



# Show of hands

## Tips for parents and families to manage “school”

This time of year is often filled with excitement of back-to-school shopping, new beginnings and connection with friends, activities and routine. But as we wade through uncharted waters of a global pandemic, this year feels different.

Will schools re-open? Will they be virtual, in-person or have a hybrid model? School districts are doing their best to assess, plan and respond to what's happening in the world. They're trying to make the best decision for the health and welfare of their students, teachers, staff and community.

These days, it seems like there are no good options. And no matter what, some families will not be happy. Parents and students are anxiously awaiting the final “call” about what school will look like. In the meantime, here are steps you can take to ease this stressful situation.

### **Plan, plan, plan**

Think about your best- and worst-case scenario. Identify what that means for your family and plan how you can deal with potential challenges. Some things may be outside of your control, so focus on those items you can control.

## Stay open and flexible

Even when you plan well, unexpected things will happen. From technical challenges to workplace and school changes, you may need to make adjustments. Be open to trying new things and changing things up as you go along.

## Schedules

We all thrive with structure and schedules. When expectations and structure are set in advance, you have the chance to lighten the stress and pressure. Be sure to factor in that children, especially younger ones, need time for movement, creative activity, breaks and snacks.

## Virtual learning and being a full-time working parent

You know your children best, whether they're in elementary school or high school. Some are independent. And others need a lot of help to stay focused and on task.

How can you ensure your student has the necessary support if you need to attend to your work? Here are some options to consider:

- Find a high school student who can help tutor
- Ask a trusted family member to provide guidance while you work
- Ask your workplace about their options and flexibility
- Explore small learning pods with trusted families and neighbors to help rotate school oversight

These are uncertain times for working parents. But you'll get through it. Make sure to care for yourself and ask for help. As they say, "It takes a village." And you're not alone.



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