

Anderson Center Consulting

The In-Home Educator

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When Education Must Occur at Home...

It is occurring in an environment that is naturally filled with an abundance of competing variables!



Having a good plan can help



School Day Routines

It is important to create and maintain routines specific for days when learning will occur in the home. These routines set the stage for learning.

- Times for waking up and going to sleep
 - Similar to traditional school days
 - May shift wake-up times to be a little later in the day if this is more effective for the learner but keep times consistent
- Morning routines
 - Breakfast
 - Hygiene routines
 - Getting dressed for the day prior to starting academics
- Start time for academics

Determine the right location(s)

Having a predictable/stable location helps children understand where schoolwork occurs in your home (academic time vs. leisure time)

- Where in your home is the best fit for your child's needs?
- How much space do they need?
 - The space should have limited distractions and be free of clutter but should provide easy access to needed materials
- Does it need to be quiet or is background noise better?
 - Some classrooms incorporate soothing music (without lyrics) into times of day where students are working independently or in small groups.

Have this conversation with your child, observe how they work best, and identify a consistent place where they can work.



Make needed materials readily available

- Be prepared....make sure the materials they will likely need are in their work space or they know where and how to access them
 - Use portable storage, if needed
 - Pre-print worksheets or other virtual documents, if possible
- Help them be prepared:
 - Do they know how to locate assignments and messages from teachers?
 - Teacher website
 - Google classroom
 - Virtual learning
 - Do they know how/when to access the platform for face time with teachers
 - Parents and learners should go through the steps to access these platforms and acquaint themselves with the technology prior to sessions

School Day Schedule

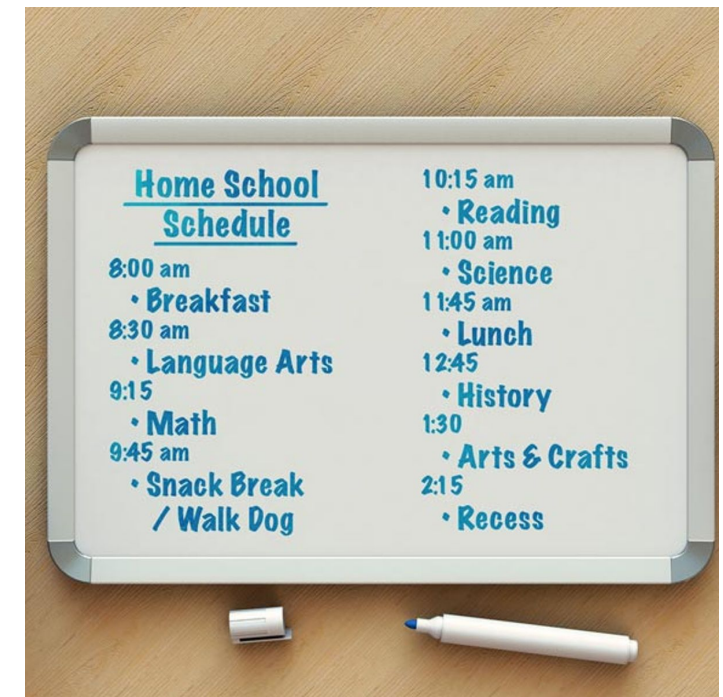
- Help your child create a school day schedule
 - If possible, involve the learner in the creation of the schedule
 - Try to schedule tasks so learners have a variety of activity formats throughout their academic day. Intermix writing tasks, computer lessons, hands-on activities, etc.
- Embed self-monitoring to help learners keep track of their progress and ensure they complete all assigned tasks
 - “To Do” checklist
 - For older children, establish a monitoring system for them to keep track of larger assignments (calendar, checklist)
- Create a visual schedule to guide the learner through their day
 - Review the schedule and objectives together at the start of each day



Ginger Casa



Interstice



Salon.com

Embed choices

- Choice can go a long way towards preventing behavior that is a result of wanting to avoid/postpone less preferred or challenging activities (such as schoolwork)
 - Order of tasks
 - Allow your child to choose the order in which they want to complete their assignments
 - Writing utensils to use
 - Allow your child to choose what they will write with (i.e., pen, pencil, marker)
 - If the task is not time sensitive, allow your child to choose...
 - When they will start (i.e., in 5 minutes, 10 minutes, etc.)
 - How long they will work on a task (i.e., 10 minutes, 20 minutes, etc.)



People Matters

Choice reduces the power struggle and increases compliance

Embed brain breaks

- Brain breaks are frequently used in school settings to avoid overload and burnout
 - Brain breaks are planned shifts in activity that activate different parts of the brain so the networks that are primarily focusing on the work task get to rest
 - Brain breaks promote optimal performance and help commit new information to memory
- Breaks can be based on amount of time, after each element of work/subject or when your child is showing increased signs of inattention
 - If your child is focused on the same task, a short brain break is recommended every 15 minutes for elementary-aged students and every 20-30 minutes for older students
 - Some children will be able to identify when they need breaks, but others may need you to suggest the break
 - Teach your child to begin to identify when a break is needed.
 - Point out to the child the cues that they need a break; i.e., “I see that you are shifting in your seat, let’s take a short break to get a drink of water.”

What should breaks look like?

- Breaks should be short, 2-4 minutes on average
- Try to include some element of movement into the break
 - Getting up to get a drink
 - Quick walk around the house
 - Stretching/yoga
 - Guided movement break video
- Avoid
 - Watching TV or playing video games (devices)
 - Playing with toys or other leisure activities associated with free time



GoNoodle.com



Cosmic Kids Yoga

Transitions

- Establish a routine for transitioning to and between tasks
 - Does your child need advanced warning?
 - “We will start your school work in 5 minutes.”
 - Consider using a timer or natural endings to activities (when you are done with ____, it’s time to start your homework; for younger kids can use songs)
 - Make sure you have their attention before transitioning (are you interrupting something highly entertaining?)
 - Consider reinforcement for successful transitions (upon arrival to work location)
- If transitioning to the school routine at the start of the day is difficult, consider starting your learner’s schedule with a preferred task



Praise and
Reinforce
Frequently



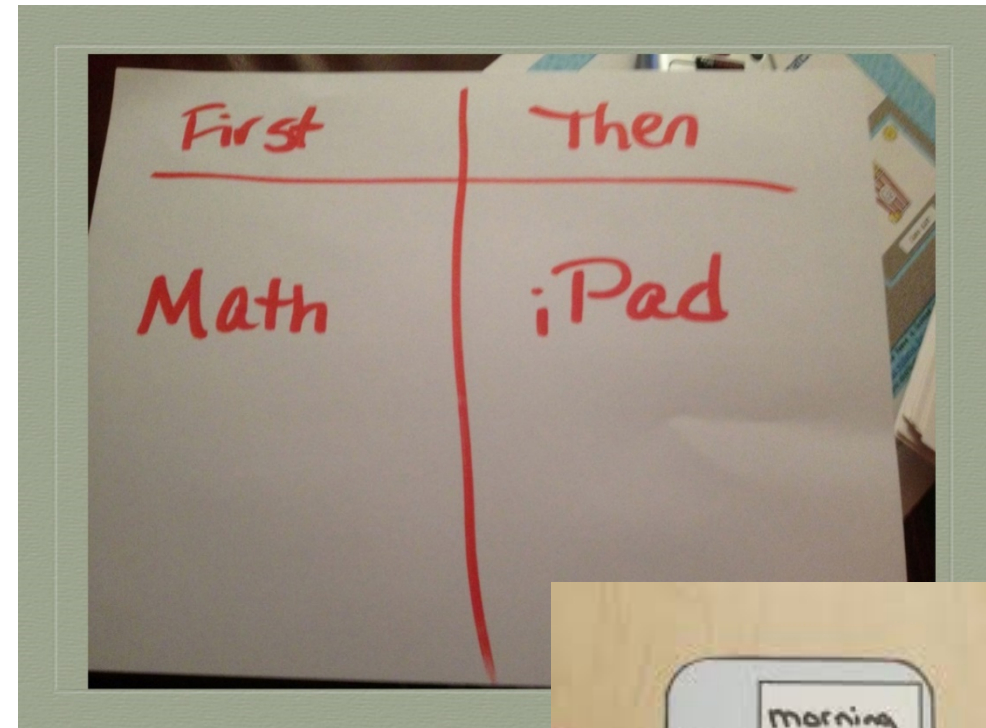
Use reinforcement

- Reinforcement is something that increases future likelihood of a behavior
- Some children may not be intrinsically motivated by getting good grades
- You may need to provide additional reinforcement for any/all components of the school day
 - Transitions
 - Staying on task
 - Trying their best
 - Accepting correction

First-Then

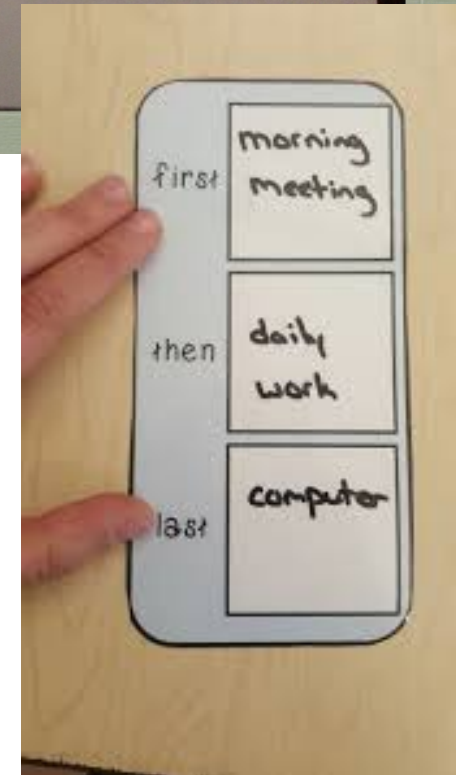
Reinforcement can be what they get to do after work is completed:

- “First work, then we will take a walk.”
- May need to remind children of this with a visual/written cue



Autism Classroom

Autism Classroom



More on reinforcement

- Remember to praise and acknowledge small steps toward what you would like in-home academics to look like
- Some children may need a more complex reinforcement plan
 - Consider “tokens” or “points” earned toward a larger reward later on
 - This can allow for tasks/subjects that are more challenging to be “worth” more
 - Token systems allow you to delay a reward or highly preferred reinforcer
 - Set clear expectations for what needs to occur prior to reinforcement



Bits of Everything

Supplementing the Academics

- Traditional school settings teach much more than academics. Socialization, collaboration, self-regulation and independence are a few of the skill areas addressed in the school setting.
- Socialization:
 - Improves emotional and mental health
 - Improves confidence and self-esteem
 - Particularly important for children with special needs
- Incorporating socialization
 - Encourage phone conversations or face time with family and friends
 - Encourage learners to reach out to peers for help or to share their accomplishments

Supplementing the Academics

- Stay active
 - Physical education, recess, walking to the bus stop, transitioning from class to class – the traditional school day is full of opportunities for movement. Be mindful of incorporating opportunities for movement into your learner's day.
- Supplementing exercise
 - Take a daily family walk or bike ride or do yoga — these are great ways to let your learner burn off energy and make sure everyone is staying active

References and Resources

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