Tips for caregivers of K-5 students, from the Stanford Project on Adaptation and Resilience in Kids (SPARK)

1. **LEARNING SPACE**
   - Find a space in your home that can be used every day for distance learning.
   - If the space is shared, create a cardboard or cloth separation to minimize noise and distractions.
   - Offer your child the chance to decorate this space to feel welcoming (draw a sign, bring a favorite pillow, etc.).
   - Make sure the space includes essential learning materials. Ask teachers for help.

2. **DAILY SCHEDULE**
   - Understand what teachers expect from your child. Email, call, or text to clarify.
   - Write a simple list of activities that your child needs to complete each day.
   - Include breaks for snacks, physical activity, wiggles or stretches, and free choice time. Younger children will need more breaks.
   - Encourage your child to decorate the schedule and post it in their space.
   - Revise to fit your family’s needs. Be flexible.

3. **PREDICTABLE ROUTINE**
   - Start early when your child is rested.
   - Review the daily schedule and make sure your child understands it (e.g., first you will..., then you can ...).
   - Help your child build independence (e.g., learn to prepare their own snack, troubleshoot computer problems).
   - Let your child know when and how they can ask for help.
   - Keep regular sleep times.

4. **GOALS & PROGRESS**
   - Together with your child, set behavioral expectations and review them daily.
   - Set goals and timelines that your child can complete. It’s about progress, not perfection.
   - Teach your child to use a timer to stay focused for a period of time. Start small!
   - Mark daily progress (even not-so-good days) with stickers, pennies, pebbles, etc.
   - Use your child’s favorite activities as rewards for showing effort and progress.

5. **MANAGING FRUSTRATIONS**
   - Use simple calming strategies: counting to 10, taking deep breaths, a short break.
   - Help your child describe the problem and express their feelings (I feel ..., when ...).
   - Together, come up with a potential solution and connect it to previously set expectations.
   - Explain how the child’s behavior is linked to consequences. Set gentle and firm limits.
   - Assume that everyone is trying their best. Be kind to yourself. Be patient with others.
   - Ask teachers and others for help.

6. **CLOSENESS & CONNECTION**
   - Start each day with a brief joyful experience: a fun greeting, song, dance.
   - Create opportunities for your child to be helpful (e.g., household chores, cooking prep, read to siblings).
   - Each day, try to connect with your child without any distractions. Highlight positive experiences. If you have time, do an activity together that the child selects.
   - Create opportunities for your child to share their worries, and provide reassurance.