

# PARENT SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR MANAGING BACK-TO-SCHOOL WITH BLENDED FORMATS

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**THE CONATIVE GROUP** PLLC  
— THINKING, FEELING, GROWING —

# We are smarter now

- But it doesn't mean it will be *easier*
- In the spring we all went home – it was sudden, but we stayed there
- This fall we may have a combination of in-person and virtual classes
  - At any point, in-person can be cancelled so we need a flexible plan
  - Setting up for maximum flexibility **within a framework of consistency** is key
  - Use what you learned - assess what worked and what didn't work
  - Give yourself credit – you are now an expert on what is best for your family



Do the  
**BEST YOU CAN**  
with  
**WHAT YOU'VE GOT!**

# BASIC COMPONENTS FOR SUCCESS

1. Maintain a similar routine and schedule regardless of school format
2. Create a comfortable, organized workspace with easy access to supplies
3. Create a master electronic filing system
4. Have a troubleshooting plan for when technology fails
5. Create a team



# MAINTAIN A SIMILAR ROUTINE AND SCHEDULE ON VIRTUAL CLASS DAYS

1. Get up at the same time on school days regardless of where school is
2. Follow your typical morning routine, including getting dressed, hygiene, etc
3. Use packing/unpacking a backpack to start and end the day
4. Eat breakfast before logging on/going to school
  - a) would you eat your breakfast in the traditional classroom?
  - b) the purpose of breakfast is to help the body wake up and have energy
5. Have lunch around the same time
6. Have breaks and recess about the same time
7. Have “after school” activities in the same time slots
8. Maintain a regular bedtime



# OTHER COMPONENTS OF A ROUTINE ON VIRTUAL DAYS

1. Consider having a morning “huddle” or family “homeroom” time to go over announcements, review schedules, touch base with what everyone is doing.
  - a) If you are working from home, this is a good time to talk about conference calls/meetings you will have. Children need to have a better understanding of your work schedule and when you are and aren’t available.
  - b) Use a whiteboard to make everyone’s schedule visible and update/refer to it in huddle time
2. Designate family lunch/recess/ etc.
3. Designate chores based on everyone’s schedules
4. Have a brief end-of-day meeting to make sure everyone is on track



# Virtual Classroom: Designate Workspaces

With as few distractions as possible

- Place the camera where it faces a distraction-free background (remember both the teacher, classmates and your child can now see what the camera sees in the background)
- Spread out siblings who distract each other, group together siblings who encourage each other to pay attention
- Pets don't go to school!

School Supplies easily accessible

- Backpack
- Binder
- Highlighters
- Post-It Notes
- Pencil Sharpener
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Perhaps use a small rolling cart

Multiple Workspaces are ideal

- In school students get up and move around between subjects

Comfort Matters – but not TOO comfortable! (stay out of beds)



# Organization

- There's a place for everything – everything has a place.
- Use backpack as a general container and to signify the start and end the school day
- Use a binder
- Maintain a master electronic “binder” (most students need help setting this up in advance – do it now!)
  - Organize a folder for each class with sections for
    - ✓ Class notes
    - ✓ Study guides
    - ✓ Handouts
    - ✓ Graded work
    - ✓ Work in progress
- Create folders to organize email
  - Most students don't seem to know how to do this – help set it up now





# Classwork Organization to Teach Children and Teens

1. Whether electronic items or old-fashioned pieces of paper – everything needs a specific place to live in your organizational system.
2. Decide where an item will live and create a specific folder for it both in your binder and your “mirror image” electronic filing system. Have as many dividers (binder) or subfolders (electronic storage) as you need to stay organized.
3. Your email also needs to be broken into categories and put into folders for easy access
4. Make a master electronic file system which houses everything. To keep track of papers from the traditional classroom along with electronic documents, scan all paper documents and keep them in the electronic files. You can take pictures of these papers on your phone or use a traditional scanner.
5. Take a picture or scan every paper assignment you’ve completed before you turn them in.
6. Take a screenshot of the “assignment submitted” screen when you submit online. Save the screenshot.
7. Most children and teens need help setting this up – do it before the school year begins!



# APPS TO MANAGE ACCESS TO DISTRACTING SITES

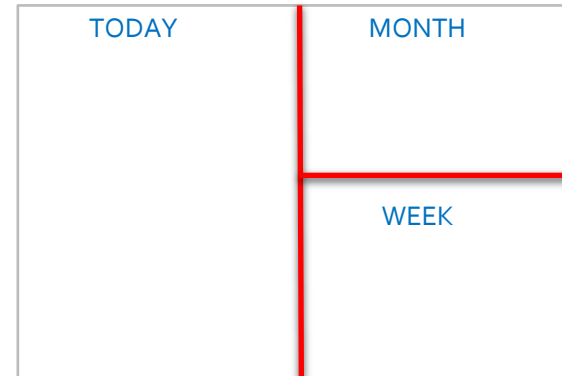
- **Cold Turkey Blocker** (macOS, Windows) for locking yourself out your computer
- **Freedom** (Chrome, Firefox, iOS, macOS, Opera, Windows) for blocking anything you want, anywhere you want
- **LeechBlock** (Chrome, Firefox) for using timers to block or allow website access
- **RescueTime** (Android, iOS, Linux, macOS, Web, Windows) for tracking productivity and blocking distracting sites – Though this might primarily be for tracking use instead of blocking
- **Self Control** (macOS) for free focus app for Mac
- **StayFocusd** (Chrome) for blocking sites in Chrome
- **Hocus Focus** for viewing one window at a time on a Mac – Lets you view only one window at a time, so it's helpful for some, but is not a "blocking" tool
- **Brain.fm** (Android, iOS, Web) for focus-boosting soundtracks – Music/sound playlists designed to help focus, so more for teens and adults
- **Focus@Will** (Android, iOS, Web) for lyric-free audio and tracking your productivity – Music/sound playlists designed to help focus, so more for teens and adults
- **Mindful Browsing** (Chrome) for gentle nudges away from time-wasting sites – Provides "gentle nudges" away from certain sites, so definitely for adults



# OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

- **Make time visible**

- Time Timer ([www.timetimer.com](http://www.timetimer.com))
- Wall/desk clocks
- Sand timers
- Whiteboard
- Agenda/Calendar



- **Students must show their full face and have daylight (not shadows)**
- **Remove all ancillary electronics**
- **No cell phones**
- **Mute Microphone when not speaking**
- **Use reinforcers and consequences for compliance**



# TROUBLESHOOTING

1. Post a list of all ways to communicate with all teachers (email, chat, text, etc)
  - a) Teach children not to ignore problems with accessing or turning in assignments
  - b) Email a copy of all completed assignments to self – the date stamp in an email is a record of when it was completed
2. Have a list of tech support contacts readily available
3. Make sure all devices are charged each evening and back-up cords/outlets/extension cords are available at all times
4. Post your email address for the kids to use if you are working
5. Have a family meeting and brainstorm possible problems and solutions
6. Use the master electronic filing system and make a check in of items scanned part of your “end of the day” routine



# Workfromhomeschooling

## Divide and Conquer

- At your family huddle each day, make sure “have too’s” are covered
- Create and use a support network to monitor children who need help
  - Grandparents/Aunts/Uncles
  - Neighbors
  - Babysitters
  - Tutors
  - Other parents

Make sure your work needs are factored in and that you have set times and places to work without interference:

- See if you can do paperwork at off times
- Create a “no enter zone” when you are working
- Set boundaries (e.g., children must text or email you during work hours instead of yelling)



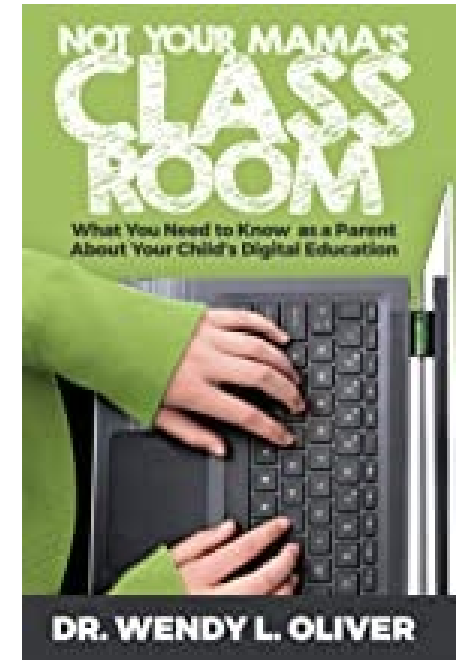
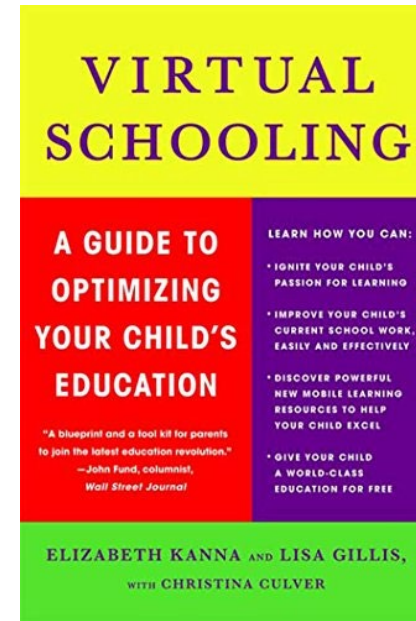
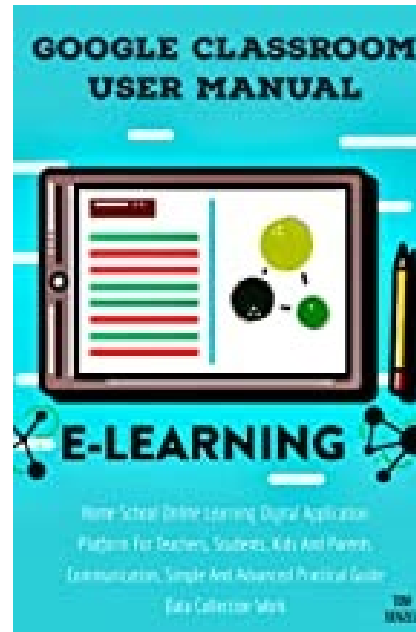
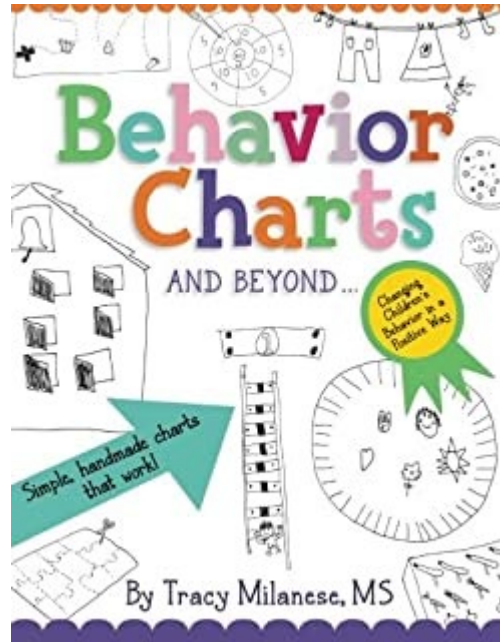
# EMOTIONAL BANDWIDTH

- Limited for all
- Time Out is your friend (you can even put yourself in time out!)
- Be the *Therapist at Home* (focus on feelings)
- Stress needs to be off-loaded daily
  - Exercise
  - Humor
  - Hobbies
  - Conversations
  - Shared, fun activities
- Anxiety needs to be managed in the moment
  - Fight, Flight or Freeze
  - Deep Breathing

**DO THE BEST YOU CAN WITH WHAT YOU'VE GOT!**



# Resources



See VLOGs [www.theconativegroup.com/media](http://www.theconativegroup.com/media)



[www.timetimer.com](http://www.timetimer.com)



**Download a PDF of this presentation at**  
<https://www.theconativegroup.com/back-to-school-presentation>



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