

# CLASS® Concepts for Virtual Learning

# RELATIONSHIPS



## About Relationships

Shared physical presence is a large part of how we're used to connecting with each other. Strong connections and relationships are important for children who may have recently experienced loss, high stress, or trauma. As you prepare to connect with children in a virtual setting, think about how you will create a safe space for learning, sharing experiences, and taking risks.



## 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 Virtual Setting

Brainstorm how you will form relationships with children through virtual interactions. Much like in classroom settings, planning for whole group, small group, and individual time with children will ensure they consistently get the various supports they need.



### Making a Personal Connection

Developing personal connections is an important part of forming and strengthening relationships with children. Think about ways to learn about each other, share your ideas, and have fun together!

#### Some Suggestions

- 1 Talk about favorites—toys, games, tv shows, foods.
- 2 Have a virtual dance party—and get any other adults who are present involved too!
- 3 Share positive comments, air hugs, high-fives, and finger hearts.

#### Your Idea(s)

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### Encouraging Peer Connections

Children love being with their friends at school, but they need support to connect virtually. Help children take turns talking, listening, and showing an active interest in each other.

#### Some Suggestions

- 1 Play games such as charades, Simon Says, and mirror me.
- 2 Have children do a virtual show-and-tell.
- 3 Meet regularly with the same small groups.

#### Your Idea(s)

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### Forming Emotional Trust

Awareness of children's needs in a virtual setting requires extra attention to nonverbal cues. Your responsiveness is important. Seeing you as a secure base helps children feel open to instruction and willing to take risks.

#### Some Suggestions

- 1 Look for facial and verbal expressions. Match the emotions you see.
- 2 Ask children to share their ideas and perspectives.
- 3 Create special signals children can use to ask for help.

#### Your Idea(s)

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## Out of Classroom Supports

Live sessions, where you can interact in the moment with the children in your class are only a part of what it means to provide virtual instruction. You are likely sending instructions and curriculum to families. You may be filming yourself for children to watch later. You may be offering hybrid instruction—for instance, leading an in-person activity for some children while others watch at home via a webcam. Your live sessions, whether with your whole class, small groups, or individuals, are a crucial time to build relationships through interactions, but you can work toward the same goals any time you are supporting children and their families in this environment.

## Before your virtual session begins ...

Now that you've brainstormed some ways to form relationships in your virtual classroom, choose an interaction goal to focus on during your next meeting with children.

Today, my interaction goal is:

- ☐ Get to know the children better.
- ☐ Have fun together.
- ☐ Let children know I notice and respect their feelings.
- ☐ Give children chances to make choices.
- ☐ Invite children to share their ideas.
- ☐ Help children connect with each other.

## After your virtual session ...

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:

- ☐ I learned something new about a child / children.
- ☐ We were smiling and laughing together.
- ☐ We were talking about our feelings.
- ☐ Children chose some of the activities we did.
- ☐ Children shared their ideas.
- ☐ Children talked to each other.

## Next time you meet with children ...

Now that you've taken a moment to reflect on the interactions from your recent virtual teaching session, 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 an idea we had by \_\_\_\_\_
- 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 by your virtual workstation.



**Let each child  
feel seen.  
Call them by  
name.**



**Smile! You're  
on camera!**



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



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



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



**Accept  
feelings. Show  
empathy.**



**Nurture ideas.  
“Tell me more  
about that.”**



**Physically  
distant, but  
socially close.**



**Talk *and*  
listen. Listen  
*and* talk.**