5 Things You Need to Know About Helping Your Child With Special Needs From Home

01 STRUCTURE AND ROUTINE ARE KEY

We totally know how difficult this can be. Don’t put too much pressure on yourself, but also, don’t give up. A simple AM/PM schedule with plenty of short-burst breaks is a great start. (We’ve attached a sample for your review.)

02 COMMUNICATE AND REQUEST ASSISTANCE

The only way schools can be of any real help to you is the quality of the communication. Most schools have multiple methods to communicate with you. Most will still have an entire staff of speech therapists, occupational therapists, and psychologists (along with special educators) ready to help.

03 DON’T GIVE UP!

In the early days of this home instruction and “social isolation” it can feel hopeless at times. The funny thing about structure and routine is that it takes consistency to create. Create a daily schedule and stick to it (as best you can) consistently. Many students with special needs take a bit longer to re-adjust (as you know) and this will be no different. You (and your child) can do this!!

04 ADOPT THE MANTRA “SAME BUT DIFFERENT”

It’s a good idea to operate through this school closure period with the same goals, the same level of communication, and use the same problem-solving strategies, as always—just plan on executing them differently.

05 TACKLE BASIC TEACHING TIPS!

Good teaching is very similar to good parenting:

1. Take time to build upon your relationship with your child. Follow their lead and study what they’re interested in in the moment.

2. Infuse instruction (teaching) into their interests. If your child likes superheroes, funnel math, reading, and writing through the imagery, discussion, and fun of superheroes.

3. For every area of instruction you’d like your child to focus on (e.g., reading, math, communication, writing, etc.) plan on 60 minutes. Break the 60 minutes into 15-minute chunks of teaching where the child is focusing on the task at hand. Separate the 15-minute chunks of teaching with 5-minute breaks.

4. Request the instructional activities from your special education teacher and your general education teacher. Ask your child about how they’d like to spend their breaks.

5. Take it slow. If 60 minutes seems too daunting, aim for 30 minutes. Nobody is expecting this to be easy for you, but we are expecting that you’ll establish some sort of consistency.