As most children return to school, here are some tips for virtual learning. This may be a challenging time for parents, students, and teachers. Frustration may surface for everyone. Try to have patience with your child, yourself, and your education team as you navigate the school year. As you and your child’s education team work to create a positive learning experience, keep these tips in mind.

1. **Be flexible.** The day may not go exactly as planned by the school or you. If it becomes overwhelming, allow your child to leave the area until you feel prepared to present material. It will not help anyone to have a child sit there while you try to discover what is working and what is not, and what has to be printed before a child can begin. **Be prepared to prioritize some key tasks which may not include everything that was sent home.**

2. **Read, read, read!** Read with your child. If your child is reading, dedicate a consistent time during which he reads to you every day. The book can be from a school assignment or a book you have at home. Ask comprehension questions to see if your child understands what he is reading. This should be done with a book that is easy for your child to read. If he struggles reading the book, then comprehension is difficult. If it takes too much concentration to actually read the words, then understanding is lost. Ask questions your child is capable of answering. If ‘why’ questions are too difficult, ask questions about what, when, who, or where.

3. **Communicate** with the teachers. You may not get an immediate response, but be sure you keep them informed of challenges and triumphs! Teachers enjoy hearing about successes. Remember: Teachers can’t fix problems if they don’t know or understand what challenges you’re facing at home. Be clear about concerns. Try to problem-solve together.

4. **Keep data** of lessons provided, what you could and couldn’t access, and when and to whom you reached out for help. Be sure you know your child’s IEP goals and track if they are addressed and how often. This will help if you ask for compensatory education.

5. **Challenging behavior** may arise, such as refusing to work, hitting, verbal refusal, or wanting total prompting. Reach out to the school for suggestions, visual supports, or behavior plans. I am also available to problem-solve situations that may arise. Email me at Peggy.Wolf@dsact.org for a consultation.

6. **Help your child feel successful.** It will be easier to have cooperation and desire to learn when your child feels successful. To increase motivation and pride, end each school day with an activity your child feels good about.

7. **Schedules are always important:** schedules help children understand what the day will be like and what the expectations are. Given the present circumstances, this may be difficult. If you use a visual schedule, keep a change card so if the schedule does not go as planned you can show a change in the schedule. It may be helpful to have first/then so if they perform a task, then there can be a fun activity.
while you check that the schedule can move forward as planned. Check out our tips on [Using Visuals](#) for more information.

**8. Transition planning** from one activity to another is also helpful. If you allow your child to move away from the learning area, be sure to provide a warning when it is time to return. For example, provide a verbal warning at 5 minutes (e.g., say ‘in 5 minutes we will read’). Provide another verbal warning at 2 minutes (e.g., ‘in 2 minutes, we will read when the timer goes off’). Timers are wonderful. There is very little argument with a timer. Don’t expect your child to willingly move from a preferred activity to a non-preferred activity without warning. As you change activities/topics, be sure to let your child know that the change is coming.

**9. Have fun!** Try to stay as calm as you can. Add movement to the lessons. You can stand and read vocabulary words or put words on flashcards to find in the room. Walk a number line on the floor to find answers. Play games.

Take a deep breath. Remember: the most important support that your child needs right now is to feel loved, successful, and safe. In the long run, that will help your child grow and learn. It is much harder for anyone to learn while in a state of high anxiety. Progress may be slower and may come with new challenges. Continue to build in exercise, movement, and relaxation activities to establish good mental health regardless of the school situation.

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to email me, Peggy.Wolf@dsact.org. I will be happy to answer any questions or talk with you about your concerns. Everyone at DSACT is here to support you.

‘They may not remember what you said. They may not remember what you did. But they will always remember how you made them feel.’ Maya Angelou