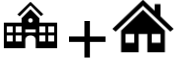











Supporting Your Child with Blended Learning



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The events of the past year have brought many unexpected and new challenges to children and their families. We want to recognize the hard work that you have done to care for and teach your children. As we move forward into a new school year, you will likely be continuing to support your children with their social-emotional and educational needs through a remote learning (fully at home) or blended learning (some time at home, some time at school) model.



What is blended learning?

Blended learning is when a child has some days where they attend school and some days where the learning happens remotely. As we develop new ways of learning due to COVID-19, the NYCDOE will be planning for blended learning models, with the option of fully remote learning if families choose. Below are two definitions for the types of remote learning that will be used in both the blended and fully remote models.

- **Synchronous learning** means that live instruction is provided through a device, such as a computer or tablet that your child participates in. This may include a video chat where a teacher reads a story and asks your child questions or where your child participates in a large group activity such as a morning meeting.
- **Asynchronous learning** means that instruction is provided through pre-recorded lessons, learning platforms, and/or hands-on experiences that you and your child can explore on your own. This may include an art project, building together, or storytelling.

These times can be stressful for everyone. This document can help families and caregivers navigate this new way of educating young children. Families know their children best, and are their child's first teacher. Therefore, we encourage you to continue to do what you know is best for your child and your family.

This guide has strategies to help you with the remote learning and blended learning process. We understand your needs and availability may change throughout the year, so work with your child's teacher to create a schedule for remote learning that works for your family.



Create a consistent routine

Children thrive with predictability. Being able to anticipate what is going to happen provides them with a sense of safety, can relieve anxiety, and supports transitions. Things to consider when creating a routine:

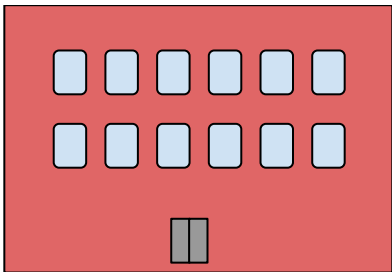
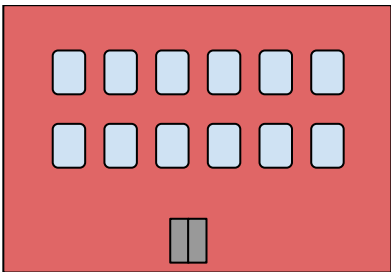
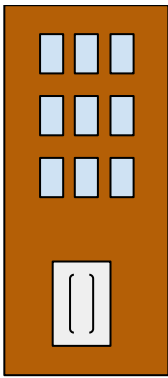
- Create a routine that is predictable and that works for your family.
- Consider making a simple visual schedule to support your child's understanding of what to expect. (See page 4 for examples)
- Prepare children for a change in a routine. Before the change happens, provide 1-2 reminders about the upcoming change.




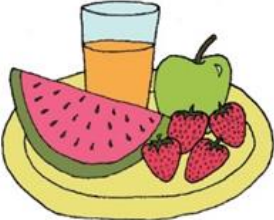

Sample visual schedules

Creating visual schedules will help your child understand what they can expect each day. If your child is participating in a blended learning model, it will be helpful to have a schedule so that they know when they will be going to school and when they will be staying home. When your child is participating in remote learning, schedules can support the learning process by giving them a visual of what to anticipate, such as when it will be time for synchronous learning, asynchronous learning, mealtimes, rest, etc. There are examples of visual schedules below. Please feel free to use these examples as models or create your own.

School Day Schedule

Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
 <p>School Day</p>	 <p>School Day</p>	 <p>Home Day</p>

Home Schedule

Before	Now	After
 <p>Morning Meeting</p>	 <p>Snack</p>	 <p>Play Time</p>





Playing with your child

Playing with your child is a way of supporting their learning at home. It can provide an opportunity to connect and communicate with your child in new ways. Your child's teaching team will provide you with some ideas that can build on classroom learning, but children learn through all types of play. So, the more often they are playing during the day, the more they are learning.



Play helps children learn by:

- Providing a way to communicate feelings, thoughts and experiences.
- Supporting children in practicing and developing new problem solving skills.
- Giving opportunities to test ideas or theories.
- Creating opportunities for language development.

When play is meaningful, children have a better chance of processing new information. Back and forth interactions with a trusted adult during play or everyday interactions can teach new ideas and support language development.

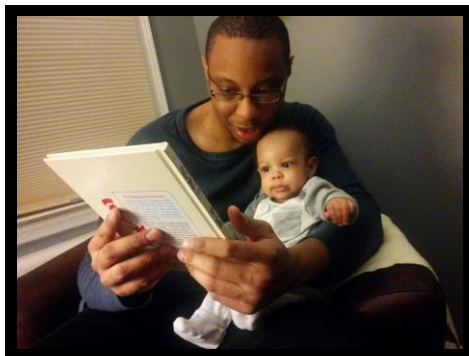
Strategies to support learning through play:

- Play with your child in your home language.
- Play and learning can happen in everyday activities (bath time, cooking, laundry, etc.), so involve your child whenever you can.
- Talk to your child about what you notice they are doing (e.g. "I see that you are stacking the boxes.>").
- Ask open-ended questions. Open-ended questions have no defined answer and extend the learning that is happening. This way of asking questions gives children the opportunity to say whatever they are thinking or develop new ways of thinking (e.g. "I wonder what will happen if you put one more box on top?").
- Build on learning that is happening in your child's program at home, when possible (e.g. if the classroom is working on "What is in my community?" take a walk through your neighborhood and talk about what you see.).
- Share what you are doing at home with your child's teaching team, so the teaching team can be part of the remote learning process and continue to get to know you and your child.



Reading or oral storytelling

Reading or telling a child a story can be a special time to connect. During remote learning you may be asked to read, tell your child a story, or support your child as their teacher does a read aloud.



Strategies to support with storytelling:

- Stories can be shared through reading a book or oral storytelling.
- Go through the pictures before reading the story and talk with your child about what they notice.
- Ask a few brief questions to check for meaning during the story (e.g. “Why do you think the girl was feeling nervous?”).
- Enjoy stories multiple times as your child is interested. This allows for deeper understanding.
- Help your child predict what will happen next (e.g. “I wonder where the girl is going to go now?”).
- Check in at the end of the story. Consider asking questions such as “What was your favorite part?” and “Why do you think they did that?”
- When your child shows interest in the printed word, make connections between how a word looks and how it sounds.
- Share your favorite story. If you love a story, chances are your child will, too!

Partnering with teaching teams

Whether you choose a fully remote learning model for your child or a blended learning format, partnering with your child’s teaching team is key to meaningful learning. Staying in close contact with your child’s teaching team will help bridge the learning between school and home as well as keep your child feeling connected to their program. An ongoing connection can take many forms. Discuss with the teaching team about the way of communication that will work best for you, such as email or phone. If your child has an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) you will also want to connect with the providers (e.g. speech therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists) who support your child.





Setting up for learning at home

During the remote learning process your child's teaching team will be suggesting hands-on learning activities to do at home.



Here are some things to consider when doing these activities:

- Everything your child needs to learn at home is already there! Use household materials to support your child's learning such as kitchen items, clothes or fabric for dress-up, writing materials, recycled and natural materials, or collections such as buttons, bottle caps, clothespins, etc.
- Allow your child to explore in places where they are already comfortable. This will lend itself to the learning process. You do not have to create a classroom in your home or outside; children learn best where they feel familiar and safe.



Bridging home learning to the classroom

It is important for teaching teams to be aware of the learning that is happening remotely. This will help them make connections for your child's learning and give a more well-rounded picture of how your child is learning. Bridging remote learning to the classroom will also give your child opportunities to remain connected to the classroom, peers, and teaching teams.

- Share photos and videos of your child at play with your child's teaching team.
- Share your child's artwork, buildings, discoveries, etc. with your child's teaching team.
- Ask for technical support when needed. Your child's teaching team is a resource for you if you need help with remote learning. If you need additional support with technology, please fill out [this form](#).
- While participating in synchronous or asynchronous learning, your child may be quiet, or simply want to observe during the sessions, and this is okay.
- When you are available, sit with your child during synchronous learning sessions and engage with them as they play.
- Share ongoing feedback with the teaching team about what is or is not working for your family.
- Inform teaching teams of any relevant information that may impact your child's learning, such as change in schedules, illness, losses, etc.





Supporting your child's and family's social and emotional wellbeing



These are challenging times for adults and children. It is essential that we consider how children are feeling during these times, as well as ourselves. Children and grownups alike feel a range of emotions and as the adults in their lives, it is our job to first recognize our feelings and help them understand their emotions. It is also important that we communicate to children that all of their feelings are valid.



Learning about emotions

Young children are beginning to learn about understanding their emotions. Through practice and adult support, children can begin to label their feelings and find ways to express them appropriately. For information about helping your child in learning how to express their emotions, please see [here](#).

Adults can support children's understanding of emotions in these ways:

- Help them begin to understand feeling words, such as happy, sad, frustrated and scared by naming the emotion for them (e.g. "It looks like you are excited! I wonder what you are excited about.").
- Teach them how they can express feelings. Consider saying "It looks like you are feeling really angry. When you feel angry you can push on the wall" or "It looks like you are feeling sad. When you feel sad you can ask for a hug or get your favorite toy."

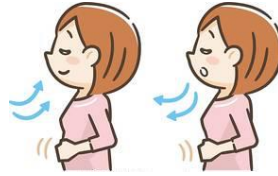
Strategies for children and families

Deep Breathing

- Deep breathing can help relieve anxiety. Doing this with your child can relieve stress for you and your child.
- With your child, choose a place where you can each go for a quiet moment alone.
- Invite your child to place their hand on their belly and take several deep breaths. Model your own deep belly breathing, and name the breath as it goes in and out.
- Help them to notice where in their body they feel their breath.
- Start with 5-10 breaths, and check in with your child on what that was like.



- You may also consider dimming the lights and playing quiet music to create a calm and quiet atmosphere.



Focus on things you like to do:

- Talk to your child about things they like to do. This can help bring on positive emotions (i.e. going to the park together, enjoying the sunshine, or being with your family).
- Talk to your child about it and share with each other all the reasons why you like it.



Strategies for families

Reframe the narrative and redirect your thoughts, when possible. Sometimes we can get caught in a pattern of thinking that does not support us in the moment. Even the simplest redirection of a thought can help us see a situation in a new way.

Consider these examples of reframing your thinking:

- Turn “they always do that” into “I wonder what they’re struggling with” or “maybe this isn’t about me.”
- Turn “I can’t believe they did that” into “maybe they don’t yet have the skills to ____.”
- Turn “the train is late again” into “I am really enjoying this music I’m listening to.”
- Try to find something positive, no matter how small.

Use self-talk to calm down. Self-talk is when you are speaking to yourself either in your mind or aloud. Using positive or reaffirming language can help you when feelings of stress or worry arise.

Consider these examples of self-talk:

- This is scary, but I am safe.
- I am figuring this out because I am capable.
- This is hard, but I can do it.



+ Additional resources

Below are additional resources that you may find helpful. There are book recommendations, at home play activities, parent resources and technology suggestions. To reach these resources click on the links found at the beginning of the description.



Books

- [Books for Topics](#): This website will provide specific book recommendations based on a topic. Click on the topic that you are interested in and it will provide which books to consider and places you may find them.
- [Units of Study Book List](#): This pre-K book list has recently been updated to reflect the diverse population we serve in NYC. This list accompanies the pre-K curricular resource, Units of Study, but can also be used as a resource for families and caregivers when looking to find new books.

At home play activities

- [Fun With Feelings](#): Fun with Feelings cards are a playful way for you to help your child learn about and manage feelings together. This resource is now available for families to download and use at home!
- [Learn at Home](#): Children love to play - anytime, anywhere, and with almost anything! As they play, they're learning about the world around them and practicing important skills. Pick from this list of activities based on the materials you have and your child's interests to support their play and learning.
- [Let's Play!](#) This resource offers play-based ideas in areas like dramatic play, art, music, movement, math, writing, and storytime to help you plan for your child's remote and blended learning day. You can use these as a starting point to create your own meaningful and age-appropriate activities.
- [Spring Into Learning](#): Look here for a full week's worth of activity ideas broken down by age group and theme.





Parent resources

- [All the Way to K and Beyond](#): Talking together with your child helps prepare them for learning and school. Use the resources below to keep conversations going all day. Download colorful posters with activities for children ages birth to five in English and Spanish!
- [Boston Basics Toolkit](#): Watch videos and read tips to help maximize love, manage stress, and explore through movement and play, among many other important skills for children from birth through age three. Remember, 80% of brain growth happens in the first three years of life; seize the opportunity!
- [Growing Up NYC](#): Growing Up NYC is a mobile-friendly website that makes it simple for families to learn about age-appropriate milestones and activities, as well as to access City programs and services available through government agencies and community partners in English and in Spanish. You can also check out [NYCDOE's special page](#) dedicated to resources for families with young children.



- [Let's Learn NYC!](#): This educational public television program, produced by WNET/THIRTEEN and the DOE, airs from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. through August 28. Episodes focus on foundational reading and writing skills, mathematics, social studies, and science for children in 3-K through second grade. You can also livestream the episodes at thirteen.org/live.
- [Nurturing Learning Series](#): Learn how infant, toddler, and preschool brains are growing, and what caregivers can say and do to nurture their learning.
- [Playing to Learn](#): Deepen your understanding of the importance of play, including different types of social play, like solitary play and onlooker play.
- [Resources for Early Learning](#): Discover quick, fun, low-cost activities you can do with your preschooler or toddler, grouped by theme, skill, and age.
- [Talk. Play. Read!](#): Every day, there are fun and easy ways to help your child build a lifelong love of reading. Here are tips for reading with your 3-K and pre-K child. Find other languages [here](#).
- [Talking is Teaching](#): It may not always be easy to talk to babies, especially when they can't talk back. Look here for fun tips and resources grounded in the best science, to help you talk, read, and sing with your child every day. Check out the new indoor activities kit!



- [The Developing Child](#): When caregivers are sensitive and responsive to a young child's signals and needs, they provide an environment rich in serve and return experiences. Learn about the best ways to have fun back-and-forth experiences with your child.
- [Zero to Three](#): During the first three years of life, emotionally nourishing relationships lay the foundation for lifelong health and well-being. Zero-to-Three supports the caring adults who touch the lives of infants and toddlers to support healthy and positive development.

Technology suggestions & help

- [Ready4K Family Engagement Curriculum](#): The NYCDOE is excited to offer you Ready4K, a **FREE** resource for helping your child stay on track with their learning goals. You will receive three texts/week tailored to support your child's growth, plus self-care ideas, because parental health is key! We will also send you local resources to help you find the right support when you need it. To sign up, [click this link](#) or text "NYC" to 70138.



- [Sparkler Play for Parenting](#): This app offers play-based learning activities and ideas for off-screen play to grow children's hearts, minds, bodies, and words. **Use code 2-1-2-1 to register**, which will give your family free access to Sparkler.



- [Technical Support for Families](#): Do you need help with DOE devices and applications, such as Google Classroom? [Fill out this form](#) to get help from our Service Desk!

