Distance Learning for Early Learners

OW and CCS

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CONSIDERATIONS AS YOU ESTABLISH YOUR PROGRAM

Pre-K:
- The distance learning goals are primarily to maintain relationships with students and families and to provide resources for families to continue student learning.

Kindergarten:
- The goal is to present a unified amount of work, using consistent tools and resources across the school. Start small and slow.

Grades 1 and 2:
- Consider a daily email checklist with instructions for resources
- Explain in a post or video to parents how to use any hardcopy materials that are sent home
- Establish office hours each day for time to reach out to families, including time slots for families to sign up to communicate

Schedules:
- Provide sample schedules for parents to use with students that use in a format similar to a regular school day to help with the transition
- Make a schedule for yourself and include break times!
- Collaborate with other teachers your students have when making these
- For students, you can use a visual layout and/or color code schedules to show what things are required and what things are optional

RESOURCES

Free web-based and/or app-based learning, in no particular order
- **List of free educational apps currently available**
- **List of Children's Museums offering virtual tours for free**
- **Google Classroom**
  An all-purpose online classroom platform where you can organize materials, track attendance and progress, and communicate with families
- **Classtag**
  Effective tool for parent-teacher communication
  Available in many languages
- **Seesaw**
  Students use creative tools to take pictures, draw, record videos and more to capture learning in a portfolio. Teachers find or create activities to share with students.
- **I Know It**
  Online math for elementary students
  Can assign individual lessons to each student and/or class
- **Happy Numbers**
  Primarily game-based, Happy Numbers serves as an independent math center, providing individualized instruction
- **IXL**
  IXL is personalized learning. With a comprehensive K-12 curriculum, individualized guidance, and real-time analytics, IXL meets the unique needs of each learner.
- **Raz-Kids**
  Reading resources for K-5 students, including leveling charts and other assessment tools
      Raz Plus includes and ELL edition of comprehensive reading supports
- **Vooks**
  A streaming library of animated children's books
- **ABC mouse**
  Variety of lessons in phonics, math, social studies, art and more
  Designed for students aged 2-8, many activities and games
- **ABCya**
  Learning games and apps starting with Pre-K
- **Starfall**
  Games, movies, and books for Pre-K through 3rd
- **Fluency and Fitness**
  3 weeks free
  Combines math and reading fluency with exercises through video clips
- **BrainPopJr.**
  Site that creates online animated curriculum-based content that is aligned to state education standards
- **Splash Learn**
  Math practice games for students K-5

- **Freckle**
  Differentiated instruction across subjects
- **Lalilo**
  Adapted phonics and comprehension K-12
  Free for all students
  Need to do a quick assessment for placement
- **Gonoodle**
  Movement and mindfulness videos for students

Resource-Specific questions:

Q: Can families ask questions to you via Classtag?
A: Yes, there are many different settings for private questions to teacher, selective groups, forums etc

Q: What if families have any issues signing up for google classroom?
A: Consider what paper materials you have already been using in the classroom, and check in with your director or team about how you will support families without internet access. It is a good idea to have workbooks and other items prepared in case you or parents run into technical problems.
Here is a brief tutorial on Google Classroom.

Q: Do you have a phone/tablet app for students to draw/edit on documents? I use Notability but it costs money.
A: Look into Seesaw, and other options that your district might be using already, ask your school's IT person or principal. Seesaw Plus has a 90 day free trial, but even with the free membership, students can draw or write on assignments and then take pictures or submit them to the teacher.
Here is a brief Seesaw tutorial

Q: Can you do a live morning meeting on See Saw or send a Zoom link on See Saw?
A: You can send a zoom link on Seesaw. Morning meeting will be a google meeting.
Here are instructions for How to use Zoom for Online Learning.

Q: What's the difference between SeeSaw family and SeeSaw class?
A: SeeSaw class is what you as an educator would use, and then you invite families to join the class via SeeSaw family.

Q: Does SeeSaw have a translation feature for families that are not most comfortable with English?
A: Some apps are available to translate information--ClassTag offers many different language options for families.

FAQS

**Q: Can you discuss "option overload" in preparing materials for students?
I read an article recommending simplicity. Coming from a Montessori perspective in particular, I want to structure the choices I offer students.**
A: As distanced instruction begins, expect very little initially, and try to extend patience and sympathy. Do not bombard families right away, start small. Remember that there is much learning to be done in daily routines and chores (cooking, setting the table, etc).

Q: What is considered an appropriate amount of screen time learning for Kindergarten? How many tools should we be asking students and parents to learn?
A: One strategy is to simulate the amount of learning that is present in the classroom as much as possible. Try to limit the amount of additional screen time you are requesting of students/families. Some districts use a program of phasing in work week by week. Starting with 5-15 minutes of instruction in one subject, teachers are adding one additional subject per week. The final expectation (4 weeks later) might look like 20-30 minutes a subject.
- Reduce the overwhelm from too many new technologies by locating links and apps in one main access point--like Google Classroom. That way the family only has to process the initial login.

Q: In balancing screen-time, what about students that live in apartments and can't get outside much?
A: If kids have windows, they can be looking for migrating birds or clouds. Make notes on the weather. Focusing on outdoors is still possible from within the apartment. In conjunction with assigning outdoor time, think about sensory activities they can do:
- Find something in nature that matches every color in their crayon box.
- Use an egg carton and collect textures that match the words: hard, soft, scratchy, pokey...etc.
- Have them journal x number things they see that relates to spring...etc.

Q: How can we navigate the new challenges of distanced instruction, while also parenting our own children and personally navigating this transition?
A: Check-in with yourself about pacing and how overwhelmed you feel. If you are in a leadership position, consider relaxation activities for teachers and staff. Understand that your students will feel considerable cognitive overload also. Keep in mind that the work you have been tasked with is no ordinary challenge, and the pace of this transition provides an added stressor. If a staff member struggles with a particular technology, consider how you might work together to share the burden of different tasks.
For ideas on managing your time and responsibilities see Long Break Work Ideas or Covid-19 Planning at Home.

Q: If a family can not get online and is using paper-based work for their student's learning, how can we establish the required daily contact for attendance?

A: Your school or district will need to determine the policies and procedures for determining attendance in a distance learning environment to ensure access/communication with all families. Refer to [guidance from MDE](#) to clarify best practices.

Q: If you have students without email access, are you dropping paper-based work off at the school on Monday morning? How will that work be distributed, assessed and collected?
A: Some schools put out a survey asking what things families need--food, internet, devices, technical troubleshooting etc. to assess what supports are actually needed.
Consider preparing material that could be printed out ahead of time, such as workbooks and packets to be distributed to families as supplements or in place of online learning. Your district might use paraprofessionals, busses, or other tools to ensure each student has access to learning materials.

Q: Any resources for Spanish Class that Pre-K and 2 grade that you can recommend?
A: [Classtag](#) offers options for communication in many languages. See the Resource List in this document for information about BrainPOP ELL and Raz-Plus as well, offering materials for English Language Learners.

Q: How do you plan to grade when they are doing things in the workbook at home?
A: Several of the apps/resources on the Resource list allow students to take pictures of work and post them online. You can also instruct parents to save hard copies of work done on paper, and determine a plan with your school for how that work will be collected and assessed.