**So, your children are at home and now you are having to educate them! Here are some tips:**

1. **Keep a positive attitude**

If you are feeling upset and resentful that you are now home with your kids, your children will absolutely feel this. From this moment on, you need to accept and embrace that this is the situation and that you are going to make the absolute best of it. A positive attitude is contagious! Remember, our children mirror our emotions back to us many times and we need to be positive and upbeat if we are to make this process successful.

1. **You need to create a daily routine**

We all know that children as well as adults thrive on routine. If your children are older and are doing school online, sit down with them and have them develop a routine for themselves for a full school day with your approval. They will be much more likely to follow something they had a part in designing. Don’t be afraid to make changes as needed, flexibility is important if you want to be successful. If you have younger children, create a schedule using pictures and put it up on the wall or refrigerator, so they will know what is coming next throughout the day. When a child knows what’s happening next, they are automatically less anxious and more relaxed. It is also important that children have some say in their schedule, even if it is just when they get a break or be allowed to choose between two activities.

1. **Have a prepared environment**

Choose one area of your house where your children will be doing their activities and schoolwork. This will limit the mess and keep all school supplies in one place. Even if your kids are doing different schoolwork, it keeps the momentum that school is in session. Set out their schoolwork in an organized way so they have everything they need.

1. **Take breaks**

Children can get lots of work done in a very short amount of time when they know they will be able to have a break and do something they want to do. Let them take breaks, and don’t underestimate how much learning gets done through independent play.

1. **Set goals and give rewards**

Everyone works harder when they have a goal that leads to a reward they want. Children can work to earn TV time, an opportunity to play a game, or even just having one on one time with a parent. Think of this as your child’s paycheck for all their hard work. Remember, once something is earned it should not be taken back...nobody wants to be docked a day’s pay when they have not performed at their best at work…children react the same way! Work with your child to determine what they would like as rewards and be sure to set realistic goals! They should be able to earn something everyday if you want them to stay motivated. One idea would be to set up a reward once half their work for the day is completed.

1. **Create jobs**

This is a time where everyone will need to chip in around the house. Cater to each child’s strengths, so it does not become a power struggle. If a child enjoys working in the kitchen, their job can be preparing lunch a few times a week. Remember that your children are more capable than you think. Chores should now be tied into your daily schedule. Folding laundry, sweeping, keeping their bedrooms clean. Create a chore list of everything that needs to get done to keep your home running smoothly and have a family meeting deciding who is going to do what and how often. If your children are older, they can rotate making dinner for the family once a week.

1. **Quiet time**

This is as essential for the child as it is for the parent. You need 1-2 hour of the day that is down time. These hours are mostly for you to take care of yourself. If you have young children, find a movie or video for them to watch. This is an opportunity for the older children to watch a movie or play a video game. This is your time to take a walk or exercise, go into your bedroom and take a nap, facetime a friend or family member, send out some emails, take a bath, engage in an activity you enjoy, or whatever you need to do for yourself. This is not school time, but it needs to be implemented in your day in order for you to maintain your sanity as a parent.

1. **Do not overdo it**

It is not wise to spend hours preparing for an activity that your child finish in 5 minutes. You would be surprised how happy kids are with simple activities. Let them help come up with activities and get everything ready, it is always easier when everyone is helping!

1. **Let your children explore their creativity**

This is a great time to let your children get in touch with their creative side. Put out art supplies and paper, get them empty notebooks and have them write stories, let them bake, make slime, bring out the glue gun and let them create. This allows them to use both sides of their brain and gives them the needed breaks for academics such as math and reading. It also allows for more movement.

1. **Give the children alone time**

Your children are going to be together for longer amounts of time then usual. Depending on the size of your house, and some may need to be more creative than others, there needs to be times of the day where the kids have time to themselves, either in their bedrooms or backyard, porch or wherever you can help make this happen. They can read a book, listen to a story with headphones or anything that just gives them some quiet alone time.

1. **Break work down into small portions**

Try not to overload your child. Have them do a few problems at a time, instead of giving them two or three sheets of math at a time. Remember to praise their efforts and set up short and long-term goals each day. Try to alternate sitting and moving activities so that they are not trying to sit still for long periods of time. There attention span will most likely only last about 20 minutes for most children, and shorter periods of time for those who are younger. Movement breaks are especially helpful for those who struggle to sit for any length of time!

1. **You have this!!!!**

There will be days where you will be frustrated and yearn for time to yourself. There will be days where you witness your children doing pretty awesome things. You will have great days and you will have really difficult days. **But you will get through it and so will your children.** You just have to work to make this the most pleasant experience possible and keep a positive attitude. **Attitude is everything!!**