



*Be the Best that You can Be*

# *Cedarwood School*

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## NEW NORMAL

With the world wide lockdown and school closures now part of our new normal, children around the world are getting used to their new classrooms: the dining room table, the couch, or even their bedroom floors. Many parents are now faced with the reality of having to juggle the online school curricular while meeting their employment expectations. These drastic changes have resulted in shifts in the roles and responsibilities that all stakeholders have in education. Parents who have never had to facilitate the process of learning, have now been thrown into the deep end of the homeschooling pool. Teachers who thrive off their ability to use their classrooms as places of discovery and actively engage with their learners have been forced into spending many lonely hours in front of computer screens to record lessons. While children are struggling with not seeing their friends, their teachers, they are also realizing that maybe mommy doesn't know mathematics as well as they thought she did. Parents, teachers, and children alike are frazzled, overwhelmed, and trying to find their feet as they adjust to these new roles.

This article documents a few tips taken from a variety of sources that we propose to be applied in your homes, as you adjust to this 'new normal'. These tips are aimed at helping your children transition and adapt to online learning and by extension, we hope they will help you as parents tackle the demands online learning has unexpectedly placed on you.

### **Tips:**

#### **1) Set aside a designated learning space**

Like adults, children learn best in quiet spaces that are removed from distraction. It is important to try and create a designated learning space for your child within the home. If possible, try and keep this space separate from where the child plays games, watches TV, or sleeps. This will promote concentration, limit distraction, and assist the child in separating work from leisure.



#### **2) Establish a routine**

Children function optimally in predictable environments. As such, attempting to create predictability amidst the uncertainty will assist your child in coping with the new way of doing school. Maintain consistent wake-up and bedtimes as well as scheduled tea and lunch breaks within the day. This will assist the child in adapting to the 'new normal'. During tea and lunch breaks encourage your child to play outside, get some fresh air, or do an activity that will allow for a break from screen time. Scheduling time during the week for children to connect virtually with friends, whether on Zoom, Skype, or online gaming will also assist in developing



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the child's social and emotional skills during this time. Make sure you try to schedule a time to have some fun with your child. This is also important in developing and maintaining your relationship with your child. While this adjusting to the 'new normal' can be incredibly stressful, you may not have the opportunity to spend as much quality time with your child as you have now. Try and make the most of this by scheduling regular games nights, baking expeditions, and other fun activities that will bring you closer as a family.



### 3) Keep connected with other parents



Every parent who has a child at home who is going through online learning will be experiencing similar frustrations and challenges. It is important that as a parent body you try to connect regularly to share these experiences, provide some insight as to what has worked for you, and ultimately support each other in taking on this new parent-teacher role.

### 4) Establish open and frequent communication with teachers

Similar to you and your child, this is the teachers' first experience of online teaching. As such you need to establish frequent and open communication with your child's teachers. Teachers are working hard to ensure that the academic needs of your child are met and they aim to assist them in becoming the best that they can be. If your child is experiencing difficulties, speak to the teacher and together you might be able to brainstorm how best to support the child through this time. The SBST is also always willing to lend a hand.

### 5) Adjust your expectations



Finally, remember things are not normal at the moment and therefore adjusting your expectations to fit this 'new normal' might be beneficial to both you and your child. In light of this, patience is key. Children take longer than adults to process information, they are still learning so the work that they produce will not be perfect and this imperfection is what is expected by the teachers. Children learn best from their mistakes so allowing them to make these mistakes is ok. Try to not let the work, and the stress of completing everything, overwhelm you. Encourage your child to try their best and don't sweat the small stuff. If the child does not finish an activity or homework, this is ok as long as they have tried their best. Just remember to keep the teacher in the loop so as not to add additional stress to yourself, your child, and the teacher.

Although the effects of this pandemic on the education sector have been a tough pill to swallow, your resilient responses to these changes have not gone unnoticed. These changes have highlighted that together with this new lifestyle, the Cedarwood parents are doing their best to adjust. We commend you all on your efforts and unwavering commitment to your children's education.



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We hope that the tips listed above will accompany your transition to online learning. Should you find that these challenges persist and increase your or your child's anxiety, please reach out to someone in the school community or a healthcare practitioner to help you as you navigate your way through these changes.

## **Resources used**

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