

# How can I help my elementary child stay focused during online learning?

## PARENT TIP SHEET

Learning online isn't always easy. If you're struggling to help your child, you are not alone! Here are a few tips to help.

### Tip 1: Set up an organized workspace.

Some classroom desks are just 18 inches x 24 inches. Your child's workspace doesn't need to be big or fancy. Keep it simple!



#### Say This

- "Let's create a workspace to help you stay focused while you learn online."
- "How can we make your workspace more organized than it is now?"



#### Do This

- Encourage your child to help set up the new workspace. If he helps, he may feel more invested in his workspace.
- Small kitchen table? No problem! Section off the workspace using binders, cardboard, cereal boxes, or even house plants.



#### Check This

- Watch your child participate in an online class. Does this new workspace help him stay focused?
- If your child has trouble sitting or working at a table for hours, let him change locations or stand while working.

If your child gets easily distracted or frustrated, use a timer to break learning into smaller chunks. When he needs a brain break, allow him to turn off his screen for a minute or two.

### Tip 2: Minimize distractions.

Just like at school, your child may be distracted while learning online. Keeping your child focused can be an easy fix!



#### Say This

- "What helps you focus when you are learning online?"
- "Does anything distract you when you are learning online?"

Reduce distractions from classmates by setting the screen so that your child can only see the teacher and what is being shared.



### Do This

- Once you determine what your child finds distracting, create a checklist of things to do before your child logs in (e.g., use the bathroom, turn off TV, put phone away).
- Let your child use headphones to help him focus on class instruction instead of noisy distractions.



### Check This

- Ask your child's teacher to send you an email or text after class to let you know if your child had trouble focusing during online instruction.
- Based on what the teacher says, think of ways to limit future distractions.

## Tip 3: Develop student-teacher relationships.

Students who have a positive relationship with their teacher are often more engaged in class. Positive news alert: It is possible for your child to build a relationship with his teacher even while learning online!



### Say This

- "Let's set up a time for you to chat with your new teacher."
- "I bet she would love to hear about \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., your new book, what you did this weekend)."



### Do This

- Help your child set up a short video chat with his teacher, even for 5 or 10 minutes. How often you do this will depend on your child's needs and the teacher's availability.
- Encourage your child to share his interests, show off his pets, and have a fun, relaxed conversation with his teacher.



### Check This

- Ask your child questions about his chat with the teacher. Does he seem more interested after a short video chat?
- Set up consistent times (weekly, monthly) for your child to check in with his teacher.

## References

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