

Tips for Parents Part 2

Managing working from home and home schooling...

Right then... The magic wand is needed here and we ain't got one so try these techniques. They are tried and tested by myself and others in classrooms and in some very challenging circumstances in Lambeth and Clacton over the years. They do work but you need to persevere. A lot of these techniques are designed to support pupils with SEND and behavioural issues but they are also very useful for all children.

Top Tips:

- Always see behavioural or organisational skills as skills to be modelled and taught by you and then practised. I always say avoid seeing any negative behaviours as 'naughty'. This has never helped in my opinion. Try to understand why your child is acting out or 'pretending' (in your view) that they need help or don't know what to do. A classic I used to hear from parents trying to support their child at home with reading was, "But you could read that word yesterday... Why can't you remember it?" What's the point of this? What are you insinuating? That your child is purposefully refusing to remember it just to annoy you?! Even if they were, assume the best about your child's intentions and develop empathy towards their behaviours.
- Top skills to teach your child when working from home:
 - independence
 - self-organisation
 - problem solving (what to do when stuck)
- Explain what working independently is and why it's going to be important in your house and life generally.
- Say that we will practise it and reward when it's being demonstrated.
- You model it. I would model how NOT to be independent - ask your child to pretend to be you and you them. Tell them that they are working on a very important document that your workplace needs finishing by x time. Then you model attempting one of their learning tasks and keep interrupting them. Make this funny.
- Then model what it should look like.

Strategies to use:

- Task Planner: this is a mini timetable for the morning tasks. See photo example. Set out clear expectations with your child. You could agree it with them, starting with smaller timed tasks to begin with depending on their age.
- Get a clock/timer/buzzer and ask your child to use it. Let them be in charge of this.
- Use visuals if needed instead of words.
- You could allow your child to choose their own brain breaks. You could do these together and include a drink or snack.
- Avoid gadgets all morning wherever possible unless they are using it for research or online learning. Start as you mean to go on. Some children may struggle with the limits of gadget time but if you stick to it, it will get easier. Think about researching with your child the reasons why gadgets and screen time should be limited. Find the facts and evidence together.
- The learning tasks may need to be broken down even further for your child. Some schools may do this using a 'WALT' (We are learning to...) title or a Success Criteria/Steps to Success which breaks down the learning into steps. This is very useful. If your child is doing a reading comprehension, the steps to success might look like something like this:
 1. Read the text/story.
 2. Read the question.
 3. Highlight the key words in the question.
 4. Find the key words in the text.
 5. Try to answer the question.
- Set your child off first thing - I would go through the task planner and steps to success together.
- Make a sign or use a funny object which you put on your door or in your space when you cannot be disturbed. Most pupils in school manage this. They have to as they are in a class of thirty children. You could remind them that when they return to school, this will be a crucial skill - working independently. It tells

Time:	What:	Completed:
9-9.45	Maths task	✓ ①
9.45-10	Brain break	
10-10.45	English task	
10.45-11	Brain break	
11-11.45	Finishing off/ Building/ Construction/ Art...	

your child that they can't disturb you at this time and need to find a solution to their problem themselves, unless there is an emergency such as the ceiling falling down!

- Set up a box of activities if your child really gets stuck and needs a different activity. This could include:
 - word searches
 - handwriting
 - multiplication table practice
 - drawing/colouring
 - making lists of things – for example, go for a walk in the garden and make a list of 10 things you can see, check your spellings
 - worksheets – there is tons of stuff online
 - design a healthy meal – find a recipe in this recipe book that you would like to make later in the week
 - have an on-going project based on something your child loves such as fast cars or horses where they can research, draw, write in a scrapbook, make models using Lego, etc.
- Allocate a space/office to your child with room/shelf to keep their resources and display their work/models. At the end of every session and day, ask the whole family to share what they have been doing. Praise and give attention to all the good things your child has achieved. Avoid focusing on the negatives. Particularly refer to their independence skills and how well they did. Even if they didn't do that well, talk about what went well and how to get better tomorrow. say that you could have done better too – you got distracted when...