

Parents Supporting their Online Learners: Part 1 of 11

Focusing on your Child's Level of Engagement and Social and Emotional Development

UPPER MARLBORO, MARYLAND, USA, April 5, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Focusing on your Child's Level of Engagement and Social and Emotional Development



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Dr. Andrea Thompson

For parents who opted to have their children continue online learning, it's important to continue supporting your child's social and emotional development, as well as keep your child engaged. This can be done by keeping them actively engaged, and helping them identify and label their emotions while exhibiting empathy and concern for others.

Identifying and Labeling Emotions

Each morning and at times during the day, have your children recognize and acknowledge their emotions. This

can be done by using a chart or pictures showing expressions of joy, sadness, worry, etc. Children should point to the emotion that best represent their current feeling. Help them express those emotions by introducing words and sentences that they can use to articulate and the emotions, and thoroughly explain how they are feeling. Delve deeper by helping them explore why they are feelings those emotions, and help them understand how their emotions can impact others around them. Provide them with options for dealing with the emotions so they can continue learning.

Active Engagement through Music

One of the best ways to keep your child interested and engaged in learning, is to use music. Music supports movement, routine, and consistency. As your child transitions from one activity to another, use music to signal the time for transition. For example, play music in the morning or have your child sing a morning song to signify the start of the day. Children will respond to songs that signal when it is time for a break or change in activity. Music can also be played when it is time to gather resources for play time, and time to return resources to the storage areas. Finally, music should be played to signal the end of day.

Active Engagement via Visual Appeals

Maintain a visually appealing and delightful workroom. Post pictures and graphics that relate to what your child is learning. Do not over-stimulate by posting irrelevant and excessive amounts of graphics. A great idea is to post pictures of the characters in the books currently being read. Have your children point to, and describe each character's emotions, and explain how each character's emotions impacted the setting or others. For older children, you can also post charts that provide procedural steps and formulas.

Managing Emotions and Building Empathy

As your child discusses characters that are posted based on required reading, have them discuss each character's emotions and how those emotions impacted others in the story. Finally delve into their concerns and empathy for the characters, as they share how they would help them manage their emotions. This activity will help your child become socially aware, understanding that people's emotions impact those in the setting. By exhibiting concern for the characters, your child is learning to develop empathy for others.

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