

Tips for home-schooling children

- **Remember you are not a teacher so if it's a tough day 5 minutes of maths is better than none. Starting small and building up can be helpful.**
- Setting up a home school. Children and young people needing to know 'why' is key. It helps them understand the purpose of the task. Each household's 'why' will be different, for example "because when you go back to school we need to make sure you are up to date with your learning".
- Try and give children an element of choice as this can be a good motivator as they feel its not being done to them. An immediate activity they could do is design and make their 'new school' a name and design a badge.
- Establish rules (not to many) and make them visual and visible
- Share your 'power' as the authority figure with your child. This helps to increase a child's confidence and decision making skills by empowering him or her to participate in educational decisions; which also helps develop critical thinking skills.
- Let your child select curriculum that includes topics of interest, appeals to visual strengths and provides the kind of structure that works for them.
- Try and keep to a structure and routine as much as possible; be clear and consistent and make things visual whenever possible. These can include photographs, drawings , lists and drawing on a white board. Just make sure that the young person understand what they are looking at.
- Use a calendar, family planner or paper to visually show 'school days' , no 'school days' and holidays.
- Try and make a visual time table. Try and involve the young person in this. You can set up a framework of some constants eg times of 'school' day, lunch and breaks. You may decide there are some non-negotiables eg. Getting out of pyjamas and also some tasks that need to be completed every day. You could also have a list of choice options that can be done after the 'compulsory' tasks.
- Keep this visual timetable visible to your child so they can view it daily and check it through the day. Try and make it interactive so they can "check off" things they do throughout the day.

- Try if possible to allocate a specific work space . This way they can primarily associate this space with their learning and will find it easier to switch off when in other parts of the house.
- Use their interests to engage them. Try and find an aspect of your child's favourite topic that can be incorporated into their learning activities.
- Some children may need to have tasks planned for the day/ week before . If this is the case then make sure you build in alternatives eg; if its dry we will but if its wet we will Other children may prefer to have a 'planning meeting' every morning.
- Try and build physical activity and movement breaks throughout the day which will allow you and your child to relax and refocus.
- It is important to build in time alone for our children. Some children with Autism need extended periods (up to an hour) alone at regular periods during the day. If a child has not got their own bedroom or 'space' then maybe use a visual for example a 'do not disturb' sign can be put on the door of a shared bedroom to indicate that it is the young persons alone time. Siblings could be taught about the need to respect this. A box of activities could be set up to do during alone time.
- Try and give plenty of warning and preparation about changes to the schedule and build in alternatives.
- A great way to monitor progress and understanding is by flipping the classroom dynamic. After you have covered a topic swap the pupil/ teacher role and get them to teach you what they have learned. This is another opportunity to give them choice; they can plan and teach the lesson.
- Try and keep some contact with school and friends. Consider e mail, skype and letters. These activities can be incorporated into their learning .