

Options for Staff Who May Need Reassignment

4/28/20

During this time of COVID-19 school/program closures, normal routines and roles have been interrupted as staff develop new ways of interacting with each other, children and parents, guardians, and caregivers to deliver instruction. Staff members have a wide range of expertise and abilities that may be used strategically while schools are engaged in distance learning activities. The ideas listed in this document include ways that staff knowledge and skills may be leveraged to:

- a) Create meaningful activities that promote quality educational experiences for children and families during distance learning due to school closure, and
- b) Reflect on current practices and make decisions that build quality practices in the future.

Support District and Community COVID-19 Outreach Services

- Adequately staff and support the child care program for essential workers and/or allow staff to support community-based essential worker child care programs.
- Assist in food preparation and delivery/distribution of meals to children and families who might not be able to pick up the meal.
- Reach out to community partners to learn about services they are providing to children and families in order to inform families of resources (including but not limited to food insecurity, unemployment, and housing).
- Develop a survey (with support of others) that can be conducted via phone, email, or hard copy to help understand the experience of essential workers and their students in school-age care.

Help Connect with Students and Families

- Provide support and technical assistance for families unfamiliar with the technology used by the district, school or Head Start program.
- Provide support for ongoing or targeted communication with families.
- Work with mental health specialists to provide extra supports and outreach to high-need children.
- Develop creative ways for each classroom staff member to have ongoing contact with children.
- Develop and share personalized messages for students and families to celebrate special occasions.
- For multi-lingual families: develop personalized supports for families in their home language.
- Develop a survey (with support of others) that can be conducted via phone, email, or other form to help understand families' and students' experiences with distance learning.
- Respond individually to parent/family questions received during daily home-school interaction time and provide district, instructional and community resources information, including mental health, food, learning, etc.

- Connect with community based programs serving incoming kindergarteners and partner on activities to successfully transition children and families from one program to the next Include ways to stay in touch with families through the summer. [Click here for MDE's kindergarten transition page.](#)
- Conduct additional outreach to families with children for whom consistent attendance was a challenge (prior to COVID-19).
- Connect with children and families via phone, which is especially important for families who do not have devices or connectivity where they live. Connecting via phone can be a potentially low-tech way of connecting with students and can be an alternative to additional “screen time” to additional time on a technology device.

Enhance Instructional Tools and Resources

- Develop resource and activity games with instructions to be sent home (e.g., social-emotional, art, movement, science, math, language, etc.). A list of activities is also included in the Q & A document posted on the [MDE COVID-19 webpage.](#)
- Develop enhanced communication and targeted learning activities for children with identified individualized learning goals such as: curricular areas where child was not meeting age expectations (or exceeding age expectations), struggling with attendance, need mental health support, etc.
- Make activity bags (virtual or physical) that support distance learning (cleaning or quarantining those bags upon return could be another activity to manage).
- Teach a child and/or family how to play an educational board or card game.
- Make props that accompany a specific book reading or encourage retelling a story (i.e., a caterpillar, butterfly, and assorted foods for *The Hungry Caterpillar*).
- Record stories or activities (art, science, music) that can be shared with children and families.
- Host a live book reading, storytelling, or joke-telling session for children and families.
- For multi-lingual families: Interpret lessons or read books and record them in their home language on YouTube.
- Digitize and organize resources being developed for current and future use (e.g. make sure lesson plans are digital and accessible, classrooms have access to digital library, etc.)
- Conduct material and resource audit. For example, in Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE), providers must review the program periodically to assure the instruction and materials are not racially, culturally, or sexually biased.
- Create a learning resource lending library or system with families (ex: games like Crazy Eights, Sorry, and Twister).
- Create a way for families and community partners to send ideas for home activities that can be compiled and shared back with the community.
- Work with your community library to record story times that can be widely shared within the community.
- Use project-based learning approaches building on experiences from the children’s home settings- e.g. taking care of the chickens, making a cake, planting a garden, feeding the birds, building a fort, playing with a sibling, etc.

- Develop a template for parent/guardian feedback and teacher reflection to understand children's progress during distance learning.

Organize Professional Learning Opportunities

- Develop trainings and support resources, for technology platforms being used for distance learning (e.g., SeeSaw, Class DoJo, Facebook Live sessions).
- Host Professional Learning Communities (PLC) around different topics. [Visit MDE's professional development page.](#)
- Host Acknowledging the Role of Implicit Bias training using [Rosemarie Allen webinars available on this page](#) (scroll down to bottom to find webinar links).
- Review and/or establish [transition to kindergarten](#) plans using new MDE resources and [Office of Head Start resources](#). Help prepare children and their families for the next school year and devise plans, including contingency plans, which are responsive to current circumstances.
- Conduct a program audit that looks at current practices, staff professional development needs, and identifies supportive resources. Topics for consideration include: assessment and evaluation; English and native language learner practices; equity and anti-bias practices; parent engagement practices; professional learning practices established through the use of teacher-child interaction tools.
- Review child level assessment data collection, use, and reporting practices. Topics to consider are: the completeness of data being collected; reliability and validity of collection methods; redundancies in tools being used to collect and record data; and gaps in data collection.
- Review curriculum and work to align curricula (vertically, horizontally, align with parenting information/education); identify resources to support and extend curriculum
- Review curriculum and/or lesson plans and ensure that they have appropriately identified which Early Childhood Indicator of Progress (ECIP) or K-12 academic standard the activity or lesson covers
- Review parent-teacher conference materials to ensure that they are family friendly and available in the languages spoken by families from the school.
- Work on strategic plan, goals, develop specific strategies (align with district strategic plan and WBWF)
- Capture what you are learning from this period of school closure and refine or design services, classes, programs (home visiting), initiatives (better serving families experiencing homelessness, incarceration, etc.)
- Work with special education staff to ensure that distance learning activities meet the needs of students with IEPs (or are altered so that they do meet their needs).

Additional Ideas

- Organize work to send home.
- Develop sensory activities that can be done at home.
- Plan movement activities that can be done at home for a break. Create videos to demonstrate.
- Compile a list of online resources that can be sent home to families in categories to supplement activities (music, reading, movement, etc.) for parents/guardians needing additional supports.

- Write specific directions for the art projects (aligned with standards) developed by the teacher. Create a finished product and take a picture.
- Assist with uploading documents to online platform, if using one.
- Read and record books that will be utilized for courses.
- Read aloud and record any other content that will be used by teachers (tests, worksheets, etc.).
- Daily inspiration, quote, joke, or video to include in correspondence.
- Work with mental health team to provide extra supports and outreach to children with identified needs.
- Pick a functional skill and teach it. Create instructions (a written version and a picture version) so that teachers can use that to incorporate into other lessons. Record completing that functional skill.
- Create fun activity packets that support the learning standards (word searches, cross words, math sheets, etc.).
- Create mystery reader videos or general story time videos.
- Write notes to be sent home to children so they remember we care and are thinking of them.
- Schedule online “meet and greets” for check-ins to support learning and answer questions.
- Spend time learning the technology your school staff is using, help others learn as needed.
- Find supports for children to use technology or help with technology work-arounds.