



750 W. Hampden Avenue, Suite 415 • Englewood, CO 80110 • 720-377-1359 • Fax: 720-399-2548

Adjusting to Catholic Home-Based Learning

Tips from the St. Raphael School Counseling Team

To assist in finding a successful balance between helping your children stay on track and adjusting expectations with flexibility, we offer the below strategies to keep in mind:

1. Create a schedule

There is nothing that brings a sense of calm, security and safety as consistent routine does. To make this manageable, build your new routine around those things that are more difficult to shift, such as a toddler's nap time or your own work schedule. Of course, structure is difficult to maintain with various needs of multiple-aged children trying to live and learn under the same roof. Therefore, stay flexible and remember that it is *okay* if things don't go as originally planned.

2. Create a learning environment

Invite your child to help create their own "school at home" – somewhere comfortable and appropriate for them to complete work. This is ideally a quiet place without a lot of visual and auditory distraction. Your home was not intended to be a school, so this place does not have to be perfect. Some children do better if they can change locations throughout the day, and some children might need more explicit instruction on how to use their space, such as having only what they are presently working on out and on the table.

3. Provide motivation for completing work

During this unique time, allow for the use of external rewards that may not be the normal ideal. Talk with your child what might motivate them...they know best! It can be helpful to use choice language, which may sound like, "If you choose to complete _____, you choose to pick the dessert/movie/book tonight", which can help strengthen their sense of autonomy when they may feel like most everything is out of their control.

4. Allow for breaks throughout the day

Research shows how important "brain breaks" are for learning, for both children and adults. Taking breaks increases one's ability to focus, process information, and regulate emotions. Go Noodle and Mind Yeti offer free physical-activity and mindfulness-base brain breaks. Coloring, playing with play dough, or getting outside to run around are also great brain breaks, and can happen as often as needed to get your family through the day.

5. Schedule time during the day for prayer

Without the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, family prayer will be an important source of grace for your family. This doesn't mean long, "perfect" prayer, especially if this is a new practice you are incorporating into your routine. Start small, such as one decade of the rosary, and embrace the potential messiness of it. Family prayer can be dynamic – coloring, painting, clay modeling, and other multi-media can be used to express prayer, as well as music and dance.



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6. Physically Distance, but Seek Greater Social and Spiritual Connection

The silver lining to our current situation is the possibility of slowing life down and become reacquainted to spending more time together as a family through games, walks outside, family talks, movie nights, and moments to problem solve. Not every family is able to make use of this opportunity due to other responsibilities such as work, caregiving, and maintaining a household, so a “good enough” attempt to embrace these moments is in fact, more than enough!

7. Use your school resources

School personnel including administration, teachers and your school counselors are here to support you through this time. Don’t hesitate to use your school resources! The phone numbers listed below can be used to contact your school counselors.

In gratitude for your commitment to your children and our Catholic school communities,

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