

Adapting to New Routines at Home

Now that we have been isolated at home for several weeks, some people have adapted to this very easily while others can find it extremely challenging. For those who are having a harder time, here are some helpful tips to help your child adjust to the new schedule of school and life at home:

- **Get plenty of rest:** The more rest we get, the better we function. By getting rest, our kids can pay attention and control their moods. Recommendations for sleep vary by age: 3- to 5-year-olds should sleep 10 to 13 hours, 6- to 12-year-olds should sleep 9 to 12 hours and 13- to 18-year-olds should sleep 8 to 10 hours.
- **Follow a routine:** Create a schedule and stick to it. Post a visual schedule for each child on the wall in a common area so they can be reminded of their schedule (e.g., wake up, breakfast, schoolwork, break, lunch, etc.)
- **Create a designated workspace:** If you have more than one child, separate each of them to have their own workspace. To make their space special, have them select one of their favorite items and add it to their workspace. Do your best to help them keep their work area neat. Some kids work better by having headphones, which limits distractions.
- **Take breaks:** It is tiring to sit in front of a screen for long periods of time. In addition to scheduled breaks, sometimes you need a quick break to move, stretch or take a breather. It is important to meet your child where they are. Some days may require more breaks for your child(ren) than others.
- **Reward positive behavior:** Praise positive behavior by naming specifically something your child(ren) did well. Studies have shown that praise will increase motivation as well as increase self-esteem.
- **Get creative and be flexible:** This is a very unique and challenging time. It is important to adapt to your child(ren)'s needs. For children that have a hard time sitting still, give them something to hold and play with while looking at classroom presentations online (e.g., a fidget toy or a squishy ball).
- **Be empathetic and patient:** During this time, kids need our patience more than ever. Child(ren) may have many questions and concerns. We have the opportunity to connect with them, teach them and let them know we care. Make sure that the information is age-appropriate. For older kids, you may want to watch TV or search the internet together.

