

Effective Routines for Students at Home

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Focus Areas

1. The impact of movement on learning
2. Screen time guidelines
3. Foundational skills for learning
4. Homework and organizational strategies for routines at home





Movement and Learning

What does the research say?

- There is a positive link between movement/physical activity and learning
 - Exercise=increased blood flow=improved oxygen and nutrients to the brain cells=improved brain function
 - Children tested post exercise had a higher rate of accuracy, especially with more difficult tasks (Hillman et al)
 - Link between brain cortical thickness, fitness and math scores. More fit kids showed higher brain maturation and outscored less fit peers.
 - Improved on task behavior/attention following 15 minutes of running that lasted 2-4 hours after workout
 - Sensory tools like dynamic seating or weighted vests improved in seat behavior, on task behavior and processing speeds



Movement and Learning

Sensory systems play a major role in our level of arousal and attention.

- If a child's proprioceptive systems (the system that received information from muscles, ligaments and joints) is under reactive: they will seek input in a variety of ways:
 - Slumping at the table
 - Propping up their head
 - Constant fidgeting
- Purposeful proprioceptive input (Heavy work of the muscles and joints) can be alerting for students.
 - Movement breaks
 - Chair push ups
 - Moving books/furniture/carrying in groceries

Kranowitz, 2003



Screen time

How much is too much?

American Academy of Pediatrics recommends:

- Children younger than 18 months avoid use of screen media
- Children 2-5 years limit screen time use to 1 hour per day of high quality programs
- Children 6 and older limit screen time use to 2 hours or less per day of recreational or enjoyment-related screen time



Concerns surrounding excess screen time

Too much screen time linked to:

- **Obesity**
 - obesity rate for 2-19 year-olds have risen from 10% in the late 1980s to 18.5% in 2016
 - Research study: for every hour/week increase of screen time there were increases in BMIs of preschool aged children
- **Sleep Disturbances**
 - Blue light emitted by screens on computer, tablets and smart phones slows down the release of melatonin, the hormone that help you feel less active and calm down for sleep
- **Loss of Social Skills**
 - Study out of University of California, Los Angeles: 6th graders went 5 days without technology were better at reading human emotion than kids who had regular access to screen time
- **Negative Impact on Memory and Thinking**
 - ABCD study: kids who spent more time on screen perform worse on memory, language, and thinking tests



Brain break!





Foundational skills for learning

Executive Functioning is an umbrella term that refers to a variety of complex mental processes. The ability to use the processes helps us plan, organize and manage ourselves and actions through daily tasks.

- Skills move from external to internal
- Students need the structure and explicit teaching to use a strategy
- Skills all build on one another and overlap
- Lists, visual reminders and other resources are IMPORTANT for all of us!

"Build Executive Functioning Skills for School Success." 2015. 29 Jan. 2016



Foundational skills for learning

- **Self Regulation** is the ability to manage emotions, desires, and behaviors in order to reach a desired goal.
 - Sensory processing
 - Executive Functioning
 - Emotional Regulation
 - Social Cognition
- Developmentally, it is typical for a student to “hold it together” all day at school. Homework might be the tipping point when the difficulty of the day spills out.
- Plus heavy “proprioceptive” work can be calming as well when a student is having a hard time regulating themselves.



Homework and Organizational Strategies for Routines at Home

- Have a specific space for backpacks, never stray far from that space when doing homework
 - And lunch boxes, coats returned homework, etc.
- Use a concrete picture for what “ready” looks like
- Practice making lists, especially for how to complete homework
- Practice using a calendar, and a timer/watch
 - Plan the next day, plan for free time, pay attention to how long things task
- Success is important, give them a little bit more support than they need
- Let your child make choices in the planning (then reflect after your done)



Homework and Organizational Strategies for Routines at Home

- When your child faces a problem, let them brainstorm possible solutions
- Practice calm downs (ultimately more important than the issue at hand)
- Remember to use sensory strategies to alert, relax or reduce distractions
 - Headphones
 - Calming music
 - Plan for movement breaks
 - Alternative seating options (on couch, laying on floor, etc.)
- Do a weekly calendar check and a weekly organizational check
- Reflect on what goes well, building awareness