

## Be Informed. Be Involved.

### Guidance for Early Learning at Home

Parents and families play an important role in shaping the way children view learning. Continued learning and academic and social emotional growth are critical components of children’s well-being. The LDOE aims to [provide guidance](#) specifically focused on early childhood since we know this is a unique developmental period that requires differentiated support. This guidance is for anyone supporting young learners at home: families, teachers, directors, and other caregivers.

As families support their children through continuous learning, it is helpful to remember a few key principles from child development that apply to children in early care and learning.

- **Build and Maintain Routine and Structure**  
Consistent routines and structures offer comfort and security for children by helping them take ownership of their experiences, which in turn leads to gains in their learning and development.
- **Focus on Relationships and Social-Emotional Development**  
Relationships are particularly important to children in early childhood. Children flourish when they feel supported, safe, and have close emotional attachments to adults who are important in their lives. These are stressful times for everyone, so creating ways to provide your child with calm, reassuring interactions is important.
- **Find Authentic Opportunities for Meaningful Learning**  
Young children learn best through meaningful play and participation in everyday routines. Your child has opportunities for deep and meaningful learning through everyday, authentic experiences.
- **Emphasize Active, Experiential Learning**  
Children in this age range learn best when they are active and engaged. Physical activity is essential for children's concentration, learning, and interactions with others.

This toolkit will help you have a better understanding of how to support your child’s development and learning. It will also provide practical activities you can use throughout the day to work with your child at home. These activities are only suggestions should you not have other resources available from your school system.

Please refer to the [Privacy and Security Guide](#) when making decisions regarding continuous learning.

## Step 1: Create a schedule that works for your family.

When your child’s normal schedule is disrupted, establishing a predictable daily schedule at home can help your child feel secure and understand when things will happen. As much as possible, try to stick to daily routines, with wake-up times, meals, naps, and bedtimes as usual. You can create predictable routines and experiences at home that mimic what your child has come to expect in their early learning program.

### Tips for developing your daily schedule:

- Accommodate the age and individual needs of the children.
- Include outdoor time, both structured and unstructured, every day.
- Incorporate at least two large blocks of time for child-directed learning.
- Maximize opportunities to talk, play, and read with your children.

### Sample daily schedules:

- Teaching Strategies Daily Schedule: A Typical Day in Preschool ([English](#) and [Spanish](#))  
*\*These schedules can be modified to fit the developmental needs of toddlers.*

### Resource:

- Teaching Strategies has developed Guided Daily Learning Plans for Preschool that can be incorporated into your daily schedule each week. Each day families will find guidance for *Morning Meeting, Study Exploration, Guided Learning, Routine Building, and Reflecting on the Day*. Find [Week 1](#) and [Week 2](#) on Teaching Strategies [Classroom Connect page](#).

## Step 2: Add activities to enhance your daily schedule.

Quality adult-child interactions mean a stronger foundation for learning. When you *talk, play and read* more with your babies and young children, you have an enormous positive impact on the brain development, vocabulary growth, school readiness, and future academic success of your children. Make sure that each day includes opportunities to *talk, play and read* with your children. Choose from sample activities found below or linked in the resources.

	Infants	Toddlers and Twos	Ages 3-5
<p><b>Talk</b> When you talk to your child – even before they can use words – you’re helping them learn. The more words and conversations you share together, the better prepared they will be to learn.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Listen to the fun sounds your baby makes and repeat them. When they coo, coo back.</li> <li>● Talk about what you see and what your baby is looking at: “Wow, I see the four dogs, too!” “I love that red truck you’re playing with. It goes beep beep!”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Everywhere you go, talk about what you see.</li> <li>● Try some early math activities: point out shapes or colors around the kitchen.</li> <li>● Play games during bath time. Take turns dropping toys in the water. Say, “Watch it sink!” or “It floats!”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Describe the steps you take when making breakfast or lunch, “First, I take out 2 slices of bread. I’m spreading the jelly on one side”.</li> <li>● While walking outside, point out unusual sights, “Did you spot that black dog chasing after the fluffy squirrel?”</li> </ul>

	Infants	Toddlers and Twos	Ages 3-5
<p><b>Play</b> Play activities contribute to the cognitive, physical, social and emotional well-being of children. It is through play that children at a very early age engage and interact with the world around them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For babies who are crawling, show them a soft ball or interesting toy. Roll it or place it a few feet away and encourage your baby to get it.</li> <li>• Hold your baby in your arms in front of the mirror. Talk about and point to his body parts—eyes, nose, mouth, arms, etc. Then step away from the mirror and ask, “Where did Baby go?” Move back in front of the mirror and say, “There’s the baby!”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a blanket and have your child hold one side while you hold the other. Place some foam balls (“popcorn”) on the blanket and then shake the blanket so the balls bounce (or pop!) off.</li> <li>• Find several stuffed animals and set them on a blanket on the floor. Have a “birthday party” with paper plates, cups, birthday hats, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build structures using the materials you have around your house—challenge your child to make a house using marshmallows, or a fort using books! Make predictions and encourage inquiry while building.</li> <li>• Write a silly story together that includes beginning, middle, and an end, then act out the parts, using costumes, props, and other family members!</li> </ul>
<p><b>Read</b> Reading and sharing stories helps children know sounds, words and language, and develop early literacy skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read a book or tell a story to your baby every day.</li> <li>• Cuddle with your baby as you share a book. It doesn’t matter how young your child is; even newborn babies are learning when their parents read with them.</li> <li>• Point to the book’s pictures: “Look, the train goes choo-choo!” Using words to describe what you see builds language.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspire a love of books and words in your young child by reading or telling a story together every day.</li> <li>• Read to your child with humor and expression. Use different voices for different characters.</li> <li>• Point to the pictures, letters, and numbers in books. Ask open-ended questions as you share the book together. “What do you see? How does he feel? What would you do if you were her? What’s your favorite page?”</li> <li>• Let your child turn the book’s pages. It’s OK if they skip pages, or like a few pages better than others. You just want your child to get used to touching books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read together every day, whether you use books, e-books, magazines, or other print.</li> <li>• Engage your child so he or she will actively listen to a story. Discuss what’s happening, point out things on the page, and answer your child’s questions. Ask questions of your own and listen to your child’s responses.</li> <li>• Talk about the written words you see in the world around you and respond with interest to your child’s questions about words. Ask him or her to find a new word every time you go on an outing. Encourage your child to practice writing or drawing about what they see.</li> </ul>

	Infants	Toddlers and Twos	Ages 3-5
<b>Suggested Activities</b> (from <i>KinderCare</i> ).	<a href="#">At-Home Learning Activities for Babies</a>	<a href="#">At-Home Learning Activities for Toddlers</a>	<a href="#">At-Home Learning Activities for Preschoolers</a>
<b>Suggested Activities</b> (from <i>Teaching Strategies</i> )	<p><a href="#">Learning Games</a>®, a component of The Creative Curriculum®, provide families with easy-to-use, engaging activities that bridge what is learned at school with what families can do at home using common household materials.</p> <p><a href="#">MightyMinutes</a>® make every minute count, featuring short and playful songs, chants, rhymes, games, and activities that enable you to turn free moments at home into meaningful learning opportunities.</p>		<p><a href="#">Curated Activities</a> are accessible activities available in both English and Spanish, with recommended times of day to coincide with a child's schedule, and ways to extend the experiences.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Learning at Home</a> contains free resources and activities to support families with information and resources for supporting the children in their care. Plans are organized by age group (Infant, Toddler &amp; Twos, Preschool, Kindergarten) and include 3 sample video activities each week to support a child's learning.</p>		
<b>Suggested Reading</b>	Reading should occur every day! Use this <a href="#">Book List</a> to find age-appropriate titles and links to free digital access.		

### Additional Continuous Learning Resources:

Frog Street's partner, Education technology provider Age of Learning, is offering families at schools and centers affected by closure free at-home access to research-proven learning resources.

- [ABCmouse.com® Early Learning Academy](#) is a comprehensive, research-validated curriculum for children 2-8. Visit [www.ABCmouse.com/redeem](http://www.ABCmouse.com/redeem) and use the access code **SCHOOL3673**.
- [ReadingIQ®](#) is a digital library and literacy platform for children 2-12 designed by reading experts to improve literacy skills. Visit [www.ReadingIQ.com/redeem](http://www.ReadingIQ.com/redeem) and use the access code **SCHOOL3673**.

### Apps and Text Services

Several programs are available to offer tips and resources for families that support early learning. Message and data rates apply.

- [ParentPal™](#) is an app by *Teaching Strategies* that promotes active, joyful engagement and developmentally appropriate progress through key developmental milestones from birth through age 3.
- [Bright by Text](#) provides quality information and trusted resources to families of children prenatal to age eight partnering with LPB. Text: LPB to 274448.
- [Vroom](#) offers free, easy-to-use learning tips for children 5 and under, delivered daily directly to your phone.
- [Ready4K](#) is an evidence-based family engagement curriculum delivered via text messages. Text: Ready4th to 70138.
- [FASTalk Direct](#) by Family Engagement Lab is focused on fostering meaningful connections between parents and students that will have a lasting impact on learning, offering grade-level academic and social-emotional learning tips. Text: LATIPS to (844) 872-0906.

### Early Childhood Special Education Resources for Families

During extended school closure, schools may offer opportunities for students to learn from home. While families are not responsible for providing IEP services to their students with disabilities during school closure, there are many ways families can support learning at home. This [document](#) provides you, as a family member of a student with a disability, a quick overview of ways you can support your child's learning during school closure. The following information provides considerations that are specific to children ages 3-5 with disabilities.

#### Understanding your child's IEP and how to provide support at home

- Review your child's most recent IEP or Section 504 plan if you have it at home; if you do not have the IEP or 504 plan at home, contact your child's teacher.
- Review the accommodations listed to prepare to implement at home. Consider available resources and set realistic learning expectations for you and your child.
- Remember that you know your child best. Be open to communicating what works best at home and specific ways you encourage your child to stay engaged.

#### Helping young children cope during challenging times

- The use of [social stories](#) and videos can assist in talking about Coronavirus and social distancing with young children.
- Consider using [visual strategies](#) to help young children manage anxieties and feel safe.

#### Maintaining routines

- Providing structure and consistency, to the extent possible, can reassure safety for young children during this time. Consider displaying [visual schedules](#) to reinforce a predictable sequence of routines and maintain stability.

#### What to expect from tele-therapy

- Many teachers and service providers are utilizing virtual platforms to provide tele-health services. In order to prepare for a tele-therapy session, consider the following:
  - Prepare your environment to limit noise and distractions.
  - Ensure your child is ready for the session (i.e. provide ample time for meals and diaper changes prior to the start of the session).
  - Check the internet connection prior to the start of the session and make sure the camera/speakers are turned on. Review all materials needed for the session with service providers and teachers ahead of time.
  - Prepare questions ahead of time and provide feedback at the end of the session (i.e. consider what went well and what could be improved).

### Early Childhood English Language Learners Resources for Families

[Learning Language Every Day: Activities for Families](#)

[Aprendiendo lenguaje todos los días: Actividades para familias](#)

The activities in these booklets allow for conversations with children about their family, what they like to play, how they feel, what sounds they hear around them at home or in the community, and the weather. The booklets may be downloaded for printing and sharing. They are appropriate for children ages 2-7 years.