



MECKLENBURG COUNTY

TRIPLE P

PARENT WEEKLY

Everyday Tips For Everyday Parents

“BREATHE...JUST BREATHE”

REMOTE LEARNING HAS US LIKE...!

Dear Parents,

We are doing this! We're making it through week THREE of remote learning and/or modified school scheduling...all while still dealing with drawn out Stay-At-Home/Safer-At-Home orders. You are surviving! Surviving does not always feel good when you're in the middle of it but if you pause, take a step back and reflect on all that's happened around you, you will see that there is good along with the challenges AND... you are still here and pressing forward. That's a BIG deal. Don't be so hard on yourself. Everyone everywhere is dealing with some of the same issues and it's okay.

Let's face it, there have been plenty of challenges over the last several months, especially these last 3 weeks as children across NC have returned to school in some capacity. You've had to plan, schedule, attend virtual open houses, meet teachers via Zoom, and prepare your children for the turbulence of technology. We've had to re-teach virtual lessons, break down challenging math equations, reconnect to the server, contact school IT, miss work meetings for school meetings, etc. For many, even though school is just beginning, finding balance with work and other responsibilities is OVERWHELMING and some are almost at their breaking point.

This week, we invite you to STOP....BREATHE....REVIEW....and REFRESH! Taking care of your children is your top priority...but what about taking care of yourself? How are YOU doing? How are you getting through these challenges? How are you teaching your children resilience during tough times? Take advantage of what will be a long weekend for most (Labor Day), and engage in self and family care! Parents, as always, remember to stay positive!

Set Goals, Seek Balance, and Stay Focused

- **Setting Goals** – Now that you have a clearer understanding of how remote learning or homeschooling works for your family, you can set or reset your goals
 - What realistic goals could you set around remote learning?
 - What is your desired family-work balance? (example: log everybody off technology by 5:00pm or schedule a family lunch everyday)
 - Identify what needs to happen for you to stay committed to and achieving your goals
 - You may need to plan for daily/weekly/monthly roadblocks
 - Try thinking ahead to identify what you'll need to succeed (example: a calendar, pre-packaged lunches to help during the day, or meal prepping on the weekends to save time)

- **Seeking Balance** – Balance doesn't just happen, you'll have to do a little work, but it will pay off big
 - Plan a family meeting to revisit and/or adjust your remote learning schedule
 - Set agreed upon expectations around study-time and recreation time, making sure they are appropriate for all ages and attention spans (example: a 5-year old's brain break may last a little longer than a teenagers')
 - Manage Time & Schedules
 - Plan and review your schedule for the week...
 - Keep a list of re-occurring meetings and share them with your kids
 - Promote responsibility and time management by asking your teens to set alarms or reminders for their upcoming tasks
 - Try staggering schedules as best you can...yours and your children/teen's. This will help you to be better able to assist each child/teen with their needs, while meeting your own responsibilities for work and/or home life
- **Staying Focused** – Distractions will arise, and challenges are inevitable. Remember that you ARE capable of finding balance and overcoming any obstacles that may arise!
 - Don't get caught up in the "Tyranny of the Moment"... Keep your eyes on the prize by remaining focused on your overall goals – for yourself, as well as for your children
 - Celebrate success...recognize what you and your children have done well, offer praise and recognition

Beat frustration: Don't let it control your emotions, your outcomes or your day

- **Know YOUR and your children's/teen's body signals for rising frustration**
 - Talk about feelings...especially at times like this
 - Avoid bottling up emotions...instead, recognize what you're feeling, pause, and model effective body management to your children (deep breathing, relaxing shoulders, walking in place, shaking it off, etc.)
- **Promote problem-solving** – It's ok if you or your child struggle at some point
 - Identify what is not working (determine barrier, brainstorm solutions, engage help...etc.)
 - Encourage your children to think through challenges to develop their own solutions to problems
 - Parents/caregivers do NOT have to be everyone's problems-solver
 - If it works for you, temporarily allow your child/teen to work on an easier subject to build confidence
 - Take a break from the offending "thing" – sometimes, you just need to walk away for a moment

- **Where you can, adjust or maximize the school schedule** – be creative with your schedule. Allow time for breaks, passes, and laughs
- **Resist the urge to do too much or “do it all”** – it is okay to lean on trusted people around you...and let them help
 - Communicate needs, frustrations, barriers etc. appropriately
 - There may be a barrier or need that your teacher/school can accommodate or support you with
 - Family and friends may have resources that could help. If you are quietly suffering no one will know what you need assistance with
 - Try joining or setting up a virtual parenting support group with other parents from your child’s class
- **Plan for “brain breaks”** – Too much screen time or staying buried in work for too long without a break can build frustration. Make sure to allow “brain breaks” for you AND your child(ren)
- **Don’t forget to celebrate**
 - Celebrate what is working
 - Celebrate small success
 - Celebrate making through

Practice Self-Regulation

- **Release the need to “know” what lies ahead** – as difficult as it may sound, this present moment is what we have control over
- **Make self-regulation a family affair**
 - Talk about emotions and teach your children/teen to be aware of what their body is feeling when happy, excited, sad, frustrated or angry
 - Use regulation techniques such as deep breathing, walks, drawing, writing, quiet time and time away
 - Respect and honor each other’s self-regulation time and activities (quiet time, talk time, etc.)
 - Sense in to your body – know when you are tired, frustrated, overwhelmed or being triggered...and step away.
- **Create a gratitude practice** – wake up each day and find at least one thing you are grateful for – this sets your body and mind up for the day
- **Physical activity** – Move your body! Go for a walk, stretch, walk up and down the steps in your home....This CREATES regulation for your body...and can calm your mind (release stress)
- **Nutrition** – Drink water and try to make some healthy food/snack choices (for you and your children). Healthy food/snacks help your body and hormones regulate
- **Stay connected** – reach out and connect with friends and family...you don’t have to go it alone

Take time to re-energize weekly (* this is key!)

- **You and your family need rest and relaxation** – You need time away from work and virtual learning

- Think through your evening and weekend plans so that rest and recharging is included
- **Prioritize YOUR Self-Care – Guilt Free!**
 - Taking time for self-care does not mean you care any less about your children or others around. It's the exact opposite:
 - It actually means you care enough about them to be aware that you can give them your best when you have rest and your needs are met.....so that you can practice patience with them focusing on virtual learning, school work, etc.
 - It means you will be better positioned to balance work and home responsibilities
 - Parenting draws a lot from your bucket; when your bucket is empty you have nothing left to give until it's refilled
- **Determine WHAT re-energizes you**
 - Everyone is different and your individual needs depend on YOU- sense into what's needed (recreation, meditation, organization etc.) to give you the energy you need. Here are some examples:
 - Go to sleep when the kids go to sleep (as early as possible)
 - Plan a night to have a dinner you love after the children are put to bed (order in, use take or visit your favorite place to eat)
 - Read a book you enjoy alone
 - Take time to browse Facebook for an hour or catch up on your favorite television shows
 - Meditate, pray or think positive thoughts
 - Organize yourself if this helps to make you feel like you can tackle the tasks that come ahead
 - Plan something....or nothing for the weekend
- **Design HOW you will make time to re-energize**
 - Lean on your village, if needed, to assist with getting re-filled
 - Ask for a babysitter for a couple of hours (leave and take a ride or walk alone)
 - Remember, a schedule for your child/teen helps you plan for YOU
 - Take advantage of regular "lights out" for your children
 - If possible, schedule re-energize time for the family where everyone does their selected recharge activity