

video conferencing software such as Skype or Zoom. If you have more money to spend but less time to spend it, on-demand courses are available from sites such as Udemy, where you can learn the nuances of English at your own pace. Finally for those who aren't looking to speak fluently but just want to boost their vocabulary, try downloading an app such as Duolingo or others, which will enable you to study casually in an entertaining way.

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HOW TO COOPERATE WELL WITH THE SCHOOL DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The new daily school routines, with home schooling via the internet, puts the cooperation between teachers and parents to a new test. Here are some good advices.

- Parents must answer calls from or get in touch with school and the teachers whenever necessary and attend meetings at school at any time they will open again.
- This is of great importance to be able to follow up your own child in a good way and to create good relations between parents, teachers and the student.

These are excerpts from the book “Good Parental Relations. School-Home-Cooperation in the Primary School” by Rector *Pernille Grepp Knutsen* and Associate Professor *Cecilie Pedersen Dalland* at the Norwegian Institute for Primary School and Specialist Teacher Education.

“It is essential to construct a common platform between school and home, so that both students and parents are updated and confident about what is happening at school” – *Cecilie Pedersen Dalland.*

The best homeschooling possible

In these days, with the corona virus affecting our world, tens of thousands of parents are placed in a very new and uncommon situation and are given a large part of the responsibility for the teaching of their children and youth.

- It is important that parents take part in making a structure and a framework for the home schooling. Get up at the right time in the morning, do the morning chores, eat breakfast and start the homeschooling, is the advice from *Dalland*.
- Make a plan for each day, including regular breaks. You may make the use of an alarm clock or similar to mark the beginning of each lesson and break. Make use of breaks if needed and if possible.
- Feel free to write down all the tasks on a sheet of paper and mark each task which is completed with a pen or marker. This may strengthen the motivation. Try to make the students work independently.
- This must of course be adjusted to fit the age and abilities of each individual child. Some may need more help than others.

Get in touch with the teacher

This new reality of home schooling puts the School-Home-Cooperation to a new test. If parents feel the need, they should get in touch with the teacher for help.

- Send an e-mail, but don't overwhelm the teacher with enquiries and questions. The teachers have a lot to do for the time being and many of them are in regular touch with their students several times a week, *Dalland* indicates.

Teachers must listen to the parents

- The teachers are the ones who have the professional standing, and they are carrying the major responsibility for the successful cooperation with the parents. They must listen to the parents, because the parents know their children better, says *Dalland*.

- If the relation between teacher and parents is good, it is easier for the parent to get in touch with the teacher when handling some difficult social or educational subject.
- Striving to build a good relation between parents and teacher makes the communication easier. It will be less difficult to get in touch with the teacher.

The parents are an enormous resource

- It is crucial for the teacher to have the parents as a part of the team, because it gives the student the opportunity to learn more, says *Pernille Grepp Knutsen*, rector at Haslum School.
- The parents need to have confidence in the school. Teachers who are able to create a good cooperation with the parents will save some extra time for good teaching.
- Parents are an enormous resource. When parents get a feeling of being heard and listened to, they will also be more able to handle challenging situations.
- All parents ought to harbor the feeling, that if the school is on fire, their child is the first one to be rescued.

There is a magic in how the teachers express themselves. If they articulate something in a spirit of love and care and keep a good communication with the parents, the parents are able to tolerate more. In such a case the teacher may say almost anything.

Parental advices

- Follow up the schoolwork
- Attend parental meetings, conferences and other sessions you are summoned to at school.
- If you are not able to attend, let it be known and make a new appointment.
- Answer all enquiries from the school and teachers.
- Get involved in different school boards or committees.
- Volunteer as a PTA representative

- Take part in school excursions and journeys when possible.
- Let the teacher know when things are not working or if you have any worries.
- Speak well of learning and school in general.
- Prepare good and healthy routines for your child's homework.
- Make good routines for home reading.

Invest in positive feedbacks

The authors appreciate that cooperation with the parents of a defiant child may be very demanding. Nevertheless, they emphasize that what you invest in the everyday home schooling, will reward you if something unexpected happens.

Dalland is occupied with the fact that the teachers also give positive feedbacks.

- The teachers should aspire to not only call the parents when they have a complaint against the child, but also get in touch when things are going well.
- Very often the call from a teacher who is making a complaint about a child, may start a downward spiral of conflict in the home, *Knutsen* remarks.

She suggests, for example, that the pupil may receive a note to put in the pocket and take home, or that the teachers are in touch with the parents twice a year via SMS or e-mail, or any other sort of electronic media they may agree upon.

Cooperation with parents is an important part of the education.

It is also important that the students who are training to become teachers, are well taught in the skills of communicating with parents.

- It is all about having and overall thinking around parental meetings, talks about progress and the daily work. A parental meeting ought to be an arena for discussion and reflection around the everyday life at school, finishes *Dalland*.