

Dear BASD Families,

This is a crazy time with constant new information from our government, updates from schools, posts of learning ideas for home, shared sites and spreadsheets and calendars with days organized and planned to the second. Despite this, you have permission to be a parent, and not a teacher.

We know that you are overwhelmed with the day-to-day responsibilities of guiding your family through this health emergency. We know that many of you are juggling going to work and lack of daycare, working from home and engaging with your children, and simply just trying to keep them safe and healthy.

Additionally, chances are you might not know the PreK-5 pedagogy. Chances are you might not know the curriculum, or the true purposes of a daily schedule organized down to three-minute increments. And that's okay. You don't have to know.

Chances are your children may be more nervous and anxious about these changing times than they show. Chances are they are more nervous than you because they are too young to have any control over any of the things happening around them. And they, too, will be okay.

**Yes, school is important (and yes, the district has a user-friendly plan — it will roll out early next week, and it is voluntary). Yes, schedules are handy. Yes, teachers are amazing and do not receive the credit they deserve for their labor. And, this gift of time with your children is important. The way that you handle this time will be etched in your children's memory and hearts. Take this gift of time to be a parent and take this permission to not be a teacher. Chances are your children will remember the time together at the dinner table, the moments spent reading together, the laughter and the snuggles that this brief interlude, our new normal, can bring with it.**

Play a board game. Chances are there is math in that game.

Lounge on the couch and read books or magazines together. Chances are your child will be reading something in which they are really interested

Take a walk outside together. Chances are nature is the best science teacher any of us will ever have. This is something you can do without engaging with others outside of your family.

Watch a funny TV show together. Chances are your family will have a more authentic conversation about the characters in the comedy than some scripted test question. Make something together. Explore, inquire, discover. Chances are your kitchen is the best makerspace of them all. Follow a recipe, or don't. Either way you'll be creating something new together and it will be great, or it won't. That is the best kind of learning

Remember, we have been given a gift of time. When we look back decades from now, will our children remember the color-coded schedule spreadsheets, confusion of not being in school, and the complexity of this time? Or will they remember this time as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to spend special time with a parent or other family member?

Lessen the frustration by lowering the expectations of thinking as a parent you need to be a perfect teacher during this less than perfect time. Simply be a parent. Provide reassurance that everything will be okay by providing you - not necessarily a daily curriculum. Because school activities will come and go, but -you- you have the opportunity to be the constant comforter as a caregiver/parent to help your children through this unusual time.

We are thinking of you. Stay safe, stay healthy,

Bellefonte Area administration, teachers, staff and board of school directors