



# Virtual LEARNING

## Tips for Parents

Educators and parents, guardians and caregivers all want children to have a positive experience with public education and virtual learning during the ongoing pandemic. With the support of families and parents, we can work together to support learning environments that allow students to grow and flourish.

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario firmly believes that the daily, in-person model of education and instruction best meets the educational, developmental and social needs of students, it provides the best experience for support and is the most equitable learning model for all students. Our union expects that elementary virtual learning in any capacity, including through hybrid models of instruction, will end once the COVID-19 pandemic ends.

ETFO, which represents 83,000 elementary educators in public schools in Ontario, will continue to demand action from the provincial government, school boards and public health units to ensure in-person learning and support can resume quickly and safely.

**Join us to defend quality public education! Visit [BuildingBetterSchools.ca](https://BuildingBetterSchools.ca)**

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Given that many students are learning and engaging virtually because of the pandemic, this resource seeks to assist you as a parent, guardian or caregiver in supporting your child for success.

## Tips for Children's Success

The global pandemic has placed everyone in situations that we could never have anticipated. Our shared goal is to ensure that children can remain engaged, interested, happy and can learn within the virtual learning environment. In the same way that you would support your child attending in-person school, you can help them by considering setting up some conditions for success at home:

- All children benefit from knowing the structure of their day. For younger children, a visual calendar or timetable may help them follow along with the parts of the school day. Older children can use a variety of tools to help them keep track of their day, such as a calendar, checklist, a planner or a digital tool.
- Establish a routine to signify that the school day is beginning. This could include getting dressed for the day and having something to eat.
- Ensure that regular breaks occur during the school day for your child to stretch, move their bodies and take a break from the screen.
- When possible, set up a place for your child to engage in virtual learning. Create a space at a desk, the kitchen table, on a corner of the couch or next to a sibling. Having supplies such as paper and writing materials nearby is also ideal.
- Set some expectations that will assist your child in knowing how to navigate their day. When can they seek your help? Are there times when they shouldn't interrupt you? Create a list of activities that your child can pursue independently during breaks or when they complete their work.
- Talk to your children about the connection between our bodies and brains and the range of possible feelings during these unprecedented times. Each day will bring moments of joy as well as challenges. But stress that everyone (including your child) is doing their best.



## Understanding Virtual Classroom Rules and Expectations

It is important to remember that the virtual environment is a classroom and all board and provincial policies and protocols are in effect online and with virtual classrooms.

Check to see if your District School Board has guidelines for parents and guardians specifically focusing on the virtual learning environment. Many districts have Virtual School websites where this information may be posted.

Teachers would have communicated their expectations and guidelines for a successful virtual learning classroom with students, parents and guardians. If you are unsure of those expectations and guidelines, reach out to the classroom teacher to ask for clarification. Communicate any additional questions to your child's teacher directly.

## Is it ok to help your child figure out answers during (live) synchronous instructional time?

As educators, we appreciate that these trying circumstances have placed you in situations that we could never have anticipated, including for many parents, supporting their children engaged in virtual learning and continuing to work full-time. It is important to remember that the virtual environment is a classroom and that all board policies and protocols are in effect. Just like in a regular physical in-person classroom, interruptions should not happen by other adults.

There are established class norms and virtual learning guidelines that help students and parents navigate this new learning experience. If these guidelines and expectations are not clear, reach out to the teacher for clarification. Many district school boards have also posted guidelines for parents/guardians on their websites, specifically focusing on virtual learning.

As always, parents play a significant role in supporting their child's learning but that role does not include participating in synchronous learning. Parents/guardians are reminded to:

- ➔ Not join their children's online classes or be visible on their children's screens during classes. This helps to ensure the privacy of students.
- ➔ Avoid engaging with their child during classroom time. Allow children time to think and process. Parents/guardians should not prompt or provide answers and students should complete tasks independently.



## There are some amazing things happening in my child's virtual class. Can you share this with friends and family on social media?

There are very clear privacy guidelines for parents/guardians whose children are engaged in virtual learning. It is important for both educators and parents/guardians to be respectful of privacy and are reminded of the following:

- ➔ **DO NOT** video record/mobile record, audio record, photograph, or transmit in any other way any part of the virtual classroom, a lesson or students and the educator.
- ➔ **DO NOT** post any classroom images, videos or visuals of any format on social media platforms. Posted materials are intended for students only. These materials should not be copied or shared and this includes no sharing of meeting links.

