

# Suddenly, We Are Teachers

*Fabiola Santos*

**BEFORE YOU READ:** Tell a story (from your own experience or not) about supporting school-age children during the pandemic.

## A New Full-Time Job

I am a parent of three children in grades three, five, and six. The remote school was hard for my family. We had to teach our children, and we were not prepared for it. It takes a lot of time to watch children while they are in school at home. It was a full-time job!

## Tablets, the Internet, and Zoom

Each child needed their own tablet for online school. At first, we didn't have any tablets. The kids had to use my phone. But it was only one phone for three kids. The city started providing tablets to families. I filled out an application, and the city sent me three tablets.

It was good for each child to have their own tablet. However, there were other problems. I live in a basement apartment where the internet is not strong. I was sometimes running from child to child when they lost internet access.

There were other challenges too. It was hard for my son to focus on his tablet. He got distracted. I spent a lot of time trying to keep him focused on school. The little one wanted to learn her lessons, but she needed a lot of help. Fortunately, my oldest daughter didn't need much help. She is a very responsible. But sometimes, she missed school because she couldn't get on to Zoom. She felt upset. I tried to help her. I called the teacher.

## Helping Other Families

Many parents had to work. Many parents did not know about how to use tablets or how to connect to the internet. They needed to buy internet access. It was even harder if they could not speak English. I tried to help them. I helped them apply



for tablets. I was a volunteer in my kids' school, so many parents knew me.

The worst thing about remote school is that, in my opinion, the children don't learn as much as they do in regular school. As a parent, I believe school is important for my children and for all the children in our community. I worked hard to make sure the children kept getting their education during the year of the pandemic.

**AFTER YOU READ:** Fabiola says that parenting three kids at home in remote school was a full-time job. Write a job description for someone in this role. Draw from her experience and your own if you like.

---

*Fabiola Santos is from Mexico. She is an ESOL student at We Make the Road/New York in New York City.*