

May 2020

A resource for SUPPORT STAFF offering individual and group support from a distance



Maintaining Connections & Providing Support from a Distance

Not everyone is returning back to school

As school teams are preparing to welcome students back at school, not everyone is returning back to school. A portion of the students will be in attendance, others will stay home and return to school in the Fall. Some adults will be returning and will be part of the process of preparing, implementing changes, physically in the school and will be on the front line welcoming and working with students and fellow colleagues onsite. Others, for an array of reasons, will not be on the frontline, however let's not forget how essential their role, involvement and support can be in this whole process.



The following information and suggestions are a beginning to how we can adapt our roles and provide support when working from a distance. Students are looking forward to reestablishing connections with the adults who were taking care of them, guiding them and keeping them safe. Your connection with them can still provide much of this benefit even if you're working from home.



Prior to returning to school: inform students that you will not be physically in school when they return and you very much want to be in contact with them virtually in order to maintain your support and connection with them.



Some suggestions to guide and inspire you

Ice Breaker Game

Launching an online conversation with a group of students can sometimes be a little daunting. Asking how they are feeling may be too overwhelming and sensitive. By asking questions of a more general nature you will be able to see how they are feeling by how they answer the questions and their level of involvement.



Instead of reading them from a list, we would encourage you to write them on popsicle sticks that you can draw 1 at a time or to have them on folded paper strips that you can draw from a basket. This will insert some playfulness that will definitely be appreciated by the students.

Here are some questions that can inspire and prime your discussion:

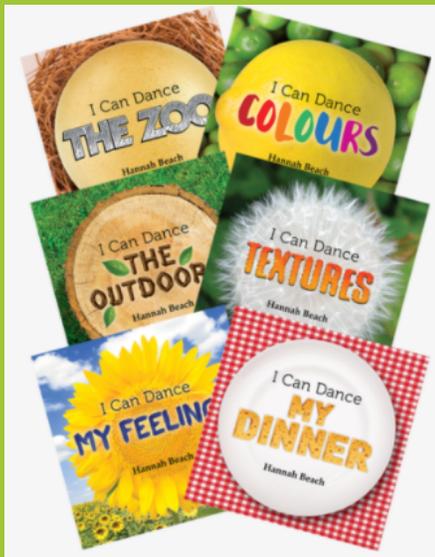
- Did you try new recipes at home?
- Did you try a new craft, what was it?
- Did you watch movies? What was your favorite one?
- Did you create new games? Please share.
- Did you practice or invent new dances?
- What did you like best about being at home?
- What/who did you miss when you were at home?
- Who read books with you? Do you have a favorite one?

Physical Distancing Games

The Art of Practicing what is “Needed” in a Playful Manner

2-metre Challenge!

- **How many ways can we show 2 metres?** Kick it off by doing a few examples yourself! Take photos and show them to the students as examples. They could do this at home or at school, indoors or outdoors. Have the photos emailed to you, regroup them into a PowerPoint and create a video capsule that can be shared with other groups. The students could also vote on the song to accompany their visual display. The video capsule could then be shared with the school team, even other schools!
- **Class Parade** – Prepare balloon hats, pirate hats or any other kind of hat that can provide a fun visual of the 2m space that we need to respect with physical distancing. Walk in a parade as you leave the room to go outside or to another location in the building.



Provide dance & movement breaks with these adult-led activity books by Hannah Beach. Each book includes a CD where the author leads the activity. Each book provides opportunities for emotional and physical expression. These books can be purchased at <https://www.rubiconpublishing.com/>



- Create or transform an object that can safely be used, to show a 2m distance. Check out the photo of the teacher walking her dog!!
- Create chants or songs that provide back and forth momentum and give an opportunity to get loud. Think of camp songs, you may already have a repertoire!

Brain Breaks – Movement is incredibly important for all, both physically and emotionally. This is a wonderful area to get energy out and provide a window for emotional expression. These can be adult led or using different sites that have videos to lead the exercises with music. This can easily be done with or without equipment within a limited personal space.

- Active
- Dance
- Yoga



These activities can help your students to:

- 1 **Express** pent up physical and emotional energy. This is particularly helpful in guiding them to release frustration that can lead to outbursts of aggression.
- 2 **Feel** by reflecting on and expressing their feelings in a safe way. This helps them to build consciousness around their feelings, which is essential for them to develop impulse control, emotional maturity, and resilience.
- 3 **Share** their emotions and experiences, express their individuality. This helps students to make sense of all that they are feeling and experiencing. Be creative in proposing different mediums through which children can share of themselves.

Read stories that lead into some discussion and/or activity that can be supported by the adult present onsite.



Some book suggestions include:

- *My Many Colored Days* by Dr. Seuss – This could lead into drawing their frustration monster as ugly, big or odd shaped as they want. Creating a puppet could also help provide a venue for emotional expression.
- *I Am Yoga* by Susan Verde, would lend itself beautifully into some yoga which could then be included in student's daily schedule, providing both physical movement, emotional expression and a break from other tasks at hand.
- The key is having a book that you are passionate about and that you demonstrate eagerness and desire to share it with your students.

Music & Singing

Be ready to share your musical talents. If you play an instrument, now's the time to show it off. The students will love hearing you play! If you're not musically inclined, use songs/chants that rally a group together. Don't be afraid to get loud and silly – it's a great venue of expression, both the students and adults will benefit. Drumming, whether on one's lap or on their desk, and rhythm stomping can also be a lot of fun!



A few more suggestions:

- **Scavenger Hunt** – Incorporates intrigue, playfulness and movement! Have the students gather different items, such as: a hat, a shoe, a hairbrush, a plastic cup, a stuffed animal, a piece of grass, a rock, a book, a pencil, a fruit, etc. You can name 1 or 2 objects at a time...ready, set, go!
- **Interactive Listen & Guess game** – Here is an example of a link that offers an auditory music challenge where the children need to listen and then attempt to guess the name of the song

Guess the Kids movie

song: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGqrn_Fz44

- **Interactive Emoji Guessing game** – Look, stop & think. Give it your best attempt to guessing which children's movie title the assembled emojis represent.
- Guess the Disney movie from
Emojis:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybkzCvx6rT4>



Greeting one another without touching – “New Greeting” Challenge!

Find or invent new ways of greeting one another, without touching and respecting the 2m social distancing requirement. Take pictures, create a powerpoint and share them with your group and other groups. You could even create a song or chant!

Some examples:

- Wave your hand and say ‘hi’
- Smile
- Wink
- Air hug
- Air “high five”
- Air fist pumps
- “Raise the roof” – both hands pushed up to the sky with a few up/down repetitions
- Thumbs up
- Sign language for ‘hello’
- Hand over your heart
- Two hands positioned to outline the shape of a heart

