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Welcome, this resource was developed to provide support to parents, carers and families of children with developmental disabilities, to have a successful remote learning experience. We've put together a series of slides of supports for you to use in your home to provide structure using household items. Please speak with your child's educational and therapy team, to see if they have resources already to provide to you, otherwise we've given you some simple ideas and tricks of the trade to support you to create these yourself.

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What we purposely put in the environment is really important. Our goal is to support you, to increase your child's engagement in their remote learning program. We're going to do this by being really intentional about the visual and environmental supports that we place in your child's immediate environment within your home.

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Visual supports are a range of things, they are things that we can see. They can be body movements, environmental cues, pictures, objects, written language. There are a number of examples on your screen right now.

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Visual supports are an important tool that can help us. It helps us to communicate information to children. It can help children to organise their thinking, it can help us provide choices, communicate rules and expected behaviours to children and it can support our communication to children to provide information such as what is happening, how long something is happening for, when it is finished and what is coming next. Visual supports provide routines, structure and predictability, which we know is absolutely crucial during this time. Visual supports can encourage on task behaviour and it can really support independence as well.

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Here are some examples of some visual support strategies. Schedules can really help to teach routines. Labelling furniture within spaces can really help to communicate the purpose of those spaces to children, using token boards and other reinforcement systems can really support the encouragement of expected behaviour and on task behaviours within those spaces. And clearly defining different spaces using furniture or tape or other boundaries can really help to define these areas to children, so they learn the difference between learning spaces and living spaces.

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So let's take a further look at how you might insert some structure into your home environment using some visual supports and strategies. We're going to look at four key areas. They are: We're going to look at the physical structure, the boundaries between spaces, we're going to look at the ways that you can use schedules to support routines and transitions, we're going to look at work systems, what can we put in place in the environments to support your child to independently learn, and what tasks are we providing.

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First of all, let's consider physical structures. We're really looking at how we can use space, furniture and pre-existing household structures and items to your advantage during this time. This might require some initial adjustment of your home environment but remember remote learning won't last forever and these temporary adjustments can really support your family's operation within the same space for a long period of time. We're going to look at how we can define learning and living areas, how it can minimise distractions and how we can support children's knowledge of what is expected and when.

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Think about the current spaces you have available to you and how you might like to use these to your advantage. Think about what will work well for you and your family as a whole and think about what will work well for your child to engage in their remote learning program. Define the difference between learning and living spaces, think about your indoor spaces and your outdoor spaces and think about communal living areas as well. Think about what furniture you might temporarily arrange to provide those optimal learning and living environments. Remember these can always be changed back again down the track, this is a temporary period where we really need to just provide some supports and structure to support your family as a whole. Also consider what household items you have available to you to support the structure also. I'm going to provide some tips for you, as to how you can use some of these everyday household items to your advantage.

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On your screen you will see several images that give you an idea of what some learning zone spaces could look like. Some of the main things to consider when you're getting creative and creating your own learning spaces within your home, are things like where can you set up the most distraction free space for your child to engage in their most intense learning, that is the time that they're going to be practicing their identified learning goals. Also consider how you could have versatile spaces, that you could use for a range of different purposes, and also consider those other learning programs that might not necessarily be best taught at a table. Things like music, arts, cooking and exercise, as an example. How are you still providing some structure around those learning programs.

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And think about your living spaces, the communal spaces where you want your child to be free to disengage from their learning program, relax, engage in their downtime, engage in some leisure activities, either independently or as a family group.

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Within these learning and living spaces we need to also consider what extra materials, resources and equipment, we might need to source to support the engagement of your child. If there are some extra outside noise coming into your home space, consider the benefits of sourcing some noise cancelling headphones. Think about things like timers and bells to signal transitions and also consider your child's sensory needs and whether your child needs that sensory input, before, after or in-between learning tasks.

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Let's look at the role of schedules and how schedules can be used to support you with your family's time management and also how they can be used to support your child's independence. There are two types of schedules, the first is a transition schedule, these schedules support children to get from one place to another. It tells the child where to go. So, for example on your screen you'll see the first schedule: independent work, music, check the mail, break, maths with mum, then exercise. It's telling your child what spaces they need to go to to do those activities. The second schedule is an instructional schedule, this tells children what to do within those spaces and sometimes it also tells them when it's finished and what might be coming next. So, for example on your screen you'll see within that independent workstation the child has to do task one, they have to do task two, then independent work is finished and then they're ready to transition to music.

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Again, when setting up schedules a couple of things to consider, go back to your child's educational and therapy team. They are likely to be using schedules within the classroom, ask them what they have been using with your child and if you can have a copy of those schedules at home. Think about the length of the schedules, think about whether they need object tactile schedules, whether they need photographs or images or whether they are readers and they can have a written or a digital schedule. Think about the length, does it need to be really short? Do we need to break it down just to two items on a schedule at one time? Or can we put the whole of the day's schedule in one? Also think about your child's self-management of the schedule. How would you like them to engage with the schedule? Do you want them to tick it off after they've completed each activity? Do you want to make the schedule that you can take an icon off for the child to travel with and match it to the label at that station? That's a really good strategy to support transitions.

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It's time for me to check my schedule. I go to the wall where it is kept. I have a look. I've got independent work, music, I've got to check the mailbox, I get to have a break, maths with mum, then I get to exercise and then I get to eat lunch. Sounds like a good morning to me. I take off the first label, Independent work and I walk to the independent workstation. Here I am. I sit down and I start my work. To do. All my work to do, until I am all finished. Once I am finished, I get up and I check my schedule again. Next I've got music, fun! I take off the visual and I walk to music. Here I am. I matched the visual, I pick up my instrument, ukulele, how fun! And I sit down, and I play. The timer just went off and mum said I'm finished now, so I've got to put my ukulele back and walk to check my schedule. Next I get to check the mail; I do this every day. Sometimes mum comes with me, but she is teaching me to check the mail all by myself. I'm so lucky. I take the mail and I give it to mum. She told me to go and check my schedule, so here I am, it's time for a break goody. I've worked hard this morning. Mum gives me choices when it's break time, but usually, I like to go into my room all alone in the dark and quiet away from everyone. Mum's also very clear when it's break time and there's no more work to do during break time. It's time to play. I like my breaks. The timer just went off and mum told me it's time to do maths with her, I don't like maths. It's back to work time for me. I do like sitting with mum though, I suppose she tries to make maths really fun. Oh boy maths was hard, mum just told me I did a good job. I've got to go check my schedule now. It's time to exercise, fun! Here I am. I like exercising, sometimes dad takes a break too and we go for a walk together. Other times I do exercise in my room, or I go out in the backyard and I kick the footy. Boy, that was tiring. Got to check my schedule. Lunch time, mmm I'm hungry. Time for a well-deserved snack. I wonder what'll be on my schedule this afternoon. I can't wait. That was a really fun morning. As you just saw, that was an example of a schedule in action. It was a homemade schedule. Homemade schedules are fine, providing they provide the information that your child needs, using the mode of communication that they can understand. If you don't have schedules provided to you by your child's educational therapy team, that's okay you can make it yourself. Just ensure that they are clearly visible, easily accessible and designed for simple use. We want the images or the writing that are on the schedule to really correspond to the activities and make sure that those images or the words really match the labels, where you have labelled those spaces within your home as well. If students aren't engaging in their schedules, try some reinforcement and to refer to them at relevant times. A good cue is, remember to check your schedule.

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Work systems are also a worthy investment. These are things that you can set up in your home environment for independent learning. Now not all children will be independent in their learning, but there are things and systems that we can put in place to engage your child momentarily while you do something else. It's a time for us to communicate to them that there are times where they won't have a parent or a caregiver available but there is still expected to do some sort of learning. Work systems can support students to know what work they need to do, when, how long for, and what is next. Work systems support students to know how to work through a series of tasks. They can take a little bit of time to set up to begin with, but I promise you it is a worthy investment once your children know these routines and how to use the systems. It will be so helpful to your child's engagement in their remote learning program.

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Here I am at my independent workstation. This station helps children sort through activities, one at a time. I have to check my schedule. First independent work, tick. I look at number one and I grab the first task. My parents told me I have to learn to set the table. I pull out my items and get them ready. I do the activity. I set my placemat. Once I am finished, I put it in the finished container. I finished task one, so I can tick it off. Now it's time to move to task two, it's time to do my puzzle. I get task two. I do the activity and when I am finished, I put it in the finished container. I can now check off task two. It is finished. There is no more work to do. I check first independent work, then music. Independent work is finished, it's time for music. Now I get to play some songs. I like playing songs. It's time to work at the independent workstation. Watch me and I'll show you how this independent workstation works. First, I check my schedule. It says: first independent work. I have to do my work first. I look into my to-do folder, now take out the first activity. It's reading. I do my reading and I answer my questions. When I'm finished, I put it in the finish folder. There's still more work to do. I take out the next task, it's drawing. I do my drawings and when I am finished, I put it in the finished folder. There's still more work to do. Now I have to do my maths. I answer the questions and when I am finished. I put it in the finished folder. There's no more work to do. Now I check my schedule. It said first independent work, now break. I'm finished! I can have my break and leave the independent workstation now. As you saw from those two examples, these are two simple ways, that you can really structure the independent workstation for your child. These are not the only ways you might structure a station. The first example really helps a child work from left to right and this strategy is great for a child who doesn't yet know how to sort through a number of tasks that they have to do. The second example allows for a bit more flexibility for the child to sort through their own activities.

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When considering what tasks to give your child, you should definitely be speaking to your child's educational team. They will provide you with the tasks that your child needs, to engage with, to meet their learning goals. Some other advice and guidance will be available on the Department of Education and Training's learning from home website and there will be some guidance specifically around learning tasks for children with diverse needs that you might find useful to support your child in their remote learning program.

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Should you require further support, please contact your child's teacher and they will be able to direct you further. In addition, visit the learning from home website again and you will find several behaviour and engagement support tips, that you may find useful.

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We hope you've found these resources helpful. Again, please work in partnership with your child's educational and therapy team. They're there to support you and we're here to support you.