

Family-Centered Instructional Planning for Remote Learning

Do this		Don't do this	
✓	Keep it low tech. Teach in ways that use low tech tools, such as text and slides. When using videos, always provide low tech alternatives, such as captions and a transcript.	✗	Excessive high tech. Don't assume all families have good internet access, including data and Wi-Fi access, and access to electronic devices at all times.
✓	Communicate frequently and consistently. All communication should be sent via at most 2-3 platforms to maximize accessibility. The same message should go out on all platforms so that families don't miss communications.	✗	Mixed and multiple communication. Using multiple platforms inconsistently can mean families miss key communications. Using too many platforms can be overwhelming for families with multiple children in school.
✓	Be inclusive. Be conscious of the many different learning contexts within families' homes - build in flexibility. Provide multiple formats for families. Have text, slides, transcripts, captions, and audio available as alternatives to video.	✗	Single approach. Making no provision for many different contexts (technology, power supply, learning environment, resources, support) by adopting formats that only a limited number of families will be able to access.
✓	Provide a blend of synchronous and asynchronous learning that all families can access. Learning activities should work around barriers (such as power, connectivity, social context). Schedule regular live meetings for both students and families to address questions and build community.	✗	Asynchronous or synchronous learning ONLY. Holding online meetings through live webinars or tutorials will exclude some families; however, a complete lack of live meetings can leave students and families feeling isolated.
✓	Less is more. Assignments may take longer to complete at home. Prioritize and limit the burden on families to monitor or guide student learning. Ensure that most assignments can be completed by students independently.	✗	Being unrealistic. Assigning work every day and requesting students to complete according to short timelines does not account for varied family circumstances. Not all families are able to provide extensive help.
✓	Differentiate. Some families may need additional supports for successful at-home learning, especially families of students with disabilities, English Learners, or other students who struggle with remote instruction. Families of gifted students may need extension activities to keep their children engaged.	✗	Use a one-sized-fits-all approach. Expecting families to support their children with completing assignments at an inappropriate challenge level or without adequate supports will place an undue burden on families who are juggling many priorities at home.

✓	<p>Well-organized resources. Use lessons to structure your activities. Label and organize resources very clearly using descriptive titles. Provide families with background knowledge via short videos, short documents, and individual meetings. All communication should be in ordinary language in the home language of families.</p>	✗	<p>Leave it up to students & families to figure it out. Requiring families to search for the learning materials they need to help their child.</p>
✓	<p>Give explicit instructions. Support families and their children with simple, clear directions and a means of asking questions. Outline detailed instructions about what students need to do, deadlines and specify the estimated length of time to complete tasks. If students do not complete tasks in the expected amount of time, modify assignments so families and students are not burdened with long hours completing assignments.</p>	✗	<p>Be unclear and vague. Communicating in lengthy paragraphs with instructions that are difficult to follow or tasks that are vague. Contributing to family conflict and long sessions figuring out homework.</p>
✓	<p>Run online 'office hours' and be visible online. Provide families with regular online office hours during hours when working families can attend and provide support, answer questions, and clarify confusion.</p>	✗	<p>Stand by at all times. You don't have to be available 24/7 and leave no break for yourself. (Unless it's urgent, it can wait for office hours!)</p>
✓	<p>Seek feedback from families. Seek families' feedback about their child's workload, emotional state, learning preferences, and learning pace.</p>	✗	<p>Use a hands-off approach. Teaching in a way that does not give students and their families a voice and/or choice can leave them feeling overwhelmed.</p>
✓	<p>Use a limited selection of new tools. Use tools students are familiar with and a limited number of new tools for remote teaching purposes. Provide short tutorials for families and students to reference as needed for learning tools.</p>	✗	<p>Try many new and unused tools. Trying new tools that you've never used may lead to technological difficulties and increase frustration.</p>
✓	<p>Break down content into short, identifiable topics. Provide material in shorter chunks with clear learning objectives and assessment outcomes. Clarify expectations for how much time should be spent on each chunk.</p>	✗	<p>Give academic materials in long, unstructured form. Don't upload long readings, projects, slide decks, or videos without clear direction about the learning objectives and expected amount of time to devote.</p>
✓	<p>Create a syllabus to keep assignments and due dates in one place. Give students and their families an outline containing dates when assignments are due, when materials will be needed, and when live meetings are happening. Keep this information in one place. Alert them that there may be changes and indicate how they will be notified.</p>	✗	<p>Send updates via announcements only. Avoid putting assignments and expectations in multiple places and sending them last-minute.</p>