TIPS AND TEGINIOUES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN LEARNING PODS

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Introduction

We developed this guide in order to support the many community volunteers and parents who are leading learning pods during this unusual time of virtual learning and social distancing. It is intended to provide guidance to help you organize the learning environment and engage children in grades K-5 with simple activities to supplement virtual learning.

This document was made possible by the expertise and contributions of the following Georgia Southern College of Education faculty members:

Dr. Nedra Cossa

Dr. Kitty Crawford

Dr. Stephanie Devine

Dr. Kania Greer

Dr. Katy Haughney

Ms. Heather Huling

Dr. Cynthia Massey

Ms. Mary Thaler

Dr. Elizabeth Williams

In collaboration:

Georgia Southern University College of Education

Savannah Economic Development Authority

United Way







Setting a Daily Schedule

We recognize that there are a wide variety of virtual learning experiences and requirements across our region; however, setting a schedule provides consistency and predictability that will foster student success. We offer these scheduling guides based on students' grade levels and offer suggestions for modifying schedules based on individual student needs.

Kindergarten - 2nd Grade	
8:30 - 9:00	Morning Routine (Eat Breakfast/Get Organized)
9:00 - 9:45	Reading and Phonics
9:45 - 10:30	Practice Writing Letters Math
10:30 - 10:45	Break
10:45 - 11:30	Read Aloud
11:30 - 12:30	Lunch/Relax
12:30 - 1:15	Social Studies/Science
1:15 - 2:00	Educational App
2:00 - 2:15	Snack
2:15 - 3:00	Play Time

	3rd-5th Grade
8:30-9:00	Morning Routine (Eat breakfast/Get organized)
9:00-9:45	Math
9:45-10:30	English Language Arts/Reading
10:30-10:45	Break
10:45 – 11:30	P.E./Music/Art
11:30-12:30	Lunch/Relax
	Sharing Session – What did you read about?
12:30-1:15	Science
1:15-1:30	Journal Time
1:30-2:15	Social Studies
2:15-2:45	Play Time
2:45 – 3:00	Additional Support As Needed

This is a sample instructional schedule to help break up the educational day. The subjects can be rearranged as needed to coordinate with the required virtual platform. Although this schedule has 45 minute blocks of time to focus on a single subject that does not mean that it is a single activity. Instead, keep the following in mind:



On average, a child can concentrate 2-5 minutes per year old they are. So the time your child should be able to focus on the same task is...

2 years old... they should be able to focus for 4-10 minutes.

3 years old... they should be able to focus for 6-15 minutes.

4 years old... they should be able to focus for 8-20 minutes.

5 years old... they should be able to focus for 10-25 minutes.

6 years old... they should be able to focus for 12-30 minutes.

7 years old... they should be able to focus for 14-35 minutes.

8 years old... they should be able to focus for 16-40 minutes.

9 years old... they should be able to focus for 18-45 minutes.

10 years old... they should be able to focus for 20-50 minutes.

For example, during the 45 minute Reading/Phonics block for K-2 students, a five year old should have at least two, probably three different activities during that time-frame. We provide several suggestions for activities in upcoming sections.

Also keep in mind that some 10 year olds will be able to focus for 50 minutes and others only for 20 minutes. As you work with students, pay attention to how long they can stay engaged and then you will be able to identify subjects and/or times of the day when additional activities are needed.

Organize the Learning Space

If possible, consider setting up the learning space so that students associate different spaces with different activities and behaviors. We have provided an example, but there are many options.

Reading Zone

Comfortable seating/pillows Books Quiet place

Writing Zone

Student Journals Handwriting paper Pencils Journal prompts and pictures to write stories about

Virtual Learning

Devices
Paper/pencils
Completing assigned work
or Educational Apps

Science Center and

Craft Station
Craft materials and other supplies

If your learning space is not large enough for separate areas, consider using storage bins for each area and taking out different bins as needed.







Establishing Routines and Procedures

Creating routines and procedures for common daily events helps make everyone's day go more smoothly. Children respond well when they know what to expect, and conversely, can get frustrated and confused when the learning context feels disorganized. For younger children, this can be supported by picture schedules or even basic posted schedules with time frames. Here is a list of several daily teaching/learning activities where established routines and procedures are helpful.

- ♣ Starting the day getting settled
- **♣** Transitioning from one activity to another
- **♣** Cleaning up after hands-on activities or crafts
- ♣ Transitioning to and from lunch

An example...

Starting the day

- Upon arrival, children put their backpacks and lunches in designated areas.
- Electronic devices are taken to the virtual learning area and plugged in, if necessary.
- Children have until 9:00 a.m. to read in the reading zone or work on their journals/handwriting in the writing zone.
- At 9:00 a.m., everyone meets in a designated area for the morning meeting to go over the schedule for the day and address any individual needs/concerns.
- After the morning meeting, children move to the appropriate area for them to begin working.

Remember to teach your expected procedures and practice them together several times before implementing!

Developing and Maintaining a Positive Learning Environment

Learning can at times be challenging and frustrating, and it is important to create a positive environment where children feel safe, respected and nurtured. Here are some tips:

TIPS FOR CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Notice and comment on positive behavior often ("Amy, you did a great job of cleaning up after your craft activity today.")
- Pay attention to children's attention spans and signs of frustration. Consider suggesting an alternative activity or a break BEFORE students act out.
- Taking a quick 2-3 minute break from an activity and then returning to it can be more productive than trying to finish a task in a single sitting.
- Encourage children to notice and praise each other.

Supporting Students' Literacy Skills

Use these tips and guidelines to read with your children and help support their understanding and comprehension of books.

SET THE STAGE

- ☐ Create a designated reading area with a selection of books. *The space does not have to be large, perhaps a corner in the house where there are few distractions.
- ☐ Make the reading space comfortable! Set out pillows, bean bag chairs, or even several blankets
- ☐ Limit distractions and interruptions: Remove toys, turn off the television and music, and put your phone on "do not disturb"
- ☐ Select books on topics that they are interested in (e.g., dinosaurs, animals, or sports) OR let them pick out their own book



ASK THEM QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BOOK

- □ Look at the cover together. Point out the title and look at the illustrations. Ask them what they think the story is about and encourage them to tell you why they think this.
- □ Point out the name of the author and illustrator. Talk about how the author is the person who writes the book and how the illustrator is the one who creates (or illustrates) the pictures in the book. *After you'd done this several times, ask them to tell you what the author and illustrator does.
- ☐ As you read, ask about different aspects of the story and use illustrations to help guide them
 - Who is this character? What do they look like?
 - How do you think this character feels? Why?
 - What do you think is going to happen next? How did you figure that out?
- ☐ Identify and discuss vocabulary words that the child may not be familiar with. Help them figure out the word instead of just telling them. For example, "Wow, that's a new word we haven't read before! What do you think nocturnal means? Let's look at the picture of the owl and see if we can figure it out."

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND...

- ☐ Be patient! Young children have a hard time sitting still for extended periods of time. Pick shorter books OR take breaks. If you notice that the child is shifting or fidgeting a lot or looking around (even without any distractions) it may be time to take a break.
- ☐ They may not know the answers to all of your questions, and that's okay! Support them by giving them some "hints" about the story. For example, if they are struggling with describing how a character feels, point out facial expressions or reread parts of the story that might provide clues.
- ☐ Give lots of praise and be *specific*! If they are able to answer a question that you asked, tell them what a great job they did and why. For example, "I love how you used the words and pictures to figure out that the character was scared."
- □ Read books multiple times! If a book interests a child, read it again! You can ask different questions than the first time and reinforce concepts that you've already discussed (e.g., identifying the author and illustrator).
- ☐ Throughout the day, bring up concepts and ideas that you discussed and learned about during the story. For example, "Wow! I never noticed how our hamster sleeps so much during the day and plays more at night. What is the word that we read about that describes animals like that?"



Supporting Students' Math Skills

Listed below are grade level appropriate math skills that can be practiced and developed to support math learning that is occurring virtually

Grades K-2

<u>Kindergarten</u>

- Comparing objects (which set has more?)
- Connect the dots
- Count and write 1 to 20
- Counting by drawing
- Naming shapes
- Number sequencing
- Picture addition
- Shape, color and number matching

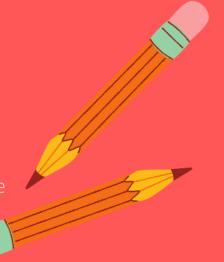
1st Grade

- Single digit addition and subtraction
- Picture subtraction
- Reading picture graphs
- Rounding numbers to 10
- Identifying patterns
- Telling time

2nd Grade

- Adding double and triple digit numbers
- Identifying location on a grid and number line
- Making change with coins
- Reading a ruler
- Simple word problems
- Using tally marks to make graphs





Grades 3-5

3rd Grade

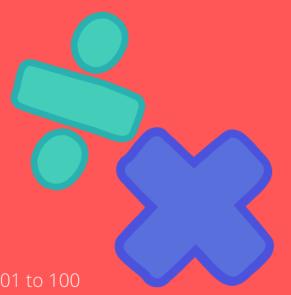
- Word problems
- Pictographs
- Single digit multiplication
- Reading and making bar graphs
- Reading circle graphs
- Ordering numbers

4th Grade

- Compare and order numbers from .0001 to 100
- Single digit into double digit division
- Finding percentages
- Multiple digit multiplication
- Fractions
- Decimals

5th Grade

- Classifying and measuring angles
- Multiplication and division word problems
- Factors of numbers
- Graphing coordinates
- Reading and making line graphs
- Converting units of length



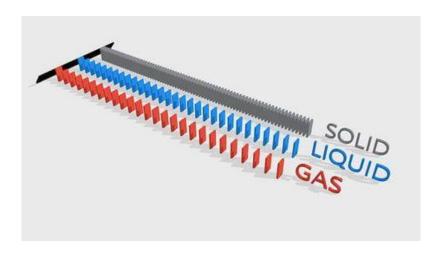


Exploring Scientific Concepts Using Materials from Home

Exploring Sound

How does sound travel through gasses, liquids and solids

- 1. Fill one baggie with air, another with water, and a third baggie with soil or sand.
- 2. Hold one bag at a time up to your ear, tap a spoon on the table to make a noise. Which was the loudest? Which was the quietest?
- 3. Why?



Exploring pitch – highness and lowness of sound

- 1. Stretch a thick rubber band and a thin rubber band around an empty box. Pluck and strum each rubber band. Which produces a higher sound?
- 2. Fill three identical bottles with different amounts of water. Strike each with a metal spoon. Which produces the highest sound? Which produces the lowest sound?
- 3. Blow across the mouths of the three bottles. Which produces the highest sound? Which produces the lowest sound?
- 4. What is the connection between pitch (high vs. low) and size? Space?



Exploring with Magnets



Building the Structure:

- 1. Create the base of the pyramid by overlapping three dowels and securing a rubber band around each overlapping end.
- 2. Connect three more dowels to form the pyramid.
- 3. Tie a string connecting a circular magnet to the top of the pyramid. Secure the magnet to the string with clear tape.

Exploring:

- 1. Place three rectangular magnets at the center points of each dowel at the base. Gently lift and release the circular magnet to watch it go! It will bounce back and forth between the three magnetic fields as it encounters different polarities.
- 2. See what happens when you shift the position of the rectangular magnets. How does position impact how the rectangular magnets attract and repel the circular magnet?
- 3. Place one rectangular magnet under your circular magnet. Make sure the circular magnet will attract the rectangular magnet. If they are too far apart, adjust the hanging circular magnet. Gently move the rectangular magnet around and watch the circular magnet follow.
- 4. Place 2 rectangular magnets under the suspended circular magnet. Make sure the tops of the rectangular magnets and the bottom of the circular magnet repel each other. Gently lift the circular magnet to release it from its magnetic field and let it swing. Watch how it is attracted to the magnetic field.

Additional Resources



The Read-Aloud Handbook by Jim Trelease. \$10.48 on Amazon.



The Everything Kids Math Puzzles Book by Meg, Greg and Sean Clements. \$9.34 on Amazon.



My Big Science Book by Roger Priddy. \$9.98 on Amazon.



Science kits with all materials and multiple activities. Available at Walmart and Target \$10.00 - \$35.00

Educational Apps and Online Resources

https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/edlmoney/





This website provides interactive money management activities like counting change, using a vending machine, checking your receipt and using an ATM among others.

https://www.learner.org/



Language Arts



Mathematics







Social Studies & History This website provides lessons and additional practice opportunities and is searchable by grade level and topic.

https://historyexplorer.si.edu/



This website provides access to interactive virtual tours, historical artifacts, videos about historical events and additional teaching resources.

https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/menu/activities/



This website provides many interactive games and activities related to space and space exploration. There are additional activities that can be done offline.

Useful Items for Crafts and Activities

We recognize it is challenging to provide supplies for activities and crafts. This list might be a helpful start as you begin to accumulate materials to supplement virtual instruction. Most are items that you and/or parents will already have at home, and others are inexpensive and can be purchased in large quantities.

- Yarn
- Construction paper
- Glue
- Markers
- Crayons
- Colored pencils
- Shoe boxes (or other types of boxes)
- Empty paper towel and toilet paper rolls
- Plastic bags/baggies
- Rubber bands
- Paper clips
- Scissors
- Pipe cleaners
- Craft sticks
- Rulers
- Clothespins
- Acrylic craft paint
- Paint brushes
- Old magazines and greeting cards
- Tissue paper

- Beads
- Duct tape
- Clear tape
- Marbles
- Magnets
- Paper plates
- Balloons
- Straws
- Toothpicks
- Paper bags
- Empty (and clean) gallon jugs and 2 liter bottles
- Glass jars
- Plastic cups
- Tinfoil
- Plastic wrap
- Buttons
- Food coloring
- String
- Glitter