

March 30, 2020

Hello GFB Families,

I hope that our students and their families are remaining healthy and engaged in academic thinking and activity. The GFB team has been working, virtually of course, to help support you. We have added additional resources to the Curriculum Resources document forwarded last week and located on our school webpage. **In addition and for families looking for more structure and a specific content focus, we have also posted structured daily focus opportunities broken down by grade level. This can be found on our school's homepage. Click the tab at the top that says HOME LEARNING.** Each grade level document provides specific daily activities in ELA, Math, Science and Reading. It also includes weekly sites/links that students can access for Art, Computers, Music and Physical Education. All recommendations are intended to reinforce learning and maintain skills students have been exposed to thus far. Learning should be a habit, something that we practice every day. With that in mind, families can use this document to establish a daily routine for students which is an often overlooked but important consideration.

Learning includes more than academic engagement and thinking. Thoughtful and meaningful experiences should also be a part of your child's away-from-school experience. To help you support your student and promote academic engagement, I am offering a few supplemental suggestions and ideas. An educational journal I recently received featured this link which includes some really creative and innovative activities: <https://www.weareteachers.com/things-to-do-during-covid/>



3. Graph the types of birds that frequent your yard or windows.

[This Principal's List of Things to Do During COVID Closures is Going Viral](#)

Kim Jones McClelland, a principal in our Principal Life group on Facebook, shared teacher Wade Whitehead's brilliant ideas for things to do during COVID closures that is now going viral, for good reason! We've added links and more ideas to these low-tech kid activities that are great for elementary kids (although I know some middle schoolers who could learn a lot from #4!).

www.weareteachers.com

As you have likely experienced by now, creating a schedule for students is as important as designating a work space. Both create expectations and help reinforce a daily routine. With that in mind, consider these tips:

- **Create a schedule that includes input from your child.** The order of learning is less important than the time allocated but it's helpful to include both in your schedule. Be sure this schedule includes a "start" time to avoid procrastination and daily negotiations with your student. Post this schedule in an area that is easily visible to your child and be sure to stick to it every day.
- **Establish a space** that includes all supplies your child will need. Obvious materials include pencil, paper, erasers, pencil grip if appropriate, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, etc. Other helpful supplies may include a number line, ruler, alphabet strip, sight word list, frequently used word list, dictionary, and any other guiding document you can find from work previously given to your student (ex.: Lively Letter sheets, Handwriting Without Tears sheets, venn diagrams sheets, etc.).
- Although natural lighting is ideal, **be careful that the area you choose isn't too distracting.** Windows that overlook a playground or neighbors playing in the yard are highly distracting and of course would compete with your child's ability to focus.
- **Try to provide your child with a stable, straight back chair** and one where ideally his/her feet can touch the floor. This promotes core body alignment and more control over extension and fine motor skills important to writing and cutting.
- **Consider the helpfulness of a timer.** Timers not only help students plan their endurance, it sends a subtle message about the pace of their work. Students working too slowly often succumb to distractions while student who work too quickly are frequently motivated to complete the task which sacrifices details and meaningful cognitive engagement. A timer is just the tool you need to help pace your child and reinforce time on task expectations.
- **Tools to promote organization.** Bins for pencils, baskets for completed and to-be-finished work, and learning support materials should be kept within your child's established workspace but in an organized and easy to access fashion.

To be sure this is new territory for all of us and as a result, the learning curve is a steep one. I will continue to offer any ideas/suggestions that I think may be helpful while our teachers continue to provide the instructional guidance necessary to keep our students engaged and maintaining skills. Let's stay strong, focused and together as we work to create the best opportunities for our students.

Your partner in education,
Ms. Pearson, Principal