



**EVIDENCE
FOR LEARNING**

Advice for families from the Education Endowment Foundation (UK) and Social Ventures Australia (SVA)

Introduction

As a result of the measures taken to control the COVID-19 pandemic, many children are not attending their regular school or early learning centre and may not do so for some time. This is leading schools and centres to develop educator led, home-supported learning. As a parent, you can be an effective partner in this learning. This page has some key learning concepts for you to keep in mind as you navigate your new, expanded role.

Support, don't replace, what teachers do



Teachers are degree trained professionals, often with many years of classroom experience. You cannot replace them or do their job, and that isn't expected of you. Schools and centres are preparing and delivering their model of educator led, home-supported learning. You are the critical, home-based person who can help with that learning but follow their lead. There are very important things you can do to set your children up for success.

Set up for success



You will make a big difference for your child's learning if you:

- Create an orderly environment for learning, for example, by limiting distractions
- Help to set and reinforce routines and timetables
- Support children to be ready for learning, including ensuring they have the materials that they need
- Engage in meaningful conversations about learning
- Communicate with your child's teacher if they need additional support

Meaningful conversations



Good dialogue in the home strengthens what is being taught by the educator. It starts with just talking, and building language and reasoning skills through expressing ourselves. It develops into effective ways to give feedback– not just praising talent or effort (*good job!*) but recognising specific achievements and suggesting what to do next to improve (*I was pleased that you re-read that sentence from the beginning. That is a good thing to do whenever you get stuck!*). And later it creates the space for respectful discussions on challenging topics through adolescence. In short; 'Thanks, I've learned something new today. Have you thought about ...?'

Creating confident learners



Build a positive attitude to learning. It begins with children feeling loved, safe and supported. It incorporates a 'growth mindset'; which emphasises that people aren't born with a fixed amount of intelligence. Instead they can always take their abilities to the next level with perseverance and thoughtfulness. It also helps children see mistakes as a guide for what needs to be learnt next. Parents can model a growth mindset by speaking aloud about their own mindsets (*Something didn't go right for me today, so I'll need to try a different way of doing it tomorrow*). This might be particularly relevant when exploring subjects such as maths, where anxiety can be high, and where encouraging persistence might be valuable.

In short, it swaps 'I can't' with 'I can't YET'.

Thinking about thinking



Helps your child to understand how they learn best. It includes strategies for solving problems and for coming up with new ideas. It involves knowing how to track progress, reflecting on what is going well and what could be done differently. Being aware of your thinking is a great way to be more productive. You can support your children to think about their thinking by: helping them to manage time; helping them to set goals; helping them to organise their learning space; and, prompting them to ask questions about their learning (*what would you change next time? are you moving towards your goal?*)

Practice makes perfect



Reminds us the learning brain works like a muscle; it only grows with practice. We need lots of effort to grasp new concepts and skills, and we can easily forget them without reinforcement. But once they're automatic, they can be effortlessly drawn on when going it to the next level of challenge.

In short, 'mastering the basics so you can enjoy the fun of learning more'.