



K-5 HOME LEARNING

# PARENT'S GUIDE

## TO EFFECTIVE AT-HOME INSTRUCTION

A practical guide to clear teaching, purposeful practice, and growing independence at home.

1

### START STRONG

Build routines, prerequisite skills, and a clear learning target.

2

### TEACH CLEARLY

Model the thinking, practice together, and check understanding.

3

### SURGE AHEAD

Adjust support, revisit important skills, and build independence.

Teaching with the SurgeAhead Foundations & Guiding Principles

**START STRONG | TEACH CLEARLY | SURGE AHEAD**

Learn | Practice | Grow | Achieve





# Welcome, SurgeStart Families

You do not have to recreate a traditional classroom to teach effectively at home.



## YOUR ROLE

Think of yourself as your child's **learning coach**: prepare, model, guide, observe, respond, encourage, and know when to release responsibility.

The goal is to create a dependable learning rhythm in which your child knows what they are learning, receives clear instruction, practices with support, and gradually becomes more independent. This guide translates the SurgeAhead framework into everyday parent actions.

## The SurgeAhead Approach for Parents

### STRONG START

Begin with routines, prerequisite skills, clear goals, and a manageable learning environment.

### PURPOSEFUL PRACTICE

Choose work because it strengthens a skill - not simply because another page is available.

### RESPONSIVE TEACHING

Change the amount or type of support when your child's work shows a need.

### GROWING INDEPENDENCE

Gradually move from doing examples for your child to having your child explain and apply the skill independently.

## THE CORE ROUTINE

**I Do > We Do > You Do > You Explain > You Apply**

## Before You Teach: Prepare for Success

- **Know the learning target.** Ask: What should my child know or be able to do by the end?
- **Check the prerequisite.** Does your child have the earlier skill needed for today's work?
- Gather only the materials you need so the lesson can begin smoothly.
- Decide what success will look like: accuracy, explanation, reading fluency, a completed paragraph, or another clear outcome.
- Plan a short break or movement opportunity before attention drops.



## KEEP IT SIMPLE

A well-prepared 25-minute lesson can be more effective than an unstructured hour.



# The Parent Teaching Cycle

A repeatable routine helps children understand what to do and helps parents know when to support - and when to step back.

1

**PREPARE**

**Parent:** State the goal and gather materials.

**Child:** Gets ready and understands the purpose.

2

**CONNECT**

**Parent:** Review something familiar and connect it to the new skill.

**Child:** Recalls, discusses, predicts, or makes a connection.

3

**MODEL**

**Parent:** Demonstrate one example and think aloud.

**Child:** Watches and notices the steps.

4

**PRACTICE TOGETHER**

**Parent:** Complete examples together; prompt rather than take over.

**Child:** Tries the skill with support.

5

**INDEPENDENT TRY**

**Parent:** Give a short amount of independent practice.

**Child:** Works without immediate help.

6

**CHECK**

**Parent:** Review work and ask for an explanation.

**Child:** Explains, self-checks, and corrects.

7

**RESPOND**

**Parent:** Reteach, guide, extend, or move forward.

**Child:** Practices again or accepts a new challenge.

8

**REVISIT**

**Parent:** Bring the skill back later.

**Child:** Retrieves and applies the learning again.

**PARENT TIP**

Do not begin a brand-new skill by handing over a worksheet. **Teach first; use the worksheet as practice.**

## How to Model Your Thinking

Children often see an adult's answer but not the thinking that produced it. A **think-aloud** makes the hidden process visible.

| SUBJECT | EXAMPLE THINK-ALOUD                                                                            |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reading | "The character packed an umbrella and boots. That detail makes me infer she expects rain."     |
| Math    | "I need $46 + 28$ . I can add tens first, then ones, and regroup if needed."                   |
| Writing | "My paragraph is about dogs as pets, so my first sentence should clearly introduce that idea." |
| Science | "The ice is changing from solid to liquid. I notice heat is causing the change."               |

**MODEL, THEN RELEASE**

One or two clear examples are usually better than explaining for too long.



# Better Questions. Better Thinking.

Shift from asking for answers to asking children to explain, justify, and improve their thinking.

| INSTEAD OF ONLY ASKING...    | TRY ASKING...                                       |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| What is the answer?          | How did you figure it out?                          |
| Do you understand?           | Explain it to me in your own words.                 |
| Who is the character?        | What does the character's behavior tell you?        |
| Is your math answer correct? | How can you prove your answer is reasonable?        |
| What happened?               | Which detail or evidence supports your answer?      |
| Are you done?                | Check your work. What is one thing you can improve? |

## SURGEAHEAD QUESTION

**What makes you think that?**

## Correct Mistakes Without Taking Over

- Pause before giving the answer. Give your child time to think.
- Ask your child to show or explain the strategy used.
- Point to the place where the work needs another look.
- Give one hint at a time instead of solving the whole problem.
- Model a similar example if the child is still stuck.
- Return to the original task and let the child try again.
- End by naming what improved.

### ERRORS ARE INFORMATION

A wrong answer can reveal a missing prerequisite, misunderstood direction, vocabulary problem, careless error, or incomplete strategy. Your job is to identify which one.



## Know When to Help More - and Less

### SURGE 1

#### INDEPENDENT

**Notice:** Accurate, confident, explains the skill.

**Do:** Reduce prompts. Add application, enrichment, or move forward.

### SURGE 2

#### GUIDED

**Notice:** Understands part of the skill but is inconsistent.

**Do:** Use prompts, examples, visuals, manipulatives, and immediate feedback.

### SURGE 3

#### REBUILD

**Notice:** Repeated confusion or missing prerequisite skills.

**Do:** Pause the current task. Teach the missing skill in smaller steps and review.



# Teach the Core Subjects with Confidence

Keep instruction clear, concrete, and connected to everyday life. Strong foundations make new learning easier to understand.



## Reading & Language Arts

Read every day - aloud, supported, and independently.  
Practice sounds, blending, phonics patterns, high-frequency words, and fluency for early readers.  
Preview titles, pictures, headings, and important vocabulary.  
Pause to predict, clarify, infer, or summarize.  
After reading, ask for main idea, details, sequence, evidence, or a lesson learned.  
Teach writing as: **think > plan > draft > improve > edit > share.**  
Correct every small error only when that is the lesson goal.



## Mathematics

Build understanding before speed.  
Use objects, drawings, number lines, coins, clocks, fraction models, or other concrete tools.  
Ask your child to explain how an answer was found.  
Practice facts briefly and consistently rather than in long drill sessions.  
Use estimation to decide whether answers are reasonable.  
Connect math to cooking, shopping, schedules, games, measuring, building, and money.  
When an answer is wrong, locate the step where the reasoning changed.



## Science

Use the cycle: **Ask > Predict > Investigate > Record > Explain.**  
Use observations, simple investigations, diagrams, models, and science notebooks.  
Ask children to use evidence from what they observed.



## Social Studies

Use the cycle: **Locate > Describe > Compare > Explain why it matters > Connect to today.**  
Use maps, timelines, biographies, photographs, informational texts, and community connections.  
Ask children to explain cause/effect, change over time, geography, government, economics, or citizenship.

### WHEN A CHILD GETS STUCK ON A WORD



Wait briefly. Ask the child to look at the letters and sounds, reread the sentence, and try again. Supply the word when frustration begins to interfere with comprehension.



### MATH TALK

Ask: Can you show it another way? How do you know? Is there a faster strategy that still makes sense?



# Build a Home Learning Environment That Works

The best home learning spaces are predictable, flexible, focused, and supportive - not perfect.

## Schedule

Predictable enough to create security; flexible enough to respond to the learner.

## Learning Space

Comfortable, organized, and reasonably free from distractions.

## Directions

Short, specific, and checked for understanding.

## Workload

Enough practice to build mastery without unnecessary repetition.

## Breaks

Used proactively for movement, attention, and regulation.

## Technology

Used purposefully for learning, practice, access, and creation.

## Feedback

Specific, timely, respectful, and focused on the task or strategy.

## Challenge

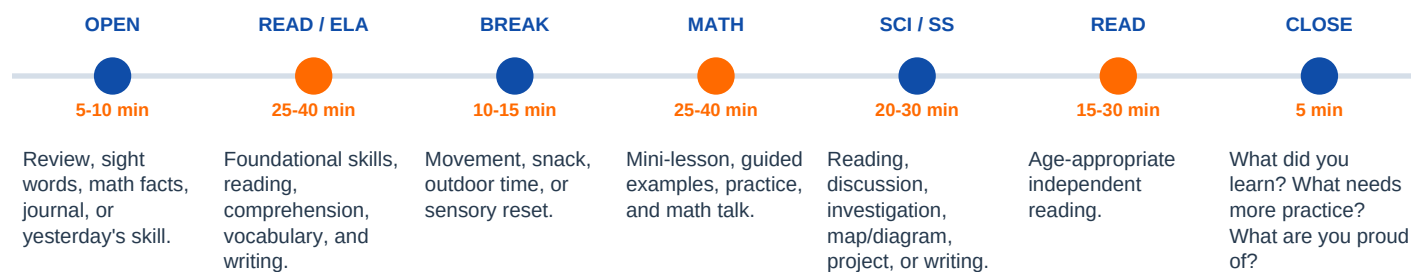
High expectations with enough support for the learner to succeed.



## THE MESSAGE YOUR HOME CLASSROOM SHOULD SEND

You are safe to try. You are expected to think. Mistakes can be corrected. Your effort matters. Your learning can grow.

## A Practical Daily Rhythm



## FLEXIBLE, NOT RIGID

Younger children may need shorter blocks. Older elementary learners may work longer. The sequence matters more than copying a school bell schedule.



# Know When to Move Forward

Mastery is more than finishing. Look for accuracy, explanation, transfer, retention, and independence.

| MOVE FORWARD WHEN...                                   | PAUSE OR RETEACH WHEN...                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Accuracy is consistent across several examples.        | The same error keeps appearing.                   |
| Your child can explain the idea or strategy.           | Your child can succeed only with heavy prompting. |
| The skill is remembered after a short delay.           | The skill disappears the next day.                |
| Your child can apply it in a new example.              | A small change in format causes major confusion.  |
| You can reduce support without performance collapsing. | A prerequisite skill is clearly missing.          |



## MASTERY IS MORE THAN FINISHING

A completed workbook page is not the goal. Look for **accuracy, explanation, transfer, retention, and independence**.

## Use Simple Assessment to Guide Teaching

### BEFORE

Ask 2-3 prerequisite questions, do a brief oral review, or give one sample problem.

### DURING

Ask for an explanation, oral retell, worked example, teach-back, or short response.

### AFTER

Use a skill page, writing sample, short quiz, reading response, project, or cumulative review.

### ACROSS TIME

Save dated work samples and compare progress. Revisit important skills to check retention.

### USE THE RESULT



If your child is not ready, rebuild. If your child is developing, guide. If your child is secure, extend and surge ahead.

## Motivation, Feedback, and Confidence

**Praise the process:** Specific feedback is more useful than general praise. Name the strategy, effort, improvement, or independence you want repeated.

"You kept working even when that was difficult."

### PERSISTENCE

"Your evidence matches your answer."

### ACADEMIC REASONING

"You caught your own mistake."

### SELF-MONITORING

"Show me which strategy helped you."

### METACOGNITION

"You are still learning this. Let's do one more together."

### GROWTH WITH SUPPORT

"You did that with less help today."

### INDEPENDENCE



# Plan the Week. Teach with Purpose.

A simple weekly plan keeps learning focused and helps you respond to what your child actually needs.

| STEP       | PARENT QUESTION                                                              |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PRIORITIZE | What are the 2-4 most important skills or understandings this week?          |
| PREPARE    | What books, SurgeStart pages, manipulatives, texts, or materials do we need? |
| TEACH      | Which skills need explicit modeling and guided practice?                     |
| PRACTICE   | Where will my child review and apply earlier learning?                       |
| CHECK      | What evidence will show that my child understands?                           |
| RESPOND    | What will I do if my child needs reteaching or is ready for enrichment?      |
| REFLECT    | What improved this week, and what becomes next week's priority?              |

## Parent Teaching Checklist

- ☐ I know today's learning goal.
- ☐ I checked whether my child has the prerequisite skill.
- ☐ I modeled before expecting independent work.
- ☐ I asked my child to explain their thinking.
- ☐ I checked understanding before moving forward.
- ☐ I used hints and guidance without taking over.
- ☐ I adjusted the amount of support based on evidence.
- ☐ I included reading in our day.
- ☐ I gave specific feedback about effort, strategy, or growth.
- ☐ We ended with a short reflection or review.



### THE SURGEAHEAD HABIT

Teach. Check. Respond. Revisit. Build independence.

## Weekly Family Reflection

What did my child learn well this week?

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Which skill needs more practice?

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Where is my child becoming more independent?

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What teaching strategy worked best?

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What caused unnecessary frustration or distraction?

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What book or topic sparked curiosity?

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What success should we celebrate?

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What is our priority for next week?

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# The SurgeStart Parent's Quick Reference

Keep this page nearby for a fast reminder of what effective at-home instruction looks like.

1

## State the learning goal.

Gives the lesson purpose.

2

## Model the thinking.

Makes the process visible.

3

## Practice together first.

Builds success before independence.

4

## Ask for explanations.

Reveals real understanding.

5

## Use mistakes as evidence.

Shows what to teach next.

6

## Review across time.

Makes learning last.

7

## Reduce help gradually.

Builds independence.

8

## Keep reading daily.

Strengthens learning across subjects.

9

## Celebrate growth.

Builds confidence and persistence.

**START STRONG | TEACH CLEARLY | SURGE AHEAD**

Build foundations. Use purposeful instruction. Grow confidence and independence.

Learn | Practice | Grow | Achieve