

Kids are Behind. HOW can we Help?

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SPEAKERS

Seth Perler



Seth Perler 00:01

Hey parents and teachers, what is up? So today we're going to look at an interesting issue with your children or the kids that you work with. And that is looking at the learning that's been lost. Has there been learning lost? And the answer is yes, I'm going to share with you a very interesting article here and discuss this a little bit, because it's really important that we address this issue. So what I'm going to do is I'm going to look at this issue really briefly, show you this article. And then I'm going to tell you ways that I think if you want to support kids, if you're a parent or a teacher, and you want to help address this issue, that you can address it in ways that are not really addressed in this article. So essentially, let's go ahead and start with my major premise here. So are our kids learning less? Yes, we know that kids have lost a lot this year. So they're quote 'behind,' does it matter? Yes, it matters. It matters to their mental health it matters to their social health, it matters to their economic health in their future. It definitely matters. So what's the conclusion? What do I think? If you value what I think you've been following for any period of time, well, sadly, what I think is, do not depend on the school to fill this gap. We need to as the adults in these kids lives, take the measures that we can. And I'm going to give you specific things I think we can do to help. Now I also want to mention, if you're not familiar with me, my name is Seth Perler with SethPerler.com, I'm an executive function coach and I wear a lot of hats here. But essentially, the kids that I work with who have executive function struggles, who struggle to get important things done, who's struggling in school, doesn't fit the school box. These kids, in my opinion, are at even more risk of experiencing more of the consequences, the negative consequences of how their learning and lives have been

impacted with what's been going on.

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Seth Perler 02:13

So, let's take a look at this article. Real quick. Fantastic article, I'll link it below. It's from McKinsey COVID-19 Education, the lingering effects of unfinished learning. Look at this, this is really well written. United States, US states, and districts have the opportunity to not only help students catch up on unfinished learning, but also to tackle long standing historical inequities in education. Great, we have the opportunity to do that. Should you depend on them to take this opportunity? Do you have evidence in the past, and I'm not trying to act, you know, like, I mean, I love teachers. Teachers work so hard, teachers save our kids. I mean, they are the most amazing human beings in our society and provide so much. But the system the way it is, does it empower them to do their best to really do this? Are we going to take this opportunity to tackle these historical inequities in education? Anyhow, let me go through just the beginning of this, this is really well written. "As this most disrupted of school years draws to a close, it's time to take stock of the impact that this past year has had on student learning and well being. It was, this year was as a whole, perhaps one of the most challenging for educators and students in our nation's history." And then they talk about their analysis of this, and this is very interesting. "The impact was significant, leaving students on average five months behind in math, four months behind in reading by the end of the school year. It widened pre-existing opportunity and achievement gaps, hitting historically disadvantaged students the hardest. In math, students in majority black schools ended the year with six months of unfinished learning. Students in low income schools, high schoolers have become more likely to drop out. Seniors, especially from low income families are less likely to go on to post secondary education. And it goes on.

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Seth Perler 04:44

Fantastic article, but we get down here and I want to show you a couple of interesting things here. So first of all about that it's inequitable, we have not addressed the inequities in this country. And when we look here, at this chart here, this is very telling, it shows by race and by income and by location, how far behind students are. And then here, go down to this last one. This shows what happens with mental health conditions. And then finally, the last one I wanted to talk about is the economic gap caused by the unfinished learning. And how much worse, this is where it already was, the racial achievement gap, and then it got even worse, adding to a worse outcome. And you can look at those on your own. And that's not what I want to talk about, I don't want to focus more on that article, I want to focus on the solution. If you have a child who you are concerned about, and you want to be helpful, and you're worried about the learning gap, what can we do? So here are some

things that are concrete that you can do, so grab a notebook, and the ones that resonate with you take a couple these ideas if you like them, I hope they help you.

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Seth Perler 06:19

Number 1: Model, modeling. We the teacher, the adult, the parent, whoever you are, we model behavior. There's the saying, "Do as I say, not as I do," that's a horrible saying. "Do as I say, not as I do," that is so outdated and bizarre. That's not reality. Kids do what we model. We are teaching them through our behaviors, our actions, our words, we are modeling how to be in this world. And are we modeling what we really want to model? So we want to model here is a value for education, value for reading, value for writing, we want to model that we value it. I think that one of the worst things I ever have heard students say, that one of the most sad things that I've ever heard them say is "I hate learning," or they'll say "I hate school." So they're creating an association in their mind that they hate learning. They don't hate learning. They hate the experiences they're having or the way that they feel in what they're associating with learning, but they don't hate learning. So to model a value for learning, to show, "Hey, I'm learning a new song, I'm learning a new thing on guitar, I'm learning a new thing in my hobby, I'm learning a new thing from this book I'm reading, oh, I'm doing math right now, this is so cool. We're looking at something in our everyday life, how cool," to model your value, how you value it, to model it more explicitly more intentionally so that they can really see that this is important in their life.

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Seth Perler 07:50

Number 2: Connect with the child and do the thing with them. So whatever we are modeling in terms of reading and writing and math, these basics that we really need. In order to get them to, you know, the problem that we're losing learning. So connect with them and do those things with them, do math with them, science with them, social studies with them, reading with them, writing with them, connect and do those things with them. We have very busy lives, I know, but to have times where we connect and and do that with them.

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Seth Perler 08:33

Number 3: Use their own interests to do those things. So when you're connecting with them about the things, use their own interest and help them see how whatever they're interested in, anything they're interested in, has an aspect of math and science and history and reading and writing and art. So help them connect those dots through using their own interests and pointing out how we use those things in their interest. Now in

teaching, that would be called 'interdisciplinary education' or 'interdisciplinary lessons.' It's where you use multiple disciplines or where you use math and science and reading and writing, where you use all the things together as you go through a unit or a course of study.

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Seth Perler 09:23

Number 4: Metacognition. Metacognition is thinking about thinking, or self-awareness, or being conscious of what you're doing, or you could say mindfulness. Metacognition is being aware of how we think and learn and feel and process, but use your own metacognition, your own awareness of when you are using math or reading or writing in a viable way. You can do what's called a 'Think-Aloud.' And what that means is that you simply think aloud about, I'm trying to look for a good example, but you simply think aloud about the thing that you're doing. For example, if you're on your phone and reading something, you can literally say, just talking to yourself, you're thinking aloud, you can say, "Wow, I'm so glad that I know how to read and that I value reading, this is a really interesting text thread that I'm reading." Now, it might be a text, might be an article or might be whatever. But just thinking aloud so that they see this is related to modeling, they see that you are reading, even on the phone, or doing math or when you're setting timers, or things like this. Setting timers is math. But we use in everyday situations, we use these disciplines. So just thinking aloud and helping them see that you're using all of them will help them to connect the dots as they go through their day to see "Oh, I always do this. I never really thought about it but I'm doing math right now. Oh, I always do this, I never really thought about it but I'm doing reading right now or writing right now, doesn't seem like I'm writing a paper but I am writing." So metacognition in everyday activities, using 'Think Aloud.'

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Seth Perler 11:09

Number 5: Know when to cut corners. Okay, now this one's interesting parents and teachers, know when to cut corners. So there are times when the school or life has us do busy work that is meaningless. And so for you parents out there in particular, when there is busy work, and you know that this just is not a value to your child's life, like you have only so many hours in the day, and you want to pack in as much connection time, family time, social time, emotional time, and learning time. When there are things that you're really looking at, you're like, "How's this helping my kid?" Know that you can cut corners, and that that's not a bad thing. It's ethical to cut corners at some times. So when do we scaffold executive function and do certain things for them? And when is it actually helping? When is it holding them back? Really looking at those things, and when to advocate and email the teacher and say, you know, "We're not going to do this, this is not

working, we did the first three problems my kid was done and we needed family time or they got burnout," You know, like, or when to do certain things for them. So know when to cut corners in an ethical way, in the best interests of your child. And for teachers out there, know when to cut corners when you have administrators or districts that say you got to jump through X, Y, and Z hoops. And I know teachers know how to do this anyway, it's called, teachers call it 'close the door and do what you need to do for your students.' So know when to do that.

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Seth Perler 12:41

Number 6: Particularly for parents, but find mentors that are not you. Find mentors that are not you. Tutors, role models, coaches, sign up for a thing that has a teacher, your teachers who are not you, talk to them, become friendly with them. But find people to help mentor your kid to help inspire that value, as I said in number one, the value for education and for reading and writing and math the value for it. So again, the problem is we're losing learning. So how do we minimize this? How do we have more learning? Well, we really want to show the value for it, but have people who are not you do these things with them in everyday life. I don't know that I'm explaining everything very well today, sorry, I'm a bit tired today. If you've been following me, hello, what's up? It's me Seth, I'm a bit off today.

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Seth Perler 13:41

Number 7: Documentaries, movie night, number seven. Documentaries are learning. So if we're losing learning, documentaries are a really great way. If you have movie night with your kiddo, and I don't know, they can be high school or they can be a first grader, but you're watching documentaries where you're learning cool things. That's a great way to pack in more learning.

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Seth Perler 14:01

Number 8: Similar to documentaries is to go back to the library. Take your child to the library, spend time in the library just reading. Value it with no distractions, with no phone, with no laptop, go spend time in the library on a weekly basis or whatever.

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Seth Perler 14:17

Number 9: Daily, daily. Have talks with your child, and this is great for teachers too, about what you're learning. So it would look like this. "Hey, it's dinnertime. What's up? Hey everybody, what did you learn today? What did you learn today? I learned this today, I

learned that today, I did math in this way, reading in this way," point out what you're learning today. Teachers, you can see the kids on the playground, "What are you learning today? This is what I learned today."

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Seth Perler 14:49

Number 10: Block out time. Block chunk time for deep dives into projects that are interdisciplinary. So parents, like do fun, cool, interesting projects. With your kids, but you have to block time out for it, and deep dive into things. When you deep dive into a topic with your kiddo, even if it's something like Minecraft or something that is online, you can still learn with them, you can study Minecraft with them, you can create art with it and write and make a cool project with it, a diorama. I'm not trying to sound cheesy. I mean, there's just a million ways that you can dive deep into projects, interdisciplinary projects with your kid that are fun.

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Seth Perler 15:29

Number 11: Do executive function at home. You're already doing executive function at home parents, teachers, you're already doing executive function in the classroom. But you might not call it executive function. Well, point it out to yourself. Point it out to them and do the think aloud saying we're setting up this system for this. These kids with executive function struggles I'm really worried about after this year, and I mean, I already have and that's why I dedicated my life this, but after this year, it's just like, I'm really concerned. And we really need to do as much as we can to help them build these skills, and you're already doing it. So figure out where you are doing it and use the thing clouds in modeling to help them connect the dots. The biggest problem here is that when they don't connect the dots, that executive function or learning or the systems or these things that they do in their hobby areas, that these are things that they can apply to other areas of their life. And they're really losing out on it because when they're older, and they don't know that they already have these skills, that's really going to hold them back. They'll figure it out eventually. And they'll find their own workarounds and stuff, it's just gonna be painfully longer than it needs to be. And we want to do everything we can to.

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Seth Perler 16:38

Number 12: The very last one that I want to talk about, the most important one that I want to talk about is the relationship, our relationship with our kids. Now, this may sound counterintuitive in terms of "Well, what does that have to do with losing learning?" Well, when our kids are losing this learning that is really, in their future, if this impacts them economically in terms of their career, in terms of their relationships, in terms of their

mental health, if this impacts them, the relationship is the core, it's the most important thing. It's the thing that allows them to come to us, to trust us, to receive help from us, what happens a lot is we tell them what they need for help. And we have the sort of top-down approach rather than a collaborative approach. But building the relationship and the simple word, love. Love your child, love the kids you work with, spend time with them. Love is in action, spend time with them, be with them. We're so busy today, I just can't say this enough. Taking the time, without devices without distractions, to have quality time with your child all the time. Having fun with them, not talking about school all the time, having connection, doing yours and mine, doing our own deep inner work. If you're not new to me, doing our own deep inner work means working on ourselves. When we work on our quote 'issues,' our stuff, our baggage, we all we've all got it. All of us, when we work on that we are modeling for our kids that we care about ourselves, that our mental health is important. We're showing them through our actions. So anyhow, thr last one was the relationship.

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Seth Perler 18:16

I'm sorry if this was a kind of random, but I'm gonna tie this together in a more sensible way for you right now. The problem is that our kids are losing learning and the consequences of learning, losing learning. And my suggestion is don't wait for the schools to do what this article says and that they have this opportunity to start changing things. Don't wait for that to happen, start right now doing everything you can. and the best things that we can do is really to model the value that we have for education. Because what happens is these kids start thinking, "I hate school, I hate learning." And when they have, excuse me, when they have a mindset that says "I hate this thing," and they're not valuing it, even though schools have their own dysfunction, that doesn't mean in schools, that doesn't mean that education or learning is bad. And learning is the key for them to be able to have a good quality of life. Learning is the key for them to do what they need to do, to be who they are in this world. So anyhow, those are some ideas that we jotted some notes that may have worked for you and I hope that was helpful to you.

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Seth Perler 19:33

My name is Seth Perler, I have a site called SethPerler.com. If you like what I'm doing, share it, I appreciate your support. It means a lot when you like, subscribe, and comment on my YouTube channel. If you want to get more out of what I do totally for free, go to SethPerler.com and sign up to get my, I send one free weekly email with brand new inspiration to support kids, straight from the heart, straight for you at SethPerler.com And I also have one called ExecutiveFunctionSummit.com. Anyhow, have a great day. Most of all, go connect with your kiddo. Take care.

