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24 March 2020

Dear parents and carers,

You might be inclined to create a minute by minute schedule for your children. You have high hopes of hours of learning, including online activities, science experiments, and book reports. However...

Our children may be just as scared as we are right now. Our children not only can hear everything that is going on around them, but they feel our constant tension and anxiety. They have never experienced anything like this before. Although the idea of being off school for weeks sounds amazing, they are probably picturing a fun time like summer break, not the reality of being trapped at home and not seeing their friends.

Over the coming weeks, you will see an increase in behaviour issues with your children. Whether it is anxiety, or anger, or protest that they can't do things normally - it will happen. You will see more meltdowns, tantrums, and oppositional behaviour in the coming weeks. This is normal and expected under these circumstances.

What children need right now is to feel comforted and loved. To feel like it is all going to be ok. That might mean that you tear up your perfect schedule - even Google Classroom sessions. Play outside and go on walks. Bake cakes and paint pictures. Play board games and watch films. Do a science experiment together or find virtual field trips of the zoo. Start a book and read together as a family. Snuggle under warm blankets and do nothing.

Don't worry about them regressing in school. Every single child is in the same boat and they all will be ok. When we are back in the classroom, we will meet them where they are. Teachers are experts at this! Don't insist on 2 hours of learning time if they are resisting it.

If I can leave you with one thing, it is this: at the end of all of this, your children's mental health will be more important than their academic skills. How they felt during this time will stay with them long after the memory of what they did during those weeks is long gone. So keep that in mind, every single day.

Please apply common sense at all times and I ask you to converse with the teacher via the Google Classroom, however I am aware that some classes may need to adjust the amounts they are giving each day (I will talk to teachers). This is a stressful time but it could be a memorable time for children, they will probably remember the special nature of being at home and the beautiful weather. I realise that your situation may be compounded by having to work at home but that could be made easier by being kind to each other and not piling up pressure for all at home.

We are missing all our children not being here, but pray for you each day.

God Bless,

Mrs Price

