Transition Sets the Tone for Doing Schoolwork

Recently, I posted my top 10 tips for home-schooling success, whether it’s just helping with homework or being full-time home school teacher to them. Now I am elaborating on each item on the list. Parenting tip #2 is this:

Allow at least 5-10 minutes of transition both at the

beginning and end of a homework, and home

schooling time.

I’m a jogger. I use jogging both for conditioning, exercise, and to keep my weight in check. Even though this is a 3-4 day/week ritual for me, I still take 5-10 minutes to stretch and warm up before heading out. You know what, I can’t remember the last hamstring injury I’ve had. Warming up is part of my ritual that keeps injuries from happening.

Similarly, as you launch into homework or home schooling time with your kids, ease into that time with a warmup. This will be time well spent that will help your kids accept the change in their activity. It will also allow for stall tactics and excuses to be addressed without taking away from study time. Taking transition time both before and after study time gives the bookends to that time that will promote attention and improve memory recall of the material studied.

“Okay, troops, it’s a quarter to ten now. School starts in fifteen minutes.”

“Aw, Ma,” Amy complained, “None of my friends are doing this school thing during the shutdown. Can’t you let us have a day off just this once?” Angie chimed in, “Puleease.”

Mom went into the dining room, pulled up three chairs, and got textbooks from the cabinet where they were stored.

“Wow!” Mom smirked as she came back into the family room, where her kids were locked into their computer gaming. “It’s a good thing I’m not teaching ‘none of my friends.’ That gives me more time with you guys. So, as you are winding down your YouTube and gaming apps, who wants some s’mores before we start?”

Amy and younger sister Angie each raised their hands and together gave an “I do,” in tandem. While snacking at the breakfast table, mom active listened their frustrations and then asked, “Okay, who needs to pee before we start?” Each child giggled.

Home study time needs to alternate with play time, usually 20 minutes of school followed by a 10 minute break. This usually allows for a separate study topic per block of time. Kids get a satisfaction from beginning and completing a task within a given time frame. Get creative with your lesson plans, like preparing a scavenger hunt for spelling words in your back yard. For older kids, guide their online lessons and prepare supplemental material. Conclude each school day with a 15-30 minute transition time, with lots of praise and reinforcement for a job well done.

Transition times are just that…easing the transition from one activity to another. They allow your child’s heart to catch up with his head, so that all of him is on the same page for school time. Transition times improve on-task behavior, attention to detail, and lesson recall. Add learnable moments to teachable moments while you are home schooling.