

## **New Normal New Order: Fundamental Skills and Highlights**

The pandemic has necessitated many new arrangements that could possibly change our lives radically since March 2020. While many changes are taking place in our lives, schools keep their vital importance in the development of children. School is the safest place after family for children in every developmental period. School life is important in terms of creating an order, learning the rules and providing a micro example of social life. School is an area where every child conducts new relationships.

The new academic year was quite different than previous years for most children and families. Some students continue the distance education whereas some students will try to alleviate their long-standing school aspirations with the opportunity of face-to-face education.

Certain skills and habits are critical for the completion of this year, which is thought to be full of changes. In this period, adaptation and forming new routines, emotional regulation and planning skills come to the fore.

### **Adaptation to School and Importance of Routines**

First, the pandemic required the change of all our ongoing routines, it once demonstrated the importance of the most primitive and necessary adaptation skills for humanity. In this process, while both adults and children dream of returning to the order they were accustomed to as soon as possible, the increase in the number of the infected people has shown that this will not be possible in a short time. Thus, adaptation is the sole option for humanity.

The first condition for us to adapt to new situations and reform our usual daily routines is to accept existing situations instead of resisting change. Parents have an important responsibility at this point because children can only continue their social-emotional development when they feel safe. This safe environment is only possible with routines. So, both adults and children need new daily planning.

Children are primarily needed to re-organize their sleep, mealtime and study areas. Even children who continue the distance education need precise rules and routines in these areas. Since abstract thinking skills are limited at young ages, children have difficulty in perceiving the concept of time. For this reason, it is useful to keep this calendar in an area where children can see it. Especially children who need individual support may need to be accompanied by adults during the distance learning. The extent

of this accompaniment may vary in line with children's emotional, academic or self-regulatory skills and needs. Students who refrain from being on their own, who have difficulties in regulating their emotions and establishing bonds, and who need individual support in concentration, following instructions and planning, need more family support. In these cases, parents can follow their children by being physically with them and / or visiting their children at frequent intervals. Despite that; It will be sufficient to provide support at rare intervals (transitions between lessons, the beginning and the end of the day) for children who have developed self-control, emotional regulation skills and the sense of responsibility for academic works.

Adolescents should be given autonomy in creating their own programs and followed by their parents as observers. The privacy of adolescents who are trying to discover their identity should be respected, especially at home and parental support should be provided if it is necessary. It would be beneficial for parents who have difficulty in deciding how much parental support should be for children and adolescents, to receive support from the school counselor.

### Emotional Regulation

Emotional regulation is the ability to realize, interpret and manage emotions. The ability to organize is a skill that starts from infancy and has a serious impact on several areas of our lives. Development of emotional and behavioral regulation skills is important for social acceptance, adaptation and academic achievement.

It is not easy to handle with regulating emotions but some methods can be follow to make it easier for children to cope with negative emotions, delay their desires, and adapt to changes. Children with advanced emotional regulation skills are more likely to find alternatives to change and find solutions to problems they experience.

At this point, the most important thing is to accept the positive or negative emotions of children, to be inclusive and to allow them to understand the emotions they are experiencing. It is necessary to allow the child to find their own solutions in order to cope with the negative emotion. It is necessary to leave some space for your child to solve problems and to respect their choices.

Emotional regulation skills lay the groundwork for many skills such as maintaining attention, behavior planning, and socially accepted behaviors.

### Planning

Planning skill is a thinking skill that helps an individual develop strategies to achieve goals. Planning; basically, it is to list the steps to be taken before starting an activity or task, to be able to plan the time and to determine the strategies for how to do the given task. For example, planning helps a child to decide what art materials they will need, then carefully assemble and arrange those materials, and then follow a step-by-step process to complete the project and complete the task.

To improve your child's planning skills;

- Talk about setting priorities. How can he do the assignment or activity? What does she or he need? You can discuss them and create a list together.
- Identify areas that are going well or need support. Highlight your child's strengths, talk through concrete behavior that they can do but not what they can't.
- Prepare checklists with your child.
- Do not intervene in works that children can do independently.
- Emphasize the importance of using a calendar or taking notes so children can use time effectively.
- Try to minimize the stimuli around it in order to increase the focus time in front of the screen.
- Determine the studying times. You can use reminders. (Hourglass, digital clock, etc.)

In this difficult process, while your child tries to cope with what they hear and witness in a different way, their emotions may also change from time to time. For this reason, being in contact with your Psychological Counselor at your class level will be beneficial for your child to maintain a healthy connection with the school and to complete the process in a healthy way.

References

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