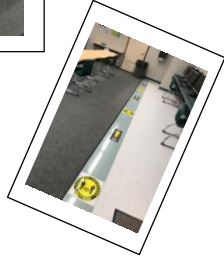


# Learning Differently in the 2020-21 School Year.



## Distance Learning Techniques That Improve Student Engagement

- 1) Establish a learning environment- A quiet place with good lighting is optimal.
- 2) Embrace technology. Use the tech you have to the best of your ability- communicate with your school personnel if you need help with connections, or with obtaining the tech you need to help your child learn. In many cases, the district may have equipment that you can use.
- 3) Emphasize structure- Set up a schedule- if possible post it on the wall. Provide for breaks between live online sessions.
- 4) Chunk assignments- Break up bigger assignments or lessons into smaller work sections
- 5) Be flexible. If having your child work outside is more effective than inside at a desk, go with what works!
- 6) Praise their EFFORT! Give your kiddo high fives, and "way to go's" when you see them working hard!
- 7) Communicate closely with your child's teacher. Let teachers know if your child is struggling with a lesson, or if you are struggling with helping them.

## Preparing Students for a Returning to School - Live Instruction in Small Groups/ Cohorts

### Kids will be required to wear masks. What if it makes them miserable?

Emphasize that this is how we keep you safe, and this is how we keep our family and the people in our community safe. We're wearing our masks in public places and you'll wear them when you go back to school. It's going to be very different for you, but it's something I think you're going to be able to get used to.

If the parent or guardian is modeling those public safety guidelines already, in a way that is upbeat and positive, that is really going to help the child. Children are very adaptive and resilient. People marvel at how quickly children can adjust. They are checking for our attitude and where we (adults) are in all of this. Explain that it's going to be a rule for your school. Children, for the most part, if they know it's a rule, they will do as they're asked.

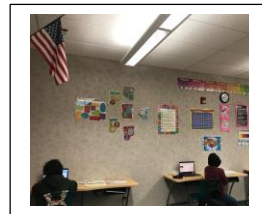
### How can students best protect themselves?

**The first thing students can be doing now is behaving in ways that decrease the community transmission and following public health guidelines.**

- Minimize contact with people who aren't in their household.
- Wear face coverings in public spaces.
- Practice good hand hygiene.
- They should start getting comfortable with what a safe distance (at least 6 feet) looks like and feels like, so it's not one more thing that feels disruptive when they enter the school space.

### What should parents discuss about this new-look school with their child?

Kids are taking cues from us. If we go into these discussions from a place of panic, worry and fear – which are legitimate feelings – they will take those cues. If they hear us say things like "masks are not safe" or something that conveys that school is a dangerous place to be, it becomes increasingly difficult to allay a child's fears. Instead, emphasize all the ways we can keep ourselves and each other safe. "Let's go try on some masks. Let's get some that you like and that fit well. Which ones do you want to pick out for yourself?" Put a positive spin on it as much as you can. You want to convey the things that are in our control and put the emphasis on that.



## Re-Calibrating Goals and Objectives for Special Needs Kids:

With Teachers and Parents trying to address student's needs in a different manner this year, it is even more important than ever to be looking at our student's goals and objectives with the lens of making sure they are EFFECTIVE. Some tips for ensuring effective goals include:

- Make them Personal– By understanding and prioritizing the unique needs of each student. Develop learning opportunities for working on goals that are relevant to the child's needs, and make the best use of their time. Provide appropriately challenging work that IS obtainable.
- Target Student's Needs. If needed create multiple objectives, so that you can turn learning into a step by step process rather than attacking a big goal all at once.
- Align Goals to Curriculum. Find ways to apply goal steps to the curriculum the student is working on. For example a teacher might align a goal for increasing student's vocabulary to a student's performance in a history project that he works on in a small group with other peers.
- Make them Relevant – Similar to personalized instruction, students are more willing to learn when we make connections to areas that are relevant to our lives. Help our students recognize how learning this helps them.
- Collaborate – It is critical for parents and teachers to collaborate closely. Communicate frequently and share concerns as they arise. If a goal or objective doesn't appear to be effective, work together to come up with a more appropriate goal.