

# Lifestyle

## Quarantine tips from a homeschooling mom

By ALISON BOWEN  
TNS

CHICAGO — As parents deal with the first days of school closings because of the coronavirus, it's a new normal for nearly everyone.

Some teachers are sending home supplemental or e-learning materials; others are utilizing Google Classroom. Either way, parents might be wondering how to keep their children engaged and keeping up with studies while everyone is at home.

Homeschooling parents have expertise in keeping kids occupied and learning throughout the day. We talked to Jennifer Givens, a Park Forest, Ill., mom of a 2-year-old and 7-year-old, who home-schools and also works from home part time.

"I've actually had a lot of people ask me," she said about parents seeking tips. Here is her advice:

**Have a schedule.** Givens said a routine is the biggest key. On social media, many are circulating suggested schedules with blocks of time for play, activities and learning.

Givens gives her children about 30 minutes

each morning to wake up and eat breakfast. Then, throughout the day, they allot one-hour increments for learning. They'll work on one subject, then take a break — go outside, for example. She sets up 15-minute breaks in between their activities, where they can play in their rooms. And her children are such different ages that they have different schedules. "Every kid is so individual," she said. She writes the schedules on a dry erase board. Walk children through the plan for the day, and consider allowing them to pick, for example, whether they want to do language arts work or math during a certain time.

**Anything can be a lesson.** Or a contest. Especially if you are stuck at home, take another look around the house to see what might be a distraction or lesson. Can you walk around and water the plants together? Givens likes to have 10-minute cleans with her children, followed by going outside. She also sets up reading competitions, and whoever reads the most gets to pick a movie.

**Crafts, crafts, crafts.** Don't be intimidated.



Dreamstime/TNS

Some teachers are sending home supplemental or e-learning materials; others are utilizing Google Classroom due to school closings because of the coronavirus.

We're not saying you need to set up a complex project while you're on a conference call. "We like to do a lot of experiments," she said. For them, that might mean growing tomatoes or making volcanoes. For parents suddenly balancing full-time work and full-time child care, it might look like mixing baking soda and vinegar or shaving cream with food coloring — things most people might have at home. Set them up in

the bathtub with shaving cream, and they'll have a ball.

**Save activities that take longer.** For Givens, this is dominoes — her son can play with dominoes at length. "You need longer stretches, especially if you need a conference call," she said. She saves certain activities that he can do for longer increments for when she needs to get a task done. Or if you have several children, pull out a game like Connect

4 or Jenga. "You can sit and get work done while they're at the table," she said. "My kid can sit there for an hour playing dominoes, and he's learning from it, which is fantastic."

**Use learning sites.** Not every school is providing lesson plans at home or supplemental reading. For those looking for things to help their kids learn, Givens recommends ABCya!, which has educational games, or ABCmouse for

children ages 2 through 8. Adventure Academy has programs for kids 8-13. Another option? Podcasts. "I wish people told me about podcasts for kids, because they have them, and they're amazing," she said. "If I need a break," she added, "I'll turn the podcast on." Her kids like "What If World," "Story pirates" and NPR's "But Why: A Podcast For Curious Kids." And keep an eye out for other kids' activities that are going virtual. The Kennedy Center's education artist-in-residence, author and illustrator Mo Willems, will have a virtual Lunch Doodle every day on the center's website.

**Give yourself a break.** Remember, it's an unusual situation for everyone. No one is expecting you to be a superhero. And every child is different, so if you try a site or activity and they don't like it, don't become discouraged. Givens said her son hates paperwork, but enjoys online learning. "You have to see what works best for your kid, and the way they learn. What works for one kid may not work for another," Givens said. "That was the biggest takeaway I had."



Antonio Perez/TNS

Mika Stambaugh exercises at her Chicago home on Wednesday, following closures at area gyms due to coronavirus. Stambaugh was using her phone to video connect with personal trainer Annie Padrid and five other people working out.

## Gyms are closed, but regulars find ways to stay active

By CHRISTEN A.  
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TNS

CHICAGO — Mika Stambaugh has four gym memberships in Chicago, at LA Fitness, The Space, SoHo House Chicago and the East Bank Club, but she can't use any of them. They're all closed.

"No matter where I am — I'm a consultant, so I'm all over the city all the time — if I have my gym bag, I can pop in," said the Chicago resident.

"You would think, with four options, I would have a place to work out," Stambaugh said, laughing. "Today I ran 6 miles on the lake. Thank God it was sunny and somewhat warm."

For the rest of the time her gyms are closed, Stambaugh plans to do Zoom workouts through The Space, outdoor runs and afternoon walks, she said.

"Health is really important to me," said Stambaugh. "It's a natural stress reliever, and getting through times like this, it's important to take a break and step away from the press conference, the Twitter

alerts and the constant reminders that we're in this scary time, and to just take time for yourself."

After her afternoon run, she said she felt "totally different than this morning."

Chris Lee, a personal trainer in Lombard, Ill., says that even though major gyms are temporarily shutting their doors, there's no excuse not to be active right now.

"The world is your workout space," said Lee, who also teaches a kickboxing class. "You can go outside, go to a park and run around. Work out with your kids in the backyard. There's no reason for people to stop moving around."

Lee said his gym hasn't closed yet, but he has been losing clients as news about COVID-19 has increased over the weeks. He hasn't done any virtual training and says he likely won't if the gym does close, but his clients do have versions of their workouts to do at home.

Ashantis Jones, a Zumba instructor at Ray Meyer Fitness and Recreation Center in Lincoln Park, which is

also closed indefinitely, started virtual classes last night. She thinks the online classes will help people keep some version of order and consistency.

"I realize a lot of people depend on a workout to have normalcy in their routine," said Jones, who's studying to become a personal trainer. "Based on last night, I think people are enjoying it."

Jones is mainly teaching through Instagram Live, but she'll use Facebook Live and YouTube Live to save the sessions.

"Working out in your home can be very difficult," she said, "but try to just control what you can, and that is your own routine. Find what works for you."

Stambaugh recently bought new equipment — dumbbells, ankle bands, arm resistance bands and gliders — to go all in for her new home workouts. She feels ready, and she isn't letting not having a gym hold her back.

"I truly believe that (working out) is a way to de-stress, and it's important for me to get away from all of it," she said."

**However you define family....**

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# daily CROSSWORD PUZZLE

**ACROSS**

- 1 Footfall
- 5 CEO, often
- 9 Merriment
- 12 Caribbean island
- 13 Manhattan river
- 14 Ms. Hagen
- 15 Nefertiti's god
- 16 Willy or Shamu
- 17 Hebrew letter
- 18 Ordinary
- 20 Web-footed birds
- 22 Pacino and Unser
- 23 Ex-soldier, for short
- 24 Hobby shop wood
- 27 Shade-loving plants
- 30 Anger
- 31 Megastar
- 33 Writer — Rice
- 35 Seedy joint
- 37 Regretted

**DOWN**

- 1 Defraud
- 2 Dance wear
- 39 Not their
- 40 Caustic comeback
- 42 Ladder parts
- 44 Solemn promise
- 45 Wimple wearer
- 46 Makes like a mule
- 49 Zingy
- 53 Longing
- 54 Make cobwebs
- 56 Freud's concerns
- 57 Make lace like granny
- 58 Atlas dot
- 59 Captain's command
- 60 O.T. judge
- 61 Slapstick missiles
- 62 Sea dogs

**Answer to Previous Puzzle**

S	L	Y		A	D	D		C	I	A			
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- 3 Poet's black
- 4 Bamboo maulers
- 5 Toilers
- 6 Hard to come by
- 7 PC bailout key
- 8 Platforms
- 9 Sulk angrily
- 10 Sporty vehicles
- 11 Cognomen
- 19 Asian range
- 21 James or Kett
- 23 Mouse cousin
- 24 Auction action
- 25 Grand Canyon st.
- 26 Strauss of jeans
- 27 Class period
- 28 By and by
- 29 Tucked in
- 32 Attracted
- 34 Hesitant speaker's insertions
- 36 Covetousness
- 38 Beat soundly
- 41 Rumors, often
- 43 Disquiet
- 45 Playing cards
- 46 Data unit
- 47 Not fake
- 48 Debate side
- 49 Obnoxious
- 50 Ottoman title
- 51 Roulette color
- 52 Recipe amts.
- 55 Tire pressure meas.

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