

How to Create a Learning Environment at Home

Designate a space for learning

- Provide a separate space away from other areas of everyday living or other distractions.
- If needed, the learning space can be a shared space.
- The space should be a comfortable, inviting space with room to lay out work and good lighting.
- Items used for school should be kept in one place (i.e., crate, box, baggie, etc.) and should be easily accessible during learning/working time.
- Avoid bedrooms, lounge areas, playrooms, or other areas with distractions.
- Allow room for movement and remember that it's ok for students to kneel, stand, rock, etc. if that helps them work.
- Mark the space with a sign if needed!

Parental Assistance

- Stay near your child so that he/she can ask for help and feel supported.
- Parents should be close by to give positive praise or offer feedback or assistance.
- Work with your student and not for them to help build their confidence and level of independence but do not expect them to be able to work for

extended periods of time without assistance. (See Levels of Prompting handout for more information.)

- Be interested in what they are learning and find ways to incorporate that topic/skill into your regular day (making connections to daily life).
- Teach your student to show respect by showing them respect.

Keep Space Organized

- Reduce clutter in work area.
- Provide a place for unfinished/finished work and supplies.
- Keep needed items easily accessible.
- Keep area free of distracting items (toys, electronics, etc.).
- Store items in a way that students can get/use them without having to ask for help.

Keep a Daily Routine

- As much as possible, follow your normal morning routine such as getting dressed, eating breakfast, brushing teeth, etc.
- Try to stick to a daily school routine (but always be flexible!).
- Allow short breaks during work sessions (this is also dependent on the needs of your child – see information on behavior, using break cards, using a timer, etc. for more information).
- Breaks could be for a movement song, removing work for a short time, listening to a song, eating a quick snack, etc.
- Notice how long your child can work before getting distracted, fatigued, or frustrated and consider scheduling breaks before/around that time.

- Breaks will be different for each child – some need several short breaks throughout their day while others can work longer periods for longer breaks – do what’s best for your individual child.
- You may want to try giving your child options of the order in which tasks will be completed each day and even allow them to choose when their breaks will be and what kind of breaks they will be to give them a feeling of control.

Leave Room for Failure

- Be flexible! Remember that no 2 days are alike (and no 2 hours are alike either!).
- Try not to stress or overreact if your child becomes frustrated, throws a tantrum, cries, etc. Learn to reach out to them and think about what you could do to 1) help prevent that breakdown from occurring next time, and 2) think about your response and what you could do next time.
- A positive learning environment can set the tone for everything else that is required and increase student effort and achievement – if you are positive, your student is more likely to be successful!

References:

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