

# Continuity of Learning Plan Overview for NYC Early Education Centers (NYCEECs)

As in-person learning resumes in our early childhood programs, we are so grateful for the incredible work that program leaders and staff members have done to make this possible. We also recognize that the public health situation is continuing to change, and it is important that we are ready to continue to support children's learning in case someone in the program becomes ill or needs to quarantine. All DOE-contracted NYC Early Education Centers (NYCEECs) are required to develop a **Continuity of Learning Plan** in case there is a situation in which one or more children must temporarily transition to fully remote learning due to an illness or required quarantine. To support you in this planning, the DOE Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) is offering this resource with guiding questions and considerations to help you craft your plan.

We suggest that you bring together a group of staff and family representatives at your program to create your plan together.

## What is a Continuity of Learning Plan?

A Continuity of Learning Plan will support your program in case any members of your program community 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:

- 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)
- A full **classroom** of children and staff will need to temporarily transition to remote learning during a mandatory quarantine period if a child or staff member tests positive for COVID-19
- All children and staff in DOE classrooms at the **program** may need to temporarily transition to remote learning during a mandatory quarantine period if children or staff members in multiple classrooms test positive for COVID-19. For the 2020-2021 year, programs may also choose to provide remote learning on inclement weather days when the program cannot safely open in-person.

This document provides an overview of the different elements that your Continuity of Learning Plan should address, including:

- Setting Expectations for the Learning Community
- Staffing and Programming
- 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 year, how will you share information about the need to potentially transition to fully remote learning during the course of the year with program staff and families?*

### Suggestions and Considerations:

- Send a family letter (like the sample draft [here](#)) at the beginning of the year to help families understand what would happen if there is a COVID-19 case in the program.
- Hold a virtual town hall 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 parents to connect with each other, or set up a family buddy system so they have a place to turn for peer support.
- Share your Continuity of Learning plan with teaching staff, and discuss the situations that would require your program to implement the plan. Invite staff members to ask questions and offer feedback on the plan.

## Staffing and Programming

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

### Suggestions and Considerations:

- Since the transition to remote learning is temporary in most cases, it is important to maintain existing relationships between children, teachers, and teaching teams to the greatest extent possible.
- It may be helpful for all teaching teams to receive professional learning opportunities on strategies for remote teaching and learning, even if they are assigned to a full-time in-person classroom.
- Programs should have plans in place to provide coverage for in-person and remote learning classes in case a staff member is ill or needs to care for a sick family member.

## Instructional and Mental Health Supports

*How will you prioritize 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, Teaching Teams should proactively 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 blended learning:** Child's teaching team continues synchronous and asynchronous remote engagement, with additional activities provided to families.
  - **For an individual child otherwise participating in fully in-person learning:** Child's teaching team provides robust asynchronous activities for the family.
  - **For an entire class/program:** Children are provided with synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities.
- In all scenarios, families should have a clear way to stay connected to their child's educators via phone or video chat for frequent check-ins as is supportive.
- Plan for social and emotional supports 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 families and staff access materials they need to transition to remote learning?*

### Suggestions and Considerations:

- Survey families and staff 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 staff:** Programs are responsible for ensuring staff will have access to devices and internet access to facilitate remote learning should the need arise.
- Programs should consider materials that families and staff may already have at home when planning remote learning activities.
- Arrange for distribution of devices and any other materials families and staff would need to participate in or facilitate remote learning activities.

## Nutrition and Health Supports, Resources and Referrals

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

### Suggestions and Considerations:

- Consider if your program is able to offer grab-and-go meal service to continue to support children’s nutritional needs if in-person learning is closed. 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](#). 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 program communicate with and support staff and families in case there is a sudden need to transition to fully-remote learning?*

### Suggestions and Considerations:

- Ensure you keep an up to date contact list for staff and families at all times.
- Consider what communications will be sent to staff and families if there is a sudden need to temporarily transition a child, a class, or the program to fully remote learning
- Plan to connect with staff 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, classroom or the full program, how can you support the transition back to in-person learning?*

### Suggestions and Considerations:

- **Program Planning:** Consider changes that may take place as staff, children and families transition back to in-person learning:
  - If families' needs have changed, will your program's learning models be adjusted?
  - If staff members' needs have changed, will your program'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?
  - Are there changes that need to be made to the way that the facility is used?
- **Safety Plan:** Use feedback from DOHMH, DOE, staff members and families to determine if any revisions are needed to your program's safety plan:
  - Would staff members benefit from additional training?
  - How can you provide families with opportunities to learn and ask questions about the health and safety protocols?