



# How to help your extrovert with at-home learning

The pressures from the COVID-19 pandemic became apparent quickly: working from home, kids going to school from home, caring for elderly parents, and the stressors from isolation that has no defined timetable. To add to it all, you have a child who is antsy to go back to school in person. Who knew?

If you find yourself in this scenario, you most likely have an extrovert for a child. The solitude and quiet of Zoom and online education may not fit his/her learning style. He/she probably misses the back-and-forth of the classroom, and the ongoing buzz of the hallway. However, your community has decided to delay returning to school full-time. If that's the case, below are ways to help your extrovert adjust to at-home learning.

- Assess what aspects of school are being missed most. Friends? Music class? Physical education or sports? Then determine how those activities can be substituted remotely: Regular FaceTime meetings with friends; online music lessons; or regular outside physical activity, possibly scheduled as a break in the school day.

- To help focus higher-energy children and adolescents who struggle with sitting in front of a screen, start the day with physical activity and/or schedule it midday as though it were a recess. You can also alternate the setting of the home classroom (i.e., morning classes in the dining room, afternoon classes in the kitchen). Doing so can help break up a school day.
- Introducing a new activity can be a good distraction from the sameness that can develop with remote learning. Online cooking, art, and language classes have become very popular, and companies like GroupOn are offering discounts for such classes. A lot of community education centers are offering online opportunities as well.
- Try to be proactive regarding boredom. Given the pandemic-induced sameness of life right now, even little things—like eating lunch or dinner outside or trying a different hiking trail—can break up the monotony.
- Give your child a role in planning or organizing things—planning an outdoor activity with a friend; choosing which movie to watch; or picking out a recipe to make for dinner.

You may not be accustomed to your extrovert feeling anxious, but that may be the case during a time that is certainly unparalleled in your child's life. Below are some tips to help you manage that anxiety.

- Check in regularly—either at the breakfast table or before bedtime, for example. Encourage active conversation rather than settling for “It’s fine” or “I don’t know.” Ask them to share something good and something bad that happened that day. Ask them to share something they are grateful for.
- Allow daydreaming and goal-setting—about future plans, what they want to do once the pandemic is over, or what they would like to do for a future vacation to make up for this one.
- Be creative in how you plan things, and try to be as flexible as possible. These are not normal times, so the typical solutions and problem-solving approaches aren’t going to necessarily be the most feasible.