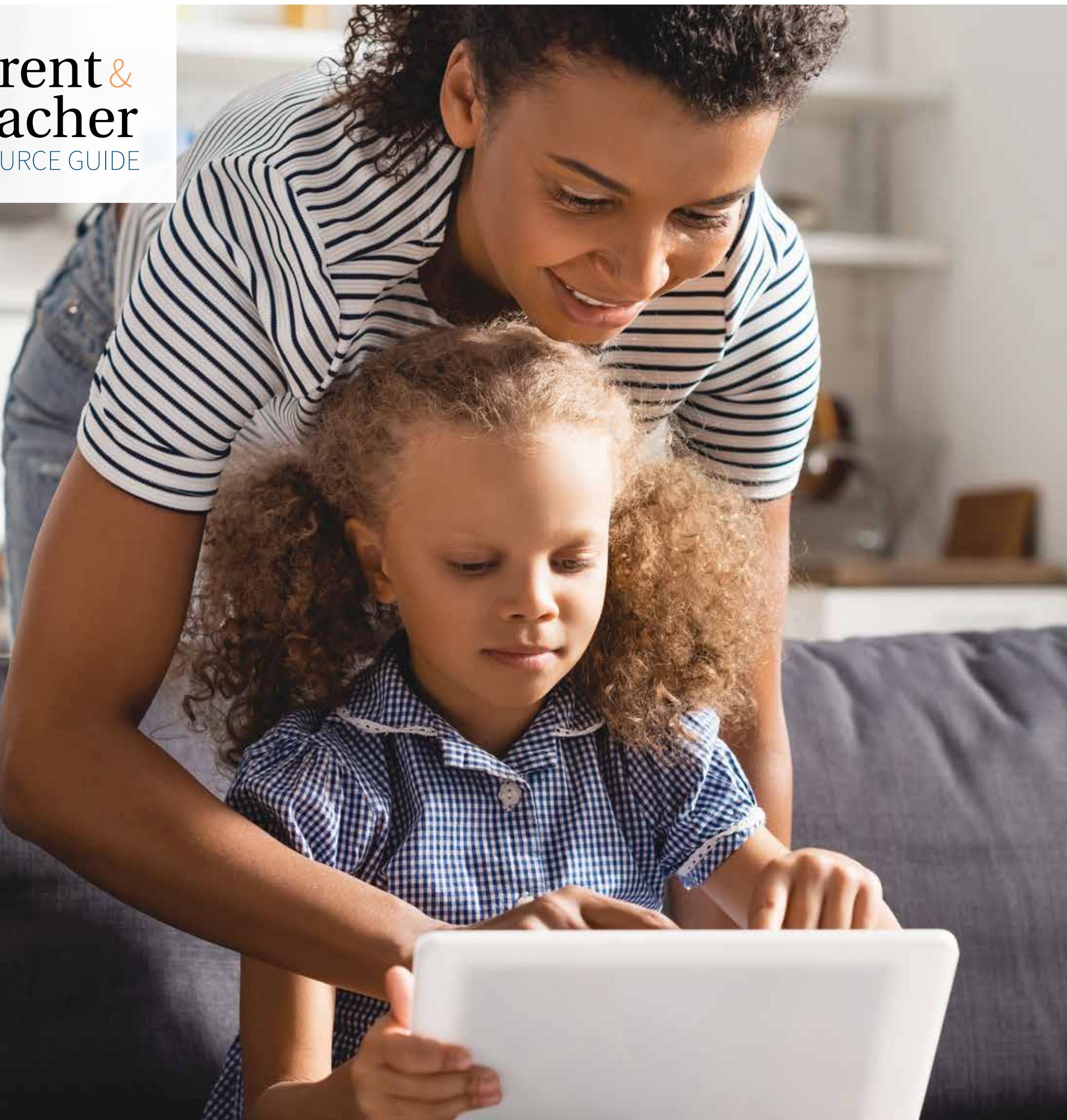


Parent & Teacher RESOURCE GUIDE



Virtual Learning

For many people, school is back. But, thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, it doesn't look like it ever has before.

More students are learning at home via virtual platforms and apps, often alongside parents who are also working from home. It's a situation that can test even the best of parents. Here are some ideas for making the best of the situation.

ROUTINE MATTERS

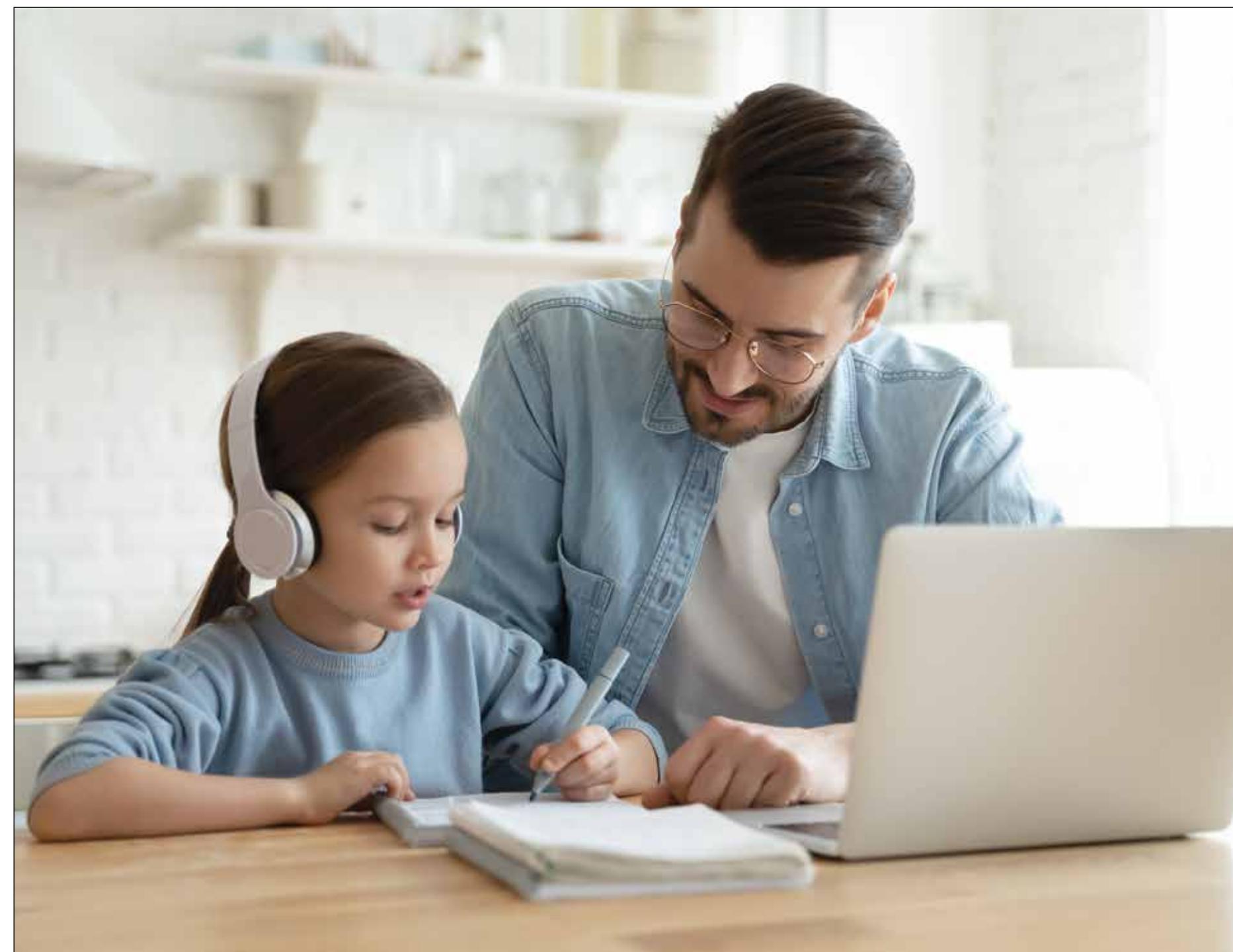
Kids are more comfortable and at ease with routines. Set one and stick to it. Wake up at the same time, have a good, nutritious breakfast, and set up for school at the same time. It's also important that they go to sleep at the same time. Plan for the day in setting class times, breaks and lunch. Set timers and alarms to help them (and you) stay on task.

SET UP SHOP

Have a dedicated place for school in your home. It should be a well-lit area with convenient electrical outlets and minimal noise and distraction. Make sure it's an area of the home you can easily see and keep an eye on, even if you have your own work to do.

GET YOUR TECH TOGETHER

Make sure your electronics are all charged and ready to go every day. Check that every-



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thing's working, including headphones, before school starts. Speaking of headphones, make sure to invest in a quality pair so that your children can hear the teacher.

MAKE TIME FOR FUN

Get your child during mov-

ing during any breaks, even if it's just running up and down the stairs a few times. Outdoor time is also important for mental health as well as physical health. When the day is over, shut down the devices and get the kids out of their seats and get them moving.

HAVE GREAT COMMUNICATION

Establish clear, open lines of communication with your children's teachers. Talk to them regularly about what's working and what's not working both on your end and on theirs. Make your adjustments

as necessary.

Also have great communication with your children. Ask them to teach you the day's lessons and help reinforce their learning by helping them apply what they learned to every day life, like writing letters, cooking or doing laundry.

Using your Local Library

Libraries are more than just the Dewey decimal system. You can make great use of your local library this school year, especially, when more classes are online and kids may not have access to their school libraries.

TECHNOLOGY

Most public libraries these days have desktops hooked up to the internet for you or your kids to apply for jobs, do research or complete schoolwork. But many also allow you to check out electronic devices such as laptops and tablets or even WiFi hot spots. They also have printers you can access to print out schoolwork, materials or other items, often for free.

CLASSES

If you're watching your kids try to do virtual school or you get confused by using your computer, turn to the local library. Most libraries have free or low-cost classes on things like using a computer, learning foreign languages or even chess or yoga. You can check your local branch's schedule either online or at the library itself.

EVENT SPACE

Want to hold a study group



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or another gathering? Your local library has meeting spaces set up just for this, WiFi included.

AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES

Most libraries have a robust collection of CDs, DVDs, records and other resources you can use for your learning.

Studying the history? Look up documentaries or copies of period music to enhance your children's learning. The library may also lend CD, DVD and record players for checkout.

ARTWORK

If you've got a child studying art or art history, see if

your local library allows you to check out artwork for students to study at home.

TOOLS

Got a science project to build? Your local library may let you check out tools to help with that.

Ready to take advantage of these great benefits? All you

need is a library card — that's free! Call or visit your local library's website to find what you need to get a card and pay a visit today. It's usually some proof of address, like a photo ID or a utility bill.

Keep in mind that with your local card, you may also be able to use neighboring library systems.

How to Study

School's back in and it's time to hit the books. Studying can raise grades and confidence levels, but it's not something that people just know how to do.

Good studying is more than just re-reading the texts and notes. Reading is an important part of the process, but it isn't the only one. Studying involves the active engagement of the material, making connections, forming examples and regulating learning. Here are some effective studying tips from the University of North Carolina.

- Organize study materials and begin by reviewing the topics covered. Some examples of good study materials are textbooks, notes, PowerPoint presentations and homework.
- Create a study guide by topic. Think of questions and write complete answers.
- Teach someone else this topic.
- Make and take a quiz on the material. Say the answers aloud and rework incorrect problems.



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- Make up examples that relate to your own experiences.

• Study in terms of question, evidence and conclusion. What is the question? What is the evidence presented? What is the conclusion?

- Understand the study cycle: Previewing, attending class, reviewing, studying, checking your understanding. Resist the urge to skip any one of these steps.
- Space out your studying

over time, working a short time on each class every day, rather than cramming in marathon sessions right before the test. The cumulative amount of time spent studying is the same, but more information is retained.

- Plan short, intensive study sessions of 30-45 minutes, or up to your children's tolerance.
- Know what environment works best for your children. It may not be complete silence.

Try playing calming music at a low volume.

- Don't plan on multitasking. It doesn't improve efficiency and can negatively affect results. Mute social media, ignore text messages.

• Switch up the settings. Study at different times and places to help engage with and retain the information.

- Teach your children to organize their time carefully and set a time each week to

plan for the next week. Set times to study and complete assignments and set times for breaks. That's important, too.

If your children are still having trouble in a particular class or on a particular topic, it's time to turn to the teacher or the school counselor. Ask if there's more work that can help them understand or if there are opportunities for tutoring or extra help in that area.

Building Writing Skills

Even though there's been a lot of emphasis on science, technology, math and engineering, even as early as primary school, it's still important to learn how to write.

Writing is a skill that will benefit them as they grow and are assigned projects like essays and research papers. Communicating easily and efficiently will benefit your students far beyond school.

BEFORE WRITING

The process of writing begins before fingers hit keyboard. The first thing to do is to ask a series of questions. These include:

- Who is the audience?
- Why are they interested in — or why should they be interested in — this topic?
- What does the audience need to know?
- How would the audience's own experience influence them on this topic?
- What do you hope the audience will gain?

Next, write down all the ideas that come to mind regarding the topic. This is a brainstorming exercise, so it doesn't have to be precise. Keep in mind the purpose of the writing assignment. Finally, organize those ideas into an outline or other map


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for your writing. This can include source material, questions to be answered in more.

WRITING

Using the roadmap, start to write. Use clear, concise language. Don't use more words than you need to and don't use bigger words to try to make

the writing sound smart; it really does the opposite. Write a strong topic sentence for each paragraph and smooth transitions between ideas and paragraphs. Each sentence in the paragraph should build on the topic sentence and any unnecessary sentences should be taken out.

EDITING

Grammar and mechanics are still important. Students need to carefully proofread their writing before they turn it in, checking for typos, spelling errors and punctuation errors. Some common errors include run-on sentences, comma splices, incomplete

sentences and subject/verb agreement errors. A good tip is to read the work out loud; it's easy to catch unnecessary sentences or errors that way.

Plan writing assignments so that there's time to take a break and come back to the work for editing before it's turned in.

Applying for Scholarships

Scholarships are great resources when it comes to planning for and paying for college.

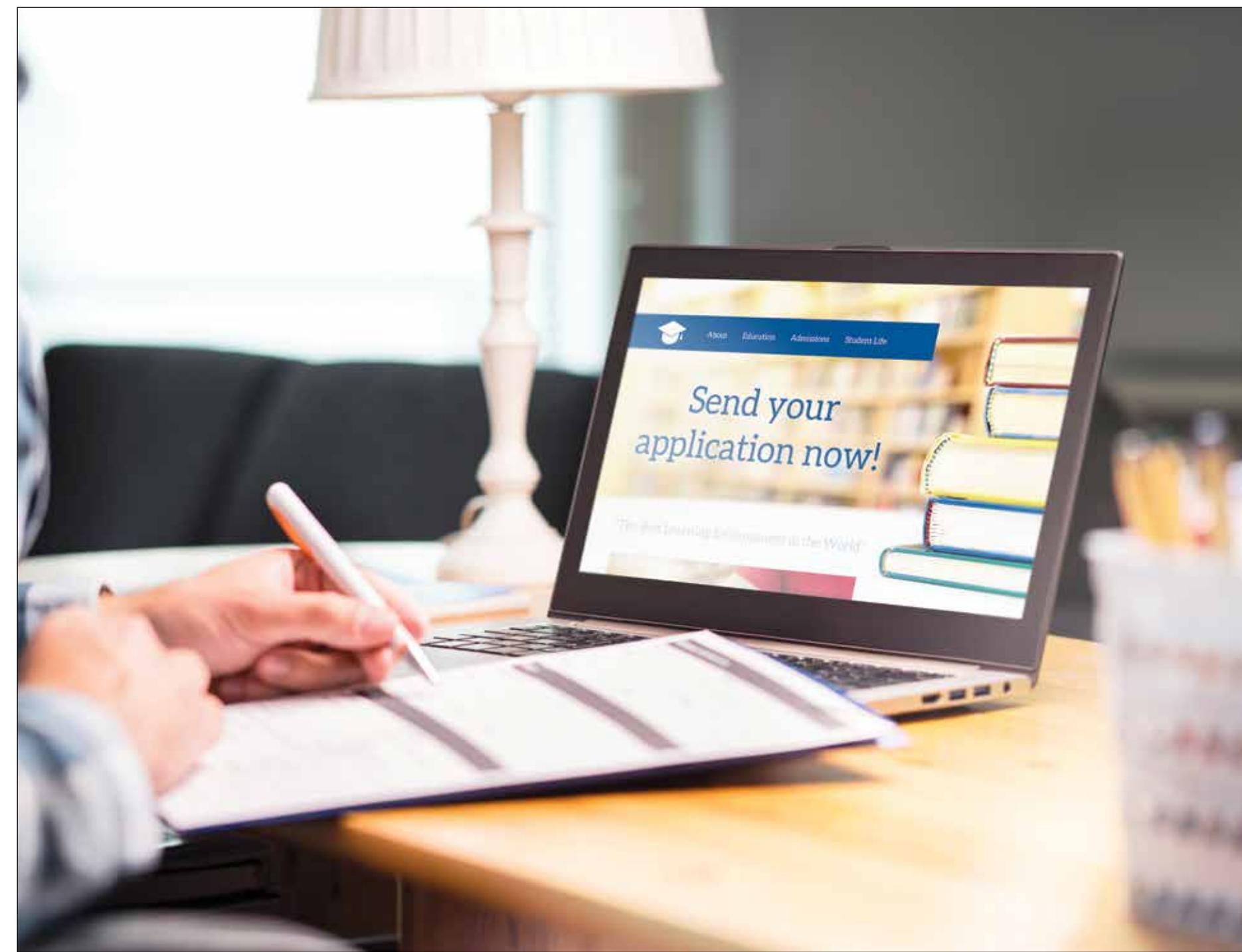
Unlike student loans, scholarships are gifts that do not need to be repaid. There are thousands of scholarships of all shapes and sizes offered across the country. They come from schools, employers, private companies, nonprofits, communities, religious groups and professional organizations. With a little research and by keeping on top of deadlines, this free money for college can be yours for the taking.

TYPES OF SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships can be merit based, community based or based on financial need. Or a combination of all of those. Merit-based scholarships are awarded based on academic achievement, sometimes combined with a talent, trait or interest. Scholarships awarded on financial need use the student's income or the income of their family to decide whether or not to award money. Other scholarships are aimed at particular groups of people, such as the children of law enforcement or military families or people from a certain town.

FINDING SCHOLARSHIPS

Start by asking the school counselor or the financial aid office at the college or university the student plans on attending. You can also look online or check the public


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library. But make sure the scholarship is legitimate. Real scholarships don't require payment.

APPLYING FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

Choose a handful of scholarships to go for. Make careful note of their deadlines and read

the application information carefully. You may need things like letters of reference; get in touch with those people as soon as possible and give them all the information they'll need. Some scholarships start their application cycle up to a year early, so it's almost never too early to start looking.

WINNING A SCHOLARSHIP

Congratulations! The first thing to do is to let the university financial aid office know so that it can prepare a total financial aid package. All of the student aid a student receives cannot be more than the cost of attendance at the college or

university. Scholarship money is usually awarded directly to the college, where it is applied to tuition, fees and other amounts owed, then leftover funds are sent to you. Some scholarships are paid directly to the student; make sure to ask how the money will be awarded.

Choosing Extracurriculars

An important, but often overlooked, part of the school experience is choosing extracurricular activities.

This means more than soccer or baseball. Extracurricular activities also include clubs, such as those focused on robotics or debate; religious activities; part-time jobs; volunteering and more. Here are some important things to consider when picking extracurricular activities.

PICK SOMETHING ENJOYABLE AND THAT YOU CARE ABOUT

In today's overloaded lives, any time outside of school is precious. Fill it with enjoyable activities that can also further your experience and education in ways that school can't. If the activity ticks both of those boxes, you may soon find yourself in a leadership position.

PICK SOMETHING CHALLENGING

Growth is important, and it's hard to get growth without challenges. You're bound to learn something about yourself as well as a new topic. Plus, it looks great on college applications.

PICK SOMETHING USEFUL TO YOU OR OTHERS

A job can be useful to you



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because you can contribute to your family or save for college or another goal you set. Or you can learn a lifelong skill. Something useful to others usually include a service element. Remember, not every student gets the chance to participate in extracurricular activities. Use your privilege to give back.

WITH YOUNGER CHILDREN

For parents of younger children, remember not to overload them or you. Look at their interests, strengths and weaknesses — and your schedules — before choosing activities. Don't push your kids too hard or let them push themselves into overdoing it.

Parents, realize when you're making them do the activity for you and not for them. That can cause a dangerous level of burnout that may keep your children from enjoying extracurricular activities in the future. First and foremost, they're kids, and they need plenty of time for play, without schedules or

expectations.

Extracurricular activities are important, but equally as important is to know when to walk away. If an activity becomes too much for either parent or child, or if the student just plain loses interest, it's important to let that happen without penalty. There's plenty of activities in the sea.

Preparing for Standardized Tests

Students now encounter standardized tests at nearly every level of their education, from primary school to graduate school.

No matter how many times they take it, it doesn't get any less nerve-wracking. Here are some tips for keeping your student sharp on test day, no matter how old they are.

FUEL UP

Make sure to get a good breakfast and a good night's sleep every day of standardized testing. Send your student with everything they'll need for success, including pencils, an eraser, paper and any paperwork that needs to be filled out. Look at what they're allowed to have during the test and make sure to clean out backpacks and remove any forbidden items before testing starts.

GET AHEAD OF THE GAME

Long before testing starts, encourage skills that will help students be successful. Reading and reading comprehension are important during timed standardized testing, so encourage your student to read, even if it's comic books. Testing also measures critical thinking, so talk to your student about their ideas and opinions to try to encourage



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these kinds of skills.

KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT

Most teachers will send home information about the test, including class preparations and schedules. Look for information about format, scoring, when the results will be in, how the class is preparing, what the test's implica-

tions are and any specific ways you can help your student get ready.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

Look at your student's performance and target, in particular, any areas where they're struggling. You can look for workbooks or down-

load practice tests for them to complete. Make sure to keep time on these tests, just like what will happen in real life. Set small goals to help them build confidence and measure progress.

The most important thing to remember about standardized testing is to prepare and be positive. A confident,

at-ease test taker is the best kind of test taker. If you're nervous, be careful not to let your child know.

If your child is prone to anxiety, practice relaxation techniques that can help them ease their nerves during the test, such as deep breathing or counting backward from 10.