



Unpacking a Parent's Role in Hybrid Learning: Teacher, taskmaster or guide? **November 2020**

Presenters:

Rachel Wigglesworth, M.Ed. [Growing Great Families](#), GrowingGreatFamilies@gmail.com

Daniela Peterson, LPC, [La Familia Counseling](#), Daniela@familiacounseling.com

Mark Pommer, M.Ed. Jackson Hole High School, mpommer@tcsd.org

Ben Brettell, MSW, Jackson Hole Middle School, bbrettell@tcsd.org

TIPS AND STRATEGIES

The ART of Expectations

The student, teacher and parent may all have different expectations for the child's school work. This can lead to challenges. If we want our children to have ownership over their learning, the expectations they have of themselves should eventually become the most important. Here are some ideas for managing the possibly conflicting expectations of the teacher, parent and student.

1. Are the expectations **A**ligned?
 - Can we work toward a similarity of expectations between parent, teacher and student?
 - Working on this will help alleviate power struggles
2. Are the expectations **R**easonable?
 - Can we relieve parent's expectations of perfection?
 - Talk to the teacher if they have expectations that feel unreasonable for your child and your circumstance
3. Are the expectations **T**ransparent?
 - Does everyone know the expectations of the others? Are they clear?
 - Where do the student's expectations of themselves come in?

What Drives Motivation? (from transcendeducation.org)

1. **Value** – people learn best when they find the content, outcomes, processes and relationships associated with the task **important and relevant**.
 - What value can your kids see in the task even if it's something they don't want to do? Can they muster the courage to do it anyway?
 - Is there a way to connect the assignment to something relevant to their lives?
2. **Self-efficacy** – People learn best when they believe in their ability to **grow and achieve mastery** of what they are learning.
 - Kids need to have the belief they can succeed. Provide encouragement and make sure they have the knowledge and skills to do the job. A growth mindset helps!
3. **Sense of Control** – People learn best when they perceive that they have **meaningful and appropriate agency** over their learning.
 - What kind of decision making power can students have over the assignment?
4. **Constructive Emotions** – People learn best when in **constructive emotional states**

- If kids are feeling stressed or worried about an assignment it might be time to take a break
- Finishing the assignment can't be about a power struggle or what the parent thinks is best. It has to come from the child and what works for them with support from you.

Helping Children become Independent Learners

1. Observe
 - Collect information:
 - What is going on with your child - demeanor/ activities
 - What do they do without any intervention from you?
2. Notice and Explore
 - Invite a conversation.
 - Start by saying, "I've been noticing lately... (that you seem to be having a hard time completing your school work)"
3. Ask Questions
 - What is going on? How are you feeling?
 - What is working?
 - When are you the most motivated?
 - What are the barriers & challenges?
 - Ask them what they want... how do they want to go through school... what goals or expectations do they have for themselves?
4. Validate & Empathize
 - Let them know you understand the challenges
 - "School can be hard in normal times let alone during a pandemic with hybrid learning and being stuck at home..."
5. Solve the Problem
 - Help your kids become problem solvers
 - Help them create a system/routine that works for them
 - The more we back off, the more our kids will step up to the plate - then it is no longer about the power struggle
 - What are the boundaries surrounding this system?
 - Privileges & Responsibilities
6. Believe in your kids
 - Encourage, Support, Empower
 - Be available, teach skills
 - Notice the positive more than the negative

Stress Management Strategies

Experiencing This?	Try This...
Lack of focus/restlessness	<p>Lifestyle changes that affect your concentration include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of sleep (see below) ● Hunger <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ eat a balanced diet with whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins ○ eat several small meals each day ● Reduce caffeine intake <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Drink water...even more important of a reminder these days with mask wearing. ● Anxiety and/or excessive stress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take steps to reduce stress, such as meditating, writing in a journal, or reading a book.
Exhaustion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sleep hygiene <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You need a solid hour of internet-free time before you try to sleep at night, Pooja Lakshmin, M.D. ● Sleep resources ● COVID-19 Sleep Study ● Sleep deprivation keeps parasympathetic system on high alert, increase cortisol production (not good) ● Serotonin and dopamine rise when resting ● iPhone Sleep Functions
Fatigue or lack of motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create a routine and flexible schedule for the day, include a “parking lot” for sidetracking thoughts. Also include “brain breaks” (we use these at school why wouldn’t you at home?)...physical activity actually boosts the brain. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tip: set a timer. ● Identify your “overwhelm” triggers. (then you can plan accordingly)
Family Conflict around school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eat, sleep, and move: The basics are more important than ever! ● Make time for quality time: When time and resources allow, try to join your child in play and leisure activities. This will not only help to maintain a positive relationship, but it will make setting limits easier down the road. ● Catch your child being good. ● Try your best to provide structure. “Kids do best when routines are in place and expectations are clear.” Partner around what this looks like for your family. ● Offering your child a choice can also help instill a sense of control during this uncertain time. “When options are available, let your child choose.” ● Help identify emotions. Put a name to it. ↑emotional vocabulary. ● Validation does not mean expressing approval of inappropriate behavior. It means acknowledging the emotions that drive the behavior. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Making your child feel heard can diffuse conflict ● Provide space <i>and</i> seek one-to-one time. ● Family meals and dedicated space to being together <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask open-ended questions and seek to have your child be heard. <p>Positive communication smooths out the bumps in the road and is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Respectful, open, honest, straight-forward and kind.

	<p>Improving Family Communications - healthychildren.org 5 ways parents can help kids thrive amid remote learning</p>
<p>Difficulties Managing Technology / Screen Time</p>	<p>Why to Limit Your Child's Media Use</p> <p>JHMS TECH FAMILY CONTRACT</p> <p>Screenagers Resource Page</p> <p>Family Technology Pact: Why You Need One and the Hidden Benefits</p>
<p>General Stress Two Nervous Systems: Sympathetic (ready to react, high alert, high arousal) vs. Parasympathetic (relaxed, comfortable, intentional, optimal functioning)</p> <p>(the more stress and anxiety we have, the less optimally our brains function: overwhelmed with deciding on flight, flight, or freeze).</p>	<p>Stress is unavoidable in life. However, high stress leads to lower functioning.</p> <p>Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Patterned, repetitive, rhythmic activity (creates a sense of calm and silences neurological “noise” + increases all the good neurochemicals such as serotonin, dopamine, etc.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ walking, running, dancing, drumming, singing. ● Meditation: Actually thickens the cerebral cortex of the brain, Increases attention span/sharpens focus/improves memory (makes space for these things). Study of Boston construction workers after 40min/day of meditation had measurably thicker cerebral cortex’s of the brain than controls ● Yoga: increases heart rate variability (HRV), an indicator of the body’s ability to respond with more flexibility to stress ● Mindful Breathing: mindful breathing helps turn off our stress response system by decreasing our heart rate. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove distractions 2. Get comfortable 3. Close your eyes 4. Take 10 deep breaths. <p style="text-align: center;">★ Does NOT have to be complicated!</p> ● Calming exercise It’s especially good for times when we are so stressed that regular breathing practices aren’t enough. ● Exercise: rebalances melatonin which enhances sleep cycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ releases endorphins ○ enhances mood by stimulating “good” neurochemical exchange <p>How Being Outdoors and Getting Active Impacts Stress Management What a Brief Jog Can Do for Your Brain - movement increases mood, energy levels and cognitive abilities more than relaxation</p>

BONDING WITH YOUR ADOLESCENT CHILD TIPS

- Use technology as your ally! Send your child a loving text message on a daily basis, funny GIFs.
- Tik Tok with your child.
- At a random time take your teen to get an ice cream or any treat, they will be surprised and willing to talk.
- Weekly movie night (at home).
- Dinner together every night, no electronic devices.
- When your child starts talking about something important, just listen and validate! Do not judge or preach to them.
- Cook together.
- Exercise, practice yoga together.
- Play your child's favorite video game.
- Play "would you rather."
- Have a family slumber party.
- Take your child on vacation.
- Road trip/camping trips.
- Share funny memories
- Validate

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- 10-minute video “[How To Help Every Child Fulfill Their Potential](#)” by Carol Dweck, PhD, on growth mindset and motivation
- For more on the four factors that drive motivation, see p 31-39 of “[Designing for Learning](#)” by Transcend Inc.
- “[How to Do School When Motivation Has Gone Missing](#)” - Here’s what teenagers can do to equip themselves to move forward during this difficult and frustrating time” by Lisa Damour
- The New York Times’ [Adolescence column](#)
- Podcast [Ask Lisa](#) - The Psychology of Parenting by Lisa Damour
- “[The Best Way to Fight With a Teenager](#)” by Lisa Damour
- This [7-minute video](#) from Dr. Judson Brewer, Director of Research and Innovation at the Mindfulness Center and associate professor in psychiatry at the School of Medicine at Brown University, demonstrates a simple technique to help us calm down. It’s especially good for times when we are so stressed that regular breathing practices aren’t enough.
- Article in Mind/Shift: [When a Child's Emotions Spike, How Can a Parent Find Their Best Self?](#) by Deborah Farmer Kris
- [The Adolescent Brain](#) by Dr. Dan Siegel
- Try this [YouTube study buddy](#), which breaks learning in into 25-minute manageable blocks