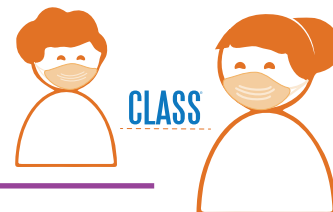


# RELATIONSHIPS



## About Relationships

Physical closeness is a large part of how we are used to connecting with each other. Strong relationships are especially important for children who have recently experienced loss, stress, or trauma. As you prepare to connect with children, think about how you will create a safe space for learning, sharing experiences, and supporting choices in a socially distanced classroom.



## CLASS Focus



### Positive Climate

The emotional connection you have with children and children have with each other. The warmth, respect, and enjoyment communicated by verbal and nonverbal interactions.



### Teacher Sensitivity

Your awareness of and responsiveness to children's academic and emotional needs. High sensitivity encourages children to explore and learn because they receive consistent comfort, reassurance, and support.



### Regard for Student Perspectives

Interactions with children that place an emphasis on their interests, motivations, and points of view. Encouraging children's responsibility and independence.

## Planning for Relationships in a Socially Distanced Classroom

Brainstorm how to connect with children through social distance. Smaller groups can help children build a sense of community with you and one another. Your plans for spending time with children will help you provide the various supports they need.



### Establishing Safety and Security

Children may have heard unsettling things about being in groups. So reassuring them that the classroom is safe is as important as ever. Social distancing is just a new way we can build safer relationships together.

Some Suggestions

- ① Reassure children: We keep each other safe at school by following our new routines.
- ② Relieve stress. Take deep breaths or stretch together.
- ③ Find out about children's lives outside of school.

Your Idea(s)

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### Building Belonging and Community

Choices and responsibilities build children's sense of belonging. By helping children talk and listen as they and their peers share needs and ideas, we support children's self-respect and build a sense of community.

Some Suggestions

- ① Allow children to make choices within required limitations.
- ② Provide classroom jobs and opportunities to care for personal belongings.
- ③ Invite children to share their concerns with each other.

Your Idea(s)

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### Enjoying Time Together

Enthusiasm makes learning irresistible, so remember to enjoy your time together! Children need the chance to just have fun. Having a good time together builds relationships, too, so make time for laughter!

Some Suggestions

- ① Read and enjoy a silly story together. Then, read it again!
- ② Celebrate! Make up a new cheer!
- ③ Have a playground dance party with goofy music.

Your Idea(s)

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## School-to-Home Connections

Engaging with families and building relationships with them may take extra effort right now due to social distancing measures. Connecting regularly with families helps them to be active members of their child's learning team with you. Perhaps you will send instructions and materials to families for children who remain at home or attend in person less frequently. You may record yourself teaching for children to watch later with adult support. However you go about it, your relationships with families are crucial to providing children with equitable relationship-building and learning opportunities.

## Before starting your day with children ...

Now that you've brainstormed some ways to form relationships in your socially distanced classroom, choose an interaction goal to focus on the next time you're with children.

Today, my interaction goal is to:

- ☐ Encourage children as we learn new safety routines.
- ☐ Try a stress-reducing activity with the children.
- ☐ Learn about a child's life outside of school.
- ☐ Provide choices when I have to interrupt children.
- ☐ Encourage peers to share ideas and kind words.
- ☐ Have fun and laugh together.

## After your day together ...

How did it go? Were you able to connect with children in the way you planned with the goal above? If so, check off the related observation at right! Perhaps you connected in other ways too! Check off anything else you noticed.

Today, I noticed that:

- ☐ Children are getting comfortable with new routines.
- ☐ Practicing stress-reducing activities was helpful.
- ☐ I learned something new about a child.
- ☐ Children made choices within safety limitations.
- ☐ Peers shared ideas and supported each other.
- ☐ We had fun and enjoyed time together.

## Next time you're together with children ...

Now that you've taken a moment to reflect on the interactions you had today, it's time to consider what you'll do next time to continue building relationships. Based on your reflection, consider the statements below, and complete those that stand out to you.

- 1 Follow up on this new idea: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Ask a child about \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Provide these choices: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Help children connect with each other by \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Do this again: \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Try this instead: \_\_\_\_\_



## Relationship Reminders!

Just snip and tape somewhere special in your classroom.



**Stay socially  
close while  
physically  
distant.**



**Air hugs! Air  
high fives!  
Finger hearts!**



**Breathe  
deeply. We've  
got this!**



**Eyes say it all!  
Communicate  
that you care.**



**Solve  
problems  
together.**



**Be curious.  
Find out  
something  
new.**



**Have fun  
together!  
Laugh! Move!**



**Build trust.  
Listen *and*  
talk. Talk *and*  
listen.**



**Build  
community.  
Share ideas!**