

For Families



Resources for learning during closures



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INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Insights is produced by Marcia Latta, communications consultant.

For most students around the country, school has been disrupted — like so many other functions of our daily lives during this pandemic. Canceled for now or for the remainder of the school year, it is an unprecedented event for families and an unimaginable academic and social disruption for students.

An April 3 update by Education Week reports:

“12 states and one U.S. territory have ordered or recommended school building closures for the rest of the academic year.

School closures due to coronavirus have impacted at least 124,000 U.S. public and private schools and affected at least 55.1 million students.

There are at least 98,000 public schools and at least 34,000 private schools in the U.S., according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Those schools educate almost 50.8 million public school students and 5.8 million private school students.”

<https://bit.ly/3dSutv2>

Learning doesn't stop when schools are closed

This is a stressful time for parents. Helping their children maintain academic progress and fill their days with productive activities is only one more challenge. But it can also be an opportunity to explore new interests and reinforce lessons about gratitude for what we have and our attitude toward situations that are outside our control.

If there is a positive aspect to this fearful, disruptive time, it is that vast resources are available for learning that many people may not be aware of. We are fortunate to have access to educational resources to supplement school instruction or guide any student to discover new facts or learn new skills.

Finding learning resources

Online education is available for almost any interest or academic subject. Now is a good time for supplementing lessons for school subjects, such as algebra, or learning new skills, such as how to edit videos. This is a great opportunity to build your own adventure.

Your local school district is the first source for supplemental academic recommendations. Your child's district, school and teacher have likely compiled lists of sites for academic instruction and enrichment. Start here. Parents should review these instructional recommendations from school with their children. This school-based information may have resources that align with the school's academic goals.

Recommended websites

Academics: There are many free online programs to help keep kids on track for their grade levels. Check your school's website or seek recommendations from your child's teacher. A Google search will also yield many options, including the following reliable sites:

- **ABCmouse:** A subscription-based program for younger students that is free for the next month. This program offers educational games, books, puzzles and songs to introduce or reinforce early-learning skills.
- **Coursera:** Free and low-cost certificate courses, taught by university instructors. This site is for high school and college students.
- **Khan Academy:** Free courses, lessons and practices for students in grades K-12

Find more recommendations at Six Online Learning Sites Like Khan Academy:

<https://freesiteslike.com/sites-like-khan-academy>

Exploration: A teacher named Mrs. Fahrney put together a fantastic Google Doc of virtual tours around the globe. Her list has been recommended on several educational sites without fully identifying who she is and where she works. It is an extensive list of locations around the globe and in outer space with links to websites, videos or virtual field trips. Thank you, Mrs. Fahrney! *Visit the sites:* <https://bit.ly/2xKpps5>

- San Diego Zoo website
- Yellowstone National Park Virtual Field Trip: Mud Volcano, Mammoth Hot Springs, Yellowstone National Park tour
- Mars: Explore the surface of Mars
- Animal Cameras: Live Cams at the San Diego Zoo, Monterey Bay Aquarium live cams, Panda Cam at Zoo Atlanta, 6 Animal Cams at Houston Zoo, Georgia Aquarium has Jellyfish, Beluga Whales, and more
- Virtual Farm Tour: FarmFood 360 Canadian site, 11 virtual tours of farms with minks, pigs, cows, apples and eggs
- U.S. Space and Rocket Museum in Huntsville, Ala.: Saturn 5 Rocket
- Discovery Education Virtual Field Trips: Field trips including polar bears and the tundra, social emotional skills, STEM and manufacturing
- The Louvre
- The Great Wall of China
- Boston Children's Museum

Just for fun

Don't forget to have fun. When your kids need a break from the academic sites, there are many apps that provide an entertaining diversion. This list from BuzzFeed includes fun visual and auditory apps. Some are also available as a phone app.

This is Sand (create colored sand art): www.thisissand.com

Build a Galaxy (make a colorful galaxy): <https://29a.ch>

Tendrils (interactive music visualization tool): <https://epok.tech/work/tendrils>

Tone Matrix (make music with bells and tones): <https://tonematrix.audiotool.com>

Live Cam (a variety of live animal and nature cams): <https://bit.ly/2xMQP Xu>

Tetris (remember this classic game?): www.freetetris.org

Find more at BuzzFeed: <https://bzfd.it/3dROn9H>

Note: Please review sites first. Online comments are enabled on some apps and may not be appropriate for children.