



1. Responsive Relationships

Learn as much about your families and children as you can. If possible:

Review family demographic and application information.

Conduct a “get-to-know-you” survey including child and family information in a mode that works for each family (e.g., email, google form, phone call or use the *My Teacher Wants to Know* form <https://cainclusion.org/walking-up-the-pyramid/My-teacher-wants-to-know.pdf>).

Ask families about their preferred method for *receiving information and communicating* (<https://cainclusion.org/walking-up-the-pyramid/Communicating-with-Families.pdf>) with you (e.g., email, phone call, text, web meeting).

Provide a variety of ways for families to communicate with you.

Plan ongoing contact with families (e.g., email, phone call, text, message in school app, video call). Use the *Connecting with Families* phone script to guide conversations if using a phone or a virtual call. <https://cainclusion.org/walking-up-the-pyramid/Transitioning-Back-Connecting-w-Families.pdf>

Interact with each child. Use a class list or roster of who will be on virtual lessons to help you know who is on the call in the virtual session.

Greet children and families by their name when they log on or when connecting with them.

Use a calm, positive, and supportive tone of voice during virtual sessions.

Provide activities that help children connect with each other during the virtual lesson.

Provide positive, descriptive feedback during the virtual session (<https://cainclusion.org/walking-up-the-pyramid/positive-feedback.pdf>), including acknowledgment of children’s engagement and following of rules (e.g., “Avery, you are listening to your friends! You are so respectful.”, “Look at all my friends who gave a thumbs up. You are really listening right now!”).

2. Schedule & Routines

- ☐ Maintain a consistent routine during virtual sessions. Share the virtual session routine with families with guidance about how to review the routine at home (provided in a hard copy, if possible).
- ☐ Be careful about the duration of a virtual session. Include a movement activity, if needed, to break up a session that is longer than 20 minutes. The duration of a virtual session with a group of children should not exceed 30 minutes.
- ☐ Verbally review the routine with children at the beginning of each learning session.

Show visuals of the routine for the virtual session, when possible. Use the visuals to help children know what you will do first (e.g., greeting song) and next (story) and turn over the visual (if displayed) or show the children that you are putting it away to indicate the end of the activity.

If the routine changes, let children and families know something will be different.

Provide a signal about an upcoming transition within the session and a signal about when the session is ending.

3. Expectations for the Virtual Learning Environment

Link examples that are positively stated to your program-wide expectations.

Provide instruction on expectations to all children as well as to individual children.

Regularly review expectations during the virtual session or when appropriate (e.g., the start of a transition).

Show the visual of expectations, when possible (e.g., show expectations poster and hang the poster in background or review photographs of each expectation individually before the virtual session).

Share guidance with families about how to review the expectations at home (e.g., send a copy of the expectations with examples through email/text or provide a hard copy if possible).

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/11-tips-teaching-preschool-online>

4. Engagement

Consider small groups rather than large groups for learning.

Provide activities and materials that support engagement during the virtual session.

Modify or adjust activities when children lose interest.

Provide multiple opportunities for each child to respond (verbal and nonverbal), considering communication levels and needs.

Redirect unengaged children and support them to become actively engaged.

Embed opportunities for choice.

Include children's preferences and interests.

Use individual supports for children who need directions or content presented in different ways (e.g., additional visuals, extra prompts, home language, more positive feedback).

Provide positive descriptive acknowledgment to all children related to engagement or effort. Make sure you recognize each child in the group at some point during the session (e.g., "Kellen is smiling as he is ready to listen to his favorite book.", "Avery is listening to her friends as they share.").

5. Social-Emotional Teaching

Incorporate social-emotional lessons (e.g., identifying emotions, social conversation, self-regulation, problem-solving) into virtual lessons when possible.

Provide families with resources to promote children's social-emotional skill development at home (e.g., *Tucker Turtle at Home* <https://cainclusion.org/walking-up-the-pyramid/TuckerTurtle-At-Home-2020.pptx>, *Solution Kit: Home Edition* https://cainclusion.org/walking-up-the-pyramid/Solution_kit_cards_home.pdf, *We Can be Problem Solvers at Home* https://cainclusion.org/walking-up-the-pyramid/ProblemSolving_Story_Home_EN.pdf).

Friendship

- Use books, puppets, songs, and other materials to help children learn about friendship and related skills (e.g., helping others, taking turns, working together). Use examples related to the friendship skills that are used at home.
- Plan an activity or discussion related to missing your friends and how we stay connected to our friends when we can't be together (e.g., call on the phone, draw a picture).
- Identify activities that might be done with a family member to reinforce what you are teaching about friendship skills (e.g., giving three compliments to a family member, take a photo of working together at home, child dictates a note to their friend and draws a picture).

Emotions

Teach self-regulation strategies using *Tucker the Turtle* (<https://cainclusion.org/walking-up-the-pyramid/TuckerTurtle-At-Home-2020.pptx>), *Relaxation Thermometer* (<https://cainclusion.org/walking-up-the-pyramid/relaxation-thermometer-2020.pdf>), or *Breathing Strategies* (<https://cainclusion.org/walking-up-the-pyramid/Smell-Blow.pdf>). Develop scenarios that are about home situations. Use puppets or books to introduce information.

Teach emotion words using *Feeling Faces Cards* (https://cainclusion.org/walking-up-the-pyramid/FeelingFaces_cards_large_EN-SP.pdf) and include the emotions that children might be feeling while at home (e.g., bored, frustrated, excited, annoyed, curious).

Teach children to recognize emotions in others by focusing on the kinds of emotions and situations they might encounter at home or in the community. Get creative with teaching emotions by using books, puppet plays, showing photos as a “guess the emotion” game.

Tell stories about your emotions or your responses to others’ feelings at home or in the community. Describe how you helped others when they felt strong emotions. Use photos of you or your family members to capture children’s interest as you share the story.

Provide families with materials (e.g., *Tucker the Turtle at Home* <https://cainclusion.org/walking-up-the-pyramid/TuckerTurtle-At-Home-2020.pptx>, *How to Use a Calm Down Area* https://cainclusion.org/walking-up-the-pyramid/Calm-Down-Area_Tipsheet.pdf) to use at home to support their child who might be experiencing strong emotions or need assistance with self-regulation.

Problem Solving

Teach children problem-solving steps including the use of the *Home Solution Kit* (https://cainclusion.org/walking-up-the-pyramid/Solution_kit_cards_home.pdf). Use books, puppets, scripted stories, and other engaging strategies to illustrate problem solving. Describe situations that children are likely to encounter at home or in the community for your illustrations to problem solve as you teach.

Practice problem solving by using the problem solving visual paired with a story and pausing to work through the steps related to a particular character. Have the visual handy to also use for any naturally occurring situations that might require problem solving.

Use natural situations as they come up for problem solving in the moment (e.g., your cat jumps on your desk as you are talking to the class, you forgot a material to share and need children to wait for you to get it out, everyone wants to talk at one time).

6. Addressing Challenging Behavior

Redirect a child who engages in disruptive behavior to focus on the activity by stating what you would like the child to do. Once the child begins to pay attention, provide the child with a response opportunity and positive descriptive acknowledgment.

If the child persists in disruptive behavior that is disruptive or minimally intrusive and attention-seeking, ignore the behavior (and mute the child's microphone if needed). Once the child stops, provide the child with a response opportunity and positive descriptive acknowledgment.

If a child is highly disruptive, schedule a call with the family to discuss how you might better support the child to participate in the session. Family members might have insight into what would work for the child. The child might also have challenges at other times of the day and the family might want your assistance to develop a plan of support.

Remember that a child who "wants attention" is doing their job! Can you address the need by providing connection, interaction, or help? You may need to work with their family to achieve this.

7. Supporting & Engaging Families

Provide families with opportunities for training around the virtual classroom (e.g., accessing zoom, lessons, expectations for family support/time, setting up the home environment for children, etc.).

Provide families with the information they need ahead of time (e.g., schedule for the week, the materials required for each activity) and have a plan for contacting families if there is a change of schedule/plan.

Develop strategies to help families with varying needs support children during virtual learning (e.g., parents working, multiple children in the home needing support, family member who is ill, a limited number of devices).

Offer assistance to families on how to work on a child's individual goals or family-specific needs.

Vary your *modes of communication* (<https://cainclusion.org/walking-up-the-pyramid/Communicating-with-Families.pdf>) to match family preferences and needs (e.g., email, text, app, multiple languages, teacher office hours).

Schedule *check-ins with all families* (https://cainclusion.org/walking-up-the-pyramid/Connecting-with-Families_tipsheet.pdf) to ask about their support needs, their experiences with virtual learning, and their perspectives about their child's engagement in learning and progress.

Be sure to have more contacts with families that are positive than about addressing challenging behavior.