

Distance Learning Guide for Parents

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Marilyn Mosley
Director of Laurel Springs School

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Fiona Spring
Genevieve Yue

DESIGN

Jill Watkins-Edwards



*Marilyn and family.
Left to right: son
Raphael, husband Lee,
Marilyn, granddaughter
Isobel and daughter
Ramaa.*

THE HEART OF DISTANCE LEARNING

MARILYN MOSLEY GORDANIER, speaker, author and director of Laurel Springs School, has more than 25 years' experience in the field of alternative education. In her capacity as an alternative educator, Ms. Mosley has helped to found three schools: the New Morning School in Baltimore, Maryland; Laurel Springs Distance Learning Program and Laurel Springs High School, both in Southern California. Since its founding, Laurel Springs Distance Learning Program has become the premier provider of customized curriculum for students Kindergarten through grade 12 and online education for students in grades 5-12. Under her directorship, Laurel Springs High School received the United Nations Global 500 Award and the President's Youth Environmental Award. Ms. Mosley was nominated for a Nobel Earth Prize and is a keynote speaker at numerous national and international educational conferences. She currently serves as president of the United Nations Global 500 Environmental Forum and recently coauthored the book *Towards Corporate Environmental Excellence*. Ms. Mosley serves as an advisor to the Ventura Adult/Continuing Education program.

Marilyn has been devoted to children and families with the idea that within their homes is an endless source of inspiration, caring and learning. In developing Laurel Springs School she has created the curriculum and mission for families to succeed at distance learning. She believes children's life experiences are part of their education, and Laurel Springs School considers life and learning to be one and the same.

What Marilyn has learned over the years has filled this book full of inspiring ideas and tips for communication, environment, socialization and nurturing the love of learning. She hopes you will find opportunities to use this book as a guide and a source of reference for growth and knowledge.

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CHAPTER ONE

WELCOME TO LAUREL SPRINGS SCHOOL

The Learning Styles Profile will help you determine and discover many other unique learning preferences. If you haven't already taken the Profile, contact your Enrollment Advisor at (805) 646-2473 to learn more about it.

Schooling your child at home is a wonderful experience. Our goal is to make this a fulfilling process for the entire family. We are dedicated to providing your child with customized curriculum; loving teachers, staff and directors; and a philosophy of education that honors each child's gifts and talents.

In most schools, a student's style of learning and interests are not taken into consideration. The child must fit the curriculum, rather than the curriculum fitting the child. At Laurel Springs, we take your child's interests, abilities, talents and style of learning into consideration when designing curriculum choices for him or her. Our goal is to develop a program that fits your child intellectually, emotionally, developmentally and even spiritually.

We also realize that children constantly change. Therefore, your teacher is trained to adjust your curriculum throughout the year.



GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CHILD

We want to know as much about your child as possible. We want to understand the kind of education your child has experienced, and how he learns best. We want to know about your child's interests, hobbies and talents. We want to know how your child feels about life. At Laurel Springs we care about the whole child.

We are always on a course of discovery to understand how your child learns. Learning is an ongoing process. It takes place every minute of every day. By doing independent study, you will know your child in a way that is often not possible when your child is away all day and someone else is in charge of her education.



SUGGESTIONS

When your child is engaged in schoolwork, observe carefully. Here are some questions you may want to answer:

- How does my child learn best? Does my child like to focus on one project for a long period or does he need to vary the material being learned?
- Does my child need to see an example of what is being taught or can she visualize the process?
- Does my child do better listening to someone explain the material or does he prefer to see what he is learning? Does my child enjoy doing projects or does she prefer to read a book? Listen to a tape?

YOUR SUPPORT TEAM

*Who is your
Enrollment Advisor?*

*When did you last
talk with him or
her?*

At Laurel Springs, we provide your child with caring teachers, Enrollment Advisors and staff.

When you enroll, you will speak with an Enrollment Advisor. This person is a vital part of your Laurel Springs learning team, helping you make decisions about the Laurel Springs educational process: your enrollment, curriculum, choice of teachers and getting started. Your advisor will also be the liaison between the office staff and your teacher(s). He or she is there to support and help you.

Teachers serve as facilitators, friends and instructors, and will be readily available to help you. Since relationships are a key to learning, the emphasis is on providing your child with a caring teacher as well as developing, supporting and encouraging a child's love of learning.

Self-esteem is also a key factor. Our primary consideration is nurturing and maintaining your child's self-esteem through curriculum geared to individual learning styles and the supportive relationships she develops with our teachers.



SUGGESTIONS

- Call your teacher if you need help with your child's education or have questions about homeschooling.
- Call your Enrollment Advisor for additional advice, or if you need to add or change your curriculum.

THE BENEFITS OF DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance learning gives you an opportunity to feel more connected to your child. The investment of time and energy that you make now will last a lifetime!

Stay in touch with your child's developmental stages.

It is so important to be aware of what your child is ready to learn and when. Our role is to help you and your child succeed in these stages of growth and development.

Nurture the loving relationship you have with your child.

When you spend time together, the bond between you and your child is strengthened. This is a bond that can withstand the challenges that may come later. I remember when my youngest child, Raphael, decided he wanted to homeschool in third grade. He

kept telling me that this was my chance to finally spend some time alone with him and to make up for the years that I had to work and go to school. This was our important bonding time, and I believe the closeness we developed helped us through the challenging early teenage years. I always saw him as my special friend. I believe he saw me as his greatest supporter.

Get to know your child.

When your child is in school, you may miss the opportunity to know how he or she learns best, to learn together, and to share in this day-to-day process of discovery. By choosing distance learning, you can guide, nurture and protect your child through this wonderful and challenging process instead of turning over the responsibility to others.





Communicate.

Distance learning allows you the time to enhance communication with your entire family. You will have time for family crafts, field trips, cooking and family reading. Quality time spent learning as a family creates a sense of cohesiveness and safety.

Early in my teaching career, I took a course in communication. When my children were old enough, they did too. It gave us a wealth of information from which we could draw. We learned to respect each other's point of view and to really listen more carefully to one another. Good communication skills strengthened our relationships during the teenage years.

Nurture your child's natural love of learning.

Distance learning allows you to nurture your child's natural love of learning. The desire to explore and learn is inherent in every human being. Some children lose this natural inclination when they are taught in a manner that is not aligned with their style of learning or when they feel unappreciated. Distance learning allows a child to get back in touch with the desire to learn.

SUGGESTIONS

- Focus on how distance learning can help you and your family. Think of the goals you hope to accomplish. Ask your child to share his or her goals with you.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BEST INVESTMENT

By participating in distance learning we invest in the future by providing our family with protection, love and learning opportunities. We allow children to establish primary bonds with family and close friends. If your child is older, distance learning offers her a chance to choose her friends free of social pressures. The bonds formed while doing distance learning will never dissolve, and will provide crucial support during those potentially unsettled teenage years. The resulting confidence will enable young adults to resist pressure from peers, and they will be propelled into adulthood with a strong sense of self. This strength will last a lifetime.



SUGGESTIONS

- Enjoy distance learning with your child. The focus is on quality rather than quantity.
- Vary your distance learning study experience. All life is part of the learning process.
- Take time for field trips, cooking, gardening and reading together. Spend time enjoying your family.

DEVELOP A SECURE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Your child has set sail upon the great sea of learning. Provide the lighthouse, and set him free at the shore.

Structure brings balance. Too much or too little structure can thwart the learning process.

One of the keys to a happy childhood is security. A child depends upon you for his needs. When you focus on a balanced, positive home environment, you give your child the security she needs to grow and learn.

For true learning to take place, security must be in place. With basic survival needs assured, your child has the physiological freedom to grow. For some children, a daily routine is very important. For others, a sense of focus is all that is needed.



SUGGESTIONS

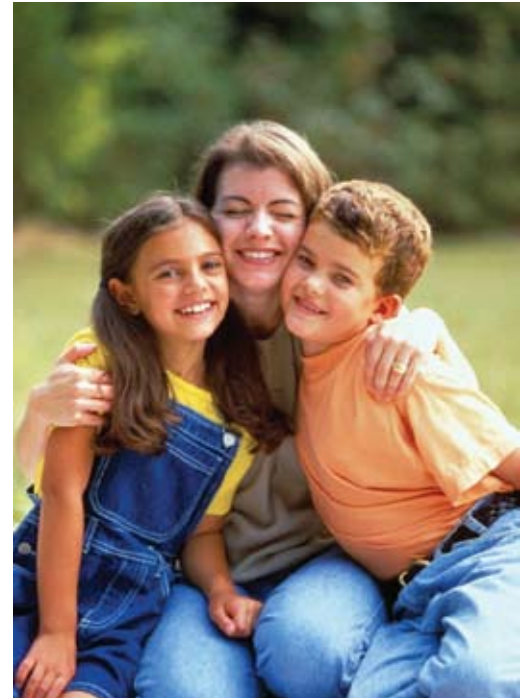
Often we respond to our children by using what we know from our own childhood. This may provide a good model, or be unworkable for your family.

- Think about structure, and what works best in your home. Which structure hasn't worked well? Why? How do you feel about structure?
- Are you providing enough structure? Are you providing too much? Is your child feeling a sense of security?

TALK WITH YOUR CHILD

It is very important for a child to develop an opinion, and to learn how to learn. Your child will create an internal model based upon how an adult talks to him. When talking with your child, you need to create a safe space that fosters a sense of appreciation and unity of spirit. Ask your child how she feels, and then give her the space and support to answer honestly. Create an atmosphere in which it is safe to communicate and have opinions, and everyone listens to and appreciates what the other is saying. True learning takes place through communication.

How do you communicate with your family members? Do you listen to them when they speak? Do you let them finish their sentences? Do they let you? Can you listen to their opinions even if they are different from yours?



SUGGESTIONS

- Ask your child's opinion on a variety of subjects. Use this as an exercise in communication and allow your child to express himself fully.

ENGAGE YOUR CHILD'S WILL

Will gives us the ability to motivate ourselves. Will is the desire to move, to have determination.

A baby has—and consistently demonstrates—will. We see it in a child pushing a cart or pulling a wagon. As your child grows, you must protect his will so that his desire and ability to succeed remains intact. Successive tasks—well taught and developmentally correct—are the key. When the curriculum matches the model, learning takes place and the will is kept intact. (The opposite can be said as well.)

Will is inherent to our being. It is the seed of our actions. It must be nurtured and allowed to grow, or a child's desire to learn is gravely challenged. When you cherish and carefully nurture your child, her will should be intact. For many children, that which is inherent must be consciously rekindled.

When we teach our children effectively, we directly affect the development and maintenance of will.



Life Experience

In addition to their academic work, our students' life experiences are part of their education.

At Laurel Springs School we consider life and learning to be one and the same. Students can pursue many of their elective credits by doing the things they truly enjoy, such as hiking, playing an instrument, traveling, dancing, gardening, acting, cooking, biking, participating in a favorite sport or competition, etc. Students can also receive credit for learning a trade or becoming an apprentice in a chosen field. Older students may act as mentors to younger children. The possibilities are endless.



Laurel Springs students with the Kurt Thomas Gymnastics Team.

SUGGESTIONS

How to maintain your child's will:

- Honor your child's stages of development.
- Make sure the schoolwork is appropriate to the developmental level of your child. (Early or forced reading is dangerous, as is sitting for long periods of time.)
- Choose distance learning if a child is unhappy.
- Provide physical activities appropriate to your child's endurance level.
- Nurture self-esteem.



BUILDING COMMUNICATION



Learning to communicate is a wonderful example of how distance learning represents ongoing education for the entire family.



Support is crucial when developing tools for communication. We all need support, and communication is a learned art. This is part of the Laurel Springs experience. Learning is not just for our children. It is for us as well. Developing skill in communication is a wonderful learning process. We must develop our ability to be present, to have the courage to listen and feel, to come from the heart (rather than from a concept), and to be our child's best friend.



Let your child talk with you. Ask yourself these questions: Who would be a better person for my child to talk to than me? If I don't talk to my children, will they learn to speak the truth? Asking these questions takes nothing away from our role as parents. It only enhances the process.



SUGGESTIONS

Here are some suggestions from experienced distance learning parents that will help your child.

- Really listen to what your child is saying. Don't interrupt. Let her share her ideas with you. Create a safe space for communication.
- Try not to be judgmental unless it is absolutely necessary.
- Talk about how you feel. Don't tell your child how he should feel.
- When talking about schoolwork, find the positives first. Ask how she perceives her work. Create a discussion.
- Be honest. Find your own truth. Doing so teaches your child this important skill.
- Support your child's thought process.
- Come from love. Most of us are more fully ourselves when we come from love. If you feel that what you are going to say comes from another place, wait before you say it. Chances are you will be glad it wasn't said.
- If it is hard for you to communicate clearly, outside support can often help to develop a new model of communication.

APPRECIATE YOUR CHILD

One of the greatest gifts we can give ourselves is the ability to appreciate our children. Appreciation and admiration bring forth their very best. It can be something small or a heroic effort. Find something about your child to appreciate every day.

Most of us (even children) are aware of our respective frailties or weaknesses. Everyone has them. Before a child can learn academic skills, his self-esteem must be intact. To become a learner, he must see himself as one.

Often our own childhood experiences interfere with parenting. Sometimes we remember the way we were treated and impose the same behavior on our children. Instead, find that which is good in your child. Then she will be better able to hear constructive criticism and work on those things that need improving.

A famous author (and Laurel Springs parent), Frederic Hudson, once said that all that our children want from us is our blessing. I believe that is true. All we have to do is to give our children love. As we teach them to appreciate themselves, we set in place a pattern of living that will last a lifetime.



SUGGESTIONS

- Think about what you appreciate most about your child. Focus on these attributes.

BELIEVE IN YOUR CHILD

Believe in your child. Hold in your heart all the greatness that your child is capable of manifesting. When you are your child's greatest advocate, you make it possible for good things to happen. By supporting and not discouraging your child's successes, you pave the way for accomplishments at all levels. Your child is a living treasure. Always see who your child really is and who he can become.



ORGANIZING YOUR TIME

Many students and parents find it helpful to create a schedule for completing schoolwork. Each student needs to find her own rhythm: Some students like to work daily on every subject, while others prefer to focus on a single subject for an entire day. We recommend that students do their academic work in the morning. Students who work 1-2 hours (K-3), 2-4 hours (grades 4-8), or 4-5 hours (high school) each day should have no problem successfully completing their work. Your teacher will help you devise the best schedule for your child's learning style.



MENTORING

All children need mentors. Children need individuals who take an interest in and are concerned with guiding them. Mentoring comes in different forms, and can be expressed in many ways. Young men, particularly, need to be mentored between the ages of 14 and 18, especially if there is no father in the family. Joseph Chilton Pearce has said that by seeing the model we learn how to act.

CHILDREN ARE A REFLECTION OF THEIR ENVIRONMENT

A child is nothing more or less than her innate self. A very young child hasn't had time to build a façade. Who he becomes, how he expresses himself, how he shines forth, are a direct reflection of the love and support he receives at home. Consciousness, love, support and focus provide a child with the ability to be and become her very best. Independent study provides a support system—a haven for the individual to become herself.

It is amazing what can happen to a child's self-esteem when she is surrounded by love and support. A new child is created, a new being revealed. The child emerges complete and whole, with self-esteem intact. He is ready to face the world with confidence and ability.

SUGGESTIONS

- Find a mentor for your child. This should be someone who, from the bottom of his or her heart, feels concern, appreciation and love for your child. Oftentimes that individual can change a child's world forever.



SUGGESTIONS

- Start by reading a story, listening to a song, coloring together. It's a lovely way to set a mood of love.

FOLLOWING THEIR CALLING

A wonderful thing about Laurel Springs is that we support every child to have a vision for her life. We encourage all of our students to follow their calling, and we give credit for the work they do toward their goals. If they act, they receive theater credit. Dance counts for physical education credit and volunteering is community service. We believe that a child can go to school and simultaneously follow her dream.

Your child should never settle for less in his education. If a course doesn't fit his needs, if he is bored with the material or feels like he's just doing the course because we told him to—not because he wants to—something is very wrong. Children should have the opportunity to be proactive and participate in their education. Education should never be about settling for less, but always striving for the next step—the next goal.

The same is true of a child's dreams. It is inherent in all people to have a mission—a vision for their lives. We don't always support the vision our child has for her future. We tell her to wait until she is older, until adulthood. But when we encourage waiting, a child often loses her vision or learns how to suppress it. This can result in feelings of betrayal and disappointment.



SUGGESTIONS

- Think about your child's talent.
- Does she have an interest or talent that is not being expressed?
- Does he have a talent that is not being supported?
- How can you best support your child's dream?

CHAPTER THREE

GETTING STARTED

Your books have arrived. Your child has received his web-based courses. You have heard from your teacher. Now you are wondering how to begin. I recommend starting with activities that will center your family. Opportunities to sit together, talk, do artwork or listen to music are important ways to start the day. Some families enjoy beginning the day by reading together from a novel or biography. It is helpful to experiment to find the rhythm that works best for you and your child. Make distance learning your own.

When my children were younger, I always began our morning instruction by

reading to them. Then we would listen to music and draw pictures depicting what we had just read in the book. It helped us to focus, and directed my children's attention toward spending time doing schoolwork. In the world of public school, my children would have been moving from subject to subject every 50 minutes. At home, we had more freedom. We could study a powerful leader such as Napoleon in depth and read his biography. We would discuss ideas that caught our eyes and hearts. We could write about him, make period costumes, research his government and even create a giant mural about his adventures.

Learning requires focus and focus requires setting aside time for distance learning in a safe and stress-free environment.



HELPFUL TIPS FOR ALL GRADES

Remember...

Distance learning is a journey. It is not a project that can be completed in one day. Give yourself time to adjust and learn. Appreciate yourself for taking on this important commitment. You are your child's first teacher. You know more about your child than anyone else and you care more than anyone else. You are courageous!

The Younger Grades

- The younger the child, the more help he will need. Assist your child by joining in with his independent study activities. If your child's work looks different than you expected, allow him to complete the project fully before giving feedback. Allow your child uninterrupted time to work.
- You can prepare your child for intellectual activities by allowing time for playing, reading stories, painting, knitting, singing and dancing. Reading, writing and math come easily and naturally when the foundation blocks are in place.
- Have fun! If your child loses interest, it's OK to move on to the next project. Try to balance focused academic work with movement or a hands-on project featuring creativity. Balance is the key.
- Some children and parents don't need an outside focusing process; others find that taking time to focus is important. Find your own method for helping your child learn to focus.
- Begin with a subject that holds her attention and give her the time she needs to get the work done. If your child is reading about frogs and becomes totally immersed in learning about amphibians, allow the process to continue. If your child is interested and focused, the capacity for learning is greatly enhanced.

The Older Grades

- Talk with your child and develop a distance learning schedule. Talk together about how you would like to structure the day. Help to develop a schedule that is consistent and fits her style of learning.
- Older children also enjoy focusing activities such as reading, listening to music or even stretching exercises.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Give positive feedback.

Children blossom when given positive feedback. Always find something good about your child's work. If you are not happy with an assignment or if it's not up to your standards, always use the sandwich approach when giving feedback: Find something positive to say, make a constructive suggestion and end with more praise.

Discover how your child learns best.

Does your child like to concentrate on one project for long periods of time, or change activities frequently? Some children enjoy diversity. Some children need to take frequent breaks or move around as they learn. Others love to lose themselves in a project and stay immersed until the project is complete. Distance learning allows you to discover how your child learns best. You can individualize and create a structure that fits you and your child.

Create the time to study.

Find a routine that works for you. Some families like to get up in the morning, eat breakfast and begin work. This is the most common schedule for homeschooling. Others find afternoons and evenings work best. If this is your first year, I suggest creating a schedule that you can stick with. Learning requires focus. Focus

requires time set aside for the process of independent study—in a safe and stress-free environment.

Take a break.

If you get frustrated, take a break. If your child gets frustrated, change the activity. Creativity and art can be soothing focusing agents. Try not to become polarized. If you find that you are in a power struggle with your child, it is best to focus on another project.

Have fun!

Our focus is on quality rather than quantity. The Laurel Springs educational philosophy is process-oriented rather than destination-oriented. Fine work, well done, is more important than dashing through every assignment. If your child can do it all, that's great! If not, make your time together a quality experience. Your relationship with your child is most important.



SUGGESTIONS

- Set a time and space for your child to learn. Many children need to develop a ritual around school activities.
- Create a comfortable space for your child. It really helps if this includes a desk and bookcase or a comfortable couch. The repeated habit of creating order around learning develops a system.
- Don't try to do schoolwork if your child is not attentive. This will be very hard on both of you.
- When doing schoolwork, try to limit sugar intake and TV. When children are not subjected to stimulants of this nature, they are often much more attentive and willing to learn.



HOW MUCH TIME SHOULD I SPEND ON DISTANCE LEARNING?

We have discovered that most students in grades K-3 should spend 1-2 hours every day doing their Laurel Springs schoolwork. Grades 4-8 should plan 2-4 hours per day. In high school, 4-5 hours per day should be sufficient. It is not the quantity but the quality of work that is important. When a child spends 5 or 6 hours in school, we might assume the same amount of time should be spent at home. However, in school a great deal of time is spent on discipline, recess, lunch and focusing the class. When a child is working one-on-one with a parent, learning takes place in a quick, focused manner. Learning is customized to meet your child's needs—information can be repeated if necessary, or you can move more quickly if your child understands the content. Also, the way you teach can be designed to fit your child's attention span and interests. Distance learning students tend to score at least 20% higher on state aptitude tests. This is due to the one-on-one attention they receive from their home teacher.

GETTING FOCUSED

Oftentimes your child simply needs time to focus, or to prepare herself for doing schoolwork. It is very helpful to develop a schedule, a time of the day when your child does his Laurel Springs assignments. If your child is older you can still offer to work with him to help develop a sense of continuity. You can help by doing some focused activities. You can always call your teacher for additional support.

It is important to spend time doing creative projects and physical activities as well as academic work. A child's whole learning experience is important to us. We believe that all forms of learning are an integral part of the process, and are important to a child's development.

SUGGESTIONS

- Balancing a child's academic time with active learning activities is of utmost importance. Academics such as reading, writing and math need to be balanced with more hands-on practices such as art, playing music, dancing, singing, playing sports, science experiments or growing a garden.



Remember...

There are lots of ways to do distance learning. If your child doesn't want to do linear book work, find a learning activity that fits your child's needs.

For example, when studying Shakespeare your child can read a book, rent a video, go to a play, research Shakespeare online or draw (instead of write about) one of Shakespeare's plays. Life is full of learning opportunities, from baking a cake (fractions, subtraction, division), to writing a shopping list (reading and writing).

SUGGESTIONS

- Develop a daily schedule.
- Give your child a choice of subjects to study.
- Your presence will help your child to focus. If your child is older it helps for you to be nearby, ready to talk or answer questions.
- Don't threaten to send your child back to school if he doesn't do his work.
- If a lesson is too difficult, you can customize that lesson. Call your teacher for advice.
- Talk with your child about the assignment. Ask which parts she found to be the most interesting.
- Create a basket for your child's completed work. When an assignment is complete, ask your child to put the completed work in this basket. This works very well for online courses, which often require little parental help.
- Develop a learning space that fits your child's personality. Not all children like to sit at a desk. Some enjoy sitting on a couch or the floor. Some children need quiet, but others like to have music in the background.
- If your child is a new distance learning student, she may need time to unwind and discover the independent learner inside. It often takes new distance learning students 6–18 months to discover that their ability and desire to learn comes from inside, rather than an outside authority.

WHAT IF MY CHILD REFUSES TO DO SCHOOLWORK?

When a child has had an unpleasant experience at school, he may develop a pattern of avoidance centered on schoolwork. Usually such a habit develops as a way to respond to stress in his environment.

To change a habit of this sort, you must change your child's routine and replace the habit with one that is more life-enhancing for you and your child. You cannot make a positive change by using force. You can make a change by providing your child with an alternative that is more interesting than refusing to do the work at hand.

For example: Your child refuses to do her math work. In school she did poorly in math and was given poor grades for her work. She dislikes math. Instead of doing a book assignment you could do one of the following:

- Choose an activity that includes the use of math, like baking. Baking requires the use of fractions. After successfully baking, let your child know he has completed his math work for the day.
- Choose a math project that is easier than the one your child has been doing. Go back in the book to the last page successfully completed by your child. Let your child move ahead to the unknown material at a slower pace. Break up the material so she feels successful every step of the way.



You can remove old images of failure and poor self-esteem by doing activities that build confidence, renew a child's love of learning, and enhance self-esteem. A child who has had a negative school experience can build a new perspective on learning with your help.

- Break up your child's work into smaller units. Start by telling her that she only has to work on math for 5 minutes a day. Once she can complete 5 minutes, she will naturally wish to increase the amount of time spent on a project.
- Purchase a math CD that is fun to do.
- Purchase a puzzle, logic book or workbook.
- Hire a high school or college student to tutor your child in math. A child often enjoys working with someone who is close to his own age.
- Take a break and work on a subject your child enjoys. Come back to math in a few days.

SUGGESTIONS

- If a child's writing has been criticized, or a child has had a difficult time with reading, focus on finding ways for him to have fun writing or reading. Do not judge or criticize. Acknowledge and appreciate the work done. Take it slowly and make each step a success. Focus on your child's talents. You can replace the unpleasant experience with happiness and joyful memories.

SOCIALIZATION AND DISTANCE LEARNING

- *Involve your child in activities in your local area. Brownies, Boy Scouts, dance, drama, art and sports activities offer wonderful ways to meet other children. Many teens enjoy taking community college classes. Some students prefer church groups and homeschool meetings.*

- *Distance learning does not segregate children by age. It teaches children to relate to and interact with all age groups, and value and share their lives with people of all ages. Our program allows each generation to share the wealth of their knowledge and their experiences with the Laurel Springs child.*

Many parents are concerned that distance learning will hinder a child's ability to socialize. Many parents believe that a child needs to go to school to learn to socialize. Unfortunately the emphasis is on quantity, not quality. Educator John Holt says children should have only as many friends as years they have under their belts. Thus, a 3-year-old should have three friends, a 4-year-old, four friends, etc. Just because a child is in school does not mean he is developing friendships. School often encourages peer segregation and is exclusive in nature. Distance learning encourages socializing and developing friendships with all age groups.

Distance learning allows your child to move away from peer pressure and teaches a child how to have meaningful relationships built on trust and communication. In many schools, socialization is the equivalent to mob control. Today, high conformity levels are a must and young individuals are frequently introduced to dangerous ideas and

activities. School can be a dangerous place. Many children can survive, but few can hold on to their self-esteem and identity. Distance learning gives your child the chance to pick and choose the individuals she will associate with.

Letting your child know he has a choice in the kind of friends he chooses helps develop a socialization style that will last a lifetime. Teenage homeschoolers tend to pick activities and individuals who will enhance their life and goals.

A recent study completed by a Laurel Springs teacher demonstrates this point. She found that teenagers participating in distance learning skip one of three phases of socialization normally found in high school students. While many teenagers focus on pleasing their peers, distance learners prefer to concentrate on life goals and mission. Many distance learners express a desire to make a difference. This teacher found that distance learners define their own self-worth rather than relying on others for definition.

SUGGESTIONS

- Find avenues for positive socialization. Contact your local museum, dance school, art school or recreation center. Talk about socialization with your teacher. How do you feel about socialization?

ASSESSMENT

What is their style of learning?

What are their interests?

What are they excited about?

We feel that assessment is a vital part of the educational process. We want to know as much as we can about your children and the progress they are making while they are with us.

Our goal is not to compare students to other students, or to penalize them for what they might or might not “know.” As expressed in our mission statement: “We believe that children receive optimum benefit from an educational process that values them as individuals and provides a personalized approach to learning.” It is in this light that we have developed a personalized approach to assessment.

Our assessment process will help us better understand your child.



What are their special abilities and strengths?

Musical, Spatial, Interactive-Animals, Math and Logic, Body Coordination, Interactive-Nature, Mechanical, Interactive-Self, Humor, Word-Language, Interactive-Others, Life Enhancement

What are their challenges?

What level of materials would be most appropriate at this particular time?

What are the goals for this student's education?

- What are the student's goals?
- What are the parent's/guardian's goals?
- To what degree are the goals being met?
- How are they developing: as a writer, as a reader, as a thinker?

How is the student progressing?

A LEARNING STYLES MODEL SCHOOL

“When you learn how to learn in your preferred style, it’s like writing with your preferred hand—the result is much better, easier and quicker.”

*Michelle Muntz,
Learning Styles
Specialist*

While you may be familiar with the concept of visual, auditory or kinesthetic modalities of learning, the Learning Styles Profile is much more in-depth. It is a preference-based assessment that incorporates five aspects of learning to offer a complete picture of a student’s learning style. These five aspects include: Disposition, Talents, Interests, Environment and Modality. The assessment is preference-based because the profile surveys a student’s preferred way of learning and experiencing the world. It does not measure IQ or academic achievement. It is a model that facilitates the unique and varied combination of learning aspects, displaying in detail optimal ways to bring out the self-motivated, natural learner in every student.

Since Laurel Springs School is dedicated to nurturing each child’s unique gifts, talents and style of learning, we have adopted the Learning Styles Profile as a tool to implement this philosophy and are a Learning Styles Model School™ under the direction of the Learning-Success™ Institute. The Institute is operated and was founded by authors and educators Mariaemma Pelullo-Willis and Victoria Kindle Hodson, developers of the A Self-Portrait Learning

Style Assessment System. Their book, *Discover Your Child’s Learning Style*, is a guide to their philosophy and practice. The Institute also trains teachers and parents at three levels to be Learning Success Coaches™ using the learning style approach to education. To learn more about the book, Self-Portrait or coaches’ training, visit their website at www.aselfportraitonline.com or ask your Enrollment Advisor.

The results of a student’s Self-Portrait provide teachers and parents with greater insight into the student’s needs, and generate exciting new ideas about how course work can be more fulfilling and productive.

A person’s disposition not only affects his learning but also his behavior. Parents and teachers often punish or nag kids for the same misbehavior over and over again, which eventually harms the relationship. The first prerequisite to learning is emotional safety, so the end result can avoid being disastrous. Learning about the family profiles allows parents and students to begin to understand that differences are quite normal and unavoidable. So what’s the next step? Constructive problem solving!



A BRIDGE TO COLLEGE

Families are often concerned with how well their children will do after schooling with Laurel Springs. Will they be ready for college?

There is a belief that if we turn our children over to public school, they will be learning and the necessary material will be covered. Often we find that this is simply not true. The teacher for a given subject may not hold your child's attention. Disruptions in the class may divide her focus. Your child may not feel safe.

At Laurel Springs, your child will be learning the same body of information but at his own pace, in his own way, and with support. We have found that (on average) Laurel Springs students score 30% higher than their public school counterparts on standardized tests and have gone on to many prestigious institutions. Laurel Springs students learn in a focused, loving environment, and they are in control of much of the learning process.

Students communicate with caring teacher who understands and knows them on a one-to-one basis. Everything a child does at school can be duplicated at home.

In addition, your child will have the time and freedom to explore interests that he or she never had time to pursue before. When we take responsibility for our child's education, the world changes!

THANK YOU FOR JOINING THE LAUREL SPRINGS SCHOOL COMMUNITY!

AT LAUREL SPRINGS EVERY FAMILY MATTERS.
LET US KNOW HOW WE CAN HELP YOU GET THE MOST
OUT OF EVERY SCHOOL DAY.