

# Learning in the 2020-2021 School Year

This school year is vastly different as we experience different learning models with [COVID-19](#). Whether classes are held all in-person, a hybrid model, or all remote, the Tourette Association of America is here to provide you with resources and tips for every type of classroom setting.

We understand that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to school this year. School attendance is particularly unique. Everyone has different ideas and opinions. You are making the best choices for your family.

To help guide you this school year the TAA's Education Advisory Board cochairs have offered advice on best practices that will help reduce anxiety and give some predictability and routine to the school year

- Most students will be working from home at some point. Have a **space dedicated to schoolwork** where your child can focus and be most productive.
  - Keep all materials organized and in a place of reach.
  - Keep folders in a basket so loose papers can be filed later.
  - It may be beneficial to color code folders to match a color-coded schedule.
    - Be sure the schedule is easy for your child to read and follow.
  - Have a copy of your child's schedule in your workspace.
  - Watch Dr Jan Rowe's video for more help with organization and planning specifically to the 2020-2021 school year. <https://imsva91-ctp.trendmicro.com:443/wis/clicktime/v1/query?url=https%3a%2f%2fyoutu.be%2fTZ1Qs5BoWxc&umid=7C91A7F4-B2D0-7B05-A3D0-72EED657DFB9&auth=5ab06289d9c3b14f9a77f69d29e7a25870e86301-182aeecf67a9cb704c3e1736ba0db90ef6bee402>
- Learn to use your child's remote learning platform.
  - You will likely need to help with organization of assignments and work.
- Sensory breaks will help break up a day of more sitting than usual. Watch Dr Heather Simpson's video on sensory breaks for remote learning here. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-GxQcDsVM4Y&t=1s>
  - Keep a basket of sensory tools like squishy balls, fidget spinners, play dough, or whatever helps your child with focus and movement.
  - Have the school keep a small basket of sensory tools just for your child at his or her workspace.
- Have either hard copies or electronic copies of the [TAA's Educator Toolkits](#) to give to everyone working with your or your child. To order hard copies, email [info@tourette.org](mailto:info@tourette.org).
- If needed have your child keep copies of the Tourette Syndrome ID card to show others in the school if necessary.
- The TAA can help with educating the school. We can offer virtual presentations and virtual team meetings for education professionals at your school or district. We can also offer virtual presentations for student education for your child's

class, school, or district. Please contact us at (718) 224-2999 or at [info@tourette.org](mailto:info@tourette.org).

- If your child has a 504 or an IEP you may need to look at what is working and what is not. Adjustments to 504 accommodations and IEPs can be made anytime.
- Your child is listening and can pick up on your anxiety. Be sure to check in with yourself as a caregiver and be mindful when your anxiety is high. Find a time when you can feel calm to help your child manage challenges with school.
  - Model excepting and adjusting to changes by letting things go.
  - Verbally model how you are managing anxiety. You could say you are feeling anxious today and that is why you are going for a walk or cooking.
- Be sure to check in with your child and ask how he or she is doing. By doing so you can monitor your child's anxiety and create a plan for helping them manage their anxiety.
  - This could involve creating a plan for completing school assignments.
    - You may need to reach out to your child's teacher or, for older students, help your child self-advocate by reaching out himself or herself.
  - You may want to help your child create a mindfulness routine.
    - Take one-minute breaks to focus on breathing in and out for a count of 4.
    - Close your eyes and spend one-minute thinking of someone that you really enjoy being with. Think about how this feels and send them a good wish. Do the same but think about things you appreciate.
    - Spend one minute with eyes closed just paying attention to what you can hear.
- A school counselor or social worker may have tips for supporting a student with anxiety and may be able to communicate with classroom teachers about the student.
- Trust that you are doing your best to support your child. This can be a challenging time

## Additional Resources

For children:

<https://assets.tourette.org/media/20200922142754/Childrens-final-tool-kit.pdf>

For teens and young adults:

<https://assets.tourette.org/media/20200922142331/Young-adult-final-tool-kit1.pdf>

Regarding education – can be given to teachers and school personnel:

<https://assets.tourette.org/media/20200922142754/Educator-tool-kit-final.pdf>

A patient's and family Guide:

<https://tourette.org/resource/patient-tool-kit/>

What is Tourette Syndrome:

[https://assets.tourette.org/media/20200922142829/WhatisEnglish.proof\\_.r1.pdf](https://assets.tourette.org/media/20200922142829/WhatisEnglish.proof_.r1.pdf)

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