

QPS Learning at Home

Our Premier, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian has requested that parents keep children at home if at all possible. We will move to an online learning model to support families to continue the education of their children. While this is being developed and refined, please find below some interim activities and learning that your child can do at home to continue practising skills that have been taught.

All activities are designed to support each child's development and are as personalised as possible in these difficult circumstances.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your child's classroom teacher.

Summary

Subject	Outline	Time Guide
Reading	Practise, practise, practise: By self or with an adult.	20-30 minutes a day
Writing	Sustained daily practise	20-30 minutes a day
Spelling	Soundwaves login	20 minutes a day
Mathematics	You Cubed	40 minutes a day
PE/ Sport	Activities to elevate heart rate	60 minutes a day
Integrated Units	Special interest project	60 minutes a day
Home Work	Chores, cooking, shopping	45 minutes a day

Learning from Home

The NSW Department of Education is putting together advice and resources for parents choosing to keep children at home. This information can be found at:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/learning-from-home>

Reading

The below article is full of ideas to help your child read at home. For a Kindergarten child, reading with or to your child is important. For older children, reading alone is also a skill which requires practise.

Some tips for home reading:

- **Establish a home reading routine.** Read aloud with your children every day. Twenty minutes for each child around a book of his/her choice. If English is your second language, read in your home language. If you lack confidence in reading aloud, the fact that you are reading with your child is what matters. Talk about the illustrations and contribute where you can. Share your excitement for reading and this will be the model your child will adopt.
- **The reader holds the book!** There is a lot of power and control in the world of reading. The reader needs to have the power.
- During home reading time, **turn off electronic** devices and give each child your undivided attention.
- Before you read a book, **set your child up for success.** Reading is not a test! Reading time is only twenty minutes so do some of the following: Keep the introduction short – one minute is enough. Talk about the illustrations and the title. Read the blurb and talk about the author, talk about any unusual words, read a page here and there as your child flicks through the book, discuss the characters. This is a short introduction, not an interrogation. If the book is already a familiar one, then this step is unnecessary.
- **If reading time is stressful, move the reading to a new location.** Instead of sitting at the kitchen bench, move to the lounge room floor, or go outside and sit under a tree.
- Find a reading time that works for your family. **Limit the time and set the timer** if reading in the past has always been difficult. It is better to have an enjoyable 20 minutes than a laborious 30 minutes where everyone is left feeling frustrated.
- At the end of the 20 minutes, **ask questions that encourage discussion**, for example: What was your favourite part? Tell me about the characters. What do you think will happen next? What did you think about that setting? What do like/ dislike about this book? There is no need to interrogate the reader. Make it a conversation as you would in a book club.
- **Encourage your child to read independently.** A bedside light is one of the best enticements for your child to read before going to sleep. After the 20 minutes of reading with you, the child can elect to continue reading independently.
- **The less you interrupt** the 20 minutes of reading, the more you are supporting the reader's independence, resilience and confidence. Zip your lips, monitor the errors, and listen as your child reads.
- **Avoid judging your child's reading** with words such as: 'good', 'excellent' or 'getting better'. Instead say things about the strategies your child uses when reading such as: 'I like how you read on when you came to that difficult word.' 'I like how you changed your voice to be the voice of the character in the story'. 'I noticed that you reread the bit that did not make sense.'
- If your child is **reading independently** and has reached the level of chapter books, it is not necessary for you to read aloud together any more. Your job is done. That is not

to say, you cannot continue to share reading time because it is what you love to do as a family or that you sit and read silently together or that you talk about the books your child is reading because you are interested in his reading choices. Readers read differently in their heads as compared to reading aloud.

- Independent **readers pick and choose** what they read. They are entitled to read some and reject others. They are entitled to not complete books because they are boring. Readers make choices.
- **Model** what it means to be an enthusiastic reader. Create a home of readers where everyone reads – It is just what we do in this house! Talk about what you have read. Read aloud what makes you laugh and share it with your child.

Audio Book Website:

<https://storyboxlibrary.com.au/>

Writing

Sustained writing practise for 20-30 minutes will support the development of your child's writing. Ways to support writing at home include:

- **Provide a place for your child to write.**

The area should be an area that is quiet and well lit. Stock the “writing center” with supplies such as paper, pencils and crayons. You can also gather family photos and magazines in the center that can be used as story starters.

- **Read, read, read!**

The best activity to improve writing is reading. If your child reads good books, she will be a better writer. Reading exposes students to general vocabulary, word study and content-specific vocabulary. Through reading, students see a variety of authors' techniques that they can use in their own writing.

- **Encourage your child to keep a reflective journal.**

This is excellent writing practise, as well as a good outlet for venting feelings. Encourage your child to write about things that happen through the week. This reflective journal can be used to develop the “senses” of writing. Have your child write about what he saw, heard or felt. Provide experiences at home that will interest your child and spark her writing. Especially encourage your child to write about personal feelings — pleasures as well as disappointments. When reading your child's journal (only if your child invites you to, of course), share your own feelings and ideas paired with positive feedback about your child's writing.

- **Provide authentic writing opportunities for your child.**

Have your child write his own thank-you notes, shopping lists and letters to family. Finding an online pen pal for your child would make writing “real.” Helping children make the connection between writing and the “real” world will increase an interest in writing.

- **Be a writing role model.**

Make sure your child sees you as a writer. Point out times that you use writing to communicate with others. Discuss authentic writing in the community such as articles and letters in the newspaper, on billboards or in written advertisements. Discuss the purpose of the writing and the target audience. When your child writes, you should write. You can schedule a day of the week that you will turn off the television and share your writing.

- **Start a vocabulary notebook.**

Teach your child new words each week and encourage her to use them. Make it into a game and give points for using the new words. Your child can keep a vocabulary notebook and get rewarded for the number of new words learned. The words will begin to appear like magic in her oral language and writing.

- **Ask questions.**

Always ask your child questions when she writes. Ask specific questions about your child's writing such as: “How did that happen?” “How did that make you feel?” “Can you tell me more about that...?” “What are some other words you could use to describe...?”

- **Help your child publish her writing.**

Share her writing with others, place it on the refrigerator or encourage her to write for kids' magazines. When your child's writing is published in a children's book, she will be on her way to becoming a lifelong writer and author.

Spelling

Your child's classroom teacher will be able to send home your child's Soundwaves login and guidance about where to start for your child. Soundwaves has activities and tasks designed to help your child practise their spelling skills.

Mathematics

One of my favourite Mathematicians, Jo Boaler has created the below website specifically for families in isolation at home. There are many wonderful activities for you to do with your child and has developed the platform to share learning in an online community.



Share



Tweet



Forward

Hello youcubians,

We know this is a trying time for everyone, so we're doing our little piece to help out teachers and families with kids at home. Below is a set of activities from our site with modifications to make them work better from home, making continuing to learn maths while maintaining social distancing easier.

This time around we are sharing some of our favorite activities from our site, but **soon we will start sending out new home-specific ideas, as well as short videos to go along with the activities.** All of this will be archived on a page on our site that we are currently building for this purpose. We wanted to send you some of our favorites to get started, but keep an eye out because *much* more is to come!

Please share your students' work using the hashtag **#YoucubedAtHome** and check the hashtag out to see others' work and interact with them! You can also use it to tell us what you'd like to see in future newsletters. We're here to help everyone get through this together!



<https://mailchi.mp/youcubed/welcome-to-youcubedathome>

PE/Sport

It's important that children spend some time each day exercising. Below are some tips to try:

- **Be a role model.** Your children watch and mimic your habits, good and bad. If your kids see you being physically active and having fun, they're more likely to be active and stay active throughout their lives.
- **Involve the whole family.** Invite everyone to participate in activities.
- **Focus on fun.** Kids like to have fun, so they're more likely to keep exercising if they're doing an activity they enjoy. Turn on music and have a dance party, or put 'Just Dance' on You Tube.
- **Use competition as a motivator.** Make it a contest between you and the kids to see who can run faster, or do more push-ups or jumping jacks. Give the winner a prize. And, use technology such as a pedometer to track your results and progress.
- **Include kids in household activities.** Many household chores, like washing the dog or the car, or mowing the lawn, are great opportunities to sneak in a little physical activity.
- **Give gifts that promote physical activity.** Rollerblades, bicycles, ice skates, soccer balls and even active-play video games make great gifts that promote physical activity. Activity-tracking apps and technologies also are fun choices for kids.
- **Limit TV and computer time.** Set a timer and limit the amount of 'screen time' your child has each day. When your family watches TV together, get everyone moving during commercial breaks – do jumping jacks, use a hula hoop or even jump rope.

Integrated Units: Special Interest Project

Choose a topic with your child that they have a special interest in. It could be a favourite animal, a famous person/ idol, a sport they would like to know more about. Brainstorm and write down questions that your child would like to know. Do some research together and find out more about their topic of choice. Present the information as a poster, a video, a BLOG, a piece of art, a brochure... or anything they like.

Think about an audience. Who could they share their work with? Would their work be useful for a community organisation? For example, a brochure about a cheetah might be shared with the National Zoo, a video about their favourite celebrity might be able to be shared with that celebrity.

Home Work

Learning does not just occur at school between 9 and 3pm. Use this opportunity to have fun with your child and involve them in the daily running of the household. This might include daily chores, completing the shopping or preparing meals. Play board games together, do some gardening, plant vegetables or learn a new skill together (art, craft, a new language, etc). These are all valuable learning experiences for your child.

Staying Connected With Our Children

Now is the time to stay close to our children.

They need to feel us beside them so they don't feel as worried as they are.
We need to be honest with them and let them know that good people from around the world are working very hard to keep them safe and healthy.
Our children will believe us, we love them deeply.

Be Honest

"COVID 19 is a sickness like a cold. Some people will get it. Maybe someone in our family might get sick. We are all a little bit scared. Being scared is a sign that we are concentrating on being safe. There are really good people like doctors who know what to do. They are helping to figure it out."

Validate Their Feelings

"I know I might look worried sometimes. Mums or dads get worried too, just like children. I know it can make you feel scared. But I am ok."
"It is ok to be feeling scared, or worried, or whatever you are feeling right now. You can share that with me whenever you need to."

Acknowledge Day to Day Disruptions

"Even if school and your after school activities stop for a while, they will start up again. How about we think about some ways of doing versions of these things together at home if we need to?"

Remind Them

"I love you, and that is one thing that will never change."

Here are some ways that
parents and carers can
share connection,
comfort and care with
their children right now.

Look to History

"There have been sicknesses like this before. And they have stopped. Clever people from around the world have worked them out together. The scientists are doing this right now with this one."

Remain Available

"You can talk with me whenever you need to. I will answer any questions you have. If I don't know the answers, I will find out and then I will tell you."

Have fun

Share some time with your children that is just for them, and let them lead the play.

"Let's do some things that you like to do."

Create some quiet time

Find a regular time where you can just be still with children. Stroke their hair. Watch a favourite show on TV. Listen to music together. Let them decide if they want to talk. Be present with them. Enjoy it.

