



Indigenous Education
and Research Centre

LEARNING WITH FAMILIES: A PRACTICAL GUIDE

Practical Ideas for Growing and Supporting
Confident Learners at Home



Welcome

Every learner develops through the experiences, knowledge, relationships and opportunities that shape their journey.

Success is built through confidence, curiosity, persistence and a willingness to keep learning. Whether you're a parent, family member or carer, you play an important role in supporting that journey.

This guide shares simple ideas and practical activities that can help support learning at home, at school and in everyday life.

How to use this guide

Explore the sections most relevant to your child, your family or the stage of learning you're supporting right now.

Whether you're looking for ideas to encourage learning at home, ways to build confidence, or practical activities that support learning beyond the classroom, you can use the contents page to jump straight to the information that interests you.

Scan the QR code to visit the Learning with Families webpage and access this guide online. Easily share it with family members, carers and others supporting your child's learning journey.



Table of Contents

Part 1: You Don't Need All the Answers	1
Introduction	1
Try Asking	1
Conversation Starters	1
When Your Child Gets Stuck	1
Quick Activity: Learning Together	2
Part 2: Learning Happens Everywhere.....	3
In the Kitchen	3
At the Shops	3
Exploring Nature	3
Sport and Games.....	4
Family Conversations.....	4
Remember.....	4
Part 3: Supporting Learning at Different Stages	5
Starting School.....	5
Building Independence.....	5
Preparing for High School	5
Looking Ahead	6
Remember.....	6
Part 4: Building Confidence Through Everyday Moments	7
Part 5: Additional Support and Resources	9
Contact Us.....	9

Part 1: You Don't Need All the Answers

Introduction

Parents and carers often worry about helping with learning if they don't understand the homework, didn't enjoy school themselves, or learned things differently when they were growing up.

The good news is that you don't need to know all the answers to support your child's learning.

One of the most important things you can do is show interest, ask questions and encourage your child to keep trying when something feels difficult.

Try Asking

You don't need to teach the lesson. Sometimes the best thing you can do is encourage your child to explain their thinking.

Try questions like:

- Can you show me how you worked that out?
- What do you think the answer might be?
- What have you learned about this at school?
- Can you teach me how it works?
- What was the most interesting thing you learned today?
- What part are you finding tricky?
- What have you tried already?

Conversation Starters

Learning often begins with a conversation.

Try asking:

- What was the best part of your day?
- Did you learn something surprising today?
- What made you think today?
- What would you like to learn more about?
- If you could ask your teacher one question, what would it be?

These questions encourage children to reflect on their learning and help build confidence in sharing their ideas.

When Your Child Gets Stuck

It can be tempting to jump in and solve the problem, but learning often happens when children have the opportunity to work through challenges.

Instead, try:

- ✓ Encouraging them to explain what they already know.
- ✓ Breaking the task into smaller steps.
- ✓ Helping them find information together.
- ✓ Reminding them that learning takes practice.
- ✓ Celebrating effort, not just correct answers.

Part 1 Continued

Remember

You don't have to be the expert.

Children benefit from knowing that learning is something we all continue to do throughout our lives.

By showing curiosity, asking questions and learning alongside your child, you're already helping them build important skills for the future.

Quick Activity: Learning Together

The next time your child tells you about something they learned:

1. Ask them to explain it to you.
2. Ask one follow-up question.
3. Share something new that you've learned recently.

This simple activity helps children practise communication, build confidence and see learning as something that happens throughout life.

Part 2: Learning Happens Everywhere

Learning doesn't only happen at school.

Everyday activities provide opportunities for children to ask questions, solve problems, practise new skills and build confidence. Some of the most valuable learning experiences happen during ordinary moments with family, friends and community.

You don't need special equipment, expensive resources or a teaching background. Small conversations and shared experiences can make a big difference.

In the Kitchen

Cooking is a great way to build learning into everyday life.

Children can:

- Read recipes and follow instructions
- Measure ingredients
- Estimate quantities
- Compare weights and volumes
- Predict what might happen when ingredients are mixed together

Try asking:

- What do you think will happen if we add more water?
- How many cups do we need altogether?
- Can we double this recipe?

At the Shops

Shopping helps children develop practical maths and decision-making skills.

Children can:

- Compare prices
- Estimate costs
- Work within a budget
- Calculate discounts
- Discuss needs versus wants

Try asking:

- Which option is better value?
- How much do you think this will cost altogether?
- What could we buy if we had \$20?

Exploring Nature

The world around us provides endless opportunities for learning.

Children can:

- Observe weather patterns
- Identify plants and animals
- Ask questions about their environment
- Notice changes across seasons
- Develop observation skills

Part 2 Continued

Try asking:

- Why do you think that happens?
- What do you notice?
- What has changed since last time we were here?

Sport and Games

Sport and games help children develop teamwork, persistence and problem-solving skills.

Children can:

- Keep score
- Compare statistics
- Predict outcomes
- Discuss strategies
- Practise resilience

Try asking:

- What was your strategy?
- What could you try differently next time?
- Why do you think that team won?

Family Conversations

Talking together is one of the most powerful ways to support learning.

Simple conversations help children:

- Build confidence
- Develop communication skills
- Reflect on their experiences
- Learn how to explain their thinking

Try asking:

- What was the best part of your day?
- Did anything surprise you today?
- Who taught you that?
- What would you like to learn more about?

Remember

Some of the best learning opportunities happen during ordinary moments.

You don't need to create extra lessons or find more time in the day. By asking questions, encouraging curiosity and involving children in everyday activities, you're already helping them build confidence and capability for the future.

Part 3: Supporting Learning at Different Stages

Children grow, learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. While every learner's journey is unique, there are some common skills, habits and experiences that help build confidence and support learning over time.

The ideas below focus on encouraging curiosity, independence and a love of learning at different stages.

Starting School

The early years are full of discovery. Children are learning how to communicate, ask questions, follow instructions and make sense of the world around them.

At this stage, confidence is just as important as knowledge.

Things You Can Try

- ✓ Read together regularly.
- ✓ Ask questions about things you see and do.
- ✓ Encourage your child to explain their ideas.
- ✓ Celebrate effort and curiosity.
- ✓ Allow time for play, exploration and imagination.

Conversation Starters

- What was your favourite part of today?
- What did you discover today?
- What would you like to learn more about?

Building Independence

As children grow, they begin taking greater responsibility for their learning and daily routines. This is a great time to encourage problem-solving, organisation and decision-making.

Things You Can Try

- ✓ Encourage your child to solve simple problems independently.
- ✓ Give them opportunities to make choices.
- ✓ Help them develop routines.
- ✓ Encourage them to ask questions when they need help.
- ✓ Celebrate persistence when things become challenging.

Conversation Starters

- What was something challenging you did today?
- How did you work through it?
- What are you proud of this week?

Preparing for High School

The move to high school often brings new subjects, new teachers and greater independence. Developing confidence and learning habits can help make this transition smoother.

Part 3 Continued

Things You Can Try

- ✓ Encourage organisation and planning.
- ✓ Talk about goals and interests.
- ✓ Help your child identify their strengths.
- ✓ Discuss ways to seek support when needed.
- ✓ Encourage participation in activities that interest them.

Conversation Starters

- What are you looking forward to?
- What are you curious about?
- What would you like to get better at?

Looking Ahead

As students move through high school, they begin thinking about future opportunities and pathways.

There is no single pathway to success. Every learner's journey is different.

Things You Can Try

- ✓ Talk about future goals and interests.
- ✓ Encourage exploration of different options.
- ✓ Celebrate growth and progress.
- ✓ Help your child recognise the skills they are developing.
- ✓ Remind them that learning continues throughout life.

Conversation Starters

- What would you like to learn next?
- What are you interested in right now?
- What skills do you think will help you in the future?

Remember

Children don't need adults who have all the answers.

They benefit most from adults who encourage curiosity, support persistence and create opportunities to keep learning.

Small conversations and everyday experiences can have a lasting impact on a child's confidence and success as a learner.

Part 4: Building Confidence Through Everyday Moments

Confidence doesn't appear overnight. It develops over time through experiences, encouragement and opportunities to try new things.

Children build confidence when they ask questions, solve problems, work through challenges and experience success for themselves. They also build confidence when they know mistakes are a normal part of learning.

Small, everyday moments can have a lasting impact.

Helping Children Build Confidence

Encourage Effort

Recognise the effort your child puts into learning, not just the result.

Instead of:

X "You're so smart."

Try:

- ✓ "You worked really hard on that."
- ✓ "I can see how much effort you put in."
- ✓ "You kept trying even when it was difficult."

Give Children Opportunities to Try

Children build confidence by doing.

This might be:

- ✓ Making a decision
- ✓ Solving a problem
- ✓ Trying something new
- ✓ Taking responsibility for a task
- ✓ Sharing an idea

Not everything needs to be done perfectly. Learning often happens through practice.

Make Space for Questions

Questions help children learn how to think, explore and understand the world around them.

Encourage curiosity by responding with:

- What do you think?
- How could we find out?
- That's an interesting question.
- Let's explore it together.

Part 4 Continued

Help Children Learn from Mistakes

Mistakes are a normal part of learning.

When something doesn't go to plan, try asking:

- What did you learn from that?
- What might you try differently next time?
- What worked well?
- What would you change?

These conversations help children develop resilience and problem-solving skills.

Try This

This week, encourage your child to teach you something.

It could be:

- a game
- a school topic
- a skill
- a hobby
- something they have recently learned

Teaching someone else helps children organise their thinking, communicate ideas and build confidence in what they know.

Reflection Questions

Take a moment to think about:

- When does my child seem most confident?
- What activities do they enjoy?
- What challenges have they recently overcome?
- How do I encourage effort and persistence?
- What opportunities do they have to make decisions and solve problems?

There are no right or wrong answers. These questions simply help identify the strengths and capabilities that are already developing.

Remember

Confidence grows through participation, practice and encouragement.

You don't need special resources or expert knowledge to support your child's learning. Every conversation, question, challenge and success contributes to the development of a confident learner.

Part 5: Additional Support and Resources

Learning is a lifelong journey, and every family approaches it differently.

If you'd like to explore further, there are many resources, programs and pathways available to support learners at different stages of their journey.

Explore More

Learning with Families

Visit the Learning with Families webpage for additional ideas, resources and practical ways to support learning at home and beyond.

Pathways into Higher Education

There are many pathways into university. Explore alternative entry options, bridging programs and support services that can help learners prepare for future study.

Student Support Services

From learning support and tutoring to wellbeing and transition programs, a range of services are available to help students build confidence and succeed throughout their studies.

Educational Innovation

Learn more about the projects, research and initiatives helping to strengthen learner confidence, capability and long-term educational success.

A Final Thought

There is no single way to support learning.

Every question asked, every conversation shared and every opportunity to try something new contributes to a child's growth as a learner.

Small moments can make a big difference.

Contact Us

We're Here to Support Your Journey

Every family brings their own experiences, strengths and aspirations. There is no single way to support learning, and every learner's path will look different.

The Indigenous Education and Research Centre works alongside students, families and communities to help create opportunities for learning, growth and future success.

Whether you're looking for learning ideas, information about pathways into higher education, or support available through the Indigenous Education and Research Centre, we'd love to hear from you.

Get in Touch

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