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Q & A
ON DISTANT
LEARNING

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Early Learning Matters

TEACHING APPROACH AND METHODS

- **What should be the teaching approach in the new normal?**

This time is a great opportunity to brush up on new ways of teaching! Make teaching more interactive, creative and free, with less focus on worksheets, so that children remain engaged and eager to learn. For example, replace your maths sheets with real life situations; ask the children to count how many pairs of socks they and their family members have, and add them all together. Go wild and be creative with your activity planning!

- **What should be the teaching methods for online education?**

Teaching methods for online education should offer the children opportunities to learn all the same things they would otherwise learn, only now the teaching methods need to be rethought. Storytelling can be done via sharing a video of the teacher telling the story, planned activities can be ran by recording the steps and processes of the activity and mathematical thinking activities can be given in more concrete and real- life situations.

- **How to maintain social contact during the online sessions?**

Social contact is an important aspect to learning. Children need to feel that they have friends and that they are liked. One way to maintain a social connection is for children to record themselves telling about their day or week and share the video with their peers. They can also share photos of fun activities they are doing, and comment on their friends activities.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

- **Why is it important to have learning objectives in ECE?**

The learning objectives guide the pedagogical planning and the children's learning and give the learning path structure, which is a key in distant learning. The learning objectives support the teachers and the families in following each child's unique learning path. Whether the children are present in the physical center or learning from home, with the support of the learning objectives, the learning can continue according to the set path.

- **How to motivate teachers for the new online approach?**

The first and most important thing for teachers to get motivated towards the new online approach is they have to 'want' to learn new methods of teaching. Secondly, is to support them with effective and simple digital tools to get the job done and offer extra training. Be supportive and patient.

- **What kind of digital learning activities are available?**

There are plenty of educational apps and games but these don't need to be the only source of 'digital' learning. Almost any activity can be made 'digital' by simply recording it and sharing it with the children - the only thing to keep in mind is to use resources in your activities that can easily be found at home.

- **What activities to use?**

Activities should be age appropriate and simple enough for the child to do without needing their hand held but challenging enough that some guidance is needed. The activities should be linked to learning objectives to be sure they support the child's needs.



SHARING CONTENT AND RUNNING ACTIVITIES

- **How to share content?**

Sharing content is easy using digital tools, such as Kindiedays. Share documents, photos and videos as messages or journal posts. You can send messages privately or create a group message where children can follow each others videos and comments.

- **What activities to use?**

Activities should be age appropriate and simple enough for the child to do without needing their hand held but challenging enough that some guidance is needed. The activities should be linked to learning objectives to be sure they support the child's needs.

- **How to organise the daily schedule?**

With distant learning a lot of the responsibility is placed on the guardians to support their children's learning and the change for the children can be challenging. For these reasons it is more important to keep the daily schedule short, to the point and simple - not to overload and demotivate families.

- **How to divide between synchronous training i.e. everybody present in real time and asynchronous i.e. children working on their own?**

It is important to keep routine but to also keep in mind the challenges of distant learning. It would be important to have all the children start at the same time each morning and then complete their tasks in their own time by the end of the 'school day' or given time. The morning task could be to video yourself singing one of the morning circle time songs and making up your own dance moves to share to your group. It can be exciting for the children to watch their friends singing and dancing. One key aspect is to provide learning opportunities for the children, despite being present in real time or learning in own time.



ASSESSMENT AND PARENT ENGAGEMENT

- **How to do assessment and relate the children's learnings to the curriculum?**

Assessment can be done by guardians taking photo and video evidence of their child's learning and sharing it with their child's teacher. If the teacher is using Kindiedays the teacher can then create learning posts linking the evidence to curriculum objectives, to be saved to the child's e-portfolio.

- **How to engage and motivate the parents?**

It can be tough for parents to become "teachers" over night, and it can be very overwhelming if not done carefully. It is important to keep parents informed and updated on what is expected from them and to keep their role as simple as possible. Record as much of the needed teaching for the children as possible so that parents only need to guide the children in the more challenging aspects. Keep an open and understanding atmosphere where families can openly share their triumphs and their struggles. Work together to create a fun and encouraging learning environment for all.

