



Protecting Children from Ergonomic Injury – Becoming an MVP (Most Valuable Parent)

School is back in session, and whether your child is in the classroom, learning at home, or doing a hybrid curriculum, chances are they are utilizing computers for learning and personal use. Have you done a “check-in” to evaluate their workstation and posture to ensure the best ergonomic practices?

Here are five tips to ensure good ergonomic practices for children:

1. Adjust sitting distance from the screen (with the child’s head to screen distance of roughly an arm’s length) and the screen height (with the eyes level at the top 1/3 of the screen while the neck is in neutral position).
2. Adjust the seat for their stature, ensuring the best upper and lower body positioning. Position hips and knees at right angles (90 degrees), with feet on the floor or footrest. Upper arms should rest comfortably against sides with elbows at roughly a 90-110 degree angle while keying and using the mouse.
3. Center the keyboard and mouse in front of the monitor. The mouse should be on the same horizontal plane as the keyboard and as close to the keyboard as possible.
4. Make sure the room has sufficient lighting.
5. Parents should plan a specific time of the day with their children to study online. This helps family members actively eliminate distractions such as TV, loud music, or toys during this time. Parents are encouraged to allocate study time and leisure time appropriately. To dispel boredom and dullness, parents can exercise with their children, (such as yoga, stretching, or calisthenics), count numbers together, cook,

or other activities. Be creative!

Be the MVP (Most Valuable Parent) when it comes to your children's computer usage:

Manage computer use time - time can fly by when working or playing at a computer. Parents can monitor how long the computer is used and try to limit continuous use (to blocks of no more than 30 minutes). Taking frequent short breaks allows muscles to recuperate, avoiding related injuries. You can download software as a reminder to take short rest breaks, or do some simple stretching exercises (to reduce fatigue).

Vary activities to help kids engage different muscle groups. Encourage children to use computers in additional ways so other muscle groups share that effort. Every 30 minutes, your child should briefly stand up, walk around, and rest the muscles used in typing and mouse work. Encourage children to look at objects at different distances, for example, looking out of a window for a few minutes allows the eye muscles to rest.

Posture during computer use is especially important to help children sit and work in a relaxed, neutral posture. Teach children to change their body positions periodically. When seated, they should be in a "squatting" position with legs on the floor or footrest, supporting them. Rotate the mouse between the right and left hand every 30 days.