

How can families support student science learning at home?

Parents, families, and home guardians play a critical role in science learning at home. Since no two families are alike, families can support their children in a variety of ways.

Don't Forget!

- **Student, family, and community physical and emotional well-being are important!** As schools close, and the news cycle is dominated by information about COVID-19 and may be frightening or confusing to children. Take care of your child's emotional and health needs during this time. Do not neglect your own needs, and reach out to available community networks and resources.
- **Home-based learning is unique and should not try to recreate school.** Trying to support school-like learning in a home setting may frustrate teachers, students, and families. Work with your child to have meaningful science learning experiences that connect to your home lives, interests, and identities.

Recommended Actions You Take

- **Model the Learning Process.** You don't have to be an expert in science! One of the most supportive things you can do is to be a partner in your child's investigations and thinking. Think out loud or describe what you are doing as you do it, whether it is cooking, fixing something, taking care of pets, or other housework. Ask questions, even when you do not know the answer!
- **Be a Thought Partner.** Support your child's reasoning using ["talk prompts" for investigation](#) (from this [more general resource](#)). You can ask your child questions, like "what do you notice? Why do you think that's happening? What can you teach me about this?" If you have two or more children working together, you can use [these prompt cards to help students guide their own talk](#).
- **Talk about Different Aspects of Science.** As you work with your children on their investigations, realize that you can engage in a range of productive types of talk. [This educator volume](#) describes and gives examples of different kinds of conversations groups can engage in: perceptual, conceptual, strategic, affective, explanatory.
- **Focus on Science in Everyday Life.** Many activities you regularly do can support meaningful science learning! To explore the kinds of connections that are possible, you can do Internet searches like "science of [EVERYDAY ACTIVITY]" (e.g., construction, cooking, gardening, washing). This can open up all sorts of meaningful questions and experiments (e.g., how does soap work, how do we hear sounds).
- **Connect Science to Your Work or That of Your Family.** There may be meaningful ways to engage your child as part of your own work that can contribute to meaningful science learning. In your work or that of another family member, how do you find the answers to your questions? How do you communicate techniques, processes, or idea? What problems or challenges might you face? Share your work and allow your child to think and work with you in a meaningful, career-related context.
- **Build from the Science-related Interests of Your Children.** You know your child — consider whether they have personal, family, or community interests that they do not always get to pursue in school. Are there projects, ideas, or collaborations that might connect those interests to their learning?

