

The Tasmania Project

Share your experience during COVID-19.



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Experiences of parents and caregivers supporting children while learning from home.

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Parents and caregivers of primary school students will be breathing sighs of relief as Tasmania transitions back to school-based learning, according to findings from The Tasmania Project.

Key findings

- Respondents with primary school children consistently found learning from home more impractical than those supporting either younger or older children.
- Essential work commitments were most influential in respondents' perceptions of the practicality of supporting their children's learning.
- Almost half the people with dependent children expressed concern about their children's education, with almost 20% indicating they were very concerned.
- Respondents working from home found it difficult to find time to support their children's learning in the home.
- A lack of a dedicated space hindered children's learning in the home.

Survey results

Survey responses included 267 people who had children learning from home. The majority identified as female (72%), were born in Australia (82%), had completed University studies (75%), and were married or in defacto relationships (84%). Respondents had children from a range of school ages with the majority in primary (35%) and high school (39%).

Who took the lead in learning at home?

26% of respondents stated they took the lead in supporting their children and were mostly female (91%) and 20% stated they shared the lead. Other respondents indicated that their children, grandparents, or adult children took the lead. 7% stated the teacher took the lead, and a few respondents indicated they took the lead using a mix of online learning portals and material from school.



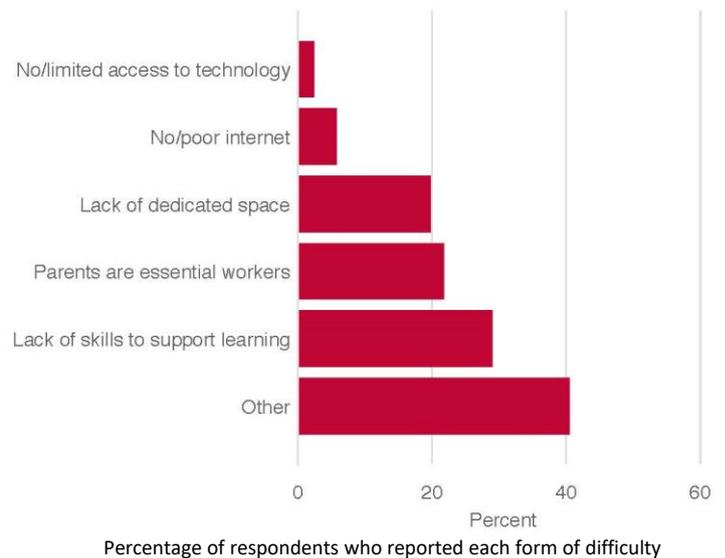
Photo: Kim Beasy

How did people manage?

Approximately 40% of respondents indicated that learning from home was practical for them and were confident in supporting their children. However, this was not the experience for approximately 30%, who indicated that learning from home was not practical, with 20% indicating that they did not feel confident in supporting their children.

A fifth of respondents indicated they experienced no difficulties with learning from home, though 40% suggested they did. The major difficulty related to balancing work commitments with home learning. Many respondents used the term 'teach' or 'educate' suggesting that support for learning went beyond supervising children. Managing this balance was exacerbated for respondents with multiple children at different levels of learning or with mixed pre-school and school-aged children. Support for children with special needs (e.g., autism, dyslexia) was also a concern.

Respondents indicated that, at times, communication from schools and curriculum delivery experiences were challenging and, in some cases, respondents felt that the expectations from schools were unrealistic or that guidance was insufficient. Other challenges related to the lack of social connection between peers and teachers. More practical challenges in the home included children who were unmotivated or who lacked engagement, or the self-discipline needed to attend to their work. Respondents also commented on what their children were encouraged to engage with and noted less focus on practical subjects such as music, physical education, technology and art.



Where next?

Further research exploring how parents and caregivers were able to navigate difficulties while children were learning from home is needed, particularly those with primary school aged children. Exploring the challenges and opportunities of home learning from the perspectives of parents and caregivers may inform home-school partnerships of the future.

The Tasmania Project – approach, method and limitations

The Tasmania Project includes a range of approaches and methods to understand how Tasmanians are experiencing and adapting to life during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

See a more detailed explanation of the Project's approach and method [here](#).