



# Parenting During A Pandemic

By Dr. Linda Hancock

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

## Published

May 31st, 2020

The pandemic has changed all our lives and for the last few weeks family members have been together at home due to self-isolation requirements. I have noticed that those who are experiencing a great deal of frustration are parents of school-aged children and their teachers who are not allowed to be together in school settings. Following are some of the concerns that I am hearing:

1. Many children do not have established routines and are sleeping in so miss their internet sessions with their teachers.
2. Parents do not know how to help with the lessons assigned, especially the math.
3. Relationships between the parents and children are strained because the schoolwork is either not getting done or is taking hours of arguing before it is accomplished.
4. The fact that students will be passed despite lack of effort or progress removes motivation.
5. Some parents and students have just given up and are no longer making school part of their lives.

If you are facing any of these or other difficulties regarding schoolwork, perhaps some of the following ideas will help:

1. Becoming a partner with the child and his/her teacher to set goals, learn strategies and share accountability.
2. Try "power working". Set an alarm for 15 minutes during which time your child will work hard and focus completely on the task. When the alarm rings you will set it again for the same amount of time and allow the child to do anything they want. I think you will be surprised to find that it only takes two or three cycles to complete all of the work! (This technique works on adults too).
3. Access free resources such as Kahn Academy to help with difficult concepts.
4. Help the child to learn life skills such as telling time, counting, cooking and writing as these things will stay with them forever.
5. Always encourage and participate in reading activities. You can listen to the child read, read to the child or share a book with each of you reading one page at a time. Think about the child's interests and choose books in those areas. For teens, choose biographies as these usually have nuggets of wisdom for overcoming difficulties.

It can be frustrating for adults to watch children neglect tasks while spending hours on technology. Learn to set and enforce limits for its use. Plan interesting activities to do as a family. Make sure children understand that school is their job. Your attitude will directly impact their attitudes.

I have always believed that your job as a parent is to work yourself out of a job! That means that you help your child to learn how to live in a healthy and independent manner. Pandemic or no pandemic, that goal doesn't change.

Here's the good news: You have learned so many things throughout your life and can reflect on ways that helped you. You might not be a teacher but your love and desire to see the child succeed can be used as motivation for both of you! Don't be afraid to be creative or to seek help from other friends or family members.

Learning can be fun! You just need to commit to investing some time, energy, patience and praise so that you and your child can succeed!