

# LASTING LEARNING

## Parent Tips for Improving Student Learning at Home

In response to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak, schools are transitioning from in-class instruction to online teaching and curriculum packets of schoolwork. Understandably, parents may be concerned that students will not learn as much from home on their own as they would in school with a teacher. **The good news is that there are three easy-to-use learning strategies that can turn students at any grade level into effective self-learners during this challenging time at home.** Lasting Learning—in partnership with UCLA’s Bjork Learning & Forgetting Lab—recommends that parents incorporate the following three evidence-based learning strategies as much as possible:

1. **Retrieval Practice:** Getting things out of your students’ heads is better than trying to put things into their heads
2. **Spaced Practice:** Spreading study sessions out over time is better than cramming the information into one session
3. **Interleaved Practice:** Mixing up different types of skills is better than practicing one skill over and over before moving on to the next skill

**How can you use these strategies with your children to improve their learning at home?**

### The Do’s:

- Whenever possible, have your students retrieve information from their own memories (retrieval practice). Ask them questions about their schoolwork before and after studying. For example, before your child starts studying, give your child a mini quiz on the information they studied *the day before*. Have your child do practice problems after studying, too.
- Encourage your child to ask (and answer!) questions themselves while they read (retrieval practice). These questions could include:
  - What has happened so far?
  - What do you think will happen next? Why?
  - What questions do I have so far?
  - Does the story remind me of anything that’s happened in my life?
- Have your child teach YOU the material (retrieval practice). For example, have them explain the water cycle to you or ask them to teach you vocabulary words by using the terms in their own sentences.
- Tell your students to summarize IN THEIR OWN WORDS what they’ve just studied and encourage them to think about how the new material connects with what they’ve already learned (retrieval practice, interleaved practice, and a bit of spacing, too!).
- Tell (and help) your students to break up their study sessions into ~30-minute chunks (spaced practice). Set a timer, if necessary, to remind them to remind your child to do this. Filling their breaks with some type of exercise is a great thing to do.

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- Organize your child's schoolwork by mixing up the different types of problems or skills they are trying to learn (spaced and interleaved practice). For example, have your child alternate between multiplication and division problems, or have them practice their cursive writing by mixing up the letters they're trying to learn to write (this may require going back and forth between worksheets).

## **The Don'ts:**

- As hard as it may be, don't give your child the answers. Doing their work for them will not lead to learning. If your child is struggling, be patient and nudge them in the right direction by providing hints for the necessary step(s) to solve the problem. Remember: Long-term learning results from facing and overcoming challenges.
- Don't be afraid of letting your child make mistakes/errors. One of the best things your child can do is for their learning is to figure out what they need to work on and then focus their efforts on improving in those areas. Making mistakes is critical for the learning process.
- Your students should avoid working on one thing over and over again, such as solving a bunch of multiplication problems in a row or practicing the same cursive letter repeatedly. Although a popular strategy, rote repetition won't lead to lasting learning.
- Don't let your child study for long periods of time. Not only will your child likely become fatigued and/or bored, but cramming is also an ineffective learning strategy.

For more information on the three learning strategies, please check out:

**Retrieval Practice:** [Why We Need More Testing, Not Less](#)

**Spaced Practice:** [To Learn, Space Out](#)

**Mixed Practice:** [The Interleaving Effect: Mixing It Up Boosts Learning](#)

**The Powerful Three:** [Want to Make Learning Stick?](#)

Start incorporating them NOW to improve your child's learning from home and online!

Sincerely,

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