

[Music]

Slide 1

Unpacking the learning at home

Welcome to Unpacking the Learning At Home – a guide for families looking for ways to support their children make sense of and manage their learning at home. My name is Sarah Humphreys and I will be talking you through this guide.

Slide 2

The response to COVID-19 has required a rapid shift from learning in the classroom to learning at home. Teachers, students and families have had to adapt to these changes quickly and so we are all learning as we go. I have outlined 4 steps to help you unpack the learning with your child:

- Step 1: Making sense of the learning
- Step 2: Working out what your child is being asked to do
- Step 3: Prioritising learning over busy work
- Step 4: Reflecting on the learning

Slide 3

Step 1 –Making sense of the learning

Before starting any learning activity, it is important for your child to be clear about what the teacher wants them to learn from the exercise rather than just completing the task they've been given. There is a subtle but important difference here that can make all the difference in how motivated your child is to engage with the activity.

Slide 4

Think about how you use a road map or GPS. Your goal is to get from one location to another. You know where you are going to start. You know where you want to end up. What you haven't worked out yet is which route or which mode of transport you want to take (we'll come back to this in Step 2). Let's stick with the goal for now.

It's the same with teaching and learning activities. Look for the road map that tells your child where they are heading with their learning. The road map on a learning activity might be shown as ...

- an outcome from the NSW syllabus or an achievement standard from the Australian Curriculum
- a learning intention or goal

Talk with your child about the purpose of the lesson.

Slide 5

If the purpose of the lesson is not clear to your child don't feel pressured for them to continue. That would be like continuing a journey without a map or GPS. Who knows where they might end up or how frustrated they may feel. Instead use this opportunity to support your child to feel confident to ask for help by...

- connecting with a friend
- contacting the teacher

In so doing you can empower your child to take control of their own learning.

Slide 6

Step 2 – Working out what your child is being asked to do.

Now your child is clear about what their teacher wants them to *learn*, they can work out what they have to *do*.

Remember the analogy of the road map or GPS? The goal was to get from one location to another. Now we can look at the options available.

Slide 7

Is there more than one route that you could take? Which one will you pick? The route you pick may be different to another person for all sorts of reasons. Someone may choose the fastest route, another the most scenic, another may make their choice based on the number of road tolls or sealed versus unsealed roads. You get to choose your own adventure but remember the goal hasn't changed. Everyone still gets to travel from their starting point to the end destination.

Slide 8

It's the same with teaching and learning activities. Look for the options available. The teacher may have assigned one particular route (e.g you will write ...) or given options (e.g. you can write, record your voice or make a video...) and given some sign posts to show what the learning will look like along the way. This might include...

- success criteria
- a marking guideline or rubric
- an example of another student's work

Talk with your child about the option they will choose. Their choice could be based on their preference to be creative, to collaborate with others or simply to get the activity completed as quickly as possible.

Slide 9

If your child is not feeling particularly motivated by the options (or lack of options) made available by the teacher don't be afraid to consider alternatives that may be more motivating. The aim is to help them achieve the same learning, but in a way that works for them. You don't want to embark on the journey via an unsealed road if you are not a good traveller and at risk of having to abandon the trip halfway. Instead use this opportunity to support your child to come up with their own ideas by asking...

- Is there a better way for you to show your learning?

In so doing you are empowering your child to take control of their learning.

Slide 10

Step 3 – Prioritising essential learning over busy work

Step 3 is about finding the balance between competing priorities and access to resources. Those priorities could relate to school work as well as family commitments. It is important to remember that the current situation of learning from home is *not* about trying to replicate a school day. It is however about continuing *learning*.

Slide 11

Your child might be asking themselves:

- how much do I have to do?
- how long do I need to spend on this?
- why do I have to do this?

- why does this matter?

Look for any indication from the teacher about how long they should work for or how much they have to complete.

Establish whether the work is about learning or about keeping your child busy. Eg. When learning about Highest Common Factors in Mathematics some children will benefit from repeated practice and completing multiple exercises to help them remember. Others may grasp the concept more quickly and may only need to complete one exercise before they get it.

Slide 12

If we go back to the analogy of planning our journey from one destination to another, we may need to consider how essential the journey is. If we decide the journey is not essential we might postpone it, or cancel it all together. Delaying or cancelling a journey is not going to cause any harm and allows us to focus on what matters without added stress.

If your child is feeling overwhelmed, bored or is struggling to start or finish tasks it is time to prioritise the workload and don't be afraid to let some things go. Use this opportunity to support your child to prioritise what they can manage by asking...

- How is the activity supporting learning?
- Can this work be left out or revisited at a later stage?

In so doing you are empowering your child to take control of their learning.

Slide 13

Step 4: Reflecting on the learning

This final step is about supporting your child to think about their own learning and make their own decisions about their own progress and guide their own effort. The goal is for your child to have the satisfaction that they have learned something new or have mastered a skill that they have been practising over a period of time. The goal is not just about completing something to hand in to the teacher.

When you have followed your GPS directions and completed your journey you have achieved your goal of getting from one location to another. You may make a decision to save that route to your favourites; you may memorise the route for future trips; you may decide that the route you chose was not the best option and you'll choose a different option for the return journey.

Slide 14

What I'm getting at here is supporting your child to think about what they have learned and whether they have achieved the goal or the end destination. If they don't think they've quite got there you could encourage them to think about how they might adapt, edit or improve on what they've done. Look for...

- Examples shared by the teacher that model what is expected
- Checklists
- Marking guidelines that describe what needs to be included and at different levels of complexity (just like the directions option on your GPS that gives the details of the route)
- Success criteria
- Offers from the teacher to email or call

- Submit a draft to the teacher for feedback (this is strategy backed by research – it is not cheating! If you were lost or unsure of the direction you were travelling in, you would ask for help to get you back on track. Same thing. Feedback is about teaching and learning.

In so doing you are empowering your child to take control of their learning.

Oh... and don't forget to submit it!

Slide 15

If you would like more information for yourself or your child's school then please get in touch by sending an email to me, Sarah Humphreys, at sarah@inclusiveschools.com.au or via the contact page on our website www.inclusiveschools.com.au

Thanks for listening.

[Music]