



CORACLE

Soundings Seminar: Education in a Time of Coronavirus: *Resources Guide*

Thursday, April 2, 2020
Feat. Laura Mastroiannia
and Erica Reiter

Soundings Seminar – Education in the time of Coronavirus

April 2020 – Featuring Laura Mastroianni and Erica Reiter

We're glad you are here! We hope you will take a minute and just breathe. You are not alone in this crazy season! God entrusted your child to you, you've been teaching them since birth, and there are beautiful strategies available that can make this sustainable for you AND for them. He is holding you, and He is redeeming this time. The more relaxed you are, the more relaxed your child will be.

The following are suggested supplements/accompaniments to what you may already be doing with your child's school. **It is helpful to remember that a little bit of reading, writing and math each day will help your child continue to make steady progress in their academic skills - no matter their age!** So if you have a rough day (and remember every teacher has bad/unproductive feeling days in the classroom too), just shoot for that as a baseline and you can know you did valuable work.

Some things to keep in mind that may help as you develop a home school structure:

- Learning their child's love language. This can have a huge impact on your interactions with them during this stressful time. We recommend Gary Chapman's excellent book [The Five Love Languages for Children](#).
- Create a space for your child to do their work.
- Consider how your children can learn lessons integrally - how subjects relate to one another. Is there a project or task in your home that could serve as an exploration of more than one subject? Check out [this example of a lesson](#) that touches on many different subject areas.
- Talk about how everyone is feeling during this unusual time! There have been many things that have been lost in the midst of schools shutting down (beyond routines and loved teachers/classmates, many will miss graduation, prom, etc.). How can you make space to grieve the losses together?
- Remember your child's teacher may also have kids at home.
- Open ended questions – what's your favorite thing you did today? What is something you enjoyed today? What is something that felt challenging?
- When your child asks you a question, turn the question around – ask what they think first.
- State your directions in the positive – we are using our walking feet instead of “don't run”
- A child's work is play! Not only do they learn as they play, they make sense of their world when they do. Listen as they play. You'll gain great insights as to what's going on in their inner world.
- *Working as a team with your spouse - here's a [helpful recent post](#) talking about strategizing as a whole family for work/school balance and boundaries.

Schedules

A daily schedule/routine is critical. For the very young children it calms them, for older children it empowers them.

- Consider inviting them to be part of creating that schedule. This can be critical for older children or teenagers to have “buy in”.
- Post the schedule – with a clock nearby (consider a “visual timer” - one that uses red to mark the amount of time left for an activity)
- Include breaks and quiet space that allows everyone to work, transition, or rest (see **Morning Basket** and **Quiet Napping Cube** strategies below)
- Use the schedule to motivate your children to transition to a new task - let it be the “bad guy”. The schedule says it’s time to clean up, time to move on to a new assignment.
- Perhaps each day holds something special – every Monday we bake/Tuesday we do a science experiment – kids are used to “specials” make that part of your routine.
- ***Give prompts before transitions in the day.*** The clock says we have 5 more minutes to play. The clock says it’s time to clean up. Bedtime is in 10 minutes.
- Include ***choices*** in each day to increase motivation:
 - Offer choices when you can/when it makes sense. Do you want to clean up the Legos or the puzzles?
 - **Don’t** give them a choice if they don’t have one. E.g. It’s time to clean up vs. “DO you want to clean up?”

Movement/Exercise

- Perhaps have your older children prepare movement activities for the rest of your family (provide parameters - i.e. how long, when it happens, how much variety) or have them set personal goals (5 pull ups in a row by June 1, 20 push ups, etc.)
- **Little breaks with legitimate motion between assignments can help focus tremendously!**
- Outdoor exploration: If you have access to a green space, climb on logs, jump over creeks, set them loose outside for meaningful movement. Join them!
- There are many exercise/playful videos online to help with motion breaks (see below)
- Dance parties – everyone in the family dances around!
- For the young ones hold up a number card (or 2 that they add together) and they have to jump that many times
- Don’t be afraid to get silly. Kids take their cues from you. If you get silly, they will too.

Literacy

Schedule a time to read together every day, even if you repeat the same book a few times! Studies show that repetition and familiarity with a single book and its text helps children become better readers.

Further activities to model literacy:

- Shaving cream (on a baking sheet) is fun and easy to clean up – write/draw
- Alphabet pancakes (Remember: you have to “write” them backwards in the skillet)
- Circle letters/words in the grocery store flyers/junk mail
- Alphabet hunt – find the letters around the house
- Rhyming words: let them fill in the rhyming word as you read Doctor Seuss books. Give them a word and they have to give you/make-up a word that rhymes. Give them 3 words (2 that rhyme and 1 that doesn’t). They tell you which words rhyme.

Model Reading

You’ve been teaching your children since they were born. They do what they see you do! Schedule a “read for 20 minutes” time where everyone gets a book and reads. Joining them in this is a powerful motivator.

- Talk about the book. How are the characters feeling, how do you know? What’s your favorite part of the story, why? What was the problem in the story? how did the problem get solved? Story elements (Character/Setting/Problem/Solution) Have older students use the language from the text.
- Act out scenes from the story together, or, if you have multiple children, have them turn it into a play for you.
- Alternate reading the pages of a book
- Read a short story – have them write or tell you what happens “next” when the story is over. Draw a picture to match what they talked about. Or make up/write an alternate ending to a story.

Writing

Schedule time to write **every day**. Do it as a family. For little children, let them draw and have them tell you about their picture. Write down what they say and read it back to them while they watch. They learn the value of their words.

- Motivation, time frame for children who struggle to focus: play a couple of classical music pieces – they must write as long as the song is playing. Then they can color a picture and tell you about their picture.

- Write letters to family/friends and mail them! Let them sound out the words. Drawing a picture is a pre-reading/writing skill
- Menu planning – discuss what you will be cooking together this week and have them make a menu for the family that can be displayed in a common space.
- Write a grocery/to do list together - have them generate ideas that increase “buy in” for their participation later.
- **Have your kids create an events of the day/feelings journal to mark this time in history.**

Science etc.

Cooking/Baking is learning at its best. You can learn about fractions, addition, telling time, capacity, measurement, cause and effect, reading, science...while making something you want to eat.

Let them look at the recipes or create picture recipes.

For older children, have them own a day of the week for cooking. Let them generate the menu with you and do all the cooking. Teach them to follow a recipe and increase their amount of independence as they grow in confidence.

Check out some [recipes for home-made finger paint!](#)

- Keep a weather chart – talk about temperature look at the clouds
- **Grow a simple vegetable or herb container garden! Follow along on Instagram @redemptive_education for how-to's and or to request seeds.** Keeping a journal to log weather, growth, and activities is a valuable earth science exploration. It also is a **motivating way to accomplish writing practice and simple math skills** (i.e. measuring and adding). Projects that do double duty are going to simplify your home school life.

Math

- Notice that Math is everywhere – numbers on the channels, patterns in our clothes, people at the table, counting steps, squares of toilet paper, timers, recipes, sequencing events (first, second third...), fractions in graham crackers/bars of chocolate, when we share we are dividing, etc
- Number Hunt: Find the numbers around the house
- Follow a calendar – count to that number – give them that many beans – mix and match to create number sentences – 25 beans + 2 paper plates. $13 + 12 = 25$ Notice the patterns in the calendar – the days repeat, the 3, 13, 23 – odd or even numbers
- 100's chart – notice the patterns in the numbers (2, 22, 32...) – odd/even, skip counting, counting by 10's etc. Practice counting to 100.
- Blocks/Legos are great tools for math – sorting by shape, size, color... counting sides, corners etc.

- Water play – measuring cups, and spoons in the bathtub – or in a wash tub. A great way to discover capacity.

Arts

- Origami - [article on the benefits of origami for children + how to instructions](#)
- Keep a nature journal! Chronicle the spring weather, blossoms, leaf growth, etc. There are lots of resources online for this - just google Nature Journaling. Leaf rubbings, paint with berries/soil, etc.
- Collage: gather scraps, empty boxes, wrapping paper, aluminum foil, etc.
- Scissor practice: have children cut along draw curved and straight lines
- Drawing to music (this works well with all ages)
- Painting with water is fun. Painting the fence with water. Painting pictures on the sidewalk. So is having a car wash (with their toy cars)
- Homemade playdough – lots of recipes – good for fine motor skills. Shape letters/numbers/shapes
- Homemade paint – lots of recipes on the internet

Additional Activity Suggestions

- Egg carton numbers – write a number in the bottom of each egg “cup”. Add 1, 2 or 3 shaker pieces (e.g kernels of popcorn or beans) Student closes the carton and shakes, then opens carton.
 - Young children can simply indicate and model the 1 number shown (e.g. the #5, and gathers 5 beans)
 - Kindergarten students can add the numbers indicated by the popcorn/beans. – popcorn/beans as counters –
 - Advanced write a number sentence that matches the cups with counters.
 - Pudding in a Ziplock bag
 - Create a dress-up bin – shirts, dresses, ties, shoes
 - Charades (charades by Zoom with other family/friends)
 - [More quarantine-appropriate ideas from Parade](#)
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Internet Resources for Enrichment

Spiritual

[Good Dirt Ministries](#): Lacy Finn Borgo is a huge advocate for the hearts of children and their spirituality. She offers insights into how to listen to our children of all ages. Look her up!

[Spirit Conversations with Children](#)

Math and Literacy

[Khan Academy](#) (ages 2- 18) – Free Multisubject/tutoring resource

[TED Daily Newsletter](#) - Covers all subjects elementary – college

[Shel Silverstein Online](#)

[Storyline Online](#) - an award winning program

[abcya.com](#) (Grades PreK – 6+)

[ABCMouse](#) (Ages 2-8)

[Fun Brain](#) (grades PreK – 8) and [Fun Brain Jr](#) (PreK and K)

[PBS Kids](#)

[Scholastic Resources for Learning at Home](#)

[Classroom Magazines Learn at Home Resources](#) (grades prek-9)

[Sesame Street](#) - emotional, social, academic support

Art/handcrafts:

[Wild and Free Homeschool Community](#)

[Art for Kids Hub on Youtube](#)

[Lashley Creative](#)

Science:

[@redemptive_education](#) on Instagram is following the progress of a container veggie/herb garden and posting tutorials. Coming soon: chick hatching video series.

[Brain Pop](#)

<http://peepandthebigwideworld.com/en/> (geared for younger students)\

Outdoor Exploration:

[Wild and Free](#) @wildandfree.co

[Redemptive Education](#) @redemptive_education

*both of these conduct demos and have suggested activities on their Instagram accounts

In the Kitchen:

[Recipes for Kids from King Arthur Flour](#)

Museums etc. (mid-elementary and older)

[Newseum](#) (for older students – see Newseum activities guides)

[National Gallery of Art](#)

Movement and Exercise (prek - elementary)

[Scavenger Hunts](#)

Student favorites:

[The Learning Station – Shake our Sillies Out](#)

[The Learning Station – Happy Dance](#)

[Dino Stomp](#)

[Kidz Bop Shuffle](#)

[25 Easy Activities for Kids at Home](#)

Live Cams:

[A variety from the San Diego Zoo](#)

[Jelly fish Cam](#) – from the Monterey Bay Aquarium beautiful, slow music and soothing

[Eagle Cam](#)

Questions? We can be reached at:

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Sample Day with Basic Routines

Sample Home School Schedule

	Child A	Child B	Child C
8 am	Morning Basket		
8:30 am	Curriculum (independent schedules here or all together) - provide small movement breaks between activities or subject areas		
10:30 am	Break: Motion, read-aloud or snack, outside time if possible		
11:00 am	Curriculum		
12:00 pm	Lunch and Motion, free play		
1:00 pm	Quiet Hour		
2:00	Read Aloud, Handcrafts, Art, Outdoor Exploration (continued curriculum work for older children as needed)		
4:00 pm	Floor Book		
4:30 pm	Clean up together		
... can add more of your complete home routine i.e. dinner, bedtime			

*Can include columns for Mom and Dad's schedules or the columns across the top can be Monday - Friday rather than independent for each child

Morning Basket

A Morning Basket strategy is one that can span a range of ages and adapted for each family culture. The main concept is that you prepare ahead of time a basket that contains handcrafts, reading or drawing materials, on-going nature journal or logs, or small activities that your children can engage with independently (after you've given them direct instruction about the parameters).

Depending on your family's morning routine, children can either go straight to the basket upon waking, or it can be for after your breakfast routine. Either way, the rhythm of a Morning Basket provides a quiet start to school time and it gives YOU space and time in the morning to prepare for the day or to take care of very little children.

- Consider how the activities or reading material can reflect a theme your family is considering at present or how it can launch some of your children's studies for the day. Perhaps you could incorporate scripture study and prayer into this time (can each child have a prayer journal in the basket?).
- Change out the contents of the basket regularly to keep it interesting.
- Join your children in these activities once it is time to transition to the rest of your day. An easy way to indicate that it is time to clean up is to play a hymn or song of the day. Teach them to return everything neatly to the basket before the song ends. While you have everyone's attention and all are together, perhaps use the time to share a read-aloud reflection or pray together to start your day.

The Cozy Napping Cube

(ages 2 1/2 - 7,8,...? yrs.)

Ingredients:

- 1 box or bag with a lid or top that can close
- raw materials for creating (age appropriate): scissors, paper, tape, string, popsicle sticks, TP cardboard roll, pipe cleaners, stickers, foam pieces, containers of various shapes, etc. - *change out a few each day, keep it fresh and always have something new to discover*
- Visual timer - you want every child to be able to independently know how much time is left. Having a visual timer will help even your very littlest (down to 2 1/2 years) know that they should still be resting/playing quietly with their box (see Amazon for visual timers).

Set a time each day for peaceful rest in your home. For many families, this will coincide with an afternoon nap for the baby of the family. Older children or teenagers will appreciate a quiet break in the day as well once they're accustomed to the routine.

Train your children to know that they are to be occupied quietly, in solitude, until the timer is up. Start small and build up in time. Little children will need to start with 10-15 minutes, older children can happily be occupied for 30 or more minutes even starting out, and many will often fall asleep when they become accustomed to this rest period. Add small amounts of time every few days and build up to what feels right for your family's schedule. Perhaps that will be 45 min to an hour each day of quiet rest.

If you have older children or teenagers, reading or artwork (non screen time) can be great activities for this time.

No alarms or bells need to signal the end. Everyone can quietly transition to snack time or the next activity without fuss when the timer is up.

Floor Book: A Family Daily Examen

A "Floor Book" is a narration (reflection/telling back) strategy used by many educators as a way of reflecting and recording the activities of a day. Consider using this strategy as an opportunity to keep a family journal of this unusual season. It also can provide opportunity for rich discussion and reflection.

- Use a large pad of paper - the bigger the better so more bodies can fit around it at once!
- Encourage children to sketch various highlights from your day together - these can be conversations, lessons, adventures, or, for older children, events from the news.
- For children that can write, they should provide captions to their drawings. Have young children narrate for older ones who can record for them.
- Create a title for the day and date your entries: "The Day of Fort Building!" "Lost Shoes and Laundry Lessons!" "Mozart Came to Town" "The Day That Wouldn't End" "The Day we were told not to leave our house"... let them be creative and reflective. Have some laughs together over the successes, failures, adventures, and frequently changing nature of this season.
- ***Take time to discuss together what went well that day and what felt challenging. This could be a great opportunity to invite prayer together, to grieve the losses of this season (prom, graduation, etc.), to set family goals, to reconcile, to listen well to each person in the family as your journey together.***
- Pray over the day to end - give thanks and close out your school day.