

Survive the Surge

6 Ways to Support Kids...and Yourself.

Here we go again! We get it. On-line school is overwhelming for students and also for the rest of the family. The adults at home cannot be expected to be teachers while juggling other responsibilities as well.

We suggest you leave teaching to the teachers and take a different approach to keep some balance during this difficult time. Below are six evidence-based strategies that, when used daily, can support your child's learning, well-being and connections to family.



- 1. Get Fresh Air.** Just an hour outside per day can relieve negative emotions like stress, anxiety and depression, for people of any age. Fresh air can reduce muscle tension, blood pressure and support brain activity. If you can get into a green space, the benefits are even greater: contact with nature can increase energy and feelings of happiness. Nature has also been shown to reduce symptoms of ADHD. Being active outside together is good for everyone.



- 2. Play, play, play.** It's not just for kids anymore! Play has been shown to build brains and bodies. Through the act of play, children experience experimentation, empathy, autonomy, and curiosity. Perhaps most importantly, it fuels joy. In a recent study, children and youth reported that play makes them happiest during the pandemic.

- 3. Read with your kids.** It deepens the bond and it's time well spent. Reading with a child supports the parent-child relationship; children feel secure when they are read to. Don't stop reading to your older kids just because they can read independently. Read to connect. Follow your child's lead, without judgment. Allow your child to choose what to read, even if the text is below the grade level.

- 4. Have conversations.** Literacy floats on a sea of talk. Powerful two-way conversations develop a child's well-being. Children learn relationship skills, how to listen and how to self-advocate. Asking open-ended questions, free of evaluation, can help your child to process and elaborate on their thinking. It also helps to build a strong vocabulary and fluency.

- 5. Enjoy puzzles, games and building things.** Puzzles are a fun way for kids to keep their minds active. They learn how to focus on a problem, build spatial awareness and persistence. Some adults will be tempted to intervene when children struggle. Instead, ask questions or give clues so the child gets a bit of guidance.

- 6. Let them help out.** When children can focus on helping others, it enhances their perspective on the world but also on themselves. They learn that the gift of time and effort holds value. They begin to see themselves as capable. Small actions they take can lead to a big difference for others. Giving back to others supports the development of self-esteem.

