TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES DURING ONLINE LEARNING

FAMILIES & SCHOOLS
PERFECT PARTNERS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT ♥F EDUCATION

Online learning has become the new normal for many students across the nation which has presented challenges communicating with students and families.

ASK FOR PREFERENCES

Do families prefer phone calls, texts or email? By asking for their preferences up front, you can be sure that you are communicating with families in the way that works best for them.

SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Be clear with families about when they can expect to hear from you, if you need to hear from them and how best to communicate. Give a timeframe for when you respond to phone messages and emails. Consider picking a specific day to send out important emails or materials, so that families know when to look for priority information.

SEEK UNDERSTANDING

It is easy for things to get lost in translation over the web. Choose clear, simple language; avoid acronyms or professional jargon that may muddle your message. Prioritize necessary information, keeping to three or fewer points. Include an "ask" to create buy-in with families.

REACH EVERY FAMILY

Encourage families to educate us on their cultures. As needed, many learning communities provide translators and interpretation resources to help you reach every family. It is important to be aware of available regional services.
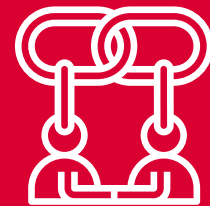
USE CONSISTENT METHODS

Many students are being supported by relatives or siblings during virtual learning. Make instruction accessible to all caregivers by providing a common location for all links, log-ins, and schedules. Consider posting videos with detailed instructions for accessing important information and daily assignments. Assure consistency among all team members working with the same families.
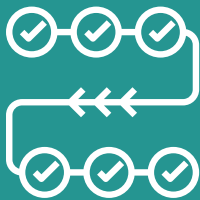
CULTIVATE THE RELATIONSHIP

Be sure to include greetings and sign-offs in your digital messages. Touch base with families to introduce yourself and check in with words of encouragement about student progress and engagement in your class. Recognize efforts of families for doing their part by providing timely and specific feedback.

SAY THIS	NOT THAT
"learning that happens on the computer, tablet, or phone"	"e-learning"
"learning that happens with the teacher and other students" "learning that happens on your own without the teacher"	"synchronous" or "asynchronous"
"The county requires that we test each kindergarten student to see that they know all of the letters of the alphabet, the letter sounds, and some common words. This test is called PALS.	"Students will be administered a districtwide PALS assessment to measure their phonological awareness and knowledge of high frequency words."
"group or group #"	"cohort, learning pod, wave"

Edwards, T. (2020, Aug. 24). *Less jargon, More grace: Using language that parents understand.* Retrieved from Edutopia, www.edutopia.org/article/less-jargon-more-grace-using-language-parents-understand.

Weinzapfel, P. (2018). *No More Mumbo Jumbo: Bridging the Communication Gap between Educators and Families.* Patricia Weinzapfel, IBJ Books.