

Creating a Learning Space at Home

A guide for students and parents

By: Paula Jacoby-Garrett and Rachel Ziter-Grant, Digital Engineers

In the blink of an eye - our lives changed with COVID-19. The new normal of learning from home or a hybrid of learning from home part-time and school part-time creates new challenges. While schools are designed with students and academics in mind - our homes were not. Yet, creating a productive learning environment at home is key to academic success.

Create an Area for Learning

The foundation of success is establishing an area for learning at home that will be used regularly. While you may not have an extra room to create a classroom, you can create a space for learning with what you have. So “instead of focusing on square footage and actual space, think about creating consistency. You can dedicate a corner of a room, but you can also create learning spaces that are more flexible. For example, pull out the same foldable chairs and tables when it is time to learn or create a learning box you can bring to the kitchen table each day.” (Waterford.org)

Choose an area with minimal distractions, remove clutter from the workspace, and keep your child in mind - do they learn better in an open space or a more closed environment? Make sure the area is well lit - either by natural light or by light fixtures. If a permanent study area isn't possible in your household, designate an area that can be used during school hours, then use a box or container to house your school supplies during the rest of the day.

Make the Area Personal and Comfortable

Knowing what kind of learner your child is will be helpful to create a productive environment. Can your child sit at a desk or table quietly for long periods, or do they prefer music and the ability to move around the room? Maybe a desk or table isn't a good fit for your child, but a beanbag chair or pillows on a rug would be more conducive to learning. While the space needs to be functional, it also needs to be inviting. Personalize it to create an environment that your child wants to be in.

Establish Rules for Class Time

Set up rules for the at-home classroom and how it will be utilized. Determine what can and can not be in the area. For example, are pets distracting, or are they comforting? Are siblings working in the same area or different spaces? Establish a daily schedule determining when your child will start their day, and when breaks, snack time, and lunch will be provided. For most children, food can be a distraction, and to have full access to the kitchen can take time away from learning.

Dress for Success

While school may be at home, getting up and dressing appropriately for school sets the stage and helps establish a school routine. So - say no to pajamas for school and set standards for what can be worn at school - even if it is at home.

Whether your student is learning entirely from home or learning in a hybrid setting, creating a productive learning environment through thoughtful consideration of space, time, and child's preferences is key to a successful school year.