Early Learning Services (ELS) Open Office Hours: **Building Relationships that Support Social/Emotional Well-Being Using Everyday Practices**

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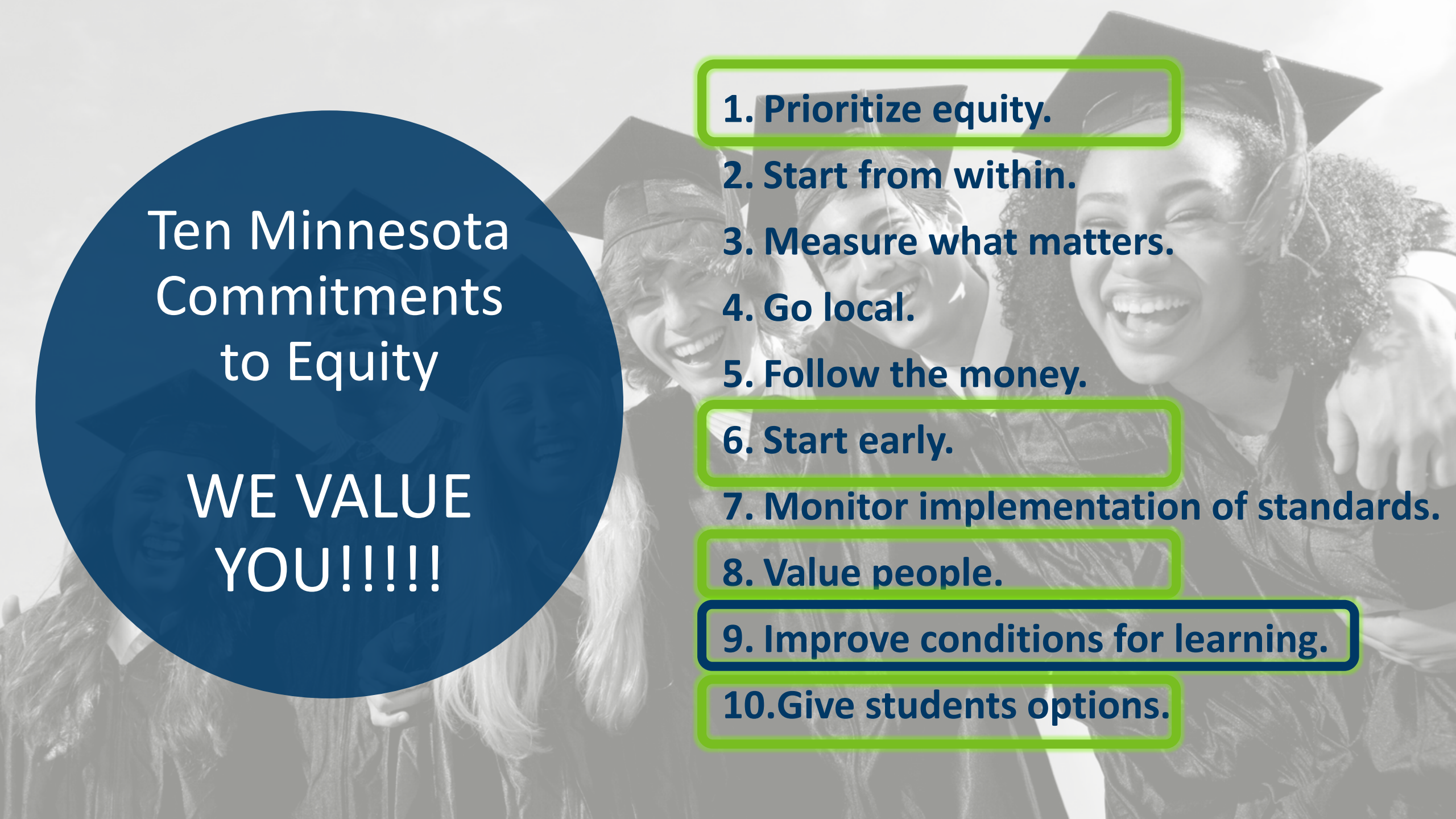
August 26, 2020



Ten Minnesota Commitments to Equity

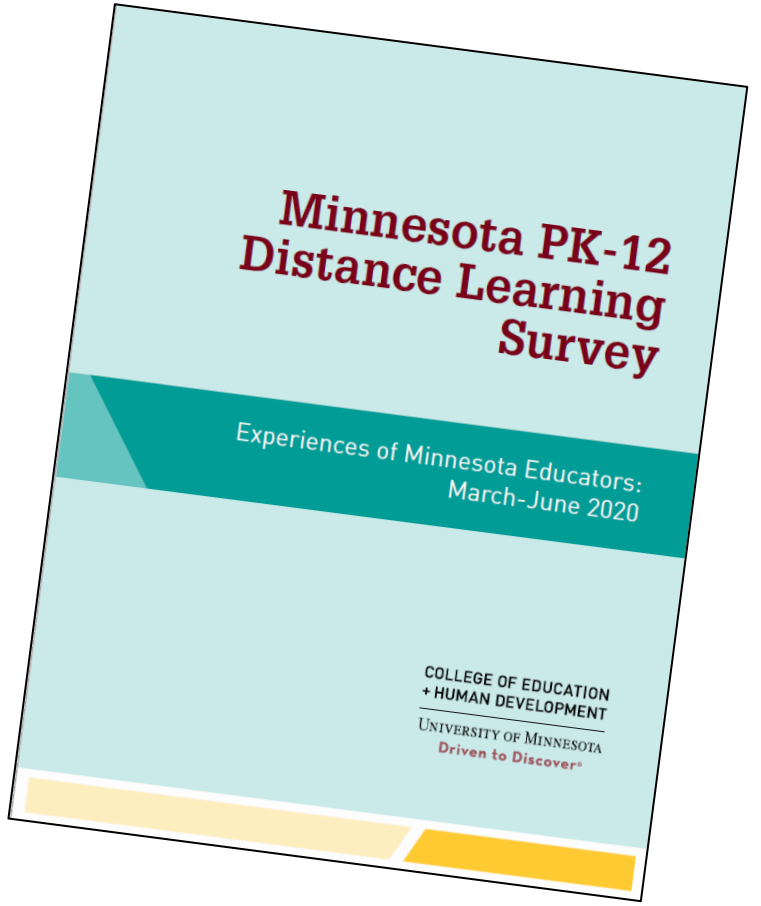
WE VALUE YOU!!!!!

1. Prioritize equity.
2. Start from within.
3. Measure what matters.
4. Go local.
5. Follow the money.
6. Start early.
7. Monitor implementation of standards.
8. Value people.
9. Improve conditions for learning.
10. Give students options.

Remember What We've Learned Since Spring

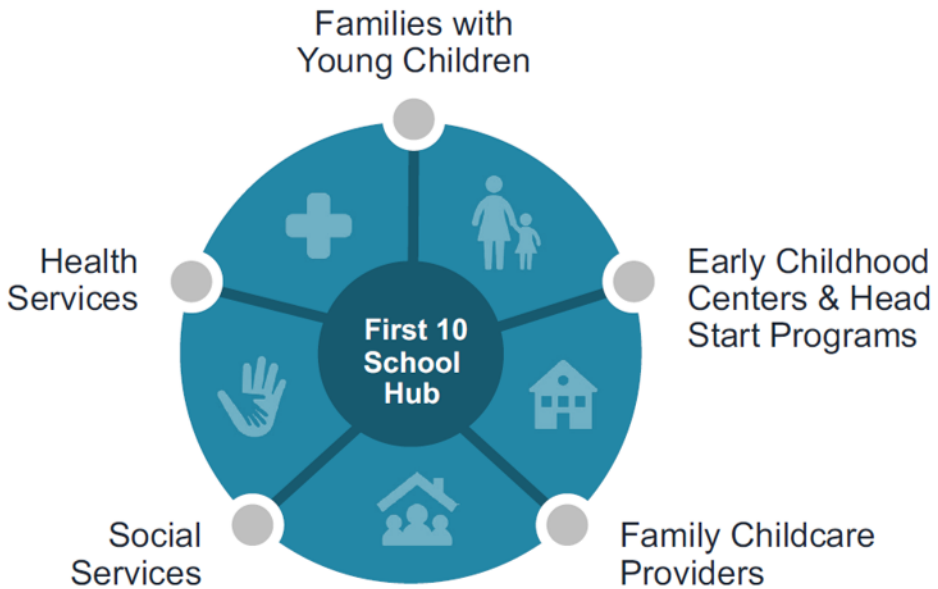
1. It's all about relationships.
2. Consider the context of the family when planning programs.
3. We are all worried.
4. We learned a lot.
5. Develop processes that serve multiple purposes.

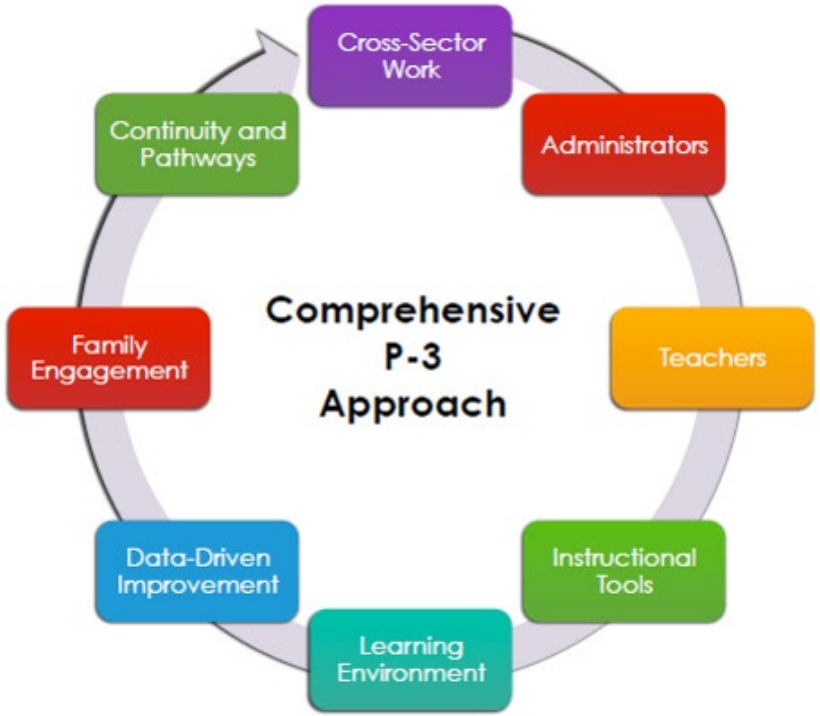
[Minnesota PK-12 Distance Learning Survey]



P3 Opportunities to Build Alignment and Coherence

FIGURE 2: **First 10 School Hub**





Session Description

Early Learning staff will review materials and strategies for:

- **Making decisions** using COVID-19 Updates materials and we will collect/answer questions as time allows.
- **Building stable and consistent relationships** throughout your program as your learning model may change throughout the school year from in-person, to hybrid, to distance learning.
- **Using everyday practices** such as communication, attendance verification, assessment, and instruction to help build routines and relationships that support social/emotional well-being and health.

Virtual Session Reminders

- Make sure that your audio is muted.
- Use the “chat” function to send comments/questions throughout the presentation.
    - Select the “Host and Panelists” so that we can be most responsive to your questions.
- Please place resource links that are pertinent to the discussion in the chat box so that we can share the information after the session ends.
- Slides from the Open Office Hour session will be shared with participants.
- This session will be recorded and available upon request.

COVID-19 Guidance Tour and Updates

Demonstration of the MDE COVID-19 Webpage

MDE COVID-19 Updates Webpage

Check these key resources as they are updated frequently:

1. Governor's Executive Order 20-82
2. Safe Learning Plans for the 2020-21 School Year
3. MDE's 2020-21 Planning Guidance for Minnesota Schools
4. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Schools and Child Care: COVID-19

Clarification on Funds

For fiscal years 2020 and 2021 only, a school district may transfer any funds not already assigned or encumbered by staff salary and benefits, or otherwise encumbered by federal law, from any accounts or operating fund to the undesignated balance in any other operating fund. A fund transfer is allowed if the transfer meets the following criteria from Minnesota Laws 2020, Chapter 116/House File 4415 Article 3 Section 8:

1. The transfer does not increase state aid obligations to the district or school or result in additional property tax authority for the district.
2. A transfer is limited to the operating funds of a school district, charter school or cooperative unit.
3. A school board must approve any fund or account transfer before the reporting deadline for the respective fiscal year.
4. A school district, charter school, or cooperative unit must maintain accounting records for the purposes of this section that are sufficient to document both the specific funds transferred and use of those funds. The accounting records are subject to auditor review.
5. Any execution of this flexibility must not interfere with or jeopardize funding per federal requirements.
6. Any transfer must not interfere with the equitable delivery of distance learning or social distancing models.

Physical Capacity and Group Size Limits

- Group size and room capacity are not mutually exclusive. If your facility allows, you may operate more than one group/pod/cohort of 10 (including adults) in any given space.
- Early childhood programs must be run pursuant to Public Health guidelines (paragraph 25, Emergency Executive Order 20-82). See the *2020-2021 Planning Guide for Schools* from MDH, which is available on the Schools and Child Care: COVID-19 page of MDH's website along with other valuable resources.
- If you find guidance that appears to be in conflict, proceed with the stricter guidance.
- Always consult with your school district administrators/leaders and your COVID-19 program coordinator.

Considerations for Classroom Use With Limited Group Size

- Whether in a hybrid or in-person scenario, limiting group size to 10 as a pod or cohort will decrease exposures or transmissions, reduce contact with shared surfaces, facilitate more efficient contact tracing and allow targeted testing, quarantine and/or isolation of a single cohort instead of school-wide measures in the event of a positive case.
- Practice social distancing recommendations.
- Limit interaction and item sharing between groups.
- Possible instructional strategies for cohorts/pods include staggering schedules, increasing outdoor play/learning, and increasing individual play.

Scenarios for Hybrid Learning #1

Example 1: Cohort model when space is limited. If a district is limited to the originally assigned classroom for Hybrid programming, the class size would be split into two groups (pods/cohorts), Group A and Group B. Each group would receive an instructional mix of face-to-face and distance learning that equals the amount of instructional hours planned.

- For instance, if the planned half-day schedule is for five days/week, it might be possible to instead have one full-day of face-to-face program for each group and three half-day distance learning experiences (Group A attend AMs and Group B attend PMs).
- Another possibility would be using Monday/Tuesday and Thursday/Friday face-to-face groupings with Wednesday as a sanitation/distance learning day for everyone.

Scenarios for Hybrid Learning #2

Example 2: Cohort model when additional classroom space is available. In this example, a class could be split between two rooms that would each function as an independent classroom that is taught by one teacher. Assistant teachers would remain with the same group of children throughout the day. The teacher would split their time between the two groups following masking guidance. The following processes could be used to plan the day in this scenario:

- Activities most closely align with core goals of the week's lesson plan or for individual children are taught by the teacher.
- Guided activities like free choice play, outdoor play time, snack, etc. are lead and supervised by the assistant teacher.
- Schedule co-planning and professional learning time for all staff following appropriate masking guidance.

Scenarios for Hybrid Learning #3

Example 3: Teacher-guided cohort model. Develop a set of criteria to help identify children who would benefit from more face-to-face learning opportunities and those who have the support needed for an expanded distance learning time. Develop a set of classroom criteria (e.g., students experiencing homelessness, food insecurity, lack of access to technology, parent work schedule issues, etc.) that helps identify two cohorts within the classroom.

- **Group A** would receive one face-to-face learning opportunity with teacher and peers each week. The rest of their scheduled instructional time would be planned distance learning activities that could also include a weekly synchronous event(s) planned between the in-class and distance learning groups or an event/work projects for small groups using technology.

- **Group B**, the face-to-face group, would maintain a regular schedule with one planned day of distance learning each week.

Program Area Highlights: Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), 1

Documenting a reduction of inclusion opportunities.

- Preschool option has closed – all models. If not alternative placement is available the Individualized Education Program (IEP) must be revised to reflect the change. Be sure to note the change is due to COVID-19 and is not reflective of a team decision.
- Preschool option still available but all children are receiving fewer hours or days. A Prior Written Notice (PWN) or Individual Distance Learning Plan (IDLP) inform the parents of what the general education setting will include under each of the three models. No need to revise the IEP.

Documenting Special Education and Related Services for multiple models

- Again, this is best done through a PWN or IDLP.

Program Area Highlights: Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), 2

When can you bring children in for evaluation and assessment?

MDE's "2020-21 School Year Planning Guidance for Schools", allows for families to come into school buildings or other locations to participate in assessment activities as long as all Department of Health guidelines are followed. Assessments allow for direct observation and data collection, but are also dynamic interactions that might allow staff to model strategies for families. This option is not available if you are in required distance learning only based on COVID-19 numbers.

Program Area Highlights: Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), 3

Recognizing the huge tasks districts have in “catching up” with evaluations and re-evaluations, the allowance for timeline flexibility remains our current guidance. While there is no specific date for completing evaluations we are still emphasizing that evaluations and re-evaluations should be completed a soon as possible.

Some things to consider when prioritizing evaluations and re-evaluations include:

- Whether the child is currently receiving services or needs that initial identification in order for delivery of services to start;
- Whether identification is necessary for participation in a district or community preschool opportunity;
- How much of a suspended evaluation or re-evaluation is left to complete (are there some that can be completed with very little additional staff time); and
- December 1 child count – child must be eligible and on a plan.

Program Area Highlights: Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), 4

Data Practice Questions Concerns

- Asynchronous coaching and education records retention.
- Assessment tool retention policies – do they match your district policy?

Program Area Highlights: Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), 5

Useful links:

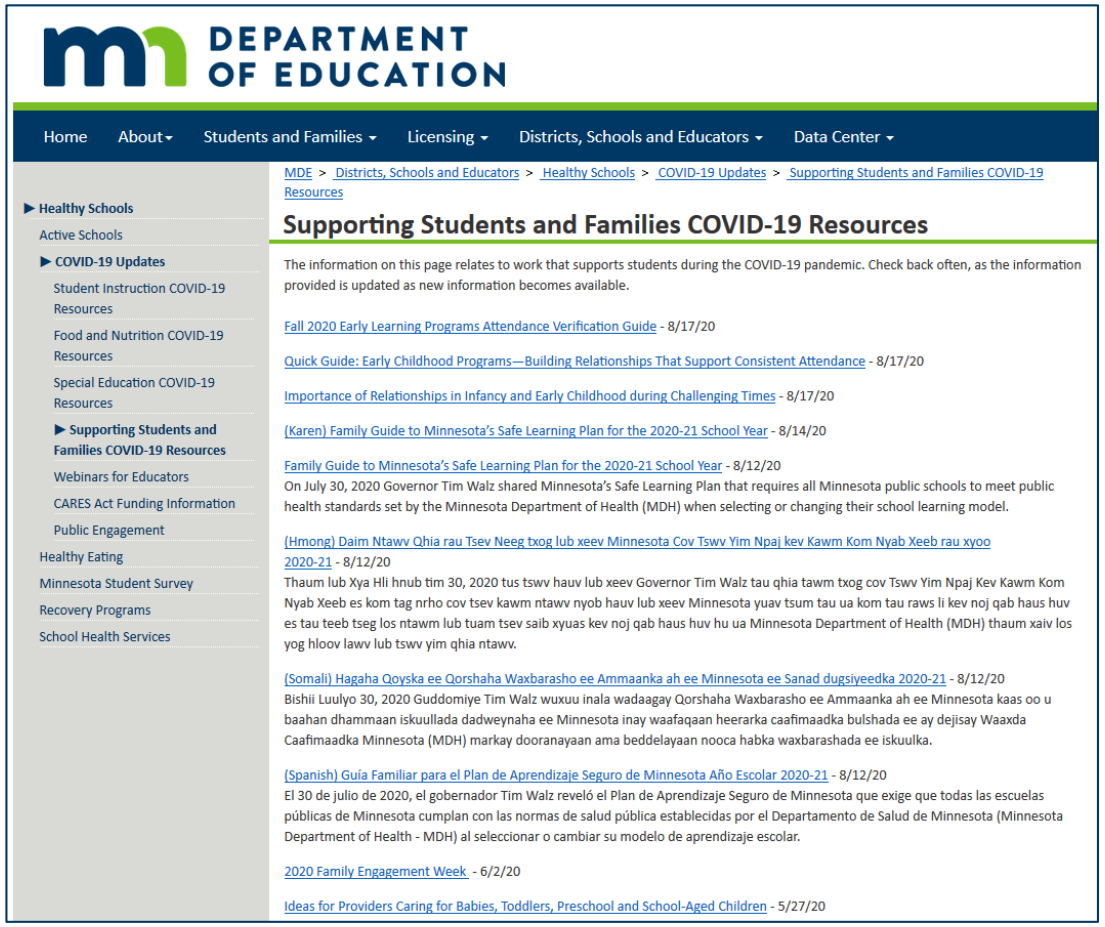
- MDH 2020-21 Planning Guide for Schools
- MDH Guidance for Delivering Direct Student Support Services: Staff Protective Equipment
- MDE 2020-21 School Year Planning Guidance
- Early Care and Education Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions for the 2020-21 School Year
- Special Education COVID-19 Resources

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

- FERPA and Student Privacy
- FERPA and Virtual Learning Related Resources

Building Relationships: Family Engagement Community of Practice

Supporting Students and Families & FE Toolkit



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Healthy Schools > COVID-19 Updates > Supporting Students and Families COVID-19 Resources

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    - Public Engagement
  - Healthy Eating
  - Minnesota Student Survey
  - Recovery Programs
  - School Health Services

Supporting Students and Families COVID-19 Resources

The information on this page relates to work that supports students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Check back often, as the information provided is updated as new information becomes available.

Fall 2020 Early Learning Programs Attendance Verification Guide - 8/17/20

Quick Guide: Early Childhood Programs—Building Relationships That Support Consistent Attendance - 8/17/20

Importance of Relationships in Infancy and Early Childhood during Challenging Times - 8/17/20

(Karen) Family Guide to Minnesota's Safe Learning Plan for the 2020-21 School Year - 8/14/20

Family Guide to Minnesota's Safe Learning Plan for the 2020-21 School Year - 8/12/20
On July 30, 2020 Governor Tim Walz shared Minnesota's Safe Learning Plan that requires all Minnesota public schools to meet public health standards set by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) when selecting or changing their school learning model.

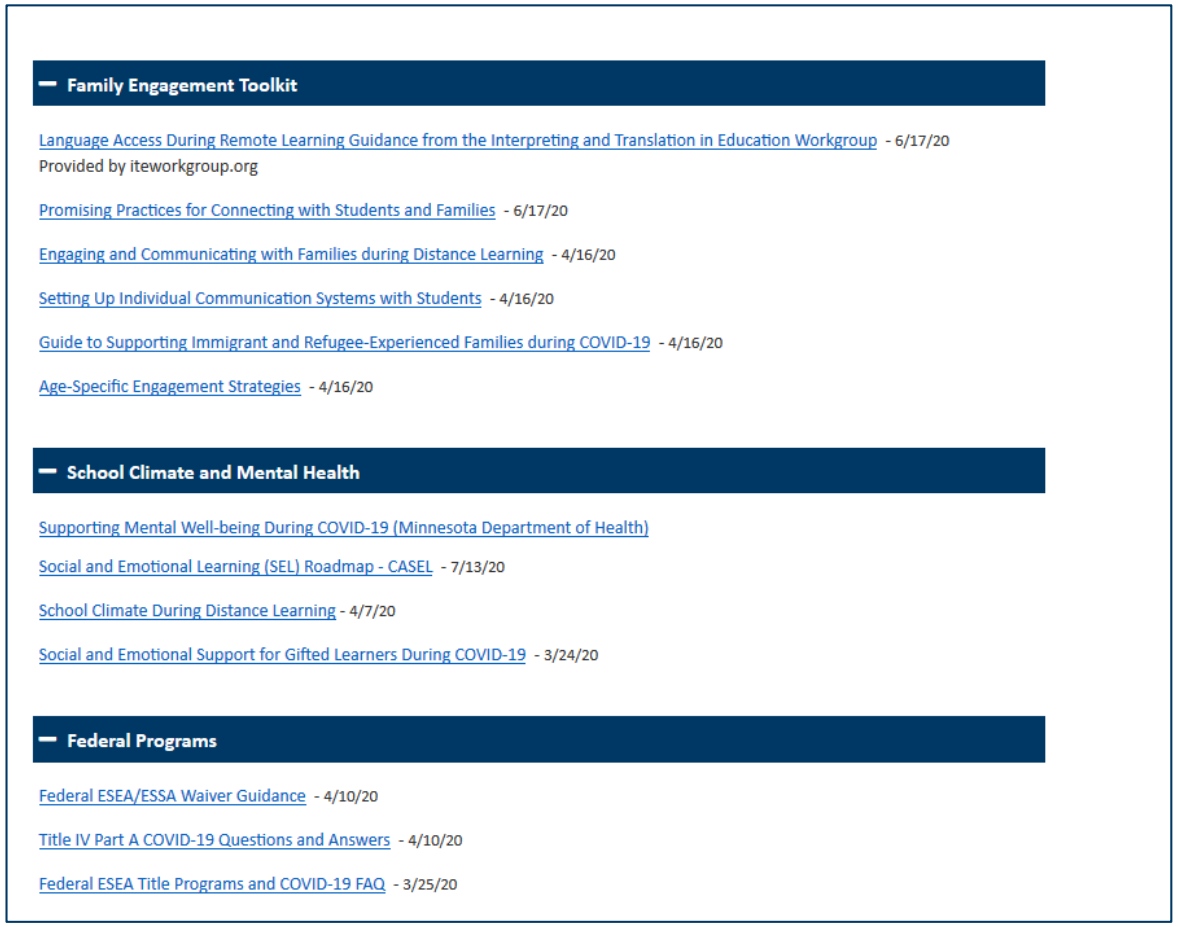
(Hmong) Daim Ntawv Qhia rau Tsev Neeg txog lub xeev Minnesota Cov Tswv Yim Npaj kev Kawm Kom Nyab Xeeb rau xyoo 2020-21 - 8/12/20
Thaum lub Xya Hli hnub tim 30, 2020 tus tswv hauv lub xeev Governor Tim Walz tau qhia tawm txog cov Tswv Yim Npaj Kev Kawm Kom Nyab Xeeb es kom tag nrho cov tsev kawm ntawv nyob hauv lub xeev Minnesota yuav tsum tau ua kom tau raws li kev noj qab haus huv es tau teeb tseg los ntawm lub tuam tsev saib xyuas kev noj qab haus huv hu ua Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) thaum xaiv los yog hloov lawv lub tswv yim qhia ntawv.

(Somali) Hagaha Qoyska ee Qorshaha Waxbarasho ee Ammaanka ah ee Minnesota ee Sanad dugsiyeedka 2020-21 - 8/12/20
Bishii Luulyo 30, 2020 Guddomiye Tim Walz wuxuu inala wadaagay Qorshaha Waxbarasho ee Ammaanka ah ee Minnesota kaas oo u baahan dhammaan iskuullada dadweynaha ee Minnesota inay waafaqaan heerarka caafimaadka bulshada ee ay dejisay Waaxda Caafimaadka Minnesota (MDH) markay dooranayaan ama beddelayaan nooca habka waxbarashada ee iskuulka.

(Spanish) Guía Familiar para el Plan de Aprendizaje Seguro de Minnesota Año Escolar 2020-21 - 8/12/20
El 30 de julio de 2020, el gobernador Tim Walz reveló el Plan de Aprendizaje Seguro de Minnesota que exige que todas las escuelas públicas de Minnesota cumplan con las normas de salud pública establecidas por el Departamento de Salud de Minnesota (Minnesota Department of Health - MDH) al seleccionar o cambiar su modelo de aprendizaje escolar.

2020 Family Engagement Week - 6/2/20

Ideas for Providers Caring for Babies, Toddlers, Preschool and School-Aged Children - 5/27/20



Family Engagement Toolkit

Language Access During Remote Learning Guidance from the Interpreting and Translation in Education Workgroup - 6/17/20
Provided by iteworkgroup.org

Promising Practices for Connecting with Students and Families - 6/17/20

Engaging and Communicating with Families during Distance Learning - 4/16/20

Setting Up Individual Communication Systems with Students - 4/16/20

Guide to Supporting Immigrant and Refugee-Experienced Families during COVID-19 - 4/16/20

Age-Specific Engagement Strategies - 4/16/20

School Climate and Mental Health

Supporting Mental Well-being During COVID-19 (Minnesota Department of Health)

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Roadmap - CASEL - 7/13/20

School Climate During Distance Learning - 4/7/20

Social and Emotional Support for Gifted Learners During COVID-19 - 3/24/20

Federal Programs

Federal ESEA/ESSA Waiver Guidance - 4/10/20

Title IV Part A COVID-19 Questions and Answers - 4/10/20

Federal ESEA Title Programs and COVID-19 FAQ - 3/25/20

Supporting Students and Families

2020-21 Family Engagement Community of Practice

The Family Engagement Community of Practice is designed to be an informal, unstructured time and space for parenting educators to meet together to:

- Learn from each other
- Share ideas, strategies, resources, etc.
- Develop personally/professionally, and advance the practice of parenting education
- Network and share experiences
- Provide collegial support and guidance

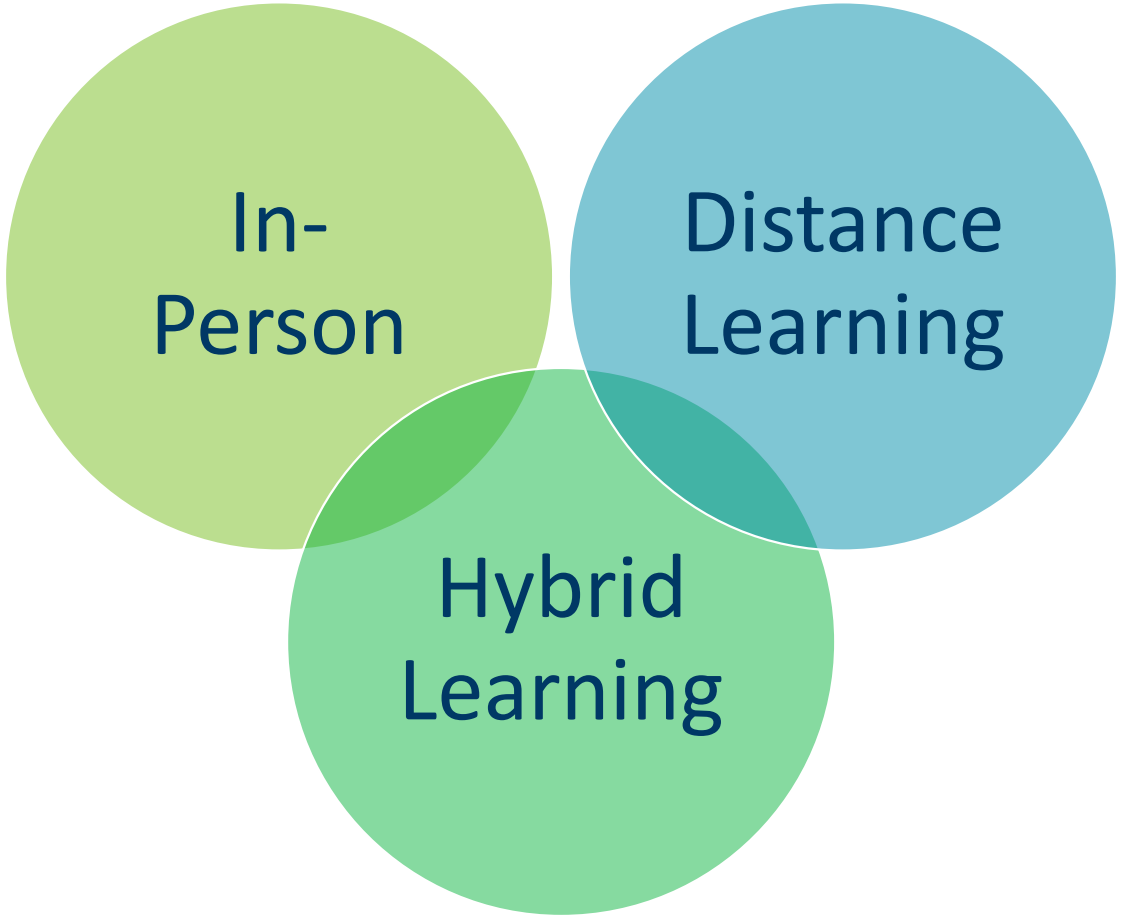
Details:

Virtual format, partners include Parent Training and Information Center (PACER) and University of Minnesota Extension

Watch for More Information

Building Relationships that Support Social/Emotional Well-Being Using Everyday Practices

Thinking About Current Contexts of Teaching and Learning



Living with Unpredictability

Living in an environment of unpredictability is stressful for everyone, especially young children. Children will develop resiliency as they grow and develop, provided they have a strong adult who cares for them, the opportunity to develop skills and abilities, ways to show how competent they are, activities to stay healthy, occasion to learn, to and manage emotions, and chances have friendships.

Children need connections and relationships as their foundation on which to develop.

Tools For Building In Connections and Relationships into Everyday Moments

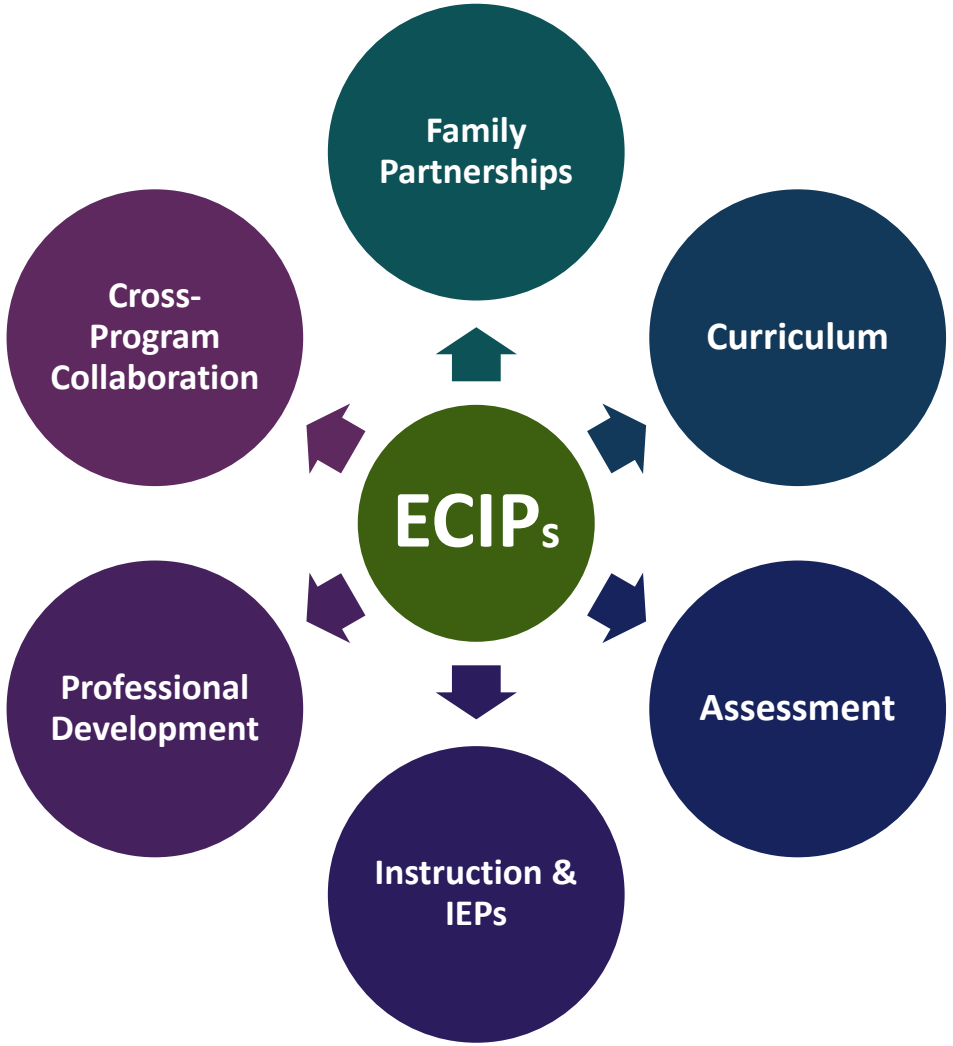
1. Alabama Example
2. ECIPs
3. Parent Guides to the ECIPs
4. Practice Profiles for Teachers, Trainers and Coaches
5. And more…

Connections and Relationships

Areas of Connection		
Teacher: Family	Teacher: Child	Child: Child
Family support is vital to be successful, so the child will benefit fully. The foundation of Early Childhood is human connection. Through connections with family each day, we will create meaningful experiences. As the teacher, connecting with families is a priority.	Connecting with children drives us as teachers. We love to see the spark in their eyes when new learning happens. Some children have had little to no experience with teachers. Their backgrounds will be diverse and their experiences as well. Connection strategies will vary between individual children. You have 18 little hearts waiting for you; you've got this!	We can't forget this piece! How can you build connections between children when they have never met? This is a challenge we are all learning and growing through. During this time your focus to build your classroom family is important. Helping children learn about one another and develop friendships will create a sense of safety and belonging. Through building these friendships, we will transition into the classroom seamlessly when the time comes.

Connecting in a Virtual Classroom, Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, 2020 Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs) The Driver(s)



ECIPs: Social and Emotional, 1

Component **S**1-3: **S**elf and Emotional Awareness

Subcomponent	0-1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years, K Readiness
					S2.7 Demonstrates growing interest in and awareness of similarities and differences between self and others
S3 Emotions: Child demonstrates understanding of own emotions, others' emotions, and awareness of emotions becoming reactions and behaviors	**S**3.1 Expresses emotions through facial expressions, sounds, and gestures **S**3.2 Notices and responds to emotions displayed by others	**S**3.3 Expresses feelings, needs, and wants with nonverbal communication, vocalizations, and a few words **S**3.4 Associates emotions with words and expressions	**S**3.5 Recognizes and describes own emotions **S**3.6 Shows some understanding of others' emotional expressions	**S**3.7 Uses words to express emotions **S**3.8 Recognizes and responds to others' emotional expression	**S**3.9 Demonstrates or describes increasing understanding of cause and effect around own emotional reactions **S**3.10 Exhibits growing ability to understand and anticipate others' emotional reactions to situations or behaviors

ECIPs: Social and Emotional, 2

Domain: Social and Emotional Development

Component S1-3: Self and Emotional Awareness

Subcomponent	0-1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years, K Readiness
SE 1 Confidence: Child demonstrates confidence "I am capable, I can experiment, I can make mistakes, and I can move on"	**S1.1** Independently prompts caregiver to meet basic needs **S1.2** Uses voice or body to show likes and dislikes	**S1.3** Independently attempts new challenges or activities that may or may not be successful **S1.4** Checks with and accepts support from adult or caregiver when necessary	**S1.5** Demonstrates or describes personal skills, likes, or dislikes **S1.6** Seeks help from adult to meet needs or solve problems **S1.7** Seeks out available social-emotional resources such as adults, peers or things for support	**S1.8** Demonstrates confidence in a range of abilities and expresses pride in accomplishments **S1.9** Consistently and effectively uses social/emotional resources such as adults, peers or things for support	**S1.10** Demonstrates increasing confidence and inclination to express opinions and ideas **S1.11** Engages in increasingly independent and self-directed activities **S1.12** Tolerates constructive criticism and manages setbacks, seeking adult support when needed
S2 Self-Awareness: Child demonstrates understanding and appreciation of uniqueness in own family, community, culture, and the world	**S2.1** Explores the world and environment around self and how things work	**S2.2** Demonstrates awareness of self as separate from others	**S2.3** Identifies self as part of the family, culture, community, or group **S2.4** Describes or labels self as a boy or girl	**S2.5** Demonstrates knowledge of family celebrations, traditions, and expectations	**S2.6** Shows increasingly accurate understanding of own strengths, preferences, limitations, and personal qualities

ECIPs: Social and Emotional, 3

Component S4-5: Self-Management

Subcomponent	0-1 year	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years, K Readiness
S5 Managing emotions and behaviors: Child manages emotions, impulses, and behaviors with assistance from others and independently	**S5.1** Uses simple behaviors, objects, or movements to comfort and calm self with caregiver assistance **S5.2** Communicates needs or wants to adults using simple gestures, sign language, or sounds **S5.3** Uses sounds, sign language, or gestures to gain adult help to alleviate discomfort or distress **S5.4** Responds to adult efforts to calm or soothe **S5.5** Uses behaviors, objects, or movements to comfort self	**S5.6** Expands use of sign language, gestures, and a few words or phrases to communicate needs, wants, preferences, and discomforts to adults **S5.7** Actively seeks adult help using sounds, gestures, or some words when feeling strong emotions, either positive or negative **S5.8** Anticipates and actively avoids or ignores situations that cause discomfort	**S5.11** Uses a wide variety of self-comforting behaviors **S5.12** Communicates specific needs, wants, and discomfort to adults **S5.13** Anticipates the need for comfort and tries to prepare self for changes in routine	**S5.16** Consistently calms self when feeling strong emotions or discomfort with only occasional adult guidance and assistance **S5.17** Independently expresses feelings, needs, opinions, and desires in appropriate ways **S5.18** Follows expectations established to manage feelings and behaviors with necessary reminders or assistance	**5.21** Increasingly expresses feelings, needs, opinions and desires verbally **5.22** Shows increasing understanding of changing expectations for behavior and emotional expression in different settings (e.g., home, school, grocery store)

Everyday Practices for Building Relationships: Experiences to Build Resiliency

1. Share ideas with parents on how their child can build skills: set a table, return food to the fridge, pick out clothes, play a game, recite a favorite story, wash a window.
2. On a walk, share what each person notices or wonders about.
3. Play “What would I do if…?” with some silly ideas (if I was a giant) and with some more real ideas (Can’t find my shoe, I spilled the milk, someone’s at the door).
4. Build on #3 – what can I do when I’m mad, sad not sure, want something. Draw a picture of the solution and keep it nearby.

3. Tools For Building In Connections and Relationships into Everyday Moments: Parent Guides to the ECIPs

AREA OF LEARNING:

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL

[MDE Family Resources Parent Guides to the ECIPs]

How you can help:

- Make sure your child has warm, loving relationships.
- Create a safe place for your child to talk to you about feelings and challenges without harsh consequences for making mistakes.
- Think about what your child likes to do, and suggest activities to support her.
- Try new things with your child by sharing and learning together.
- Help your child practice listening and talking to others in a social setting.
- Respond to comments or questions from your child about differences among people in a factual, positive way.
- Teach your child about her culture and the culture of others and encourage your child's understanding of differences.
- Talk with your child about how she feels and how others might be feeling. Teach your child to express his or her emotions appropriately.
- Be a good example to your child when interacting with others.
- Set limits for your child and guide her so she can live within those limits.
- Allow your child to make reasonable choices so she can learn to set limits for herself.
- Help your child problem solve when she encounters a challenge. Encourage your child to help others.

4. Tools For Building In Connections and Relationships into Everyday Moments: Practice Profiles for Teachers, Trainers and Coaches

"Research shows compared to their non-bilingual
peers, bilingual people have an easier time:
• Understanding math concepts and solving word
problems;
• Developing strong thinking skills;
• Using logic;
• Focusing, remembering, and making decisions;
• Thinking about language; and
• Learning other languages." (Too Small to Fail)

MDE Practice Briefs for Teacher, Trainers and Coaches

Using KEP-Approved Assessments to Partner with and Engage Families

Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP)-approved assessments are a resource that can be used in a planful way to regularly partner and engage families throughout the year.

Regular conversations with families build relationships (partnerships) that are essential to collecting formative authentic assessment data.

KEP-approved assessments are all designed in a way in which families are positioned as valued partners that can share valid and reliable information.

Families (and other members of the child's educational team) should **always** be included in developing an understanding of what a child knows and is able to do.

The information collected by the team – **including families** – should be used to:

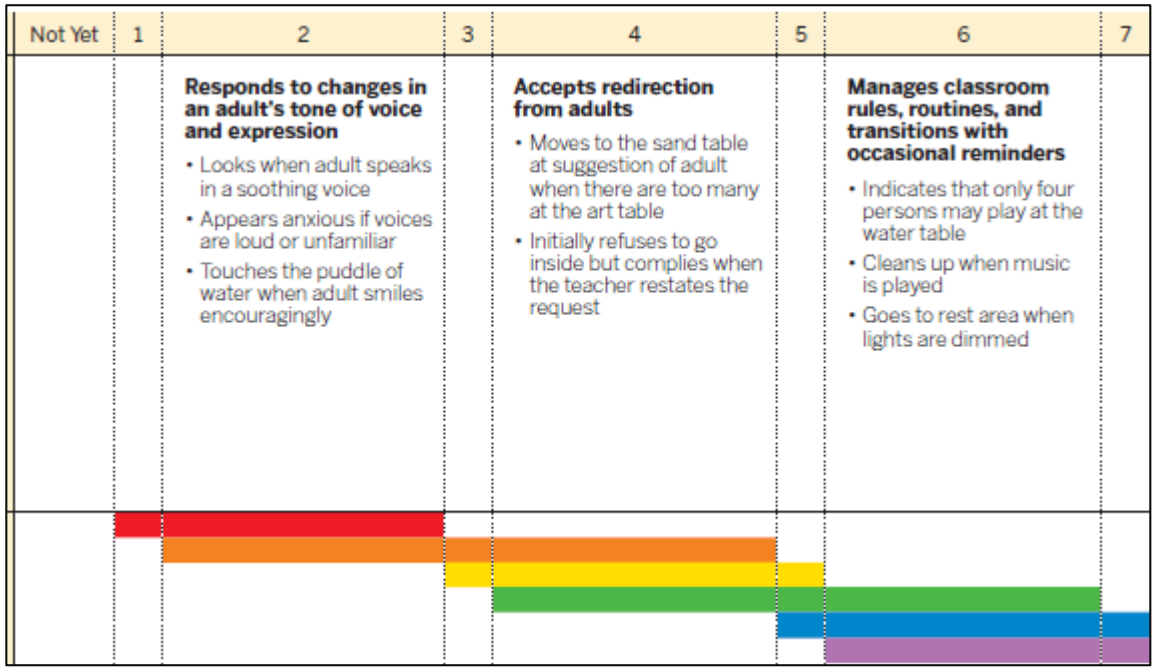
1) Anchor regular conversions and check-ins about how a child and their family are doing.

2) Guide instruction → where is the child on the learning progression and how do we give them the opportunity to progress.

3) Determine whether or not additional supports are needed by the child or family (i.e., programmatic resources, 504 Plan, referral to special education, or other services like mental health supports, multi-lingual learner supports, health services, other community resources).

A Concrete Example (GOLD) Focused on the Social Emotional Domain of Learning.

GOLD 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors → B. Follows limits and expectations



This is a progression of skills (left to right).

Red = Birth – 1-year-olds
Purple = Kindergarten

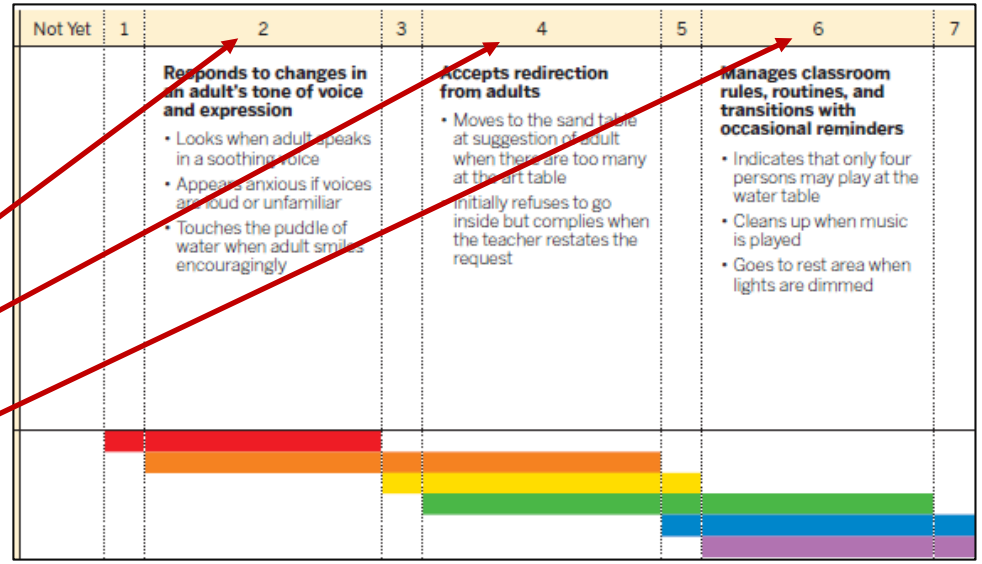
GOLD 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors B. Follows limits and expectations

Example: Web Meeting or Phone Call with Family

Teacher: What does it look like in your family when you tell your child "It's bedtime!" on a typical night?
Family: Responds.
Teacher: Does the response allow you to assign a score? If not, ask follow-up questions to obtain more details:

- Does your child respond to a change in the tone of your voice?
- Does your child initially refuse but then 'comply' when you repeat your direction?
- Does your child need any reminders to follow your bedtime routine?

Teacher: Does the response lead you to believe that the child or family could benefit from additional resources or support? The information should help you understand "What is the next step for this child." – which can be shared with the family.



KEP-Approved Assessments
Focusing on Social Emotional Development By Partnering with Families

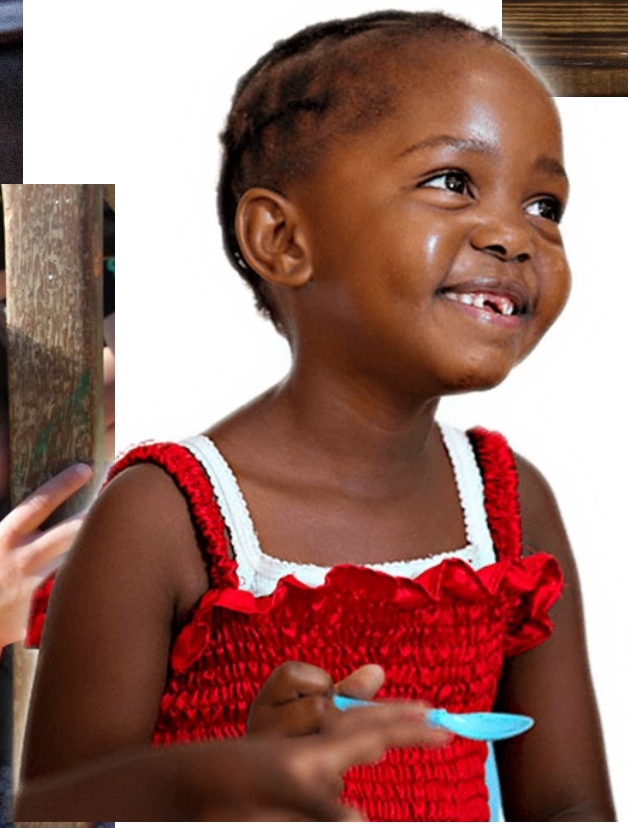
KEP-approved assessments produce formative and summative information.

- **Formative**: How are students doing throughout the year?
- **Summative**: How are students doing at the end of the year or how did they progress from the beginning to the end of the year?

There are widely held concerns around social emotional development and child/family well-being during COVID-19, we strongly encourage you to collect information for this domain regularly. I.e., collecting information regularly throughout Fall, Winter, and Spring (not just fall and spring).

> *"The consequences of long-term distance learning are likely to differ depending on the age of students and their specific learning needs. Elementary-aged children may struggle with distance learning, especially if an adult is not available to support them. This is the case especially for children in grades K-3, who are still developing the skills needed to regulate their own behavior and emotions, maintain attention, and monitor their own learning."*
>
> -- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2020. Reopening K-12 Schools During the COVID-19 Pandemic

More Everyday Practices for Building Relationships



Everyday Practices for Building Relationships: Communication and Instructional Practices

Build and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with families using carefully selected communication mechanisms:

- Set up times and methods that work for each family for intentional interactions.
- Empower families by offering communication choices that work for their family.
- Ask families what they need or worry about and respond with resources or support. For example do families need access to meals, medical care, internet or financial supports? Help them locate and if needed provide support to sign up.
- Acknowledge the family members understanding of the child by asking open ended questions: these invite more information than simple yes/no questions. For example, “What have you tried and how did that go?” or “What do you think she’s trying to tell you when she does that?” Or “What’s it like for you when that happens?”
- Use the information that you learn to help shape instructional practices.

Example Strategies for Instructional Practices

Strategy	Description
Small Group Zoom	From the child survey, create voting opportunities on Zoom calls with variables such as thumbs up/ thumbs down, make a specific animal sound, or move a certain way by clapping, bouncing, or waving. Have them vote and count these votes, link children together with the same interests and don't forget to cast your vote in as well.
Create a daily check-in with children	This can be done via Zoom platform or even a google doc. The goal is that it is a brief check-in and it can be questions like: How are you feeling today? What do you want to do today? Do you have any news to share? The answer can be created into a daily newsletter then can be emailed to parents and then shared with children.
Virtual Field Trips	Using the power of the internet take the children on virtual field trips. Use a read aloud or talk about a place the children visited. Ask them if they could go anywhere where would they go? If possible, make it into a short fun virtual trip!
Feelings Chart	Make a simple feelings chart and have the children make the faces of the feelings and have them tell what makes them happy, mad, sad, scared
Spotlight a STAR student each day	The STAR Student is spotlighted with interview questions that the teachers asks the child and parent.
Question of the day or problem of the day	Send a question or problem and ask parents to send the responses, then create a letter highlighting what the responses were
Story Time	Reading a story or using a website like Vooks
Morning Meeting	Same time each day have a morning meeting with the children just like in the classroom, start slow with movement and singing as the children get used to Zoom (offer multiple choices of times for daily meetings)
Dance Party	Host a dance party and let children dance in their homes
Flat Teacher Activity	Send a cut-out of you to each child and ask them to take you through their day. Have them tape your picture to a piece of paper and draw around you the things you saw
You Draw Me and I will draw you!	Hop on Zoom with one child and ask them to draw you and you draw the child, talk your process through with the child and share the pictures. It would be a nice touch to mail your drawing of the child to them
Virtual Lunch Date	Or Breakfast or Dinner or snack- share a meal with one child at a time and talk to get to know the child, let them lead

Everyday Practices for Building Relationships: Attendance

By paying attention to the needs of families that often contribute to absenteeism, issues of systemic inequity can be recognized and addressed by the level of support and resources offered to students and their families. Think about each of these questions and how them might be approached differently for in-person, hybrid, or distance learning models?

- *How are we communicating and connecting with families and their children?*
- *How are we proactively monitoring and addressing attendance and absenteeism?*
- *How are we ensuring daily/regular interaction with a staff person?*

Quick Guide: Early Childhood Programs—Building Relationships That Support Consistent Attendance - 8/17/20

Building Relationships Through Everyday Practices: Attendance Verification

During any period of hybrid or distance learning, attendance and membership information is verified through parent-generated and school-confirmed learning experiences.

Fall 2020 Early Learning Programs Attendance Verification Guide

Provides guidance for developing verification methods based on routines that support positive student outcomes using three key ideas:

1. **Consider the context of each student's situation.**
2. **Leverage technology to understand student participation.**
3. **Keep students (and families) engaged.**

Building Relationships Through Everyday Practices: Social Emotional Health and Early Childhood Screening

Early Childhood Screening requires a social emotional screening component completed by parents (age 3-6).

- Anticipatory guidance is offered to parents to know what to expect as the child grows. Parents may ask questions and learn about resources.
- If indicated, referrals and resource information are offered including: Medical provider, Early Childhood Special Education, mental health provider and other resources:
- CDC Positive Parent Tips, Zero to Three Parent Resources, Family Voices (Parent-to-Parent of Minnesota), PACER, Hands and Voices, ECFE, Head Start, Family Home Visiting, Follow Along Program, Parent Support Outreach Program (PSOP), Help Me Grow- informational articles and videos, MN Children's Mental Health Grant.

Resources and Contacts

New Resources

- Importance of Relationships in Infancy and Early Childhood during Challenging Times (MDE) Explains the importance of relationships throughout the age span, ideas for activities and stories of connection with families.
- List of WIDA Early Years Articles on Family Engagement and Language Learning
- Alabama Reopening Guidance 2020 Helpful information on maintaining connections with families and children during distance learning, activities and what to include in distance learning experiences.
- Emotional Connection During Crisis, Columbia Nurturing Science Program: a Series of 7 short articles, each article addresses one element of connection that is especially important during times of crisis.

Frequently Updated National Resource Sites

- Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA)
- National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- Minnesota Association for Family and Early Education (MnAFEE) Family Engagement
- National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI)

ELS Contact Information

Email Addresses:

- Early Learning Services: MDE.ELS@state.mn.us
- Early Childhood Special Education: MDE.ECSE@state.mn.us
- Voluntary Prekindergarten/School Readiness Plus: MDE.VPK@state.mn.us
- Early Learning Scholarships:
    - MDE.PathwayII@state.mn.us for policy/implementation questions.
    - MDE.ELSA@state.mn.us for ELSA system questions.

MDE Early Learning Services