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SUMMER 2023

Homeschooling *and beyond*

*Homeschooling
can improve
your child's
mental health*

Maths
vs maths
literacy

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films to watch on
family movie night

A parent's
guide to
screen
time

How to
boost your
child's
brainpower

Preparing for a new
homeschool year

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Ask Dalena



Dalena van der Westhuizen will answer any questions or concerns you may have about learning, concentration, memory and cognitive development – and, of course, the frustrations arising from these

My 12-year old son will be starting homeschooling for the first time next year. What should his study environment at home look like? – *Debbie Els*

Hi Debbie

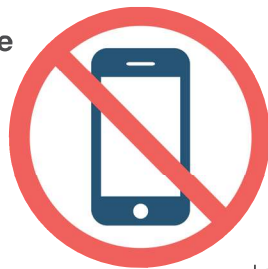
Here are four practical tips to create a productive study space:

- **Switch off your phone**

When working or studying, your phone can be the biggest source of distraction, affecting your focus and time management. So turn it off or switch it to airplane mode. Don't just leave it on silent mode, because you'll be tempted to keep looking at it whenever there's a new message or e-mail notice. Ultimately, it's best not to have your phone with you while you work or study.

- **Keep it simple**

Keep only the things you use daily within reach (no extras, only



what's really needed and used regularly). Store everything else away from your desk to limit distractions.

- **Keep your planning in sight**

Put up a visual calendar where you can write down important tasks, due dates for tasks/projects, etc. Knowing and actually seeing what's next make planning for it easier and reduces anxiety.

- **Put up a wall clock**

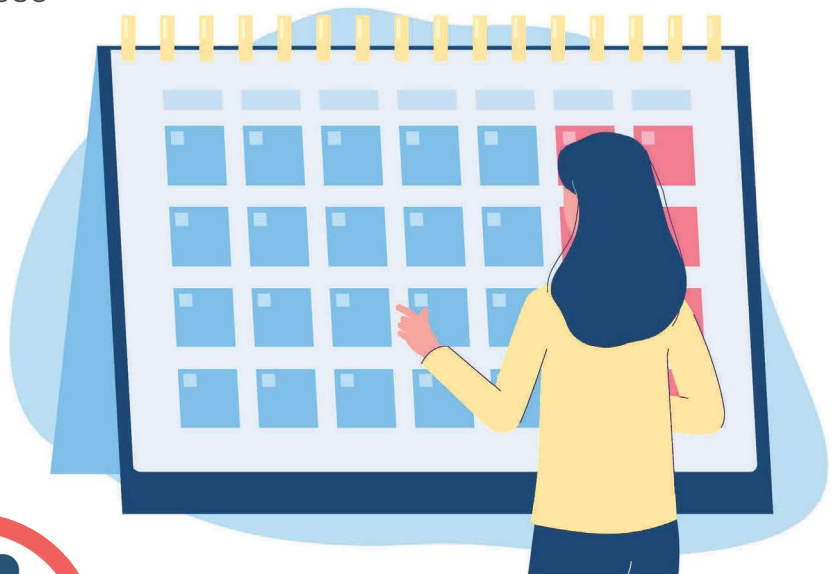
Before starting a task/studying, set a time for how long you plan

to be engaged in these tasks or decide what time you plan to finish, then use the clock to keep moving forward.

How much should parents get involved in their children's education? I work full-time and struggle with feelings of guilt. My children's marks are good. – *Daleen Barnard*

Hi Daleen

If your children are able to work (mostly) on their own and are doing well, you're doing something right, so forget the mom-guilt! Our end goal should



always be to help our children develop into independent studiers. It seems your children are at a stage where some guidance and assistance – as and when needed – are enough.

My son’s performing really well, but he spends a lot of time on his phone. Is there an impact of smartphone use on learning effectiveness? – Linda Knop

Hi Linda

If your son’s performing well, I wouldn’t worry too much about the impact of his smartphone use on his current learning outcomes. The important thing, however, is finding a balance between screen time and other activities. Be sure to read more about this in the article *A Parent’s Guide to Screen Time* inside this issue.



My 11-year-old has absolutely no interest in schoolwork. How can I help him focus during school time? – Petrea Maass

Hi Petrea

There may be a variety of reasons why your son has no interest in schoolwork. These may include having to sit still for periods that are too lengthy, finding it hard to keep up in the classroom, not understanding the work the first time round, struggling to break

down tasks, etc. To find a long-term solution to the problem and really get him focused during school time, it’s important to dig deeper and find the cause of his disinterest. Start off the process with a simple (non-judgemental) conversation. Let him explain, in his own words, why schoolwork doesn’t interest him. If that doesn’t provide actionable information, consider getting professional assistance by means of a learning skills assessment.



About Dalena



Dalena van der Westhuizen is the co-founder and MD of BrainAbility, a cognitive development specialist, a master brain coach and an internationally certified cognitive coach. She translates the latest international cognitive research and best practice into strategies that can be applied by parents and educators alike.

A mom and a self-confessed chocoholic, Dalena enjoys working with both kids and adults to improve the way their brains process information for better learning, reading and focusing.

Send your questions for Dalena to: adri@isikhova.co.za.