

Working from Home with School-Aged Children

00:03 Many of you who have children who are approaching or in high school or
00:08 preparing for the final year of high school, keep in mind that universities
00:13 around the country, they, too, are trying to figure this out.
00:18 So one way that they are working with school districts and
00:22 families who are considering admission, many schools have become SAT optional.
00:29 And so what I want us to take away from this is that in as much as students
00:34 may not have to take the SAT, just be mindful to create that level of balance.
00:40 So no SAT doesn't mean that you lay all of your learning
00:43 standards by the wayside, right?
00:46 So just be at a place where you're striking that balance with yourself and
00:52 also with your high school-aged children to understand that, one,
00:57 you are going to get into college, will you get into the college of your choice?
01:04 That's a decision that will have to be made on an individual basis with families,
01:09 but knowing that colleges are also adapting,
01:12 because they didn't anticipate where we are right now either.
01:16 I also wanna share with everyone here when you think about your student being
01:21 admitted into the college or university of their choice, what would that look like.
01:28 So for many families, they've made the choice to look at their local or
01:32 their state schools if it will be in a virtual setting.
01:35 And also think about affordability is the final piece that I will add about
01:40 the college admission process for those of you who are looking forward,
01:45 but keep in mind that colleges are learning to be adaptable, as well, right?
01:50 Because they know that in K12 spaces, we are grappling with
01:56 what are we doing in the absence of state standards?
01:59 We didn't teach all the standards.
02:01 So when you are preparing to go to those virtual open houses for
02:05 your campuses, be sure to ask those key questions.
02:09 So what accommodations are being made during this period of school closure?

02:14 How have you adjusted your admissions standing or your admission policy?

02:20 In as much as the essay, in the third question,

02:23 I would say if I were a family member looking at college admission,

02:26 in as much as the SAT has been waived for admission,

02:30 is the SAT still required for merit-based scholarships?

02:35 Because the two are different.

02:36 So just keep those questions in your back pocket to ask and

02:41 hopefully, your admissions officers will answer.

02:45 And if I could add one other thing thinking about what is being offered at

02:50 your local community colleges or colleges that are in four year colleges and

02:56 universities that are in your area for dual enrollment.

03:00 And dual enrollment would allow your students to

03:05 have access to college level courses.

03:08 Many times, some states are offering the courses at a reduced cost or no cost.

03:14 So that can also be a way to keep your students skills sharp.

03:18 If you may not feel like they're getting it in the high school setting.

03:25 It takes a teacher on average,

03:29 by your fifth year, you are a great teacher.

03:33 And so remember, that is after you have spent four years in undergrad,

03:37 that is after you have spent two years, earning a master's degree,

03:41 that is after you have spent an additional two years

03:44 earning professional development courses and going to numerous conferences.

03:49 So think about it this way.

03:50 It is about a little more than a decade that it

03:53 takes a person to become a good teacher and that's with great coaching.

03:59 We have asked parents to turn into great teachers in, what, six months,

04:03 we've asked you all to turn into great teachers.

04:07 So give yourself some grace.

04:09 And I'm saying this as someone who has evaluated many teachers,

04:13 six months into their first year of teaching, I'm expecting a lot but
04:18 I'm also providing a whole lot of coaching to go along with that.
04:23 So I say all of that to say, one, just be kind to yourself as
04:28 parents who are now becoming by vocational is what are called mini parents.
04:35 You're doing your first job and now you have become teachers,
04:39 school counselors, food and nutrition service managers.
04:44 So just, one, give yourself grace,
04:47 and two, just understanding that you are not in this alone.
04:51 Teachers, or educators, although we are not with your
04:56 children every day in person, we are still available.
05:00 Ask us questions, right?
05:04 Understanding that we may not get back to you right in that very moment,
05:09 but know that there are lots of resources that teachers have access to,
05:13 and even if it's so you're asking the teacher for clarity.
05:17 Or asking those clarifying questions, ask, because we don't
05:22 know what you need if you don't say anything to us. It's okay to ask.
05:30 Not just the teachers but some schools have instructional coaches,
05:34 some schools have assistant principals and other instructional staff who are there
05:40 to help but just know that you're not in it alone and like I've told a few of our
05:45 parents here in Baltimore, remember, it took us a decade to get to this level.
05:51 We don't expect for you to be where we are in six months.
05:56 But just know like the one thing that I will
05:59 share with everyone is don't try to do this alone.
06:04 Ask us for help.
06:05 We are here, we are willing to help, and if we don't know the answer,
06:10 we have become quite savvy at finding a network or a website where we can
06:15 tap you into the supports that you will need if we don't have the answer that
06:21 you may need about teaching a particular learning standard, or in a content area.
06:32 There's a phrase that I've heard that parents are only

06:36 as happy as their least happy child.

06:39 And we see a stress in our kids, and the question I have for you is,

06:44 how do we know when you talked about different levels of anxiety,

06:49 and how do we know when they need a hug versus when we may need to

06:54 get some additional help of some kind?

06:59 Absolutely, so that's a great question, Michelle, and

07:02 I'll tell you if I knew the answer that question every single time,

07:05 I probably would be a better parent than I am.

07:07 But I think there's a couple of things.

07:09 So anxiety affects all of us in really different ways.

07:11 And I think the first thing to remember when you are coming at a kid and

07:15 you're trying to figure out how to approach what they're doing behaviorally

07:19 is to ground yourself and our kids are only as well as we are.

07:23 And so I think really taking the time to get in touch with what am I feeling

07:27 what's going on for me and how do I take a breath and

07:29 step away will help you get the clarity that you need to be able to look and

07:33 then respond in a way that's appropriate.

07:35 But I think you need to remember that in times of anxiety, kids also may regress.

07:39 So you may see your 4-year-old acting like a 2-year-old,

07:42 you may see your 12-year-old acting like a 6-year-old.

07:45 And that may be a cue to you that it may be time to go back and treat and

07:48 interact with them as if they were the age they're behaving.

07:51 So if your six or seven-year-old is having a screaming temper tantrum,

07:54 you might be more effective if you get down on the floor and hold them.

07:57 Then if you get really mad,

07:58 you're gonna get mad cuz it's gonna make you crazy if your seven-year-old's laying

08:02 on the floor screaming while you're trying to get to a meeting,

08:04 but if you can take a step back, take a deep breath, approach them with kindness,

08:08 I think you're doing two things.

08:10 You're not only may fix the situation more quickly, but you're also modeling for
08:15 your kids how to respond to a meltdown.
08:17 We all feel meltdowns internally as adults.
08:19 We might be just a little bit better at not showing them.
08:22 But every time you're responding in a way that's quiet,
08:26 you are helping your kids see how to calm themselves.
08:33 Dr. Nora, you've mentioned that when we have children with
08:37 certain mental health challenges, that the fact is that their
08:42 learning styles that we may need to take that into consideration.
08:48 Can you comment on that?
08:50 Absolutely, I think really for those parents out there that are dealing with
08:54 kiddos with special needs, ADHD, those types of situations,
08:57 I know we've got a lot of questions coming in from folks.
09:01 At least in this room, we were kind of screening what people were asking with her
09:05 a lot about my kiddo has ADHD, or how do I get my kid to sit in front of a screen for
09:08 this long?
09:09 How do I get my four year old to stay in front of a screen for this long?
09:12 And it may be that you can't.
09:14 And if you can't, that's okay.
09:16 You may have to incorporate that more experiential type of learning.
09:20 We do this in our house by cooking.
09:21 I'm Italian, I love to cook.
09:23 So if we're learning fractions, then we make cookies, but oops,
09:27 we have to make half the batter, okay?
09:29 How do you divide things in half?
09:30 What does that mean?
09:31 And so you can do that all [INAUDIBLE] if you're working with a new reader.
09:34 We're driving, there's a sign, what does that sign say?
09:37 How do you know what that sign says?

09:38 Or if a kiddo who's isn't reading yet, well,
09:40 what's the letter at the beginning of that sign?
09:42 What sound does that make?
09:43 How can you guess what that sound means?
09:45 So there are ways to get around if you can't get your kids to sit still.
09:49 Instead of just trying to make them sit in front of the TV,
09:52 I think especially like I said, if you have a kiddo with ADHD or anxiety,
09:56 getting up, getting moving, and engaging with you is a great way to handle that.
10:04 Chevonne, you have been an educator for a while, you're now the CEO of the school.
10:09 And my guess is that you have a lot of parents that are coming in and
10:13 asking you for advice.
10:15 They're probably very worried as we've just been talking.
10:19 You also noted when we talked that you check in on them pretty often.
10:23 And when we spoke,
10:24 you talked about something that you call the non-negotiables.
10:29 I was wondering if you could expand on that because I thought that was really
10:33 precious.
10:34 Yes, so what we shared with our families here in Baltimore is that in
10:39 as much as there is so much that's changing in our world and
10:43 in our communities, sometimes by the hour, there are certain things that
10:49 we recommend that you have as non-negotiables in your home, right?
10:54 And so those non-negotiables could be something as simple as,
10:57 we will have dinner together every night, right?
11:00 So just know this non-negotiable is the connectedness of the family and
11:06 the kids will know that this is what is expected.
11:10 That every night, regardless of what we have for dinner or what time we have
11:14 dinner, this is the expectation that we're going to eat together every night.
11:19 So those non-negotiables can range from meal times,
11:23 they can go into quiet time, they can go into times when, as a family,

11:29 you commit to not being on a device or lack of screen time.

11:34 And it can also be an opportunity for you to really get to know your children and

11:38 for your children to get to know you as you all learn a new skill, right?

11:43 So this is the time that we are going to connect together and

11:48 learn how to paint by numbers or whatever your thing is.

11:53 We're going to learn how to ride bikes.

11:56 But just making sure that in your home and

11:59 part of your self-care practice, just remembering as families to have,

12:05 one to three things that are non-negotiable that can begin to start

12:10 providing those structures back in place for your days together.

12:20 One of Pam's comments was that as she views her social

12:24 media from her friends, it gives her anxiety and

12:28 guilt because everyone else's kids are so perfect and hers are not.

12:35 So what advice, Dr. Nora, do you have for Pam and the rest of the folks

12:40 that are maybe feeling guilty about their social media posts?

12:46 Absolutely, I think something we all know, but we don't say enough,

12:50 either to ourselves or to our kids, is that things like Facebook are not real.

12:54 They're fake, right?

12:56 They are not actually, you never pick your camera up when your kids are melting down

13:00 and somebody just slammed the door and your kitchen is a mess,

13:03 and take a picture and post it and be like, got to this today and

13:06 my kids are throwing things across the room.

13:09 I mean, that never happens on Facebook.

13:11 Instead, you take your toddler, who's a complete mess, and

13:13 you wait until just the right moment when they just look angelic.

13:16 And then you snap a picture and you clean it up and you put it out there for

13:19 other people to see.

13:20 So I think it's important to remember and

13:22 this is another thing that really affects our teams, right?

13:25 We see anxiety, depression,
13:27 even suicidality in teens going up exponentially.
13:30 And part of that is a result of them judging their lives against social media,
13:35 which is a false value.
13:37 So what I would say is don't base your life on people you don't know well and
13:41 who honestly you don't care that much about and don't know much about you or
13:46 your kids voting on everything that you do.
13:49 You will make yourself crazy if you try to do that.
13:52 Instead, find a core small group of people who share your values,
13:56 who you love, who love your kids.
13:59 And share your successes and
14:00 your failures with them because they will help not only make you feel better, but
14:04 to normalize the fact that we're all gonna do this, we're gonna mess it up.
14:07 There is no hard and fast rule book that some families got that you don't have.
14:11 And I think the other thing to remember is that any of us have kids know that not all
14:15 kids are easy.
14:16 So sometimes, someone else next door may have a kid that's easier than your kid.
14:20 It doesn't make them a better family, that doesn't even make them a better parent.
14:23 It just makes them better at capturing moments for Facebook.
14:26 So I think shutting it off, explaining to your kids why you're doing that.
14:31 And also, judging yourself based on people who you actually value and care about,
14:36 and who know and love you, rather than the 150 friends who are just looking
14:41 to see whether your kitchen looks as good as their kitchen, is really important.
14:45 I don't know if you'd call them friends, right?
14:48 Yeah, [LAUGH] exactly.
14:50 They're certainly not people who you probably should be worried about what they
14:55 think about you.
14:56 I mean, we can't possibly,
14:58 our brains were designed to interact with a very small group of social people.

15:02 That's what we're good at.

15:03 So that's one of the things you have to do is create a small group of people

15:07 who value the same things you value, who celebrate the things that you celebrate,

15:11 and worry about what they think.

15:13 And tell them when you're off because they can help you because I can assure you all

15:17 of them have screwed up, too.

15:18 If they hadn't, they wouldn't have learned the ones that got them to be the better

15:22 parents in the first place.

15:27 Kelly, I want to move to you as a policy advocate and

15:29 you're working with the state of New York.

15:32 I believe that there are the other states that we're in the footprints

15:37 of probably have similar policy advocates and such.

15:41 There's a lot of resources that parents can rely upon to help them.

15:46 Like today, I said, we got over 100 questions,

15:49 we won't be able to answer them all.

15:51 But can you talk a little bit about and maybe give us an example of where

15:55 we can go for assistance if we don't have the answer on the tip of our tongue or

16:00 in the tip of our

16:02 Fingertips?

16:03 Absolutely.

16:03 In every state, there's what's called child care,

16:06 resource and referral agencies.

16:08 These are meant to help support parents either find child care or

16:12 find other parenting resources.

16:15 And as Dr. Nora said social emotional learning is something that's very

16:19 important It's ingrained in the school day.

16:21 And so parents now need some tools to be able to incorporate that with virtual

16:25 learning.

16:26 So there's a lot of great websites out there to give parents the resources and

16:31 tips to do this at home.

16:32 One website is through case1

16:36 And there's social emotional learning one on one for parents to kind of get down to

16:40 the nitty gritty of what actually is this and what does this mean for me?

16:43 Another great resource is aperture education, and

16:46 it has family resources on social emotional learning.

16:50 For remote learning, and so it has things like optimistic thinking and

16:54 self awareness, self management, personal responsibility.

16:58 And these strategies are broken out by elementary, middle school, high school,

17:03 and they also have some tips for infants and toddlers and preschoolers.

17:08 So an example is one activity on self management.

17:11 They really discuss controlling your emotions and behaviors to complete a task.

17:16 So the goal is to increase your energy levels and motivation.

17:21 So an example for elementary school students is maybe have them spend five

17:25 minutes pretending to be an active animal so

17:28 jumping like a kangaroo stomping around like a dinosaur.

17:32 And really get them energized and

17:33 have them do it several times throughout the day when they're starting to slump.

17:37 And you can take that to the next level.

17:39 So middle-schoolers, music can really heighten our mood and elevate us and

17:44 get us fired up for the day.

17:45 So have your middle schooler create a playlist of their favorite energizing

17:49 songs so they can listen to that throughout the day and stay motivated.

17:53 So there's a ton of resources like this online, and certainly we can share those

17:58 links, but that's really gonna help keep your kids motivated.

18:02 And you know what some of these tips and tricks will work for you too.

18:05 I know that listening to music really helps to get me motivated and energized.

18:09 So stop and think about, can you apply these not only to your children,

18:14 but to yourself as well?

18:16 Thanks, Kelly.

18:16 It's interesting both you and Dr. Nora connected our health and

18:21 well being and our mood, it does transfer.

18:25 And a little later we'll talk some about taking care of ourselves as well.

18:29 But there's a definite connection and I think we all feel it.

18:32 And we see our kids responding to how we are respond.

18:36 And so that's, that's reinforcing

18:43 You've been focused on youth,

18:46 the success of youth, young adults.

18:50 And I think that this is can be a tough crowd.

18:53 How do you connect with them and help them to want to succeed not just to survive.

19:00 Like there's, we navigate, we succeed, we survive, but then how do

19:05 you convince them especially in these times, that is possible to succeed?

19:11 First I want to start by saying, I have a degree in early childhood education.

19:15 I have a degree in psychology.

19:17 And nothing prepared me for this for

19:19 working at home with two school aged children.

19:23 It's hard work.

19:24 It's hard and I think I just need to echo what everyone has been saying but

19:28 the most important thing is our mental health and emotional health and

19:32 our well-being because that is gonna directly reflect on our kids.

19:36 And so we really need to make sure that we're finding opportunities to spend time

19:41 with them.

19:41 But also have time to unwind ourselves without them.

19:46 So, we need to make sure that we're giving them independence throughout the day so

19:51 they can feel that they have autonomy and

19:53 ownership over what they're choosing to do.

19:56 So, I've seen a lot of folks put different sticky notes on the refrigerator of

20:01 when you're bored, pick one of these 15 activities and

20:04 there's a lot of great activities that our young people can participate in museums,
20:09 aquariums, zoos all across the country.
20:12 Have live webcams where children can tune in and participate in seeing and
20:16 in virtually visiting these different cultural institutions.
20:20 So I think that really, as long as we're keeping them happy and that they're not
20:25 feeling that anxiety and that stress, and we're not also imparting that on them.
20:30 I think that the way to set our children up for success for the future.
20:33 And really just making sure that again, we're focusing on that mental health.
20:37 Emotional health and well being of our entire family.