



Reopening Washington Schools 2020: Early Learning Planning Guide

REOPENING WASHINGTON SCHOOLS 2020: DISTRICT EARLY LEARNING PLANNING GUIDE

2020

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LETTER FROM DR. KATHE TAYLOR, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

Dear Superintendents and School Leaders:

Districts routinely provide early learning services and opportunities, working in partnership with local community-based organizations, and...it's complicated.

Even the term "early learning" requires clarification. For the purposes of this planning guide, we are defining early learning as instruction and services provided to students 0–8 years of age in a K–12 setting. This span of years corresponds to our state's [early learning and development guidelines](#) and current law that requires students to begin schooling by age 8, and includes a variety of programs offered within K–12 schools, including developmental preschool, district-based Head Start and Early Childhood Education Assistance Programs (ECEAP), Transitional Kindergarten, programs that serve children of parenting teens, and students in grades K–3. Statewide, thousands of children are "early learners" in K–12 schools.

Embedded within these recommendations are the commitments that the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction has repeatedly surfaced in our guidance documents: supporting students furthest from educational justice, preparing for health and safety, investing in connectivity, and leveraging local expertise. Similarly, the guiding principles presented in the [Continuous Learning 2020](#) document published in early spring 2020 will be evident, as well: keep students at the center, design learning for equity and access, and assess student learning.

Several stakeholder groups helped us think about key early learning themes that will apply whether learning happens remotely, face-to-face, or in a hybrid model this fall. These themes are at the same time obvious and profound:

1. Young Children Have Unique Needs
2. Families are Children's First and Most Important Teachers
3. Early Learning is a Network of Cross-Sector Partnerships

Young children require more than smaller chairs and tables. Skills that come easily to "big kids" are still new and in process for little ones. Washington has invested in many resources to understand students' early growth and development, most notably through the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS), a kindergarten transition process which engages families, observes and documents students' entering strengths, and creates a bridge for collaboration with community-based organizations and child care settings. Developmental progressions identified from birth through third grade are available to K–3 teachers through resources associated with the kindergarten assessment—please ask your kindergarten teachers to share these resources!

Washington statute recognizes the importance of partnering with families by designating three school days for teachers and families to meet at the beginning of the kindergarten year.

Opportunities for connection will be even more important as teachers and families navigate school structures that will be new to everyone this fall. Schools may even want to consider extending the “Family Connection” component of WaKIDS to other grades.

Now more than ever, schools and districts need to build on their relationships with community organizations to address the needs of families to negotiate school schedules that may be different from the traditional five-day, face-to-face setting. As families and school staff balance instruction and learning with working inside and outside the home, the role of community organizations to provide safe and healthy settings for students to thrive will be critical. It will truly take the whole village to make this happen.

Finally, we did not need a pandemic to tell us that our system does not serve **all** children well. WaKIDS data continues to underscore that children enter kindergarten with a wide range of knowledge and skills. Even some students who enter kindergarten “ready,” and particularly some from historically underserved groups, are falling behind in math and literacy by third grade. With a laser-focused racial equity lens, we can rethink our systems and reimagine learning environments that are culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate, and meet the needs of each and every student.

We hope that this planning guide helps districts, regardless of the school schedule they are following in the fall, take a fresh look at what is working well, and what could be improved to better serve our youngest learners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathe Taylor".

Kathe Taylor, Ph.D.
Assistant Superintendent
Learning and Teaching

OSPI VISION, MISSION, VALUES, AND EQUITY

Vision

All students prepared for postsecondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement.

Mission

Transform K–12 education to a system that is centered on closing opportunity gaps and is characterized by high expectations for all students and educators. We achieve this by developing equity-based policies and supports that empower educators, families, and communities.

Values

- Ensuring Equity
- Collaboration and Service
- Achieving Excellence through Continuous Improvement
- Focus on the Whole Child

Equity Statement

Each student, family, and community possess strengths and cultural knowledge that benefits their peers, educators, and schools.

Ensuring educational equity:

- Goes beyond equality; it requires education leaders to examine the ways current policies and practices result in disparate outcomes for our students of color, students living in poverty, students receiving special education and English Learner services, students who identify as LGBTQ+, and highly mobile student populations.
- Requires education leaders to develop an understanding of historical contexts; engage students, families, and community representatives as partners in decision making; and actively dismantle systemic barriers, replacing them with policies and practices that ensure all students have access to the instruction and support they need to succeed in our schools.

Many policies and practices of K–12 schools create barriers for students of color. In addition, many families served by districts' early learning programs, like developmental preschool or Transitional Kindergarten, have greater needs than the general population. Transparent practices about how the school is addressing racial inequality and creating welcoming and inclusive environments for young students will be important.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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APPLYING A “P-3 LENS” TO REOPENING WASHINGTON SCHOOLS

On June 11, 2020, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) released the [Reopening Washington Schools 2020 District Planning Guide](#) as a resource for local education agencies in planning for a safe and healthy start to the 2020–21 school year. The guidance was developed in collaboration with the state Department of Health (DOH), Department of Labor and Industries, and the [Reopening Washington Schools Workgroup](#), which consisted of more than 120 educators, education leaders, parents, students, elected officials, community-based organizations, and community members. Following guidelines set forth by DOH, the guide offers planning considerations for returning to school this fall.

About this Early Learning Planning Guide

On June 16, 22, and 26, 2020, OSPI convened the Early Learning Transitions Workgroup and P–3 Educator Taskforce to review the *Reopening Washington Schools 2020: District Planning Guide* with a Prenatal–3rd grade, or “P–3” lens. This guide is a collection of recommended action steps and considerations specific to school-based early learning programs for children ages 0–8 years. Guidance for meeting Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for young students with disabilities can be found on the OSPI website on the [Special Education Guidance for COVID-19](#) webpage. Guidance for early learning and child care settings can be found on the [Department of Children, Youth, and Families website](#). In the upcoming weeks, OSPI will also be providing guidance specific to the administration of WaKIDS, the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills.

Whether it's beginning kindergarten, accessing special education services, or participating in programs for pregnant and parenting teens, young children and their families will engage with our public schools for the first time this fall. It's important to attend to the unique needs and requirements of our youngest students right from the start, especially given concerns that families may have about starting school during the COVID-19 crisis.

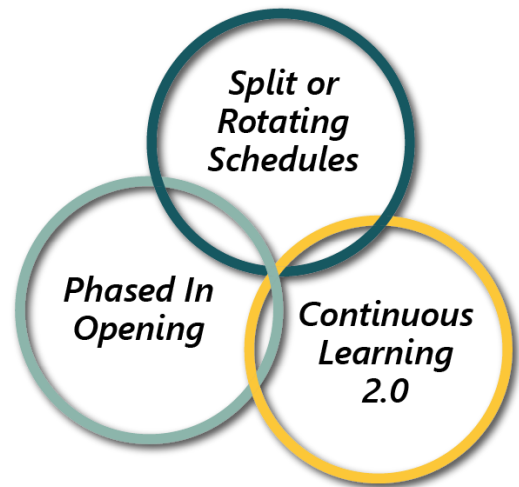


REOPENING WASHINGTON SCHOOLS: SCHEDULING CONCEPTS

The Reopening Washington Schools Workgroup identified three scheduling concepts from a continuum of options if schools cannot meet physical distancing requirements and are limited in face-to-face instruction opportunity.

Those concepts are as follows:

- **Split or rotating schedules with continuous remote learning.** Part-time on-site, with continuous remote learning (online courses, videoconferencing, home-based instructional tasks) on the days in which students do not report to school.
- **Phased-in opening with continuous remote learning.** Some school facilities open only for some groups of students, while others remain closed until a later date. For instance, serve elementary students face-to-face using all school buildings (elementary, middle, and high); serve secondary students at a distance. Students who are not attending face-to-face participate in continuous remote learning.
- **Continuous Learning 2.0.** Online learning, plus opportunities for asynchronous learning experiences. This scheduling concept can be used on its own or with split/rotating schedules or phased-in schedules. This model should be used only when it is not safe for any large groups of students or staff to be in their school buildings together. All districts, however, must be prepared to shift from in-person, face-to-face instruction to continuous remote learning should they need to close school facilities in the short- or long-term.



Depending on the schedule concept, working families with school-age children may have an increased need for additional care and supervision outside of school. Child care provider capacity has changed during the pandemic. The availability of care in a community may not meet the demand that families will have. It will be important to communicate with families about their needs and to know the landscape of available child care in local communities.



KEY THEMES IN EARLY LEARNING

This fall, children and families across Washington will engage with our public schools for the first time. Whether it's the of beginning kindergarten, Transitional Kindergarten, developmental preschool, or programs for pregnant and parenting teens, public schools are hubs of early learning in communities. Members of the Early Learning Transitions Workgroup and P-3 Educator Taskforce identified explicit observations they thought were important to emphasize, organized within key themes specific to early learning in public schools:

1. Young Children Have Unique Needs
2. Families are Children's First and Most Important Teachers
3. Early Learning is a Network of Cross-Sector Partnerships

Young Children Have Unique Needs

The start of school is always a big transition for young children. This year, concerns about COVID-19 increase the need for greater communication with families and attention to the unique needs of early learners, whose experience with online and in-person learning will be different from that of older children. What works for older children will not work for children ages 0-8 years.

Young Children...

- Need more supervision and assistance in learning how to take care of their own physical needs, such as toileting, washing hands, wiping their nose, and cleaning up.
- Require support, reassurance, and clear boundaries to develop social-emotional skills, including the ability to interact in a consistently positive way with peers and adults and manage their own feelings.
- Require smaller group sizes and more care and comfort from their teachers, parents and families, and other trusted adults.
- Rely on predictable, consistent relationships and schedules.
- Need more time and opportunity to practice skills.
- Need developmentally appropriate, intentionally designed learning environments.
- Rely on adults to help them with online learning and directed tasks.
- Learn best through play and social interactions, using all senses in their learning: smelling a flower, touching a slug, tasting salt, running and climbing, and digging in sand.
- Thrive in inclusive settings with diverse peers.
- May be spending a significant amount of time outside of school, in child care or in the care of family, friends, and neighbors.

Families are Children's First and Most Important Teachers

Communication and outreach to families of young children will be even more critical this year as families adjust to the challenges presented by the pandemic. Because many families will struggle to coordinate school, work, and child care schedules, and may have difficulty prioritizing time to connect with educators, teachers and families will need to create new ways to identify and collaborate on learning goals and activities that promote growth across learning settings. Schools will need to address families' pandemic-specific concerns about enrolling their children. Families

may be more cautious about or fearful of bringing their young children to school. Families of students with disabilities may be hesitant to send their children to school due to health impairments that may make them more at-risk to the impacts of COVID-19. All of these issues may be compounded by trauma that families have experienced since schools were last in session. As a result, schools, more than ever, will need to be prepared to address children's social and emotional needs and to demonstrate in as many ways as possible their recognition of the important role that families play in their children's learning.

Families...

- Understand their child's needs best and will want to ensure their child's health and safety needs are included in instructional planning.
- Play an important role in their child's educational journey, and are critical partners, especially when supporting a child with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Need to know their young child is safe and which adult is responsible for their child at any given moment of the day.
- Want to feel supported and to see (and feel) the value of engaging with teachers.
- May have more complex needs due to COVID-19.
- May be working and caring for other children or family members.
- Want opportunities to give feedback about what is or is not working for their child.
- May have limited capacity to support learning at home.

Early Learning is a Network of Cross-Sector Partnerships

The landscape of early learning is made up of a broad range of community partners. In order to reach out to families with young children, support transitions into public school settings, and assure that children and families have access to necessary services and supports, including early intervention and child care, schools will need to call on existing partnerships and build new collaborations where relationships don't already exist. Strong community partnerships and collaboration will ensure community resources are maximized, not duplicated.

Community Partners...

- May have been impacted by school closures to district-based preschool programs.
- May be impacted by choices that schools make about school schedules.
- May have strong, longstanding relationships with families of young children.
- Often serve young children furthest from opportunity.
- May be providing child care or other services when school is not in session.
- Can help facilitate connections with families for program registration.
- Provide access to additional resources that may be beneficial to children and families.
- May have access to valuable developmental assessments and progress monitoring data that can assist school district partners in successfully transitioning children from one early childhood program to the next.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The following items are steps districts should consider and implement when planning to meet the needs of young children during the reopening of schools for the 2020–21 school year.

Recognize the Unique Needs of Young Children

- Prioritize space to support early learners face-to-face. Given the limitations of technology for young children, and their need to practice social interactions with other children and adults, districts should prioritize in-person learning for the children who need it most, including early learners from birth through 8 years of age.
- Respect children’s development by using a strengths-based approach. Teachers and schools focused solely on learning loss overlooking young children’s interests and developing skills.
- Prioritize developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed, social-emotional support for young students. Social-emotional needs may be much higher than usual.
- Place young children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, involving them in all activities offered to their typically developing peers.
- Ensure access to students’ learning resources, safety procedures, and school policies are available in child/families’ home language.
- Prepare to support children who do not have access to technology, meals or other resources.

Refer to the OSPI Special Education Reopening Guidance for initial evaluation timelines and service delivery requirements for students with disabilities participating in early learning programs.



Create Meaningful Family Connections

- Identify family liaisons and support specialists, who are knowledgeable about young children, to reach out to families and help make sure they get settled into the school year.
- Develop and confirm strategies for communicating with parents and families who do not speak or read English.
- Partner with community-based preschool and child care programs, and parent/guardian advisory committees to connect with potential new families.
- Assign students to classroom teachers and/or case managers as soon as possible so they can meet with families early.
- Provide a range of learning options (in-person, online/at-home) in the child’s home language to best meet family needs.
- Establish regular, predictable communication between teachers and parents/guardians, not just with the child.
- Develop educational plans in partnership with families and other educators who previously or currently support the child, even if that program is outside of K–12.

- ❑ Include families with young children and organizations representing early learning in every planning group and include them from the beginning. Diversify the representation of family voice, intentionally including families whose children are furthest from educational opportunities.
- ❑ Offer virtual parent/guardian advisory groups in a variety of formats, with interpretation services.
- ❑ Consider hosting play and learn groups for families to come on-site once or twice a week, following [Washington State Department of Heath guidelines](#), as a way for families to meet other families and for children who are learning remotely to experience social learning.
- ❑ Provide technology training for children's families in their home language.
- ❑ Collaborate with special education case managers and specialists, coordinating schedules and service delivery plans so as not to overwhelm the family.
- ❑ Consider integration of service delivery for students with disabilities and what progress monitoring can occur during general education delivery.
- ❑ Create clear communication systems to share progress monitoring to ensure Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) during school facility closures.

The Family Connection meetings that are part of the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) transition process for kindergarten could be extended to other grades, as a means of welcoming families to school and learning about children's experiences since spring. For more information visit the OSPI [WaKIDS Family Connections webpage](#).



Develop Inclusive, Culturally Sustaining, Anti-biased Approaches

- ❑ Provide choices for families to meet their child's educational needs in the safety of their tribe and/or community.
- ❑ Review district inclusion practices and offer developmentally appropriate general education options for young children with disabilities.
- ❑ Avoid clustering certain groups of young children together (i.e., all students with disabilities, all English learner students). Equity does not mean the same for everyone.
- ❑ Meet the language needs of families, including access to interpreters.
- ❑ Revisit current communication plans to make them more robust, accessible, and inclusive across school communications and programs.
- ❑ Consider home visits with support from cultural leaders and family liaisons to build trust and relationships with families.
- ❑ Utilize frameworks such as [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#) or [Pyramid Model](#), supporting the needs of the individual child, while maintaining a racial equity lens.
- ❑ Use tools such as the [Local District Preschool Inclusion Self-Assessment](#) or [Benchmarks of Quality for Classroom-Based Programs](#) to engage in an analysis of the quality and developmental appropriateness of school-based early learning environments and take steps to

improve them.

- ❑ Work with staff to provide the tools to implement inclusive, culturally sustaining, anti-biased practices, including behavioral supports.
- ❑ Clarify the district's expectations of teachers, administrators, board directors, and all district staff concerning bias and the equitable treatment of students and their families.
- ❑ Prioritize in-person learning for the young children who are furthest from opportunity for services in school buildings, including students with disabilities, children of teen parents, families experiencing homelessness, English learners, and others.
- ❑ Create space for family advocates and advisory groups to express their concerns.

Establish Strong Community Partnerships

- ❑ Identify an early learning contact in the district to serve as a point person between community and district-based early learning programs.
- ❑ Seek and invite community-based early learning organizations to provide input on back-to-school planning using multiple means of communication in multiple languages, including direct contact, email, and social media.
- ❑ Develop a communication protocol with community organizations and early learning partners to disseminate information to families.
- ❑ Include child care providers in family-facing communications where appropriate. For instance, if the district sends regular updates to families via email, include child care providers.
- ❑ Communicate changes in the school's schedule/practices directly to child care providers to allow time for them to make adjustments to support families as needed.
- ❑ Prioritize resuming high-quality early learning programs that serve children furthest from opportunity, including Head Start, the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), district-based preschool programs serving students with disabilities, Transitional Kindergarten, and before and after school programs.
- ❑ Prioritize referrals to community-based child care programs before establishing district-based child care options.
- ❑ Be open to creative ways to share dedicated space with community partners who provide services such as preschool and before and after school care including the use of classrooms, the gym, multipurpose room, cafeteria/kitchen, outdoor/grounds, entry ways, and school-based health center/nurses offices.
- ❑ Provide services (e.g. janitorial, heating and others) to on-site child care programs to keep a safe and healthy environment for children.
- ❑ Coordinate school nutrition programs with child care programs, either within the same building or through meal delivery programs. Be aware that USDA regulations are significantly different

Meet with early learning partners to find out about resources and local collaboration opportunities through Washington Communities for Children.

Visit Child Care Aware of Washington to request a list of child care providers in your district or school's area.

P-3

for operations this fall compared to spring and summer. Students enrolled in school can participate based on eligibility (free/reduced/paid).

- Know that child care facilities may participate in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and receive reimbursement for meals they prepare and serve. Alternatively child care programs may choose to vend (purchase meals) from schools.
- Enable access between schools and child care programs to virtual learning platform logins. Where appropriate, create a data sharing agreement.
- Provide access to technology supports to facilitate student learning in care, such as Wi-Fi, hot spots, and district devices, with training and technical assistance to child care providers who use district virtual learning management system(s). Note: Consult with school district legal counsel for recommendations around options for partnering that do not constitute a gift of public funds. Washington's Gift of Public Funds doctrine does not automatically preclude a school district from using state resources to partner with private child care providers to support student learning. Visit the [Municipal Research and Services Center's website](#) for additional information.
- Within established district agreements and protocols, consider creative ways that district technology support staff may assist child care providers with online learning platforms and other technology needs.
- Develop release forms and other documents that when signed by the parent/guardian would allow a teacher to directly speak to a child's child care provider, as needed.
- Refer to the [OSPI Integrated Students Supports Protocol](#) and the [OSPI Expanded Learning Opportunities \(ELO\) Guide](#) for strategies to engage with community partners.
- Select and develop remote programming in partnership with child care providers.
- Encourage teaching staff to know which children are in child care during the school day.
- Consider ways to work with child care providers to meet the needs of children with special needs or learning challenges that require specialized services in their child care setting.
- Within established district agreements and protocols, consider creative ways that district staff (paraeducators, case managers, counselors, social workers, nurses) within district agreements might assist students who need specialized or specific services while in child care during remote learning, or assist child care programs in establishing screening protocols and providing training to child care staff.
- Within established district agreements and protocols, consider creative ways that school nurses and school counselors may work with local child care providers to provide training for medical, as well as social emotional health support to school-age children in child care settings during remote learning.
- Explore local partnerships to support families with access to basic needs, as well as mental health services, positive discipline training, and computer literacy.

Support Early Learning Transitions

- Provide additional time at the start of the school year to facilitate transitions.
- Explore new ways of helping families get to know the school buildings and staff, such as a video open house touring the school with visits to classrooms.
- Create opportunities for teachers to connect with children's prior teacher and/or family support staff to serve as a bridge for families during transition.
- Support teachers in attending home visits with Head Start/ECEAP family support staff, PreK teachers, and/or child care providers to get to know children and families.

- ❑ Host early learning planning events with community-based child care providers in evenings and on weekends, and provide incentives for child care staff participation.
- ❑ Invite child care providers to complete the [Washington State's Kindergarten Transition Summary Form](#) for children transitioning to kindergarten.
- ❑ Consider options where students start the year with their former teacher before moving to a new classroom and teacher.
- ❑ Partner with provider agencies to ensure that children with disabilities transitioning from IDEA, Part C to IDEA, Part B have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in place by each child's third birthday. Utilize alternative means for conducting virtual assessment and IEP team meetings, such as telephone or videoconferencing, as necessary.

Plan for Kindergarten/ Program Registration

- ❑ Hold registration early.
- ❑ Provide multiple ways for registration, including over the phone for families who do not have access to the internet or a computer, or options for drive-through registration materials pick-up.
- ❑ Communicate with families through community organizations, local cultural centers, child care, and preschool programs. For instance, if the school posts videos showing how to register and what to expect, make sure the community organizations know about and have access to the videos.
- ❑ Set up communication structures for parents and families to ask questions.
- ❑ Poll families about their schedule preferences and child care needs. Refer families needing child care to [Child Care Aware](#).
- ❑ Coordinate district-based preschool enrollment efforts with community early learning programs, matching children and families to the programs best able to meet their needs.
- ❑ Use registration information to set up class lists as soon as possible so teachers and families can begin to communicate early, recognizing decisions about registration may change as family circumstances change.

The Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) is a kindergarten transition process intended to welcome families into the K–12 system as partners in their child's education, to help teachers learn about the skills and strengths of children so they can meet the needs of each child, and to align practices of early learning professionals and kindergarten teachers to support smooth transitions for children. WaKIDS is an important part of the beginning of kindergarten and will be especially important this coming year.



Consider Staff Needs and Responsibilities

- Consider staffing needed to assure there is enough direct support to help young children with health screening and following safety protocols.
- Survey educators about their child care needs. Refer staff needing child care to [Child Care Aware](#).
- Adapt teacher schedules to meet with and respond to families at different times of the day, based around the capacity of young students and families.

Provide Professional Learning Specific to Young Students

- Provide professional learning specific to the needs of teachers and staff working with young learners and their families, including effective practices for remote learning and child development.
- Provide necessary training to staff that will allow students with disabilities and significant health impairments to continue to be included in a learning environment with peers.
- Provide time to plan for implementing [Department of Health guidelines](#) with young learners.
- Develop teachers' coaching skills for working with families who are supporting their children's learning remotely.
- Engage in cross-sector professional development with community preschool and child care providers. When hosting community training, provide real-time language interpretation.
- Implement anti-racist, anti-biased curricula.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR EARLY LEARNERS

Whether school will be in-person, following Department of Health guidelines, or conducted remotely, the needs of young students require special consideration.

Early Learners in General

- Young children need more supervision and assistance in learning, including more physical care and comfort from their teachers, parents and families, and other trusted adults.
- Early learners rely on predictable, consistent relationships and routines, with multiple opportunities and exposure to content and time to practice the skills being taught.
- Early learners are not independent in using technology to learn and will rely on adults to help them with directed tasks.
- Young children need and learn through play, physical movement, and social interactions.

The pandemic has created an opportunity to rethink curricula and instructional practices across all grades.

During this time, it's important we do not lose sight of the specific learning needs of our youngest students.

P-3

- Young children express themselves in different ways, frequently communicating through behavior.

In-person Instruction

- Adults providing in-person instruction to young students will need to facilitate play-based learning opportunities within Washington State Department of Health guidelines. Depending on the funding source, there may be specific guidelines that programs must follow, for instance if a program is licensed.
- Teach and practice following health and safety protocols, like washing hands and wearing face coverings. Make it fun, with songs and modeling. Young children will need frequent reminders and positive reinforcement.
- Establish routines that help build a sense of security, providing children and families with daily schedules and safety practices in advance.
- Consider using face masks that include a plastic covering over the mouth. Young children learn to form letter sounds and words by looking at lip and tongue placement.
- Establish assigned seating areas with a variety of flexible seating options for physical movement, including the floor. Consider removing shoes while in the classroom.
- Identify a special space in the classroom for children who need to have quiet time.
- Use [outdoor areas for learning opportunities](#), assuring adequate supervision, when possible.
- Consider [outdoor classrooms](#) where children spend the majority of their time outside.
- Explore funding sources to help families with financial and/or logistical barriers that cannot afford school supplies or personal protective equipment.

Recognize the limitations of online learning for young children and their families. Offer a variety of ways to engage in remote learning for young children beyond online instruction.

P-3

Remote Learning

- Involve families in scheduling decisions. Because young children are not independent online learners, families will need to be available to assist their young children with remote learning.
- Support teachers with [best practices for remote learning with young children](#), including [developmentally appropriate technology use](#).
- Work with families to identify opportunities to practice skills that can occur during daily routines using everyday household items as learning materials (e.g., counting the spoons when drying dishes, identifying the color of clothing while putting away laundry).
- Provide backpacks to children, with materials like books, colored pencils, balls and other supplies that are connected to objectives for development and learning. Encourage children to take these backpacks with them if they are engaging in remote learning away from the home.
- Provide planning time for teachers to share ideas and approaches they have developed for teaching content that families could support at home.
- Develop learning plans with families based on skill progressions the [Washington State Early](#)

[Learning and Development Guidelines](#), [Early Literacy Pathways](#), and [Learning Pathways in Numeracy](#).

- Provide “[choice boards](#)” or a menu of different options so families can choose learning activities that will work best for them.
- Establish regular check-ins with parents and guardians to discuss their child’s progress and needs.
- Organize weekly assignments so families can plan around their own schedules.
- Establish a predictable schedule for disseminating information.
- Engage families in collecting evidence (work samples, photographs) of their child’s progress toward learning goals, inviting them to participate in the process of documenting their child’s learning. Be cautious not to pressure or suggest that families are *expected* to contribute.
- Help families create and follow a schedule, using pictures that illustrate components of the day, and revisit it often.
- Create safe ways for families to let schools know if they need support to help their children learn at home. Ask families if they have the materials children need to learn, whether remote or in school, including students who might need adaptive equipment and devices.
- Post a read aloud or [video](#) of the teacher that can be viewed at any time. Provide alternate methods to engage with the teacher for those families with limited access to technology.
- Offer assistance in troubleshooting technology so when meeting virtually, the child can see the teacher’s face, and both the teacher and the student can hear each other.
- Young children may need more time and encouragement to feel comfortable engaging with teachers and peers virtually. Incorporate “show and tell” or scavenger hunts for items around the house (things that start with a particular letter, have a certain shape, etc.) and use these items to begin discussions. Consider awarding participation “badges” or other incentives, mailing or emailing them to each child as they are earned.
- Recognize that young children will have shorter attention spans and limited capacity for sitting for prolonged periods of time in front of a computer.
- Attend to children’s need for physical development and outdoor play when creating plans for remote learning.
- Give parents and guardians ideas for activities to develop children’s fine motor skills (e.g., using playdoh to strengthen finger muscles) and large motor development (e.g., running and throwing).
- Recognize that some children will be in child care during the day and may not have access to the technology or resources to engage in online learning at a specified time.

CONCLUSION

The 2020–21 school year will look different than typical school years, and for many of Washington’s youngest students and their families, it will be their first encounter with K–12 school. Prioritize providing face-to-face instruction for early learners (children 0–8 years of age) if health and safety requirements can be met. When face-to-face instruction is not possible, districts can use considerations in this guide to design developmentally appropriate local plans for meeting the needs of young students. Whatever the plan, districts should not forget what a special time the start of school is, that young children have unique learning needs, and that involving families early and frequently will be the keys to success.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Additional Resources

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) compiled a list of resources to support a number of the themes surfaced by the Workgroup. While many may apply to school districts' fall context, they will likely need to be adapted for a hybrid or continuous remote learning context.

Resources for In-Person and Online/At-Home Learning

- [At-Home" Teaching and Learning in PreK-3rd Grade from the National P-3 Center](#)
- [Conscience Discipline Routines](#)
- [DEC Recommended Practices: Online Edition](#)
- [Distance Learning and Early Childhood Education | ECLKC](#)
- [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center \(ECTA\)](#)
- [Early Literacy Pathways](#)
- [Equitably Serving Children with Disabilities and their Families during Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Indicators of High-Quality Inclusion](#)
- [Learning Pathways in Numeracy](#)
- [National Center for Systemic Improvement \(NCSI\) Distance Learning PreK-K](#)
- [Open Educational Resource Commons](#)
- [Pyramid Model Resource Library](#)
- [Ready Rosie](#)
- [Resources for Remote Learning Boston Public Schools](#)
- [Remote Service Delivery Examples](#)
- [Teaching Strategies GOLD® Objectives for Development and Learning](#)
- [Understanding Anti-Bias Education: Bringing the Four Core Goals to Every Facet of Your Curriculum](#)
- [Vanderbilt: The Family Behavior Support App](#)
- [Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines](#)

Partnership Resources and Tools

- [Finding Child Care for Families Through Child Care Aware of Washington](#)
- [Connecting with Local Child Care Providers Through Child Care Aware](#)
- [Connect with Partners Through Washington Communities for Children](#)
- [Considerations for Increasing In-Person Activities and Making Infrastructure Adjustments for Part C During COVID-19](#)

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Download this material in PDF at <https://www.k12.wa.us/about-ospi/press-releases/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-resources>. This material is available in alternative format upon request. Contact the Resource Center at 888-595-3276, TTY 360-664-3631. Please refer to this document number for quicker service: 20-0017.



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