

## CHILDREN, READY OR NOT?: REINFORCING THE FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS IN LEARNING

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Experts fear that already overburdened early-childhood-education teachers will have a difficult transition as those children attend or return to school once classes reopen following years of community restrictions. The resumption of face-to-face classes on Public Schools is a challenge among kindergarten and elementary pupils especially on the Primary grades where the foundations of reading, writing and arithmetic falls under such level. The readiness among learners had been a concern for our teachers and parents as well.

The school closures have affected our learners in one way or another. Studies have shown that school closures and long-term online learning have detrimental effects on children's physical, emotional, and social well-being, as well as low educational outcomes and increased educational inequality. Undeniably, there are contributory factors that affect the learning of our children remotely, some of which may include the absence of learning facilitators, both parents / guardian is working, incapacitated learning facilitators etc. These factors affect the mastery of foundation skills among our learners thus their readiness for actual learning is at stake. Though there is already existing learning crisis, however, the pandemic had exacerbated the situation.

The readiness among our pre-elementary and elementary learners before class opening takes a greater advantage for them when foundation skills are established. Foundation skills refers to the fundamentals of reading, numeracy, and transferable abilities, which serve as the foundation for a lifetime of learning. We cannot expect a child to grow without good fundamental skills, just as we cannot expect a house to be built

without strong foundations. However, in most regions of the developing world, these learning foundations are insufficient. Parents must prepare their children to formal education by introducing them to the basics of learning. It is critical to prepare children for school, as research has shown that good school preparation for formal education is associated to both short- and long-term outcomes, such as improved academic achievement, improved mental health, and reduced misconduct. Foundational attributes are necessary component in the process of collecting knowledge and experiences as one progresses through the educational system.

Though the department had implemented various modality of remote learning most especially virtual and modular learning modalities, a few significant concerns also surfaced. First, majority of online learning was not participatory and did not meet the expectations of parents. Parents did not have enough time and did not have the necessary expertise to help their children study. The abrupt shift to online learning placed the demand on teachers to create relevant content.

Adjustment to the issues were being addressed by the department of education to empower parents as learning facilitators, teachers, and our learners as well by providing innovative projects that would accommodate shortcomings regarding remote learning.

As we take a step forward towards revitalizing learning for our young pupils by reopening the doors of classrooms in every school, parents must also give weight on strengthening the foundation skills of children, as we all know that it is at home where we learn the basics first for them to become much ready in school. As education institutions recuperate from the pandemic, a stepped-up reform effort now will lay the groundwork for faster development in the crucial years ahead, ensuring that children all over the world learn early, learn more, and continue to learn.

*References:*

<https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/urgent-need-focus-foundational-skills>