

Authentic Assessment in Remote Learning

The purpose of authentic assessment in early childhood is to understand and meet the needs of all children. During this time of remote learning, early childhood teaching teams should continue to use their knowledge of children's understanding and development and partner with families to make decisions about instruction.

However, due to the transition to remote learning and the impacts of COVID-19 across New York City, there is flexibility in programs' use of their authentic assessment system for spring 2020. Teaching teams may find it helpful to continue to upload observations and work samples and use the developmental progressions in the authentic assessment system to support children and families.

Teaching teams are not expected to complete the Spring Checkpoint originally scheduled for May 29, 2020.

Please note that while you may receive communications directly from your respective authentic assessment tool (e.g., Work Sampling System, Teaching Strategies GOLD, or COR Advantage), please refer to Division of Early Childhood Education communications, guidance from program leadership, and communication with families in your program to guide your practices.

Partnering with Families

During this time, it is particularly important to consider how we support families and children in having safe, nurturing, and predictable experiences. In a remote learning environment, teaching teams cannot be physically present with children to capture authentic documentation of children's learning in person. Educators should focus on virtual interactions with children and families to learn more about children's knowledge, skills, and interests.

When possible, teaching teams should engage in two-way conversations with families using an agreed-upon mode of communication (telephone, video platform, email, text, etc). Teaching teams can celebrate children's learning and development through ongoing conversations with families and by sharing short narratives, among other strategies. Please see below for more guidance.

Teaching teams can also invite family members to share their own observations about how their child learns and their thoughts and insights about their child's play at home. When planning how best to maintain connections with children and families, teaching teams should consider the needs and circumstances of their classroom community. While some families may choose to share photos or short written statements of what they are doing at home, programs should not expect or require all families to do so.

As teaching teams continue with remote teaching and learning, it is important to be aware of each child's developmental progress across the domains. Teaching teams can use information from their classroom earlier in the year, along with information shared from families to make decisions about next steps in supporting children and families, including what activities and resources to share. Teaching teams can support families in understanding different areas of development, making connections between children's play at home with their experiences in the classroom earlier in the year, and understanding their child's strengths and needs. Teaching teams should also share with families that they can request to set up time to speak about their child's growth through remote learning, as well as to discuss any questions or concerns they may have about their child's development.

In times of crisis or trauma, some children may regress in some areas even as they show growth in others. Please reassure families that regression is a common response to stress and change. Encourage families to continue to have conversations with their child about what they may be thinking or feeling. For additional suggestions, please connect with your DECE support team.

Families may be faced with challenges that may impact their ability to connect with programs at this time. If you are having consistent challenges connecting with families, please connect with your DECE support team.

Guiding Questions

Teaching teams can use the questions below to guide two-way conversations with families to learn more about children's understanding and development. Teaching teams should keep in mind how they might connect information shared by families to their own observations of children's growth throughout the year.

- What are your child's interests?
- What activities does your child enjoy engaging in?
- What materials does your child enjoy using?
- What have you noticed about your child's learning during this time?
- In what ways does your child communicate their wants and needs?
- Describe your child's play.
- In what ways has your child expressed their feelings? Please describe your child's verbal and non-verbal behavior.
- Where have you noticed your child grow this year?
- What would you like to see your child do next?

Strategies for Celebrating Growth

Teaching teams can share information about children’s learning and development with families in many ways, including:

- Collaborative conversations with children and families during remote learning.
- Sending short narratives in the family’s home language, when possible, that describe developmental progress using information teaching teams collected earlier in the year, paired with information gathered in conversations with children and families. Narratives should be individualized and focus on the child’s strengths, use language respectful of children and families, showcase the child’s progress throughout the school year, and include ways to extend learning.
- Sharing digital portfolios with families, including photos, anecdotes, and work samples collected throughout the year.

For more suggestions on End Of Year celebrations in remote learning, please look for more information in upcoming Bulletin/Principals’ Digest announcements

More Information

For more information about supporting remote learning, please reach out to your program’s support team or deceinstruction@schools.nyc.gov. Please also see the NYC DOE [Learn at Home Early Childhood Instructional Resources](#), [Guidance for Remote Learning in 3-K and Pre-K](#), and [At Home Learning: Guidance for Family Child Care Networks](#) for more information and suggestions.

For more information about authentic assessment systems or policies, please reach out to authenticassessment@schools.nyc.gov or call the NYU Authentic Assessment Hotline, available weekdays between 9:00 and 5:00 at 212-998-9003.