

Problems with home learning

AT this time last year, SPM students were busy preparing for this major examination. Numerous seminars were being conducted to provide tips, spot questions and short notes to put the students on top of their studies, and motivational speakers were engaged to keep their spirits up. Parents also bought lots of revision workbooks for their children to do at home.

Simply put, it was a busy month preparing for the examination.

But this year, all is quiet. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, schools have been closed until the year-end holidays and classes are now held online.

I conducted a survey among students who told me of the few months they had attended school in 2020. Their parents are worried over how their children would cope with the SPM examination with so little preparation.

Parents are not trained teachers, but due to the closure of schools, they have to ensure that their children not only attend the online classes but also supervise them in their studies and assignments.

This ultimately involves disciplining their children, which could lead to child abuse. In cases where



Photo: Bloomberg

parents are not familiar with the subjects their children are learning, they might become frustrated and take this out on the latter.

I have also spoken to a number of parents and most admitted that they find their new role challenging. Some who have children in primary school say getting their children to study in the new normal is an effort.

It's mostly mothers who supervise their children's online lessons. But for households in which both

parents are working, either at home or in the office, the situation is worse.

The present routine for parents is to wake the children up in the morning in time for the classes and make sure they take part in the lessons, pay attention and do their homework.

The bigger challenge is for parents with children in secondary school. Most of these students are linked to their friends and play online games till the wee hours of

the morning. For them, getting up for their classes requires much effort. Their parents now have to force them to go to bed early and wake up in time for classes in the morning. Some parents have faced hostile situations when dealing with their children who refuse to reduce their time playing games.

What can parents do? Some are quarrelling daily with their children. In this case, I feel sorry for single parents who have to struggle to put food on the table and manage their unruly children at the same time.

While the future remains uncertain due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we as a society must prepare for new ways to adapt to the situation and come together to support each other.

Suriana Welfare Society has set up a Telehealth service to help parents cope with their physical and medical health needs. We are now extending our services to children as well. Call 1300 88 2200 during office hours if you need our assistance.

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