

Our Role as Parents in Distance Learning

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We are in the midst of a pandemic which brings us in a situation where teachers, students, and their families face a new reality. Suddenly, many mothers, fathers, and guardians are asked to assume the responsibility in their child's schooling. Now, more than ever, parents and family involvement have proven to be an essential part of a child's education.

These are not ordinary times. And as discussed by Norman B. Mendoza during a Webinar at Angeles City Science High School, there are three components of a healthy online learning environment. According to him, an ideal remote learning space should be—accessible, free from external disruptions, and psychologically safe.

Accessibility in remote learning denotes that children must be able to connect to the school's online platform. This poses a challenge for parents who struggle to provide for their children in terms of internet connectivity and electronic gadgets. Thankfully, the Department of Education has made adjustments in its learning modalities. Parents don't need to buy electronic gadgets or set up internet connections because according to the Secretary herself, the Department will provide printed modules for learners who chose modular learning modality. It is now the responsibility of parents to assure that their children receive these modules by going to school or to designated areas (like barangay halls) to retrieve these learning packets and then return the answer sheets as well. Moreover, parents can help their kids learn better in the new normal by setting a space that is free from external disruption. Children can learn and study "as if" they are in school with as little disruption as possible. Do this by setting up a physical location that's dedicated to school tasks and activities. Make sure that it's quiet and free from distractions. Keep the doors open to monitor the children's activities and to ensure that they practice digital safety.

Parents also need to make sure that children will feel physically and psychologically safe to study. They also need to guide their children so that they can complete their lessons at home. In this way, they can ensure that they keep their children safe while taking this as an opportunity to form an even stronger bond with them.

In these challenging times, there are no definite rules on how to be a PARENT to a child who studies remotely. Do we provide for our children's psychological needs? Are we being patient enough? How do we reinforce good behavior, exemplify discipline, and track their learning progress? Indeed, the answers to these questions depends on how we handle our emotions and make the most out of these unusual situations.

Education must continue even in times of crisis. It will be such a waste to let the year pass without our children learning anything. Our role as parents and teachers is to start somewhere and work our way towards the ideal where all our children can access purposeful and effective learning experience even while they are in the safety of our homes.

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