

*The following is an excerpt from a letter sent to parents by an elementary school principal. Although its author cannot be verified, this message has been shared thousands of times in the past few days. We at Trinity Lutheran School feel that this message of hope and encouragement is an important one for all of us.*

This is my advice for those who have been thrust into schooling your kids at home due to the coronavirus COVID-19 shutdowns. You are NOT homeschooling. You are CRISIS schooling. Crisis schooling is stressful and even trauma-inducing.

Being at home all day is NOT our normal! Our kids are not used to being in their houses all day long. Children are grieving right now. Out of the blue, they lost a lot. It is wonderful that so many classes are going online, but it's not the same. They lost their in-person time with friends, their daily routine and the predictability of life that gives us security. We all did.

1. HONOR that grief process! Don't expect to just jump into a perfect program and learn, learn, learn. Expect them to act out. Expect them to not want to get out of bed. Expect them to not have words to express their inner turmoil.
2. YOU are grieving and experiencing loss. Give yourself a lot of GRACE! Even some of us veterans in education are struggling because our security has been yanked from under our feet. Some of you have lost jobs. Those who are working are afraid of going out. Some of you have been to 5 grocery stores and still do not have what you need. Our society has been turned upside down. Give yourself a break.
3. It is okay to NOT be amazing. Don't try to be Pinterest Homeschool Mom/Dad of the Year. From experience, I can tell you, something always "gives", no matter how perfect people pretend to be. When you have 18 kids in a class, it takes a lot of time to get all of them to turn to page 32, take out pencils, get their paper, stop pulling their friend's hair. There are natural distractions with a big class that do not happen in a small one. You will get done fast!
4. Don't artificially create busywork to do for 6 hours a day. That will anger and bore your child, and make you tear your hair out. When you're done, you're done! Go do some fun things! Or... even crazier... have fun learning! If your school did not give you loads of worksheets, be glad. Now you can read lots of literature and do hands-on learning! There is a lot of learning that does not end in a worksheet. Read, read, read!
5. Get crazy and ask your kids what they are interested in-- and then learn about that! If your child thinks the solar system is really cool, then read about the solar system, look up YouTube videos about it, do projects about it, making it fun and engaging. If you do that, your day will fly by... and you'll still be learning.

Life will go on even if you are not stellar during a worldwide crisis. Maybe your best today will be to cuddle up with the kids and just be together. Maybe your best today is that everyone is fed and you didn't cry in front of them.

It's okay, and even necessary, to be REAL with yourself about what's happening. A bomb did not literally go off, but metaphorically it did. Our lives may never be the same after this. If you crumble, honor that. I promise you, your child will learn. We learn from all of life!

Blessings and love to all of the parents who are taking on this huge challenge! Give yourself grace! You got this!! I believe in you! I have seen parents work miracles in schooling their children.