Supporting Students & Families with Distance Learning

**For Parents**

Please find some simple ideas as to how you can support your child during distance learning.

* Establish overall routines and expectations:
	+ Maintain regular bedtime and morning routines.
	+ Visual schedules are helpful. This can be easily created together on a piece of paper that includes labels and simple drawings. There are also free printables online.
	+ Try to distinguish the weekday from the weekend. The weekend may include something special such as having a different breakfast or playing a favorite game.
* Establish “school” routines:
	+ Create a quiet space for ‘school’ that has little distractions and includes materials such as pencils and paper.
	+ Make sure someone is able to monitor learning and checks in at the start and end of each day.
	+ Establish a start and end time for distance learning (this may be dictated by the school). For help, Khan Academy has free learning schedules for children ages 2 to 18 on their website that you might find useful ([khanacademy.org](https://www.khanacademy.org/)).
	+ Ensure that recess, lunch and physical movement breaks are included. This will look different for everyone.
	+ Please remember the regular school day cannot be replicated at home.
	+ If possible, have age appropriate toys and books accessible.
* Establish daily physical activity or exercise – indoor or outdoor while practicing social distancing.
* Changes to daily routines: be mindful of the child’s feelings and their expression of stress to the changes in their daily schedules, which will vary for each child.
	+ Set up daily or weekly check-ins with everyone in your home.
	+ Stay connected with friends and family through social media, phone calls or video calling.

**For Educators:**

Please find some ideas to help support your students and their families.

* Parents, caregivers and/or guardians want to hear from you. A weekly email or telephone call will help reduce overall anxiety or stress.
* Provide short daily or weekly check-ins with your students.
	+ These check-ins can be used to have students share artwork, visual expressions or stories through oral communication. If students are shy to share, a sentence starter may help begin the conversation.
* Parents are not educators. The school day cannot be replicated through distance learning.
* Review the Ministry guidelines here ([ontario-extends-school-and-child-care-closures-to-fight-spread-of-covid-19](https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/03/ontario-extends-school-and-child-care-closures-to-fight-spread-of-covid-19.html)):
	+ **Kindergarten-Grade 3:** five hours of work per student/week (focus on literacy and math)
	+ **Grades 4-6:** five hours of work per student/week (focus on literacy, math, science and social studies)
	+ **Grades 7-8:** 10 hours of work per student/week (focus on math, literacy, science and social studies)
* Many curriculum activities and skills can be hands-on and performed during daily chores around the home such as:
	+ **Life skills:** making beds, tidying up and putting the dishes away.
	+ **Curriculum expectations:**
		- **Math:** counting and sorting when folding laundry, helping with meal preparation and measuring ingredients, helping with the grocery list, estimating cost; and
		- **Language:** listening to stories online or read aloud, telling stories orally to family members through social media, phone calls or video calls.
* Provide choice for students and a variety of ways to submit work.
* Take into consideration access to technology and time constraints and/or stress levels in many homes.
* Take time for those ‘teachable’ moments when they occur during distance learning.