

HOW TO COPE WITH THE STRESS OF HOMESCHOOLING (FOR PARENTS)

Homeschooling can feel like uncharted territory, particularly if you're doing it because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It's completely normal to feel stressed, uncertain, and overwhelmed about the days to come. While homeschooling can be a bit unpredictable at times, you can put your best foot forward by developing a simple routine and not putting too much pressure on yourself or your kids.

ADJUST YOUR MINDSET

GET SUPPORT FROM OTHER PARENTS AND HOMESCHOOL TEACHERS.

If you've been out of school for a while and suddenly find yourself with the role of "teacher," you probably feel pretty overwhelmed. Thankfully, there are a lot of resources you can take advantage of. Post on forums or join social media groups dedicated to homeschooling during the pandemic. The people there can be a wealth of knowledge and support! You might also talk to parents who regularly homeschool their kids to get a better idea of what their schedule and learning objectives look like.

REMINDE YOURSELF WHY YOU'RE HOMESCHOOLING IN THE FIRST PLACE.

Instead of viewing your situation as homeschooling, view it as a necessary part of keeping your children safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. It's okay if you struggle a bit—what's most important is keeping your family healthy. Homeschooling can be tough, especially if you're adjusting to a crisis like COVID-19. On the more stressful days, remind yourself that you're helping your children stay educated and well-adjusted during an uncertain time.

PRACTICE GRATITUDE ON A DAILY BASIS WITH YOUR HOUSEHOLD.

Take a few minutes with your kids to write out or sketch something that each of you is thankful for. Additionally, plan out 1 thing you want to accomplish during the day, along with one thing you can stop worrying about.¹ For instance, you can say something like: "I'm thankful for the opportunity to spend more time with my family. Today, I'm going to help my kids with a science experiment. I'm going to forget about any stress and meltdowns from yesterday and make today the best it can possibly be."

ADJUST YOUR EXPECTATIONS ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS.

Try not to expect the world of yourself or your children. Homeschooling is tricky, and it'll only seem more stressful and overwhelming if you set your expectations sky-high. Accept the fact that your children may not be as productive as you'd like them to be, which is okay.² Don't expect your kids to sit and study for 8 hours each day. Instead, focus on giving them an engaging, thorough education that meshes with your own work schedule.

SWITCH UP YOUR TEACHING STYLE IF YOUR KIDS AREN'T INTERESTED.

Pay attention to how your kids react and engage with each lesson. Certain teaching styles may not resonate well with your children—if this is the case, don't be afraid to change it up. Make your lessons more hands-on, or include more visual guides. Keep a close eye on your kids and see what types of lessons resonate with them the most.³ For instance, if your kids aren't a fan of reading out loud, have them listen to audiobooks instead. If your children aren't engaged with a lecture, add in some posters and visual aids. Or, if your kids seem bored and cooped up, move to the front porch or backyard for a change of scenery.

REDUCE STRESS WITH A ROUTINE

OUTLINE A ROUGH SCHEDULE FOR EACH DAY.

Develop some realistic goals for your family as well as your individual kids, which will help you know what to focus on for the day. With the entire household in mind, plan out a schedule that you can realistically manage and balance with other obligations you have, like your job.⁴ For instance, you might start the day with breakfast and clean up, then let your kids work on assignments while you focus on your job. At this point, you can have lunch, followed by a bit more studying or quiet time. Finish off the day with a fun or social activity, like going for a walk or kicking a ball around outside, to keep your kids engaged.

