

How to learn at home with your deaf child



As a result of the global Coronavirus outbreak, schools are closed across the globe. If your deaf child has had to come home from school or is unable to attend near home, this is a difficult time and you may worry they will miss out on their education. But you and the family can play a big part in helping your deaf child continue to learn.

Learning takes place all the time, in everyday activities, discussions while eating meals together, playing games or communicating with family members, washing clothes and cooking food.

School education and home learning are two very different things, but both are important. Don't worry about trying to recreate school at home. Think about creating an environment where your child can learn in a natural way. Showing your child how to wash their hands correctly and trying to explain why, is as important as learning from a book at the moment. There are many useful ways to develop your child's life skills:

Counting objects and showing the numbers on your fingers.



Explaining ingredients to your child when cooking and how they change during cooking.



Helping your child pick out the letters in their name.



Teaching them to tell the time.



Telling your child names of trees, hills, rivers, fruits, vegetables and animals or birds and agree a sign. Or describing, touching, tasting, or smelling them to learn colours, shapes, texture, taste and smell.



Your child will be learning even when they are just spending time communicating and playing with you and other family members, or even accompanying you as you go about your daily tasks.

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Communicate

Make sure your child is using their hearing aid if they have one and any other personal technology as much as possible while they are at home with you.



Be patient with your child and when you notice them struggling to understand you, find a different way to express the meaning instead of repeating the sentence.



You do not have to know sign language to communicate with your deaf child, you can use gestures and point to things or you can come up with signs or gestures together.

Talk at a normal speed (not too fast or too slow) and do not yell or shout when talking to your child as you sign or gesture. Remember, your child might be deaf but they will look at your lips and facial expressions to help them understand.



Communicate clearly how you expect your child to behave and learn, but be prepared to be flexible. Every family will approach learning in a different way – there's no right or wrong way. Agree a set of simple rules but be prepared to revisit it if things aren't going well.



Build your child's confidence by praising them when they do the right thing rather than scolding or punishing them when they do the wrong thing. Remember your child may be frustrated and worried by changes they don't understand.



Routine

Most children are happiest when they have a daily routine. This will make them feel secure when everything around them feels strange and when school is closed. Agree together or explain the routine and write it down or draw it out using words or pictures.

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Learning

Most children learn best when they can share their thoughts and ideas and interact with other people.

Involve your deaf child in all family activities, including some simple responsibilities around your home as well as any fun activities such as games and sports.



If you have any books or pictures, share these with your deaf child and learn signs and gestures from each other as you go through the story.



Make up a story to tell your child or share a story about your family. Children love a challenge - see how many objects they can collect and fit in a small box or bag from around the house or garden. Ask your child to explain what they found and where it.



Behaviour

We all know how important it is to look after our children's physical health, but their mental health is just as important. Many children are feeling anxious about current events and changes to their usual routine.

Look out for stress in your child caused by the change in daily life and the people around them – if you are stressed, your child is likely to be aware but may not understand what is happening.

Their behaviour may change

They may cry more

They may stop wanting to eat or play

They may become very sad



Learning with your deaf child can be fun! Learn and work out the best ways to communicate **TOGETHER!**