

# Opportunities for Learning While Public Schools Are Not In Session

## What Does “Distance Learning” Mean for Preschool?

Many families whose children were attending preschool in public schools are now at home with their children. School districts are working to support children and families with distance learning opportunities during this time. But what does “distance learning” really mean for preschool?

This flyer includes some tips and resources as you support your child’s learning at home. The most important tip is to keep the stress level low! This is new for everyone and many people are feeling stressed and overwhelmed. But there are many opportunities for learning during daily routines. Focus on creating consistent routines, building in learning opportunities over time, and keeping things fun.



### Play and Learning

- ◆ Young children learn best through play. Follow their lead and look for a chance to build learning into their play. Kids do not need fancy toys. Encourage them to make up a silly game, sing songs, or read a book together. Take a break and release some energy by going for a walk, doing a silly dance, or creating an obstacle course with pillows and chairs.
- ◆ Some learning opportunities and play may involve technology and/or “table time”. It is also important for young children to balance these experiences with physical activity and open-ended imaginative play. Check out these links for ideas:
  - ◇ The **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** offers many resources and strategies to promote your child’s learning at home.
  - ◇ The **CT Early Learning and Development Standards Action Guides** include strategies for supporting preschoolers across several areas of learning and development.



### Using Online Resources

- ◆ There are many websites with resources for you and your preschooler. Brief periods of time with high quality, interactive content can support children’s learning.
- ◆ It is important to keep in mind that experts (including **NAEYC and the Fred Rogers Center, and the American Academy of Pediatrics**) recommend limiting screen time for young children. While this may be difficult right now, look to trusted resources to make sure screen time is educational:
  - ◇ **Scholastic PreK-K**
  - ◇ **The Illinois Early Learning Project** has compiled many resources related to learning at home during this difficult time.
  - ◇ **State Department of Education, Resources to Support Student Learning During School Closures Due to COVID-19**
  - ◇ **RESC Alliance Resources for Distance Learning** (note that topic number 9 includes tools and resources for early childhood)





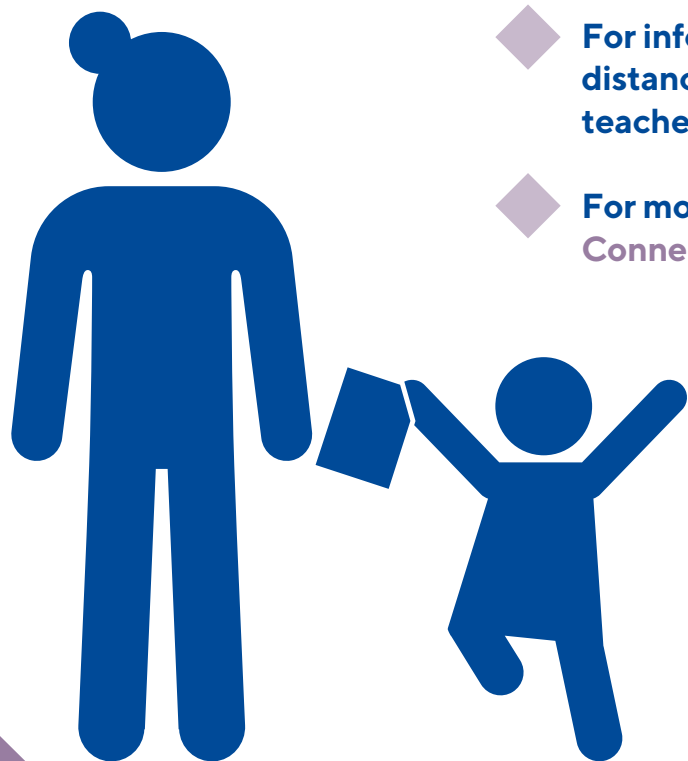
## Staying Consistent and Connected

- ◆ Young children benefit from routines and relationships. This public health emergency has disrupted both. While much has changed, trying to keep some things the same, like morning routines or bedtime rituals, will help kids feel safe.
- ◆ Maintaining familiar but flexible routines can help your child feel safe and secure.
- ◆ Look for ways to address your child's feelings and help them connect with family, teachers, and/or friends through phone or video calls if possible.
- ◆ If your child's school program is connected through social media (e.g., a private Facebook group) or other communication tool, consider ways to keep the children connected and learning as well. Start a Virtual Spirit Week so children can share photos wearing their favorite colors, enjoying Pajama Day, and more while they are apart. Teachers or families can share videos of themselves reading stories that children can watch at home.



## Taking Care of Yourself

- ◆ Caring for young children is hard work in the best of times and the current situation is adding new challenges. It is important that you have support in this hard work. Below are some resources for taking care of yourself and your child:
  - ◆ **The Fred Rogers Center: Support for Helpers During Coronavirus:** This site includes ideas and resources related to supporting young children and yourself during this time.
  - ◆ **211ct.org:** 2-1-1 of Connecticut has many resources for families, including those related to food, mental health, housing, and concerns about child development.
  - ◆ **The Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC):** This statewide nonprofit center offers resources and information to families of children with disabilities or chronic illness.



◆ **For information on your district's approach to distance learning, please contact your child's teacher and/or district representative.**

◆ **For more information on COVID-19, visit the Connecticut Department of Public Health.**

