Addressing Social and Communication Needs of Children During COVID-19 School Closures

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The Importance of Sharing Key Information With School Staff

Your child's current state of being (i.e. emotional health; communication abilities)

Emotional Health:

1. What is their emotional state?
2. What Zone are they in?
3. How resilient are they? Can they use strategies to change mood or stay in a calm happy state?
4. Are they able to be flexible thinkers?
5. How are they processing the current health crisis.

Adversity fosters resilience (Dr. Ross Greene, Lives in the Balance)
Communication Abilities

➢ Do you notice a change in your child’s communication skills (talking more, talking less, withdrawing or needing more attention or support from family)?

➢ Do you feel your child is communicating their basic wants and needs (if they could do this before COVID-19)?

➢ Do you feel your child needs multiple reminders to attend to a task or conversation?
Three Wishes

Share *3 wishes* with your school speech and language team regarding your desire for support during school closure?

For example, I want:

- To be sure my child’s language skills will not regress
- To learn strategies to support my child’s attention in a conversation or for an expected task
- My child to be able to respond when asked a question
- Respond to a question on topic.
- Listen for 30 seconds without interrupting.
What to Look For and What to Expect for Online Learning

School staff will be reinforcing goals and objectives stated in the IEP.

1. Familiarize yourself with those goals and objectives.
2. Prioritize if you can, those that will impact your child during this time and communicate that to your school team
3. If possible, stay in the room to observe and support your child if/when they need it, while they interface with speech and language staff. This gives you a chance to notice your child’s behavior and provide valuable feedback to the teaching team. You will also be aware of:
   a. The specialist role in treatment
   b. How objectives are addressed
   c. The skills they are reinforcing
   d. The strategies they are reinforcing
   e. How to carryover this learning or strategy use at home.
   f. You may also benefit from direct consultation regarding how best to support your child at home. Ask for consultation time if you need it!
Social Emotional State and Language Abilities are Supported by the Child’s Capacity to Perform & Manage these Skills:

- **Conversation Elements:** Initiate, Maintain Topic, Topic Switching, Initiating, maintaining, closing conversation Turn Taking, Pleasantries of Conversation, Monitor Talk Time, Close Conversation
- **Language Organization:** purposeful use of social narrative for connecting with others and expressing oneself clearly and succinctly
- Understanding sensory needs
- Use and read facial expressions
- Monitor body language (self/others)
- Identify/appreciate/accept the perspective of another (Theory of Mind)
- **Executive functioning** for social/academic success (Initiation, Attention, Planning, Organization, Task Completion, Working Memory, Mindfulness)
- Build **Situational Awareness**/Understand the impact of behaviors on others and self
- **Problem Solving** – Collaborative & Proactive Solutions (Size of the Problem)
- **Emotional Regulation** – Zones of Regulation (Size of the Reaction)
- Self Advocacy & **Self Talk**
- Purposeful eye gaze for “thinking about others”
How to Use Functional Daily Routines For Support

Engage your child in functional activities around the house. While doing so,

Stress the importance of routine:

- Consistency
- Same time
- Same activity
- Same expectation

Games and Activities that support communication:

- Chores, such as cleaning your room or setting the table require time management, planning, organizing, attention, initiation, & task completion

Self Talk is used to motivate and critique the action
Functional Activities to Support …

1. Being Social
2. Language & Speech Development
3. Executive Functions
4. Self Help Skills/Activities of Daily Living
5. Social-Emotional Management
Play a Game

1. Make a game or activity!
   a. I Spy
   b. Obstacle Course
   c. “I’m going on a Picnic”

2. Play a commercial game
   a. Candy Land
   b. Who Am I
   c. Leggo
   d. Charades
   e. Bubble Talk
   f. Pictionary
Engage in Household Activities

1. Memory Jar, Sunshine Jar, Activity Jar
   https://youtu.be/xUR6KLBHlrw

2. Chores
   a. Set the table
   b. Yard work
   c. Laundry

3. Make a daily schedule
4. Help make a meal
5. Plan an outing
Check it out!

NESCA News and Notes
http://www.nesca-news.com/

Communication Works (CW)
CWTHERAPY | Speech Language Pathologists & Social Therapist SF-CA

Dr. Ross Greene - Lives in the Balance; Collaborative and Proactive Solutions

https://www.livesinthebalance.org/

Cincinnati Zoo

Home Safari Resources - Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden®

FREE Stories online
Stories.audible.com/discovery
Resources

Helpline: (617) 357-8431
  • massadvocates.org/helpline

COVID-19 Resources
  • massadvocates.org/covid19

Sample Email Template: Requesting Special Education Services During School Closures & Blank Remote Learning Plan & Sample Remote Learning Plan from DESE
  • massadvocates.org/newcovidresources

Upcoming weekly chats & other events:
  • massadvocates.org/events

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Additional questions & topic suggestions
  • Contact communications@massadvocates.org