Twitter Thread by Andy Tattersall



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Just a few thoughts for home-schooling parents as a parent who has had a 12-13 year old daughter out of mainstream school for most of the last 18 months. I appreciate that this won't help everyone (maybe just one person) but hope it brings comfort.

Our daughter has been in and out of mainstream school since October 2018 due to an ongoing medical condition she's being treated for. The first few months were hard as she completely fell between the cracks of education and health care. She had no education for about 3-4 months

Her condition is not aided by extra anxiety and therefore we have had to take a soft approach to her education. Since sorting things out through various services, she was back at school part time for the last semester. Things were taken day by day

Although she is only studying certain subjects, she soon made up ground in those areas, and though she may not be top of her class, she is doing OK. Her mental well being remains most important to us.

Remember that the school system was very anxiety inducing for some of our kids. Some have thrived more under lockdown without peer pressure, constant testing and anxiety/expectations. As adults we can better coping skills to deal with anxiety and we can share them with our kids

Even though kids might be at school 6 hours a day, they do not actively learn for 6 hours, so don't feel that they have to be in front of a screen all day. They are also dealing with this, it's scary for them, if you are stressed about their education, it will make them anxious

You don't have to be a perfect teacher, you are not qualified to do this. I know teachers who admit that they struggle to home school their own kids. The dynamics have changed. Things will get better.

If you are lucky to live in a stable, loving household that values education, your kids have a good foundation Learning just does not happen exclusively behind the school gates. If they are watching an instructional art video on YouTube or Horrible Histories, that's education

I feel for the kids less fortunate than mine, where no life long learning takes place at home. Where there are no laptops, books, games and most importantly no love and assurance. What your kids need most right now are the last two things

I don’t pretend to know enough about secondary education and it’s easy to say what another profession should be doing to improve. But we have to remember that the system our children are in does not fit all, testing and exams is not great for all kids.

Home learning can be flexible, and less regimental. Watching a documentary as a family & talking about it has value. I know not one size fits all. Kids are different ages with different vulnerabilities, demands, families have pressures, workloads and caring responsibilities.

So I don’t mean this advice in any demeaning way. We are resilient, we are entitled to offload and complain, it’s important to communicate. Don’t feel bad about all of the things and don’t beat yourself up if you think you’re failing at home schooling.

It’s not a competition, focus on love and learning will come easier once you start to relax a bit. Forcing it all is just not going to help any of us, especially the kids. x