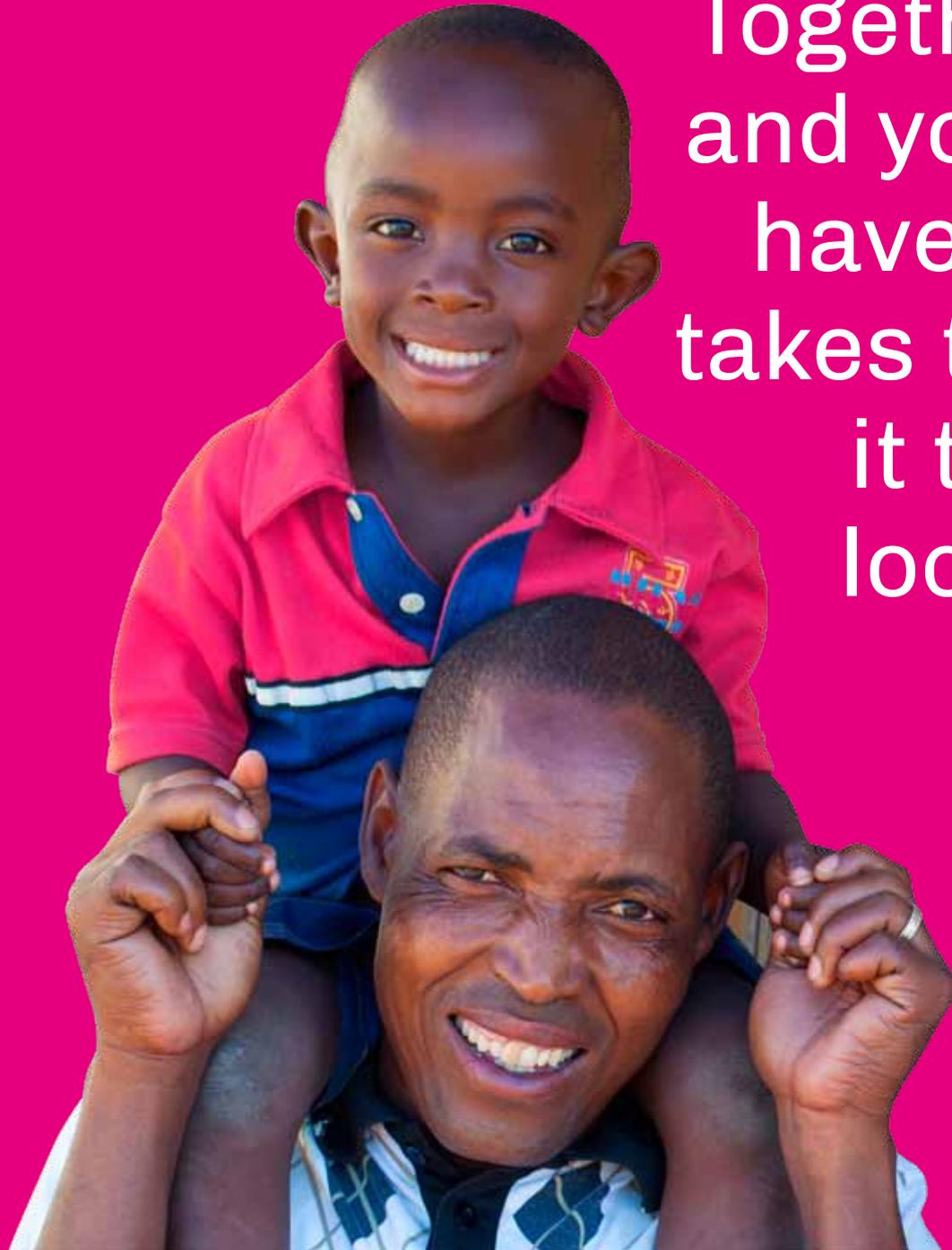


Guess what?
Together, you
and your kids
have what it
takes to make
it through
lockdown!



Your best efforts are valuable and important to your children.

As a parent or primary caregiver you are the first educator of your child. Whether you have formal education or not, you are the most important adult in your child's life. You know a lot about your child; like their favourite foods, toys and games. You know what makes them scared and how to comfort them. You love and care for them and together you have built the foundations to enable your child to go out into the world.



Caregivers can play an essential part in a child's school career, whether or not they are the child's biological parents. Researchers have found that having at least one caring supportive adult has a significant impact on a learner's academic potential.

You are not expected to become a substitute teacher. You are in partnership with the teachers and the school. Your role as a parent is to support your child through the process of learning by creating a space for her or him to explore their interests, develop ideas and ask questions. Learning at home will not look the same as it does at school. This period of lockdown is a key time to reinforce some of the foundations that are needed for your child to truly engage in meaningful learning at school. (For suggested activities see “**Learning in the Home Environment**”)

Your relationship with your child is your most important asset to help your child learn. You can build on it, and use practical tools to help your child learn.



You have the power to help your child shine!

Your relationship with your child nurtures their physical, emotional and social development. It lays the foundation for your child's personality, life choices and overall behaviour.

It can also affect the strength of their social, physical, mental and emotional health.

From the day you brought your child home with you, you have worked on this relationship. As your child grows the relationship between you and them may change, and it is important to acknowledge that certain challenges that happen naturally will require you to put effort into trying to strengthen that bond. The lockdown provides you with a great opportunity to build the relationship with your child, for this period and also once they go back to school.



Practical guidelines on developing a strong relationship with your child

As a parent, you can use the relationship you have with your child to help them develop more positive attitudes and behaviours towards school. Showing interest in their feelings towards school and what they have learnt or are learning demonstrates that schooling is worthy of interest and time. Your thoughts and opinions matter to your children and you are their first role model. Children are likely to copy their parent's behaviour at school. Try to be positive when discussing school and teachers. Your attitude to learning will play a big part in shaping your child's success at school.



Build trust

- It is important to **listen** to your child. Set aside 10-20 minutes every day to listen to your child. During this time it is important to give your child your undivided attention and try not to be the one talking.
- Try to be as **honest** as possible with your child about what is going on at a level that is appropriate. Help them to understand the situation and explain the steps that they need to take to stay safe.
- Be as **consistent** as possible with your child when it comes to rules and home routine.
- Show your child **love and care**, this is a difficult period for everyone.



Communicate with your child

- Try to make communication with you child a **two-way process**, with both of you listening and talking to each other.
- One of the best ways to do this is to **talk** to your child about the things that are important to them.
- Allow them to ask **questions**. If you don't know the answer, try to find it together.



Highlight the positive

- **Congratulate** or praise your child when he or she performs task well.
- **Reassure** your child when they are struggling or face challenges. Young children may experience regression e.g. bed wetting, baby talk, thumb sucking and temper tantrums.
- Give your child simple chores to help the family. This will make him/her feel important and build their **self-esteem**.



Your child has a right to quality basic education, no matter what school they go to and whether you are paying school fees or not. It is important to remember that if you are worried that your child is not getting the support they should be getting from their school during the lockdown and beyond, you have the right to ask questions and propose solutions. The School Governing Body (SGB) is there to represent you as a parent body so it is important to raise concerns with them. You should also discuss these concerns with your children's school and teachers. You have the power to ensure your children experience high quality education.

How to support your child without being overwhelmed



One of the best ways to equip yourself with the tools you need to support your child now is to ask your child and their teacher questions. This lockdown period provides you with the opportunity to understand where your child is at - both academically and emotionally. Ask your child open-ended questions about school, such as...

“Which subjects do you enjoy at school? What do you like about them?”

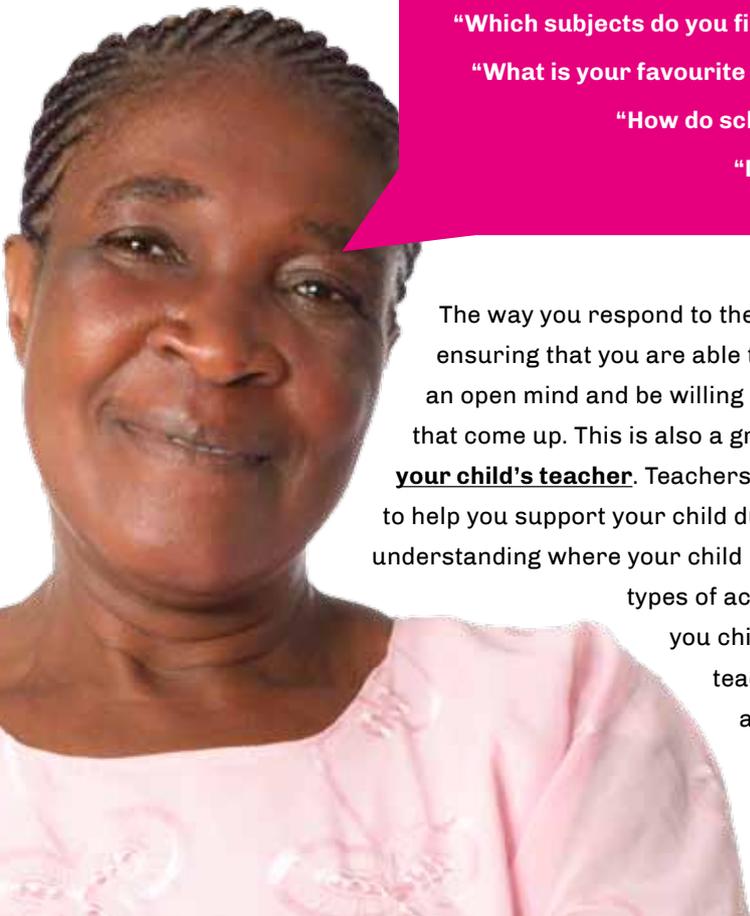
“Which subjects do you find more challenging? What is challenging about them?”

“What is your favourite time of the school day? Why do you enjoy it so much?”

“How do school rules differ from our rules at home?”

“Do you think the rules are fair?”

The way you respond to the answers is very important, for building trust and for ensuring that you are able to support your child if they are struggling at school. Have an open mind and be willing to have a discussion with your child about the issues that come up. This is also a great opportunity for you as a parent to **connect with your child's teacher**. Teachers throughout the country are trying to find the best ways to help you support your child during this period. This partnership can really help with understanding where your child is. Your child's teacher can give you great advice on the types of activities you can do during the lockdown to reinforce what you child already knows. Try to communicate with your child's teacher, many teachers are currently using WhatsApp to try and communicate with parents.



Some practical steps to trying to start communication with your child's teacher, school and school community:

1. If you do not know the teachers contact details but you know anyone's phone number at the school, call them to find out the phone number or email of the teacher teaching your child.
2. The school might have an outdated number for you, or may have lost your phone number – make sure they have the right number.
3. If you can't get hold of the school or the teacher, do you know other parents at the school – try to reach out to them.
4. Does your child have friends at school? Try to contact their parents.

Tips for learning in the home environment

When supporting your child at home, the types of activities you do will not look like the formal learning that s/he does at school.



For children aged 3-6 it is important to...

- Build a **routine** for your child. This routine will not look like it did when your child was at school or when you went to work, but it will help to make you and your child feel more secure during this very difficult time.
- Focus on trying to build your child's **vocabulary** through reading, storytelling, and talking to them about the various things that you are doing together throughout the day.
- Try to keep your child **active** and have them do activities that use both their big muscles and small muscles, this helps to develop your child's gross and fine motor skills. Big muscles are responsible for running, jumping, and throwing, small muscles are mostly in the hands and fingers.

SmartStart has data-free resources to assist in the building of a routine and the types of activities you can do with your child available on: <https://smartstart.datafree.co/everyweekcounts/>



For children in primary school it is important to...

- **Contact your child's school** and find out what it is doing to support learners during this period.
- Some schools already have plans in place, but if yours does not, **focus on practising reading and mathematics**. *ClickMaths has created a database of data-free resources to assist in the your child in both mathematics and reading, these resource are available on: <https://learning.bcxlearn.com/learn/#/topics>*
- **Build a routine** for your child that creates time for learning and play.
- If there are multiple children of different grade levels in the home encourage them to **read and work together**. This not only helps your younger child but also assists in reinforcing the foundations of your older child.

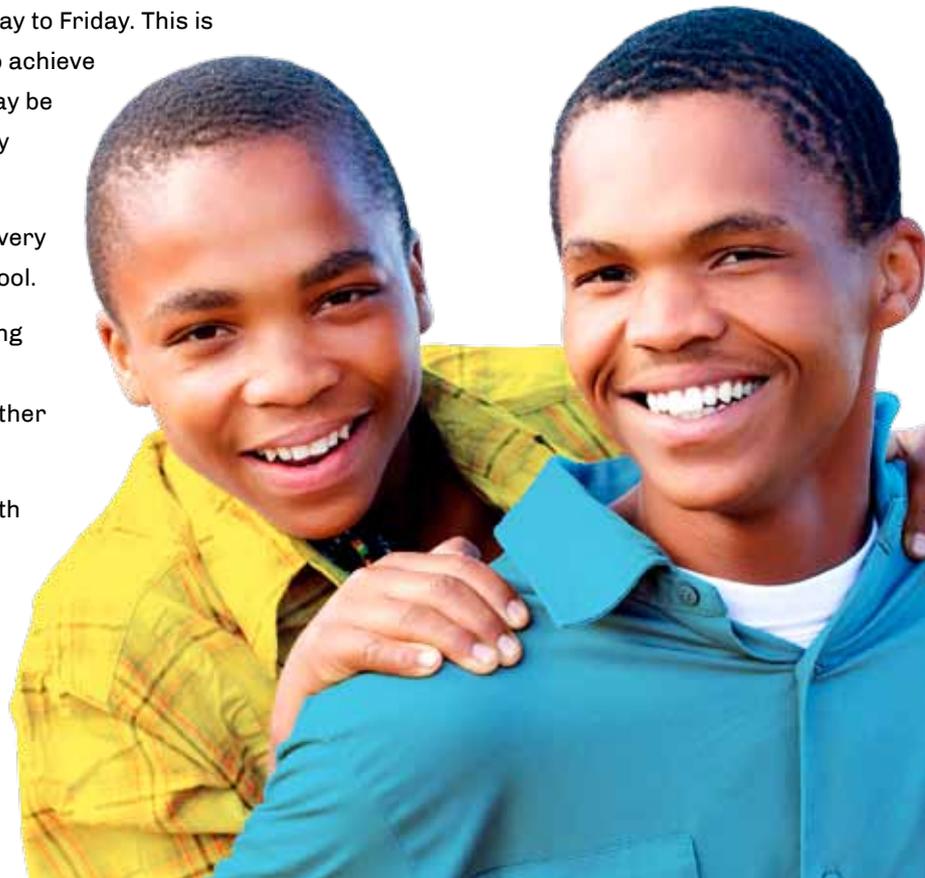


This period is also an opportunity to reinforce the values that you feel are important for your child to engage with the world and others in a positive way.



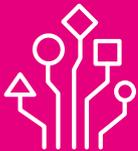
For children who are in high school it is important to...

- Sit with them and understand **how much time** in a day they need to be able to do their schoolwork. Set realistic goals.
- Help them draw up a **timetable** from Monday to Friday. This is to give them enough time each day to try to achieve their learning goals. Bear in mind that it may be necessary to revise the timetable once they have tried it out.
- Ensure that your child has **enough sleep** every day, just as you would when they go to school.
- Ask your child about what they are learning in each of their learning areas. This is not about you helping with the content, but rather **showing interest in their schooling**.
- **Encourage your child to communicate** with classmates and his/her teachers. Many high school teachers are currently using WhatsApp as a tool to reach their learners.



How to take care of yourself as a parent

This is a difficult time for everyone, and if you don't protect your own mental health you can't take care of your children. Build a community with other parents who are going through similar experiences. Create a WhatsApp group where you are able to check in on each other, discuss your challenges and successes.



Be flexible, if a particular approach to home learning does not work for you and your family, move onto something that does. Remember whatever your contribution is, it is valuable.

COVID-19

Coronavirus hotline: 0800 029 999 / WhatsApp 060 012 3456
www.sacoronavirus.co.za / www.coronavirus.datafree.co

MENTAL HEALTH

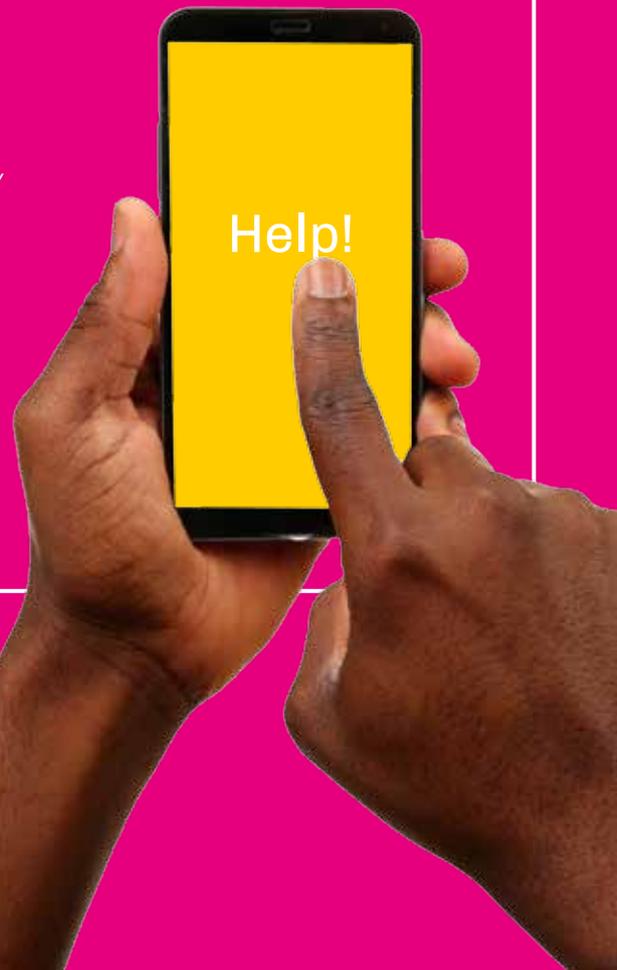
South African Depression and Anxiety Group hotlines: 0800 21 22 23 /
0800 456 789 / 0800 20 5026 / 0800 70 80 90 www.sadag.org

POSITIVE PARENTING

Parent Centre: www.theparentcentre.org.za / 021 762 0116

LITERACY CATCH UP SUPPORT

Reading for Meaning: You can find Reading for Meaning stories and activities on WhatsApp by typing "hello" to +27 600 54 8676 and following the Zero Dropout Campaign menu.



Parent Power is a DGMT initiative aimed at galvanizing a constituency of activated parents in South Africa who are empowered to act as champions for their children's education.