

For those of us with school age children, Monday should have been the blessed relief of 'Back to school' after a chocolate filled Easter break. What this actually means is 'Back to home-schooling'. For those of us in this situation here are some suggestions that may help, these are just my thoughts and opinions so if you have found anything that works for you please do share, we could all use some help right now.

1. **My most important tip:** Cut yourself some slack, unless you happen to be a qualified teacher no one expects you to suddenly become one, and even if you are a qualified teacher no one expects you to be able to be both a teacher and do your full time job as well.



2. **Lots of advice suggests setting and keeping to a routine,** my tip is to set a routine but keep it flexible if you can. Get up, have breakfast, set a lunchtime and a time that the working / school day will end but in between that go with the flow. If you decide that your child should do Maths between 2-3pm but they really want to write a story instead is that such a bad thing? Maybe they can do Maths later when they help you work out a recipe for dinner. Involve your child in setting the schedule, if they think it's been their choice they are more likely to try to stick to it.

3. **For older children that may have been set quite a lot of work, let them have input in what they do and when.** If you try to make the day a copy of their school timetable they will rebel and you will spend more time monitoring that they are sticking to it than you probably want to.



4. **If you have younger children who want to play remember that playing is educational too,** if they build a cardboard box fort they are learning about engineering, spatial awareness, construction, arts and crafts ... if they come to tell you about it then they are learning how to construct sentences with description and fluid articulation, things that would normally be considered developing their English skills.
5. **Take a break,** if you need to break from your work to help your child or set them up with a project / activity then take that break. If you have to take 10 minutes away then do it, that 10 minutes is the same time it takes to make a cup of coffee which you would be doing if you were home schooling or not.



6. **Make use of online resources**, there are 1000s, from revision guides and tutorials for older children, and online drawing lessons, to the nations PE lessons with Joe Wicks (which my kids insisted on me setting up for them to do and then they proceeded to sit on the sofa and watch Joe Wicks on the TV!!!), to Zoos live streaming the animals.

7. **Remember this is just as weird for your children as it is for you**, children will struggle and so will the adults and it will be stressful at times. But that is ok, while we are all connected through VTCT and ITEC we are also all in this together. Talk to each other and other parents, share ideas and frustrations but remember the best thing you will ever teach your child is that you love them no matter what.



8. **Ask for help.** It is ok to find this hard and it is ok to ask for help. Your children may even learn more from seeing you ask for help than they will from a textbook.