

## Continuity of Learning: Contingency Planning for DOE Family Child Care Networks and Affiliated Family Child Care Providers (FCCs)

A Continuity of Learning Plan will support your Network in case any affiliated providers need to quickly implement a temporary transition to fully-remote learning due to potential exposure to COVID-19. There are three different circumstances that would require you to implement your Continuity of Learning Plan, based on the DECE COVID-19 Case Reporting and Tracing protocol outlined in the [Health and Safety Guidance for FCC Networks and Affiliated Providers](#):

- An **individual child** may need to temporarily transition to remote learning during a mild illness (up to 10 days), or a mandatory quarantine period (typically 14 days, if they are exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID-19)
- All **children and staff** in the affiliated provider's program will need to temporarily transition to remote learning during a mandatory quarantine period if a child or program staff member tests positive for COVID-19
- All **children and staff** in the affiliated provider's program may need to temporarily transition to remote learning if the affiliated provider has been identified by Test and Trace as a close contact for COVID-19 and has been instructed to quarantine for 14 days. For the 2020-2021 year, Networks may allow affiliated providers to choose to provide remote learning on inclement weather days when the programs cannot safely open in-person.

All DOE-contracted Family Child Care Networks are required to develop a **Continuity of Learning Plan**. This document provides an overview of the different elements that your Continuity of Learning Plan should include. To support you in developing a Continuity of Learning plan for your Network, the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) will continue to share additional resources. The elements of the Continuity of Learning Plan, described further in this overview document, include:

- Setting Expectations for the Learning Community
- Networks and Affiliated Providers Staffing & Programming
- Payments
- Instructional and Mental Health Supports
- Materials and Technology
- Nutrition and Health Resources and Referrals
- Supporting the Transition to Remote Learning

- Transition Back to In-Person Learning

## Setting Expectations for the Learning Community

*At the beginning of the program year and ongoing, how will you share information about the need to potentially transition to fully remote learning during the course of the year with affiliated providers and families?*

### Expectations

- At least two meaningful contacts a week are expected along with a wellness check.
- Families will co-create their at-home learning schedules based on their own unique needs, perspectives and cultures.
- Networks should share resources with families to support their at-home learning experience. See [Let's Play at Home!](#) for remote learning curriculum suggestions and refer [here](#) for additional remote learning resources.

### Suggestions and Considerations:

- Share your Continuity of Learning plan with Network staff and affiliated providers, and discuss the situations that would require your Network and affiliated providers to implement the plan. Invite staff members and affiliated providers to ask questions and offer feedback on the plan.
- Share a family letter (sample letter [here](#)) at the time of enrollment to help families understand what would happen if there is a COVID-19 case in the program.
- Hold virtual town halls to allow families to ask questions about different illness scenarios and protocols. Consider adding visuals, like the chart on page 5 from [DECE COVID-19 Case Reporting and Tracing](#).
- Offer resources to help families talk with their children about the possibility of transition between in-person and remote learning due to COVID-19. For example, share this [Guide for Helping Children Cope with Emergencies](#).
- Facilitate a way for families to connect with each other, or set up a family buddy system so they have a place to turn for peer support.

## Networks and Affiliated Providers Staffing & Programming

*Who will support children and families who must transition to fully remote learning, and how will this impact other responsibilities they may have?*

### Expectations

- Networks must have a plan in place to provide remote learning opportunities in collaboration with affiliated providers during the duration of the affiliated program closure.
- Networks must take full responsibility for remote learning when affiliated providers are unable to continue to provide remote learning support to their enrolled children due to a COVID-19 diagnosis or other emergencies.
- See the [Family Child Care Sample Schedule for In Person and Remote Learning](#) for additional guidance.

Suggestions and Considerations:

- Since the transition to remote learning is temporary in most cases, it is important to maintain existing relationships between children, affiliated providers and program staff to the greatest extent possible.
- It may be helpful for all affiliated providers, program staff, and Network staff to receive professional learning opportunities on strategies for remote teaching and learning.
  - Network staff and affiliated providers can access an Introduction to Early Childhood Remote and Blended Learning and Trauma Informed Care 101: Part 1 courses via the [ProTraxx homepage](#).
- Affiliated providers should have plans in place to provide coverage for in-person and remote learning in case a staff member is ill or needs to care for a sick family member.

**Payments to Affiliated Providers While OCFS Waiver is in Place**

Expectations

- Affiliated providers are expected to provide remote learning services under the guidance and in collaboration with the Network during the duration of COVID-19 related closure to all enrolled children in order to continue to receive payment.
- Networks must continue to make payments to affiliated providers during COVID-19 related closures for all enrolled children, even in cases when the affiliated provider is unable to continue to provide remote learning support due to a COVID-19 diagnosis or other emergencies.

**Instructional and Mental Health Supports**

*How will your Network support affiliated providers in prioritizing the continuity of established adult-child relationships as children shift to fully remote learning, if needed?*

### Suggestions and Considerations

- At the beginning of the year, Networks in collaboration with affiliated providers should prepare a remote learning plan based on the [Remote Learning Guidance](#) for the two week period while the child(ren) is not attending any in-person learning:
  - **For an individual child otherwise participating in fully in-person learning:** Networks in collaboration with affiliated providers provide robust asynchronous activities for the family.
  - **For an entire affiliated program:** Networks in collaboration with affiliated providers are expected to provide children with synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities.
- In all scenarios, families should have a clear way to stay connected to their child’s affiliated provider and the Network via phone or video chat for frequent check-ins as is supportive.
- Plan for social and emotional support to help the families transition into fully-remote learning, including sharing this resource: [Supporting Your Child with Remote Learning](#). This resource includes tips on self care for adults, establishing routines at home, activities for families, and other important information.

### **Materials and Technology**

*How will Network staff, affiliated providers, and families access materials they need to transition to remote learning?*

### Suggestions and Considerations:

- Survey families and affiliated providers for device needs and internet access at the beginning of the year.
  - **For families:** Encourage all families in need of either devices or internet to complete the [Remote Learning Device Request Form](#) by following the link or calling the help desk for assistance at 718-935-5100.
  - If families do not know their child's OSIS number, please ask them to enter all 9s in the OSIS number box to complete the form.
  - This form will remain open throughout the year, however, we urge programs to have as many families complete the form now so that DOE can properly identify needs and do our best to acquire the right amount of devices.
  - **For affiliated providers and Network staff:** Networks are responsible for ensuring affiliated providers and Network staff will have access to devices and internet access to facilitate remote learning should the need arise.
- Networks and affiliated providers should consider materials that families and staff may already have at home when planning remote learning activities, such as this resource: [Let’s Play at Home!](#)

- Arrange for distribution of devices and any other materials affiliated providers, families and Network staff would need to participate in or facilitate remote learning activities.

## **Nutrition and Health Supports, Resources and Referrals**

*How can your Network and affiliated providers offer children and families ongoing nutritional support and referrals to community resources?*

### Suggestions and Considerations:

- Networks should encourage affiliated programs to consider offering grab-and-go meal service to continue to support children’s nutritional needs if in-person learning is closed. Affiliated programs operating with the Child and Adult Care Food program can explore a waiver through the [Guidance for Non-Congregate Feeding During COVID-19](#).
- Children and adults can also continue to receive free meals through the [DOE Meal Hubs](#)
- Children and staff can receive free priority COVID-19 testing at [specific locations](#) across the City. See instructions for your program staff in the [DECE September 1, 2020 Special Bulletin](#).
- Families who cannot afford or do not qualify for health insurance can apply for [NYC Care](#) to receive no-cost and low-cost health care services.
- You can also share a list of any local community organizations that may be able to support families with their health, mental health, nutrition, housing, technology, and other needs.

## **Supporting the Transition to Remote Learning**

*How will your Network communicate with and support affiliated providers and families in case there is a sudden need to transition to fully-remote learning?*

- Ensure you keep an up to date contact list for affiliated providers and families at all times.
- Consider what communications will be sent to affiliated providers and families if there is a sudden need to temporarily transition a child or affiliated program to fully remote learning.
- Plan to connect with affiliated providers and families soon after the transition to fully remote learning to check in on their health and wellness. You can refer to these [Suggestions for Checking In With Families/Caregivers around Remote Learning](#).

## **Transitioning Back to In-Person Learning**

*After a temporary transition to fully-remote learning for an individual child or all enrolled children, how can Networks support the transition back to in-person learning?*

Suggestions and considerations:

- **Affiliated Provider's Program:** Consider changes that may take place as affiliated provider and their staff, children and families transition back to in-person learning:
  - If families' needs have changed, will your Network and affiliated providers have the ability to offer referrals and access to needed resources?
  - If Network staff members' needs have changed, will your Network's staffing plan and division of responsibilities change?
  - How will the curriculum be adjusted to be trauma-informed and responsive to children's emotional and mental health needs?
  
- **Safety Plan:** Use feedback from DOHMH, DOE, staff members and families to determine if any revisions are needed to your affiliated providers safety plans:
  - Would Network staff and affiliated providers benefit from additional training?
  - How can you provide families with opportunities to learn and ask questions about the health and safety protocols?