

Managing Learning At Home

for children with special needs

Children with special needs are affected to a greater extent by the circuit breaker as they no longer have the structure and support of school. Here are some tips from **Liaw Chin Chen**, Learning Support Educator, and **Chiang Jing Jing**, Senior Occupational Therapist from Child Development Unit, National University Hospital for parents to support learning at home.



Set Up A Conducive Learning Space

Designate an area for learning and demonstrate a good sitting posture to your child.

While the child is seated, make sure his back is straight, knees and hips are at a right angle and feet are firmly on the floor.



Set Realistic Goals

Set goals based on your child's abilities rather than age. Before starting work, ensure that your child knows what he/she is supposed to do. (E.g. "We will just do the letter A for today".)

For instance, do not try to teach your child letter writing and phonics at the same time if your child dislikes writing.



Make Learning Fun

Think beyond pencils and worksheets.

To teach letter writing, try getting your child to write in a sand tray or with shaving cream. Or hide the letters around the house and play a simple scavenger hunt.

Remember, children learn best when they are having fun!

Outline Clear Rules And Use Rewards

Break tasks into smaller steps using a visual schedule to help your child attain success in completing the goal.

If your child has difficulty transiting from one activity to another, show your child a reward when signalling the next activity.

Once your child completes the activity, you can reward with the reinforcer. You can also offer praise and give your child a token to place on a visual contract and accumulate it to exchange for an eventual reward.

Monitor Your Child's Attention Level



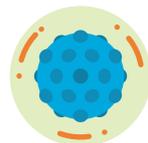
- Begin the day with heavy work activities such as pushing, pulling and lifting heavy objects as the use of movement may help improve memory for many children with difficulty focusing.



- If your child has difficulties maintaining an upright sitting posture for extended periods, allow him/her to lie with tummy down to do work. This may enable him/her to pay attention to the task at hand.



- If your child fidgets, encourage him/her to exercise (e.g. jumping jacks, animal walks) before work time to expend excess energy.



- Allow your child to use fidgets, which are small objects to keep hands busy (e.g. a stress ball), that are effective for them.



- Play instrumental or calming music to help your child regulate his/her attention.



- Providing snacks for your child to chew may also help to maintain focus.



Keep Instructions Short And Sweet

Give your instructions one at a time, in shorter sentences and with visuals.

Approach your child and crouch down to his or her eye level to speak to them.

If your child responds to his or her name, always call them before giving the instruction.

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