

Prekindergarten Distance Learning Guidance

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Ideas for consideration when developing distance learning plans for Prekindergarten aged children

There is no online equivalent to preschool (NAEYC, 2012). This means that interaction between children, adults, and carefully chosen materials is the way that young children learn best. These ideas should guide distance learning plans developed by districts. Additionally, consideration must be given to who the adult in charge of a preschool child will be during a distance learning day, as parents may need to work, and may be working from home during the COVID-19 outbreak. The designated adult may be an older sibling, a grandparent, a child care provider, a friend or neighbor. All distance learning activities need to take this into account when plans and guidance are created as this will impact the advance notification, preparation of materials, and role of the teacher.

Advance preparation and planning

Preparing for distance learning requires careful consideration of ways that distance learning is different for young learners since this age requires more adult guidance and support than older children. When others are sharing responsibility for learning, planning activities that are embedded in regular routines whenever possible may help ease the pressures caregivers are facing. Preparing requires pre-planning and communicating the activity plans; possibly providing materials; and developing a communication structure between the parents and the teacher during the distance learning period. The plan needs to be considered for accessibility and individual needs so that all children may have equitable experiences during the distance learning period. As the district forms a comprehensive plan that meets state requirements, it will be important that it appropriately consider needs of children and families that are specific to early learning.

Examples of approaches to appropriate distance learning experiences for young children:

Like a school day, distance learning experiences should include activities like creative play, real-life exploration, physical activity, outdoor experiences, story time, conversation, and social interactions that are important for children's development. Any technology and media should be used to support learning goals established for young children and not as a sequestered activity. Guidance on the appropriate use of technology and interactive media in early childhood can be found in the National Association of Young Children's (NAEYC) [position statement](#).

Role of the teacher: The teacher is instrumental in the advance planning and communication of the distance learning day for the students. Guidance for that is provided below. During the distance learning day, at a minimum, the teacher will need to provide students with access to appropriate educational material and ensure they receive daily interaction with their licensed teacher(s). If the district has interactive technology available to all students, teachers could set up specific times for interaction with or between students, depending on the technology used. Teachers could also set times or let parents schedule 1:1 times with the teacher and the child and/or parent. The types of interactions selected, may depend on the length of scheduled distance learning period.

Sample activity guides for parents and caregivers: The following ideas are examples of ways to organize activities that could be used with preschool children on distance learning:

Teacher Posted Lesson Plans: Teachers will share a lesson plan that can be completed and documented by the child with the parent or caregiver. The district will use a prescribed method for sharing and collecting these documents. This format may include some of the interactive teacher time described above.

Activity Bags: Activities can be prepared and shared with parents. There can be one “Activity Bag” per distance learning day posted to the district website. Examples for a prekindergarten class might include these kinds of activities:

- Write your name 5 times on this piece of paper.
- Walk around your house and copy 5 words from things you see.
- Count as high as you can three times. Have your parent write down the number each time you count on this paper and sign it when you are finished.
- Find 5 toys and line them up from biggest to smallest.
- Use the same 5 toys and sort them in a way that you choose.
- Find something that you would like to do by yourself or with someone who is with you. Play for 20 minutes. (Ideas: building with blocks, working with playdough, pretend play, or cleaning something up)
- Read a book with someone who is with you (This could be a book sent home from school). Tell the person the story again using the pictures.
- Help set the table for lunch, help make lunch or help clean-up after lunch
- Dance to some music, sing a song or play an instrument.
- Draw a picture of something that you liked doing today.
- Go outside and play for at least 20 minutes.

Activity Matrix: The matrix below provides additional activity ideas aligned with Early Childhood Indicators of Progress. These can help in planning to ensure learning goals continue to be met. Consider how you will allow flexibility in choice based on the child’s needs, interests and activity level. While at the same time recommending that an activity(s) from each section is addressed during the distance learning day or time frame.

Choose a variety of activities from the areas below. Make sure that the child has time to independently choose some activities that they can do by themselves or with a small group of siblings or peers. (NOTE TO SCHOOL: This can be customized to align with current developmental and curricular goals within your school).

Literacy and Language	Math, Science, and Art	Physical Large and Fine Motor Activities	Social and Emotional Learning
<p>Oral Language: Expand vocabulary to communicate needs, wants and with one another</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask each other questions; strive for five exchanges • Look at something and describe it to each other • Engage in dramatic or imaginative play with dolls, hats, action figures, or other make-believe props • Tell your child a story from your childhood • Look at family photos; talk about who is pictured and what was taking place 	<p>Math: Make sense of numbers and mathematical concepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match items that look alike (A basket of socks works great) • Find patterns in fabrics of a shirt or the way you set the table or in the way blocks are arranged • Use different objects to measure the length of something. Possible objects include: shoes, spoons, blocks, etc. and compare the numbers • Use mathematical language such as more and less or big and small or long and short • Look for geometric shapes in the environment; find circles, squares and rectangles in everyday items • Survey members of the family/group and find out how many like ____ then report the data 	<p>Large Motor: Use large muscles to move with purpose to catch and throw, and to climb, run and gallop. Play outdoors at least 20 minutes per day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play with balls, hoops, bean bags, etc. • Practice running, hopping, skipping and galloping • Dig in the dirt, sand or rocks • Use pedal toys on the driveway 	<p>Social Skills With Others: Practice skills needed to get along with others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take turns with toys and in conversation • “Read” the emotions of characters in a book. Ask, “How do you think he is feeling? How do you know?” • Play make believe and share decisions about what happens next • Practice caring for stuffed toy animals; help the child show care and concern • Practice waiting for short periods of time before it is the child’s turn to talk or their turn for a toy • Work with the child to make a trade for toys that are in high demand

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<p>Reading: interact with books and story-reading experiences, to build initial concepts of print and early comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read books together; talk about the scenery, the characters and the storyline • Read a book and guess what will happen before you get to the end • Look for real life connections to what is taking place in the book • Let your child look at books independently • Watch a video link sent or suggested by the school talk with your child as you watch it • Act out or retell simple stories like The Three Bears • Experiment with sounds and rhymes by singing and telling rhymes 	<p>Science: Observe, ask questions and experiment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bake something together; observe how the ingredients change as they are mixed • Look at something closely and draw a picture of it • Observe differences in plants and trees • Make a ramp and roll cars or other round objects down. Mark where they end to see which goes the farthest. Guess why • Put ice cubes in a bowl and predict how long it will take to melt. Check on it periodically and observe progress 	<p>Large Motor: Use large muscles to move with purpose to catch and throw, and to climb, run and gallop.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jump or step across a piece of tape or rope on the floor • Place chairs and pillows around the room; practice stepping, jumping or crawling over, under and around • Throw a light weight scarf in the air and catch it • Use a soft ball and liter bottle to bowl • Throw balled up socks into a laundry basket • Pretend to be various animals and imitate how they move - slither like a snake 	<p>Managing Emotions and Behaviors: manage thoughts, feelings and actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice deep breaths or counting to ten when upset • Talk about feelings; your own, the child's and of those around you • Use a variety of words to indicate intensity like "frightened" or "really scared"

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<p>Writing: initial attempts at writing as to scribble and draw with various tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide writing materials such as crayons, markers and pencils • Try writing on a variety of surfaces like newspaper, cardboard and junk mail • Encourage writing for a reason such as a note to a friend, make a list of things to do and pretending to take an order at a restaurant 	<p>Art: artistic expression through painting, drawing, making music, dancing, pretend play, photography, and building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paint with paints, water or in the bathtub with shaving cream • Talk about the shapes, lines and colors used in drawings and paintings • Converse with the child about creative aspects of a child's dance, made up song or building • Make a 3-D sculpture using tape, newspaper, and other found materials 	<p>Fine Motor: use muscles of hands and fingers to feed and dress themselves and use drawing, writing, and other tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put puzzles together • Practice zipping and buttoning • String necklaces • Assist in putting items of clothing on and taking them off • Help pick up and put away toys • Practice using utensils at meal time • Use various blunt kitchen tools to make prints in playdough 	<p>Building Relationships: interact cooperatively with others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play simple board games like Candy Land • Play simple card games like Go Fish, Concentration and Old Maid • Write notes to those you can't visit • Call a friend or loved one and ask them a question; really listen to the answer