

Tips for Easing the Transition to Virtual Learning

Making the transition to virtual learning can be difficult for your family. Whether your child or teen will be doing virtual learning full-time or part-time, as parents, it is important to set your child up for success and assist in the maintenance of academic skills. Here are some tips on how to ease this transition.

Prepare for virtual learning

- **Create a workspace** for your child/teen designated for virtual learning. Free the space of distractions as much as possible and use this space for work every day to create a routine for your child/teen.
- **Continue to use organizational systems** as needed. Increase the likelihood your child will be prepared each day. Consider the following:
 - Backpacks (if space is tight at home, this can serve as a base for all materials)
 - Folders
 - Notebooks
 - Pencil cases/school supplies bin
- **Prepare your child to be on video.** This may include practice with different baseline skills or creating rules around expectations. For example:
 - Consider setting up a group meeting with friends or family prior to schooling for practice.
 - If needed, you may want to gradually expose your child to being on video. Consider creating a reinforcement system as you practice and gradually increase the amount of time needed to be in front of the video before the reward
 - Outline that classroom expectations are still needed (e.g. refraining from talking unless call upon, closing other tabs while attending class, etc.)

- **Make sure all electronics are working effectively** and your child is comfortable speaking and listening from a screen. Provide headphones, if appropriate, to eliminate noise from other siblings or family members.

Keep up with routines

- **Continue to maintain day-to-day routines** as you would if your child/teen were leaving for school (e.g. changing out of our pajamas, making lunch the night before, bedtime routines, etc.).
- **Create a daily schedule of expectations** that is visible and meets the needs of your child/teen. Depending on their ability level, consider “first/then” visuals, [visual schedules](#), written check lists, or even individual planners.
- **Be prepared to create new routines.** It may be beneficial for you and your child/teen to schedule schoolwork at times that work best for you both depending on their required level of need.

Schedule effectively

- **Consider scheduling free time/independent play** during times when parents/caregivers are busier with work.
- **Plan to tackle more challenging work** during a time of day that parents/caregivers can assist.
- **If you know your child works best** at different times throughout the day, schedule accordingly.
- **Consider scheduling schoolwork** at the same time of day as other siblings. This may decrease distraction and encourage aiding each other.

Foster independence

- **Create a task analysis for different skills** (e.g. step by step on how to log in to the computer).
- **If your child/teen is more independent**, consider building in “check-ins” throughout the day to maintain they are keeping on track.
- **Use a timer** or first/then visual to set expectations of how long to complete a certain task
- **Use reinforcement systems** for working independently. For younger children, it may be as simple as earning a reward when the child was able to attend in front of the screen for a certain amount of time. For older individuals, they may be earning allowance for completing an entire day of expectations without only 1-2 reminders from parents.
- **Identify ways to signal** that parents are “not available.” This may be a note on your office door while you’re in a meeting or placing a mark on a clock when it is OK to interrupt.

Set yourself up for success

- **Keep lines of communication open** with teachers about different accommodations needed to help your individual child succeed with certain subject areas.

- **Celebrate the small wins.** Remember that moving to remote education is a learning experience for students, parents, and teachers alike, so try to remain flexible.
- **Maintain your own self-care.** Practice meditation, go for a walk or engage in a preferred activity a few times a week. Taking care of yourself will better prepare you to balance expectations effectively throughout the day.
- **For full-time working parents**, consider networking with neighbors, families and/or local groups to support virtual learning.
- **Consider accepting more formal supports** such as counseling or other mental health services. See the CDC [video here](#) on stress and anxiety with COVID-19.

Helpful Resources

www.healthychildren.org

www.kidshealth.org

[American Academy of Pediatrics COVID-19 Guidance](#)

Need more ideas or help?

Schedule a consultation with Rethink’s behavior experts today!