FIRST step in helping them get started and working independently is to establish a regular and exclusive SETTING (this week’s topic) and GATHERING MATERIALS (next week’s topic).

We want to offer you step by step instructions that “you” can utilize all of the methods teachers use in their classrooms in your home. It’s best to try the strategies we offer you ONE AT A TIME and DON’T TRY TO DO THEM ALL AT ONCE. You may stack the strategies as move long through this distance learning era. But let’s just try one at a time for now.

We will be offering you strategies each week or so that you might try those that work for you. Some will, some won’t. But all of the strategies have support from having worked for parents in the home setting as they ask their children to take time from their time to do “school work”. Yeah, it doesn’t sound too appealing when it’s sunshiny and the great outdoors is calling. We will talk about WHEN to do homework in a future publication as well as HOW to promote a child’s gathering supplies, finding their workspace, staying in their workspace, engaging in their assignments, completing and then checking their assignments. But for now, let’s talk about SETTING.

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STRATEGY TWO

ALL NEEDED SUPPLIES IN ONE WORK BOX

It is best to not only to create a box of necessary supplies but also make an inventory sheet so BEFORE a child sits down, they look through the inventory sheet with you and make sure the WORK BOX isn't missing anything. You might be surprised how things mysteriously disappear from this box. So once you inventory the WORK BOX. Your child takes the WORK BOX and takes a seat in the SETTING you established when you read last week's suggestion. Then (except for trips to the bathroom and needed drinks of water...which we will address in the future) your child should be ready to complete their school assignments.

HAVE EVERYTHING A CHILD WILL NEED IN ONE CONTAINER

IN ONE PLACE FOR WHEN IT'S TIME TO DO SCHOOL WORK

Supplies if they are ready to go and in one consistent place BEFORE your child begins their school work will save everyone time, prevent lost time, and set the stage for learning. In the classroom at school, as students may or may not move classroom to classroom, they are typically taught to keep all their supplies in a zip lock bag, lunch box, storage container of some sort, and leave them in the work area if possible or carry them about. In your home setting, supplies might need to move about (just like school where children might move place to place).

So let's make the container your child keeps their supplies MOBILE. Use any container (heavy zip lock back, cardboard box, lunch box, etc.) that you and your child choose. You "can" even make this a bit of fun by allowing or encouraging your child to customize or personalize their WORK BOX. Let your child paint it, put stickers on it, glue pictures on it, or personalize it in any manner they choose.

That WORK BOX should contain all the pencils, pens, crayons, scissors, dictionaries, multiplication tables, etc. that you know your child frequently needs. Part of the plan is to keep them seated and their not having to get up and down to go "get" something they "just realized" they needed. We as adults do this. Let say you are sitting down to pay bills, you sit down and realize..."Oh! I need my checkbook." On our way to get your checkbook, you stop and look out the window and the bird feeder needs filling. After you fill the birdfeeder, you sit down and realize..."Oh! I think I have a bill in the mailbox". On your way to the mailbox, you decide it's time to mow the lawn. Mowing the lawn is much more fun than paying bills. So you say to yourself, "I will mow the grass today, and I guess I'll pay bills tomorrow".

You and your children and every person who ever walked the planet Earth is the same when it comes to doing something we don't really, really want to do. We AVOID it. In future weeks, we will discuss AVOIDANCE as a psychological / behavioral principle. Until then, trust me. We need to remove the chance that a child is enticed to do something else....once they have taken their seat to do school work.

One strategy it so make sure they HAVE EVERYTHING THEY NEED IN ONCE BOX, so they can stay seated, and complete their homework.

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STRATEGY THREE

SCHEDULE

It is best to set aside a two-hour block of time, either 10-12 AM or 5-7 PM Monday to Friday for school work. You know what works best given your family's particular situation. But whatever you pick and agree upon with your child (regardless of age), this is the time that schoolwork needs to be the focus. Only "after" this time slot is established would you want to allow a child to complete their work earlier. If they do complete their work "earlier" the two-hour academic time is still for "academic" styled recreation...Reading is a good idea. But ONLY allow "early" school work after you establish the time slot and ONLY every ONCE IN A WHILE would you allow anyone to "skip" the scheduled time. And that "skip" might make sense and be reasonable for a number of reasons (example: the parent who helps with homework wouldn't be available, there's something super cool on broadcast TV and your child really wants to see it, or any other reason that is "reasonable" but "rare". It's always best if you know that you have to reschedule school time that you move the school session time slot EARLIER in the day...NOT LATER. Moving school work time LATER is a form of "avoidance" and we don't want to "avoid" schoolwork or establish an "avoidance" pattern. (More on "avoidance" as a behavioral principle in future articles).

Additional Guidance for Strategy Three- CREATE A SCHEDULE

While this may sound like one of the simpler strategies, it is actually one of the most difficult to complete. The typical day at home has only breakfast, lunch, and dinner with rather predictable patterns. You may also have (or used to have) rather predictable times to get up and times to go to bed. But as you and all of your family members have been distancing and not attending events which provide structure to our days (such as school, church, piano lessons, baseball, etc.) it is very easy to have drifted into a rather unstructured day. Most of us are sleeping later and going to bed at odd times...why not? We've lost our structure.

So with school work, it is more important than ever to SCHEDULE or establish a particular time to be set aside for schoolwork. The optimum time for all of us (young age to adulthood) is 10:00 AM to lunch. IF this is possible, and we don't expect there will be many days that anyone would have two full hours of work to complete in a single day (though that may happen in the upper grades with such assignments as book reports or lengthier essays involving research) we want to set aside two hours so assignments can be completed with time to spare. Try to make 10:00 AM your start time. Set aside a two-hour block. Two hours should be "more" than enough time. Then if you are using your kitchen table as the work area, it becomes a natural end time to complete work, clear the table, and have lunch. At night, (as an alternative one alternative) the 5:00 to 7:00 should be sufficient to allow time to get possibly have family time, and then ready for bed afterward.

Our brains appear to work best in matters of attention and memory at these times of day (particularly the 10-12 AM). However, the evening from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm is a good second choice and possibly the best time in your home. Regardless of "when" you pick a two-hour window (remember that should be more than you need), agree on this with your child, and put it on the calendar. Then don't vary. Make schoolwork a Monday to Friday (five sessions) unwavering activity. If a child opts to complete or work on their work at another time, only allow this "after" the 2-hour daily time is established...or it will be difficult to ever establish that block of time and you will be back where you started. Right now you probably have no exact time set aside for schoolwork.

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There are many family variables that may make the 10-12 AM and 5-7 PM time slots NOT appropriate for your home. That's fine. You decide what works for your house. But if you stick to that schedule...everyone will be happier. There won't be a need to constantly ask..."Have you done your schoolwork?", or "When are you going to start to do your schoolwork?" Additionally, it allows your child to know that they have "plenty" of time for play and be "non-academic"...but there's a two-hour block set aside Monday to Friday "without exception". This will help you impose or create structure whereby the structure is very difficult to establish in the present unstructured "stay at home" situation we find ourselves.

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STRATEGY FOUR

REWARDING ACTIVITY

It is best to REWARD your child's completion of their SCHOOL WORK with a REWARDING ACTIVITY "immediately" following the 2 hour period of SCHOOL WORK. If your child finishes before the 2 hour SCHOOL WORK time period, the activity still waits until the 2 hours has expired. Otherwise, your child might rush and not do their best work. Fill the extra time with an academic styled activity such as Reading. The REWARDING ACTIVITY is something that your child CAN NOT access at any time except when you provide it as a reward. You might have to procure a new computer game if there is no chance of limiting the time they presently spend on a particular game. That's just one example, all REWARDING ACTIVITIES are NOT technology-oriented and children will still complete their work to "go outdoors and play ball" or "go outside and ride a bike" or "use their new set of paints" "That you just got for this REWARDING ACTIVITY. Just be sure it falls immediately after SCHOOL WORK.

Additional Guidance for Strategy Four- REWARDING ACTIVITY

In psychology, we know you can't "control" anyone's behaviors. But, you can influence someone's desire to complete a task IF you set up a rewarding activity right after they complete the undesired task. Meaning, do this thing you might not really want to do (school work) to access or get this thing you do really want to do (gaming?). You will simply add another hour of activity the child has told you "they" want to engage in AFTER they do something YOU want them to do...school work.

It is absolutely best that the REWARDING ACTIVITY be available IMMEDIATELY AFTER school work is completed (quality is important or a child will rush through to get the REWARDING ACTIVITY). To further reduce "rushing"...even if a child is "done"...the REWARDING ACTIVITY is not available until the scheduled hour. So if you aren't doing lunch after the 10-12 AM School Work period, the REWARDING ACTIVITY would be available from 12:00 to 1:00 PM. OR, the 5-7 PM school work time would be followed by a REWARDING ACTIVITY from 7-8 PM. You get the idea, set 2 hours of school work (Strategy number 3), and add 1 hour of a REWARDING ACTIVITY immediately after your child completes their work to YOUR satisfaction.

IMPORTANTLY, this REWARDING ACTIVITY can NOT be available to your child any other time. It has to be something they want to do but can't do unless you allow it and ONLY when you allow it or offer it following the completion of their SCHOOL WORK. This is an entirely new concept if your child (as most do) uses their computer, phone, or digital games throughout the day. It's not easy, but you need to control that PRIVILEGE. Otherwise, if they access it all day or most of the day or whenever they wish, it will have no power as a POSITIVE REINFORCER (more on that Behavioral Principle in future articles). If you don't want to get into the conflict of reducing your child's access to something they use a lot, then purchase something NEW but ONLY allow access AFTER SCHOOL WORK...and NEVER any other time.

There are other POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT strategies and your school is going to be offering a School-Wide Raffle relative to this topic. But that would be ON TOP of what you can do at home in regards to a REWARDING ACTIVITY. It can be as simple as "going outside" WITH "the basketball" or "their bicycle" where it is NOT allowed except and exclusively AFTER SCHOOL WORK COMPLETION. It's a good idea to provide ONE HOUR of REWARD for TWO HOURS OF WORK.

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NOT the other way around of TWO HOURS OF PLAY for ONE HOUR OF WORK. That simply fails to work (for long).

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STRATEGY FIVE

EXPECTATIONS

It is best to be sure you and your child are agreed upon what is expected of them regarding SCHOOL WORK. You will want to know that they “understand” just what it is you expect of them. Those “agreed upon” expectations need to be modeled and practiced so everyone is in agreement. This is actually a “contract”. Then these EXPECTATIONS need to be WRITTEN DOWN and POSTED above their work area or on their BOX OF SUPPLIES but somewhere that remains visible at all times. If these are posted they can be the FIRST thing you refer to if things are not going as well as hoped.

Think of it as a JOB DESCRIPTION for your child and comparable to a JOB DESCRIPTION that you might have at work. All of us need to know what is expected. It can also be thought of as INSTRUCTIONS as they repeat daily what your EXPECTATIONS are in a list. That list would include such things as “make sure you have your supplies, make sure you have paper, make sure you write neatly, make sure you check your work, make sure you read the teacher’s instructions, and everyone’s list should include a standard such as MAKE SURE YOU DO YOUR BEST.

Additional Guidance for Strategy Five-EXPECTATIONS

It is best to be sure you and your child are agreed upon what is expected of them regarding SCHOOL WORK. You will want to know that they “understand” just what it is you expect of them. Those “agreed upon” expectations need to be modeled and practiced so everyone is agreed upon. Then these EXPECTATIONS need to be WRITTEN DOWN and POSTED above their work area or on their BOX OF SUPPLIES but somewhere that remains visible at all times. If these are posted they can be the FIRST thing you refer to if things are not going as well as hoped.

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The reason that WRITTEN EXPECTATIONS which you and your child have AGREED upon and POSTED are important and helpful is that research supports this strategy’s effectiveness because you have actually formed a WRITTEN CONTRACT. So as you both need to sign it. Spend time with your child so you get their perspective and what you will also gain is their comfort level with the work that comes their way. If they (your child) insist “we go over the instructions together” ...then be sure you do this, it will induce comfort and security. Often we presume our students and children can do things or perform tasks that they themselves feel they “can’t” do or need more practice before working independently. But on the other hand, some children don’t want anyone “looking over their shoulder” and will say so when you develop your EXPECTATIONS.

Think this way:

- 1 What does the teacher expect? (This is in the assignment)
- 2 What do I expect of my child? (This will be in your and your child’s written expectations)

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3 What does my child expect of me? (This will also be in you and your child's written expectations)

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STRATEGY SIX

ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO ASK NECESSARY QUESTIONS

Your child will have necessary and unnecessary questions. To help them decide if they “really” need to answer a question. Provide 3 tokens (any kind you create) that they are provided at the beginning of each SCHOOL WORK SESSION. Allow all questions that you know a child needs answered as they are figuring out what to do for that particular assignment. If they ask a question “BEYOND” the appropriate and understandable questions and you feel that they might be killing time or trying to get you to do their work...just ask “Is it worth a token?” (Whatever that token you designed might be) and if they say yes, they pay one token to get an answer. After 3 questions, they have used up their tokens and the assignment is apparently too difficult. Report back to the teacher on the form provided. If the child decides to figure it out themselves and save the tokens, each token is worth 10 minutes off additional time after the hour of REWARDING ACTIVITY. Tokens cannot accumulate and must be spent the day they are earned or they are forfeited. This is NOT a penalty but a rewarding activity to induce Self Reliance, Independence, Problem Solving, and Self Sufficiency.

Additional Guidance for Strategy Six-ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO ASK FOR HELP

No matter how INDEPENDENT we design work and no matter how INDEPENDENT we think a child can complete a task...there can occur real and incidental questions that really need an answer for the child to proceed. However, a child’s questions can also be an incredibly effective time killer and a really good method to get you to do your child’s work “for them”. So how do we influence a child so they might ask ONLY the questions that they need an answer for? Well first, simply answer a question or two, and if they are legitimate to ...answer them and step back and let your child complete their work with the aid you just provided. But if you start thinking...” that is not a necessary question” and “I don’t know why, but I feel that my child could have done that without asking me”. Then support your child for making judicious decisions regarding what is a “necessary question” and what is an “unnecessary question”.

You can do that by providing your child 3 tokens (any kind of token you wish...a checker piece, a cut-out star printed on paper, a popsicle stick...whatever you wish). If your child wishes to ask a question, they simply trade you a token for your answer. At the end of the SCHOOL WORK session and the REWARDING ACTIVITY (see Strategy Number Four) is offered, your child gets an EXTRA TEN MINUTES for each token they have LEFT. When it becomes more valuable for your child to save their question and therefore save a token, time-killing and unnecessary questions should take care of themselves.

But remember, you need to answer the first question or two WITHOUT asking for a token if those questions are regarding “getting started” or “instructions” or simply a “real question” that needs an answer. If you pretty much know your child knows the answer to a question they are asking you and you ask “IS IT WORTH A STAR?” (Or whatever your token) your child will decide.

Why this is NOT a PENALTY? This is NOT a PENALTY because you are taking NOTHING from your child. The agreed-upon REWARDING ACTIVITY occurs regardless of this item. But your child gets an ADDITIONAL TEN MINUTES for EACH TOKEN they didn’t spend asking questions. This type of system ENCOURAGES SELF RELIANCE, PROBLEM-SOLVING, INDEPENDENCE, AND SELF SUFFICIENCY. Tokens (which cannot be saved up and must be

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spent the day they are saved or they disappear). Provide extra time in the already identified REWARDING ACTIVITY.

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STRATEGY SEVEN

PLACE A BREAK BETWEEN SUBJECTS

You don't have to keep your child on task for the entire 2 hours. That would never be your goal. The two hours has time for you to break (naturally) between subjects, between assignments and even between items within a particular assignment if you think it's a good time to discuss or just allow your child to take a breather. It's a good time to praise your child for their present accomplishments and it's a good time to ask your child (since you will want to do this now or at the end of the 2-hour session) what they have learned or what they just studied. Every chance a child has to put their new knowledge into their own words is a good thing. It helps encode the information in their words in their memory stores and it helps them comprehend and start to see how everything they are learning is beginning to be linked to a larger framework (whether they ever use those words or not). So chat between work and during breaks, but if you or your child prefers silence...that's just fine as well. Just take breaks.

Additional Guidance for Strategy Seven-PLACE A BREAK BETWEEN SUBJECTS

We have set aside two hours (more than enough) to get through all of the work assigned for your child and should have plenty of time left over to READ or do something during SCHOOL WORK TIME. But that doesn't mean a child has to be ON TASK the entire time. Far from it. Not only can your child take a break and take a breath, stretch, sharpen their pencil (all the things we do as adults when we are focused intellectually for long periods). As an example, a particularly good time that you may want to ENCOURAGE your child to TAKE A BREAK is BETWEEN SUBJECTS. The mind needs to shift and refocus and pull up a different set of background skills and prerequisites when moving from (let's say) Mathematics to Reading or Written Expression.

Ask your child to tell you when they are finished with Mathematics, and if they would like to explain what they completed and summarize what they have done....great! You will need to do that for all completed work, why not do it now? But if they would rather put it down, take a short (5 minute?) break and then take up the next assignment in another domain such as Reading or History, etc....then that's fine too. There are always options in plans such as this, we just need an idea of what to allow as a rather productive option and what might be detrimental.

Taking a 5-minute break between subjects is a GREAT idea. Do it! Whether or not you decide that you want your child to review verbally what they have completed "before" taking a break is up to you. I would...but you don't have to. Just remember, you do want sometime before things are put away for your child to "review" and "summarize" what they have completed, and maybe you can ask. "What did you learn that you didn't know yesterday?"

This provides an excellent time to praise your child for doing so well and all the great things they can do if they keep up such hard work. Praise all positive steps your child makes....no step is too small to praise. But you have to develop that habit...it's easy to automatically praise big accomplishments...and you should. But you have to LOOK for small accomplishments and if you ask your child to tell you what they learned they didn't know yesterday....they will provide YOU an excuse to praise them and you are taking a break at the same time between subjects. This is what many people call a Win! Win!

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STRATEGY EIGHT

SNACKS AND BEVERAGES

Much to the surprise of many parents, but this psychologist recommends allowing a bit of multitasking during the school work time whereby your child may enjoy a snack and/or beverage “while” they work. Just be sure they retrieve their snack “before” they gather their supplies and get seated to get to work. The seemingly “casual” atmosphere does NOT diminish what is actually a highly structured study time. It also allows your child to feel that “learning” is “not as bad as I thought”.

Additional Guidance for Strategy Eight-SNACKS AND BEVERAGES

Ever enjoyed buttered popcorn while watching a movie? How about chips and dip during the Super Bowl? We all like to “multitask” when it includes FOOD. There is nothing wrong with snacking or having a beverage or even a bowl of candy (your rules might not allow this) while doing school work. It’s a teacher’s choice in the school setting but many of the best managed and most productive classrooms with the most motivated students are classrooms where the teacher allows snacks during work time.

But the teachers know, and you will want to remember, that students get their snacks “before” they sit down and get to work. If allowed, totally up to the parent in the home setting, then simply be sure your child gets their snacks, get their supplies, get seated, and get to work. You as a parent have the support of many teachers who utilize this very simple strategy. It fosters the comfort level children are after without really altering the highly structured situation we want to provide.

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STRATEGY NINE

TWO OR MORE CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE THE SAME “SCHOOL TIME” SCHEDULE

IF THEY ARE IN THE SAME HOUSE STUDYING

Grouping all the children in your home regardless of their grade levels is a good thing, not a bad thing. While an older student “might” at first think they don’t want to study with a younger student, when you explain you need them to role model appropriate behavior (and you do) as well as foster learning by a bit of peer or friend tutoring (and you do want this), then typically an older child will go right along with your suggestion. Break time becomes a good social time and the topics of their conversations are there’s to choose. Communication skills are being practiced in a natural setting. This is positive for all concerned. So go ahead, invite your neighbors over and have study time at your house today and give your neighbors a break. Particularly if they are following all the guidelines we offer to you. Then you can take a break and your children go study at their house tomorrow. Community is important, and we have all been isolated a bit too much lately. See how you like group learning, it may be for you.

Additional Guidance for Strategy Nine- TWO OR MORE CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE THE SAME “SCHOOL TIME” SCHEDULE

IF THEY ARE IN THE SAME HOUSE STUDYING

Teacher’s group children during work time for many reasons. But one of the reasons that might surprise you is that students working on academics seated beside students working on academics fosters a studious atmosphere and allows (actually encourages) students to model the appropriate work habits of the child beside them. If you have two or more children in your home (siblings, regardless of grade levels) or in your care (maybe you are sitting for a neighbor or friend) then you want STUDY TIME or WORK TIME (or whatever you have termed your two-hour block) to be the same for everyone in the house. This will obviously keep you from supervising multiple groups, but it allows all the children in your care the same ON time (school time) and OFF time (playtime). It’s good for the modeling purposes mentioned above and even better if you have children in different grade levels. So don’t let multiple grade levels stop you. Multiple grade levels are good as you ask the older student to model appropriate behavior for the younger student(s). You can imagine, you can also use the aforementioned Break Time for “peer tutoring” and an exchange time whereby “academics’ might actually be the topic. But if they would rather talk about the latest Star Wars movie, that’s just A-OK. The topic is their choice, the casually appearing talk time between work and between students is a good thing. And you aren’t supervising multiple learning sessions with not only our permission but with our support. Studies have long supported multiple grade-level settings as fostering improved social skills and academic gains.

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STRATEGY TEN

CHECK WORK

Checking work is at least half of the learning process. We all make mistakes, we just don't want to keep practicing the mistakes until they become habits. We want someone to tell us how we can improve and they can't tell us that if they don't observe us or our work. The different subjects in school have different manners of "checking". We read written passages to check them. We listen to a person to do oral reading to check them. We do math problems in reverse to check them. Regardless of the subject, we actually "learn" from examining how we might have made a mistake. The process of "checking our work" is typically done quickly if at all. Students don't realize it's actually helpful in the learning process. Students and adults (including you and I) don't really like to do anything twice and we look at "checking our work" as a waste of time. It is not a waste of time. It will actually save learning time in the future if we include it in the beginning. Check your child's work and have them check their own work if you aren't available.

Additional Guidance for Strategy Ten-CHECK WORK

We all make mistakes when we do things that we know full well how to do. We make even more mistakes as we are learning new tasks. Mistakes are fine. Mistakes are part of how we learn to not only do things the correct way but we are also learning "why" we want to be efficient. But yet, none of us like to check our work. You don't and I don't. And checking work is also something we like to "get over with" and we tend to "skim" as we look for our own errors. Your children are just like you and me. We and they are perfectly normal.

What's important is that you know that CHECKING WORK is not "just" so the teacher will score it as "correct". It's much more than that. It's actually at least one half of the learning process. As one example, once we find an error, we quickly learn what NOT to do and this keeps us from "practicing errors". If we practice doing something the wrong way, it becomes a habit, and habits are very hard to break. We actually "learn" from our mistakes.

Each type of learning activity has a different type of rather logical "checking process". Math is the most logical in that if you added two numbers and obtained the third number, we know to subtract one of the first two numbers and see if you get the other of the first two numbers. Yep, that's an easy one. But Reading and Writing have different styles of "checking". Oral Reading is "checked" by reading aloud to a listener who gives feedback. You can't check your own Oral Reading. You must have someone listen. And if you are writing something, you need another set of eyes to "read" what you "wrote". It's a whole lot easier to have someone check your work than for you to check your own work. You will see that teachers might be grading work, but they are "checking" work more than anything when they ask a child to read out loud for the teacher to listen or write a passage so the teacher can read the passage. This is how we discover how close we are getting to the target objective or skill which the lesson hopes to establish.

So you see, we "learn" from checking our work or another's work. It's a major part of the learning process and quite often the step most students want to or are willing to leave out. You need to make sure it's not left out. Real learning occurs when your child hands you their work for you to "check" it and you point out they might need to look back at a particular item and discuss how to do it correctly and what

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mistake they made. Teachers won't mind (unless it's a test) and will appreciate your helping your child "acquire" a new skill.

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STRATEGY ELEVEN

HAVE YOUR CHILD TELL YOU IN SUMMARY WHAT THEY JUST COMPLETED

Similar to #10/Checking Work but not the same is another helpful strategy to assist your child's "comprehension and memory". It is the strategy of Summarizing. As your child to tell you "in their words" what they assignment they finished was all about.

Summarizing is very difficult for students below the age of a typical 3rd grader. The early elementary aged students (k-2) will use single words or short sentences and pretty much repeat the instructions which were on the assignment (in the teacher's words). Younger students will say "I added" or "I subtracted" and those are appropriate responses. You should go back to one of the items and say "what did you add in this item?" and get as much of a description as you can. But if you only get a little bit of a summary, a little is good enough. The upper elementary aged students (3-6) should be able to "elaborate" a bit more. They might say something such as "I added two numbers and I carried the ten to the ten spot...etc." Or if a story read was Chicken Little (as an example) the child might "summarize" the story by saying "The story was about a chick that thought the sky was falling." You say, "What happened then?" They say "People got so they didn't believe the boy"...you ask the all-important question "Why?"

You can tell by your child's verbal summary if the "point" or "objective" of the activity was obtained. Who, What and Where questions are great and needed. But the real learning is ascertained when you ask Why questions. Yet, it should be understood that Why not the point in some activities is. "You" just use the WWW type of question or questions that "you" think allow your child the chance to summarize what they have learned "if" they are having difficulty expressing themselves.

And it's worth stating, don't ask your child to summarize in a written format...that's an entirely different type of assignment. We only suggest that you ask your child to summarize using their spoken words. It's easier, it's to the point and it accomplishes the purpose of allowing you to hear your child explain what they learned. We do not need or suggest that you have this "summary" written.

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One way to help our child take the information they just learned and file it way in their memory "and" relate it to other information in the "big scheme of things" is to ask them to put what they "just" learned into their words. You simply ask them, "In your words, what have you been doing?" You should expect short (even one word answers sometimes) from children grades k-2. This is typical and normal as children are in 3rd grade quiet often before they develop the abstract ability to "summarize" and "synthesize" (this is not a set in stone limitation but a general observation of those in child cognitive developmental studies). Assist your child with Who, What, Where and Why types of questions to help you "hear" them explain what they are learning. No written product is expected nor would it be helpful...that is another type of learning. We want ONLY that you take the time to ask your child about the tasks they are involved to assist their learning, assist your awareness of their mastery and to further enhance the experience of distant learning which is taking place in your home. This "summary" task at the end of activities is also a nice way to find reason to "praise" your child and close out that activity and move on to the next. All of these are good.

Anderson Creek Academy

STRATEGY TWELVE

GET DRESSED IN DAY CLOTHES APPROPRIATE FOR SCHOOL

It is not required nor is it strongly suggested but it would be helpful if your children were asked to dress as if they were dressing for school and not to do study time or school time activities in pajamas or extremely casual attire. This is merely a suggestion as to the term Dress for Success! Applies here in that if we and our children approach the learning tasks as a very different task than the rest of the day, we help them get in the mindset for LEARNING which is a different mindset than one required for PLAY.

Additional Guidance for Strategy Twelve- GET DRESSED IN DAY CLOTHES APPROPRIATE FOR SCHOOL

You've heard the term, "Dress for Success!" It applies here. You have probably (having read items 1-11 before reading this item) established a "time period" that you set aside Monday to Friday for School Work. You have probably established a "place" where School Work happens. You have most likely provided your child with a storage container to keep all their "supplies" in and ready to go. So now, we have imposed or even offered a lot of structure. We then installed a "rewarding activity" after the School Work to reward your child for "doing their best". We want you to do everything that is reasonable to ensure your child is comfortable and relaxed but that they separate "playtime" from "school time" and approach the learning tasks with the frame of mind that helps them absorb both content and processes. It would help you, after all, that you've done to assure success, to ask your child to "dress" similar to how they would dress for school.

Pajamas are no more conducive to learning than lounging in a bean bag chair or bed is to learning. Simply by dressing for school will help announce, it's not playtime, it's learning time...or school time. You obviously don't have to do this, it is merely a suggestion and one that helps establish a change in expectations from playtime to school time. It simply helps announce..."It's school time!". (Remember the bell that rings in all of the old Westerns as school teachers announce it is "learning time"?....This is similar).