

Today, several online homeschooling programs have opened doors for many parents to homeschool their children under their supervision.

As the name suggests, an online homeschooling is conducted from the home and hence the parents' role is with a difference. The difference here is the level of commitment and responsibility that the parent takes on behalf of the child(ren). Their child's education becomes a greater responsibility for them.

First, let us understand how an online homeschool operates because it takes some effort to have a five or six year old child sit in front of a computer for x number of hours to study when he/she would prefer to play!

Online Homeschooling provides students access to a virtual classroom in their own home environment where they are taught using Information Communication Technology (ICT). Such classrooms provide visual aids such as presentations, online e-book reading, educational audios, videos, games and much more use of whiteboard to interact with the student. Using Paintbrush features also allows the teacher and student to communicate effectively. These features also help them to grow intellectually with the state of the art technology presented to them.

When children first attend public schools most parents experience difficulty in convincing the child to spend time in a new environment, some being afraid and some even being shy. However, an online school eliminates this issue to a great extent. Children who are very shy and cannot talk or express much in the traditional classroom communicate more confidently in a more relaxed environment which is their own home.

Moreover, an online education program also requires children to adhere to discipline. This means that we need to inculcate values and discipline in them at a very young age. .

Some of the important strategies that will help parents ensure success from this type of schooling are as follows:

Online schooling brings parents and parenting abilities right under focus. So parents will have to be Very Determined, Goal Oriented, and Very Consistent.

Parents will have to have an attitude that expects 'success,' 'accomplishment' and 'excellence.' Apart from what is being taught online, parents will have to contribute a reasonable amount of time every school day to help their child(ren) cope with his/her academic needs, such as doing homework, revising or learning lessons, encouraging them to read books, and so on making sure that they are locked into a very productive formula: you must be able to motivate the child to do his/her homework with a good approach even if you have only a basic knowledge of his/her after-class assignments. You must demonstrate a sense of need, love and support. You must believe that your child is eminently capable of learning whatever is being taught in class.

Following are certain strategies to help parents and their youngsters take this journey to being educated smoothly:

Have consistent daily schedule before or after class hours. Define time for homework, play and other activities. A daily timetable or lesson plan gives structure to a child's day. It lets children know what to expect, and prepares them mentally to perform better. Even sleeping time and meal time have to be defined and should be followed as closely as possible with consistence. By following a structure we instill in our children basic rules of organization and discipline which is immensely important while conducting homeschooling or online schooling program and also in the building of our child(ren)'s character.

Have a dedicated study area for your children. For online schooling, place your computer in the area of your house where distraction is less, but is not completely isolated. Your child should be

able to focus without being distracted by what is happening around him at home. So provide an academically facilitating environment at home during school hours.

As online schooling is part time, children do have ample time at hand which should be used productively. There should be certain hours of the day that children should spend doing academic work under the guidance of their parents. Parents should review homework, classwork and encourage children to pursue them.

Children enrolled for online schooling should also have opportunities for extra-curricular activities in their daily schedule. This will give them an opportunity to socialize with other children and provide an outlet for their physical energies.

To make very young children attend online school can turn out to be difficult as they are physically active and will find it hard to sit through long hours. Along with the curriculum presented by the school, parents can ensure the following:

- Enhance learning by providing hands-on activities of what is being taught
- Try to discipline young children by mentally preparing them for the class
- Clearly stating the rules that have to be followed during class hours
- Allow physical movement and frequent movement breaks
- Keep important things like water and some snacks handy
- Have a star chart to reinforce good behavior
- Encouragement & reward should be given after positive behavior
- Encouragement & reward could be anything from praise and approval to play with a favorite toy
- Children who are fidgety can be allowed to hold a straw or clay, as physical movement helps some children to concentrate better
- Using a rocking chair for hyperactive children can be helpful when attending school, as movement helps them to concentrate
- An adult should supervise the online class as this will ensure the child is attending and focusing

An online program such as YMOH offers ICT prior to its academic year, preparing students before it starts. The ICT program, in particular, facilitates the following benefits:

- Knowing about the basic components of a computer and how it works
- Learning keyboard skills.
- Opening, closing and saving files.
- Using Paintbrush and Notepad.

For older students, conducting research or learning to use an online dictionary

It is also important that parents ensure that they:

- Periodically ask the child(ren) to show you what they are doing on the internet
- Be available to talk about internet safety and be more involved in their computer use
- Place the computer at home in an area where you can monitor it easily
- Have a specified time of internet use and be consistent in following it, and encourage them to spend time away from internet and electronics
- Be a role model
- Parents can also install keyboard log software wherein the computer would save a log of all that has been typed on the keyboard and makes monitoring easy.

Every child can be a success. It's about feeding them the correct formula, and the correct formula is:

- Knowing that your child is an Amanah from Allah
- Knowing that every child is Unique
- Believing in their ability to perform well
- Knowing that children are born with a natural instinct to learn!
- Knowing that modeling is the foundation on which we learn and is good
- Knowing that truth is strong and necessary
- Knowing that all questions are intelligent
- Knowing that a correct diet is vital for physical and mental health
- Knowing that the child should be given as much freedom for learning and self expression as possible

Once we feed this formula to our children
They will grow Insha'a Allah,
And how?
Fast!

May Allah reward us for our efforts.

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