Department of
Education

GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Set up a learning environment

One of the first activities you might like to do with your child is to plan and then create your home learning environment.

An environment in which your child feels comfortable and able to focus on learning will work best.

You may have a regular place for your child to do their homework under normal circumstances, but this space may not be suitable for working in for an extended period of time.

A space/location for extended learning is best if it's a public/family space, and preferably not in a bedroom. It should be a place that can be quiet at times and have a strong wireless internet signal, if possible.

Above all, it should be a space where you or another adult is able to monitor your child's learning as much as possible.

A few tips:

A bit of structure is good

- a suitable desk or table to work at
- access to the materials (stationery, work books) or technology they may need
- a chair that they can sit on without becoming uncomfortable too quickly, but also doesn't send them to sleep by being too comfortable—a properly sized and adjusted office chair is best
- try to make the space around them fairly clear and open, removing any tripping hazards
- think about their classroom at school and the elements of it that you can easily set up at home. Does their classroom have zones where certain activities happen? For example, a mat, a story time chair and cushions, a technology zone separate from their work desk (with enough safe power points and chords etc to power everything they need).

Reduce distractions

If you can, choose a room that your child doesn't already associate with less focussed activities (probably not the television room), reduce clutter around them, and choose a space where they are less likely to be distracted by other household activities.

Test it out—if you notice something in the room that is distracting your child while you're trying to keep them focussed, can you remove it? Or can you use it as part of the activity to engage them?

Make the space comfortable

- temperature, lighting and noise levels are all important to consider
- consider the sizes of the chairs and desks:
  - do they match your child's size?
  - do you need cushions or a booster on the chairs you have to raise your child high enough to be comfortable at the desk?
  - do you need something for them to rest their feet on so they aren't dangling? It's best if their knees are bent at 90 degrees and feet are flat on the floor when they are sitting.
  - is their lower back well supported?
  - is the computer screen (if you have one) at the right height with the keyboard and mouse positioned correctly?

- is everything they need to use regularly within easy reach of their seated position? Every time they get up is an opportunity to get distracted for some children, but others need to get up to stretch and burn off energy regularly. Work out what's right for you and your child.
- your child might like to decorate it with their school work, artwork or other accomplishments they are proud of so it is a positive environment that encourages them to learn more

Establish a schedule

Routines make life easier as your child will be used to them at school. Together, put together a timetable of activities that is reasonable for both you and your child to manage. Make sure you schedule breaks and opportunities to stretch and get some exercise.

If you are doing a lot of time on technology, make sure you include regular breaks for no-tech times, and maybe make evenings technology-free after a certain time to support their health and wellbeing.

Set up rules together (rewards and consequences)

If you both understand and agree to reasonable behavioural expectations and the consequences of either meeting them or breaking them, life will be much easier for the whole family

Technology and equipment

Suggested equipment to help with learning at home:

- computer
- accessories such as keyboard, microphone, headphones and mouse.
- an alternative device such as an ipad can also support learning.

- internet access
- headphones
- pens and pencils
- scrap paper
- calculator (optional)
- ruler
- a printer may be useful but not essential.

Familiarise yourself with the curriculum[1] and the learning platforms that your child's school uses. This may include Connect Classrooms, Webex and Office365.

Referenced links

1. https://parent.scsa.wa.edu.au/what-will-my-child-learn
2. https://www.education.wa.edu.au/copyright
3. https://www.wa.gov.au/
4. https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/au/