

7 Gift Ideas for Kids to Up Their Virtual Learning Game

 web.archive.org/web/20210120231947/https://www.parents.com/holiday/gift-gallery/gifts-for-kids-to-up-their-virtual-learning-game

From the best tech for kids to learning games and educational subscription boxes, we spoke with parents and teachers to discover the best gift ideas for that special virtual learner in your life.

By Fiona Tapp
December 02, 2020

Each product we feature has been independently selected and reviewed by our editorial team. If you make a purchase using the links included, we may earn commission.



Credit: Tanoshi

This school year has been like no other for children. So many kids have been forced to swap their seat in the classroom for virtual video calls at the kitchen table, and even kids still able to attend school in-person are adopting new ways of learning to prepare for possible school closures in the future.

But right along with kiddos, parents and teachers have felt the pressure during the pandemic when it comes to learning. It's been a struggle for most of us to maintain high academic standards while navigating the new world of virtual learning. One thing that's helped everyone though is loading up on the right tools, whether it be technology, gadgets, or online services that can help answer a child's question when it's needed most.

We spoke to parents involved in homeschooling their kids for the first time and teachers charged with delivering virtual lessons and asked them to share their favorite gift ideas for the holiday season to take your child's virtual learning to the next level.

RELATED: [6 Things Not to Do While Distance Learning and Expert Tips on What to Do Instead](#)

Credit: Tanoshi

A Kid-Friendly Computer

First things first, you can't access online classes without a computer. Don't just get any laptop though, choose one specially designed for children, like the [Tanoshi Scholar](#). Tanoshi computers are not toys, they come pre-loaded with award-winning educational apps and run on Android. Plus, their latest model the Scholar, which has a 10-inch screen and detachable keyboard also features a more durable design and a webcam privacy screen so kids can choose when to be seen. They are a great choice for children aged 6-12 and were recommended by many educators we spoke to including, Mary Tui, a teacher of more than 30 years from Seattle.

"Kids like the Tanoshi because it feels like it was made especially for them, they can still play their own games and apps, but their parents can approve all selections and see how long they play for. It's a really smart little machine," she says.

Wireless Headphones

You should also invest in a pair of quality headphones so that your child can concentrate fully on their teacher's words and are essential if you have more than one learner at home. Try the [LilGadgets Untangled Pro Headphones](#) which come in lots of fun colors and patterns that kids will adore. They are wireless freeing kids up to move around as they listen. "My son wears these to dance around and loves that he can listen without wires," says mom Nneka Pollock.

New Books for Their At-Home Library

You should also try to build a good library of leveled reading books at home. This can be tricky with many libraries closed but one homeschool family in Rhode Island started a book swap in their neighborhood. Books are cleaned and left on the porch and rotated once a week. "It allowed our kids to keep their reading choices fresh and sometimes they put little notes or drawings in for the other kids to see," Lucy Soloman, the founder says.

For book-loving kids try [OwlCrate Jr.](#) a monthly subscription box for kids ages 8-12 that takes a book theme and runs with it. Kids receive 4-6 goodies, a hardcover book, and activities to spark their imagination and creativity.

RELATED: [How to Set Up a Virtual or Homeschool Learning Space for Kids](#)

Virtual Learning Games

Your child's school may provide a detailed and balanced program of work to follow at home or you might have gone your own way and homeschooled from your personal curriculum. Either way, supplementing what you are already providing to your child with some learning games helps to keep things interesting and ensures that all bases are covered. With the [Osmo](#) series of games you just need to slip your tablet or device into the red base and then play a variety of educational games that test math, spelling, reading, and even coding skills.

Homeschool mom, Tracey Reynolds, recommends [PlayShifu](#), three platforms supporting 14 different educational products. Her three kids enjoy [Plugo](#) which features a gamepad on which your tablet stands and a variety of different add-ons including letter tiles, magnetic engineering building blocks, a piano, and numbers for complete learning.

"My youngest also really likes the [Shifu Orboot](#) which is a globe of the Earth where you can use your tablet to zoom in on different countries and learn more about a place," she says.

A New Robot BFF

Daniel Tomkins, a kindergarten teacher from California says it's important for parents to remember that online learning isn't all about academics. "Kids have lost so much this year," he says, "the social aspect is missing from many home learners' lives and that's why it's

important to make play and fun a big part of their day." He purchased a Miko robot to use in his online lessons and saw some of the parents of his students do the same. "We now have a little tribe of robots communicating with the kids!"

The [Miko](#) robot presents conversational learning which teaches kids about emotional intelligence and can help to curb loneliness.

RELATED: [5 Things That Can Make Distance Learning Much Easier for the Entire Family](#)

Credit: Guide Dots

Endless Extracurricular Activities

Alice Little is an art teacher from Ohio and worries that this pandemic will mean an absence of arts education for some kids. "Parents are under so much pressure to try and make sure their kids are keeping up with their math and reading skills that those other foundational subjects like music and art could end up forgotten."

She advises parents to allow traditional learning to take place in scheduled virtual classes but to try and make sure they are leaving space for creativity at other times in their busy days. "Cook together, sing, paint a picture, make a model, just have fun together!" she says.

She recommends [eat2explore](#), a subscription box that contains treats from countries around the world, a shopping list, a cooking accessory, and a recipe for families to cook and eat together.

Other gifts that help kids to exercise their creative muscles include [Guide Dots](#), another subscription box that teaches kids how to draw. Online instruction is provided using strategically placed dots bridging kids from amateur to talented young artists, helping to improve their drawing skills over time.

RELATED: [16 Virtual After-School Programs to Keep Kids Engaged When the Learning Day is Done](#)

Mindfulness Tools to De-Stress

Samantha Obinna is a children's yoga teacher and says that it's essential to remember the psychological impact of the huge change our children have endured this year. She suggests parents remember to set aside time each day to consider their child's mental health and wellness. "You can do this just by having a cuddle and a chat at the end of the day or more formally with a yoga and meditation practice," she says.

She also encourages parents to create a "wellness box" of resources kids can use if they feel overwhelmed or sad. "I always put a warming compress inside, some relaxing music, or a calming roll-on essential oil." Try the original [Magic Bag Warmy Friends](#), cute animal companions that have inserts inside that can be warmed in the microwave or put in the freezer on hot days.

"Try to remember that even though kids are learning at home, they sometimes might still need a day off," she says.

Advertisement