

# HOW TO GIVE YOUR KIDS A REALLY GOOD EDUCATION WHILE THEY ARE OUT OF SCHOOL



Facebook is full of ideas on how to manage schooling during the coronavirus. One of our favorites is a Facebook post by Mike Farris, President and CEO for Alliance Defending Freedom.

## You need not and probably should not try to emulate what your kids were doing in school.

This unfortunate situation gives every parent a chance to ensure that their children have some basic tools for learning that will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

- **Have your kids read aloud to you.**  
For little kids, this is by far the most important thing you can do. Forget the nonsense modern methods. Teach them phonics. After all, they are learning to read English. And in English, letters make sounds.
- **Read aloud to your children.**  
Pick great books. Pick things your children understand but may be a bit over their own reading level. For preschool kids, this is by far the most important thing you should do.
- **Make sure your children can add, subtract, multiply, and divide.**  
By themselves. No calculators. Learn to carry and borrow. Learn how to express remainders in division as fractions. Old fashioned math.
- **Do math time tests.**  
When you know math well enough to do it fast, you know math.
- **Work on spelling.**  
Find lists of commonly misspelled words and learn how to spell them. Start with the difference between lose and loose. It drives me crazy when I see supposedly well-educated adults repeatedly confuse those two. For heaven's sake teach them that you do not use apostrophes to make a word plural in the vast majority of cases.  
Make them write lists of dozens and dozens of words and make them plural.
- **Expand their vocabulary.**  
Get vocabulary lists. Make lists of words from the books you read to them and they read. Learn to spell them and their meanings.
- **Learn to do critical analysis**  
Find a news article or opinion piece. Find an article expressing the opposite view.  
Ask: who understood the facts more accurately.  
And: whose arguments were more persuasive.  
Write a summary of your own views after doing the above.
- **Have them read good books. Better yet, great books.**  
Read an equal number of books from the following time periods:
  - Before 1800
  - 1800-1900
  - 1900-1950
  - 1950-presentSome of my favorites.
  - The Chronicles of Narnia
  - Anything by David McCullough (histories)
  - Uncle Tom's Cabin
  - Cry the Beloved Country
  - My Grandfather's Son by Clarence Thomas
  - The Scarlet Pimpernel
  - Great Expectations
- **Write book reports**  
A short summary of the book.  
What lessons was the author trying to teach?  
What did you learn from the book beyond facts?
- **Work on geography.**  
Learn every state and its capital. The population of every state. Major cities in every state. Rivers. Mountains. For world geography. Learn them by continent. Country and capitals. Population. Major industries and products. Religious groups. Languages. Type of government. Average income.
- **Have your child write a first-person history of this crisis.**  
Impact on them. Family. Community. Local businesses. Nation. This will be a major event in world history. They can read this to their grandchildren.

There are many other things that can be done but I have emphasized the basic tools of learning. Science is downwind from math. Most everything else uses words. Master math and words and you can do pretty much anything.

**If your children do these things it may be the best school year of their life.**

