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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Beth Bye
Commissioner

DATE: November 24, 2020

TO: Providers of Services to Young Children

FROM: Beth Bye, Commissioner

RE: Coronavirus Memo #34
Requirements for State-Funded Programs Providing Remote Learning

Programs that receive School Readiness, Child Day Care, and/or Smart Start funding to provide remote learning are expected to meet the requirements outlined in this document. These requirements address remote learning offered in one of the following ways: as an option for families who choose not to send their child to a program due to concerns about COVID-19, as an alternative model due to a short or long term closure based on public health guidance, or as part of a hybrid option in which children participate in a combination of in-person and remote learning.

Meeting These Requirements

OEC's goal is to provide support and resources to assist state funded programs in meeting the requirements outlined in this document.

- In-person care and education remains a priority; however, School Readiness, Child Day Care, and Smart Start funding all allow for the provision of remote learning when necessary. Review information regarding each individual funding source for further details about fiscal support for the provision of remote learning.
- Professional learning opportunities related to remote learning will be offered beginning in late November. This professional learning will consist of a series of webinars offered by the Technology in Early Childhood Center at the Erikson Institute and technical assistance and support through the Regional Education Service Centers.
 - Programs currently offering remote learning should plan for staff that is planning or implementing remote learning to participate in the webinars being offered.
 - Programs that are not currently offering remote learning should plan to have at least 1-2 staff members attend the webinars and create a remote learning plan in case a classroom or program closure is necessary.

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- Programs not currently meeting remote learning requirements can access support through the RESC Alliance for support in meeting these requirements.
- The OEC, with Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funding, is working to provide a limited number of families and programs with devices and connectivity in order to facilitate remote learning opportunities. State funded programs providing remote learning to families choosing to keep their child home due to COVID-19 concerns will be contacted about this opportunity in the near future. The OEC will continue to explore strategies to address family and program needs related to technology.

Expectations for Remote Learning and Hybrid Options

The following expectations apply to all models that include a remote learning component:

- Opportunities are intentionally planned as a part of a comprehensive curricular approach based on the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS).
- There is a focus on developmentally appropriate practice, including support for play-based learning and relationships.
- Special attention should be paid to supporting social and emotional development due to disruptions in routines and relationships and potential trauma.
- Total screen time as a part of remote learning should be limited, with a goal of keeping as close to one hour per day as possible. Children should not be expected to watch/listen to the teacher for more than 30 minutes. Individual check-ins do not count toward remote learning screen time.
- Coordinate with any supplemental services provided for young children. School districts serving children with Individual Education Programs (IEPs) should refer to their Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan. SDE’s [Addendum 6](#) provides more information about these plans.
- Staffing patterns support intentional planning and individualized support. Full time teachers support no more than 20 students/families.

Table 1: Expectations across Three Models that Involve Remote Learning

Model	Definition	Opportunities Provided to Families	Expectations for Engagement
Remote Learning Option as Family Choice	Families opt-in to participate in learning opportunities in which students and educators are not physically present in a classroom environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one synchronous group opportunity per week • Provide a combination of synchronous and asynchronous opportunities expected to last <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ at least 2.5 hours/ day for CDC and SR ○ at least 3 hours/day for Smart Start • At least one individual check-in with child and family each week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate family agreements outlining expectations for engagement (at least 50% engagement in offered opportunities). • Have a plan for monitoring engagement • Provide support to families not engaging • Sustained non-engagement may result in disenrollment
Remote Learning as Classroom or Program Model	Classrooms or programs implement learning opportunities in which students and educators are not physically present in a classroom environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one synchronous opportunity per day • Provide a combination of synchronous and asynchronous opportunities expected to last <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ at least 2.5 hours/day for CDC and SR ○ at least 3 hours/day for Smart Start • At least one individual check-in with child and family each week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and document engagement • Meet with families who are not engaging to gain feedback and provide support. Document efforts to engage families.
Hybrid	All students participate in a combination of both in-person and remote learning support, resulting in a limited student population on site at any given time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On remote learning days, provide a combination of recorded videos, resources, and activities expected to last at least 3 hours per day • At least one individual check-in with family every two weeks • If a synchronous remote learning day is offered, follow guidance for synchronous large and small group opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor engagement • Meet with families who are not engaging to gain feedback and provide support

Expectations for Synchronous Learning Opportunities

Learning opportunities that involve individuals participating remotely at the same time. This might be an individual meeting or small or large group activities that occur at a specified time.

Format	Examples	Group Size	Length	Frequency
Large Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story time • Music • Introduction to an at-home activity 	10-20 children	5-15 minutes	1-2 times per day (maximum of 30 minutes per day)
Small Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing time • Mini “lessons” 	3-6 children	5-15 minutes maximum per group	1-2 times per day
Individual Check-ins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing a story • Having a child share “work” from activities • General discussion about child and family needs 	Child and family	10-15 minutes	<p>A minimum of 1 time per week for remote learning</p> <p>On a periodic basis for hybrid model.</p>

Expectations for Asynchronous Learning Opportunities

Learning opportunities that involve families and/or children at any time and do not involve a live interaction.

Format	Examples	Estimated Time of Provided Opportunities
Pre-recorded videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recording of a story time led by the teacher • Program staff work together to compile a music video • Video leading a child through an at-home activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-10 minutes in length • Suggested resources/schedules for families include no more than 30 minutes of video time per day total.

At home activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials for an at-home art activity • An idea for a scavenger hunt with lyrics to a song and a way to share what they found • A list of ways to support learning during daily routines provided with a request for families to share one strategy they tried 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities involve materials that families are likely to have or can be embedded into family routines. Materials are provided for other learning opportunities. • Children and families are encouraged to communicate the results of at-home activities through sharing of artifacts, photos, or verbal descriptions. • Expectations for families regarding completion of activities are positive and encouraging, not punitive. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Families selecting remote learning as an alternative to in-person care may have more specific expectations regarding engagement.
Sharing outside resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing a list of activity ideas from a trustworthy source • Sharing an educational show or interactive app with families • Directing families to websites with ideas for activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections made to CT Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS) • Families are provided with sample schedules, frequency or quantity of activities to complete, or suggested uses for the resources. • Follow up to suggested opportunities is a part of planned experience. Families are provided with a way to share experiences or artifacts, or to provide feedback related to the shared activities/resources.