

# GOING THE DISTANCE



A weekly update for Distance Learners at Wintonbury Early Childhood Magnet School

From the Distance Learning Coordinator, Lisa Smith-Horn DECEMBER 11, 2020

## Important Dates:

December 23—January 1 No School for Winter/Holiday Break

January 8 First Friday Chats

## Reflections from Parent Teacher Conferences

First, on behalf of the entire distance learning team I extend gratitude for your collaboration and dedication to the Enhanced Distance Learning Program at Wintonbury. These are uncharted waters for all of us and we are navigating it together. We learned a lot from you during conferences and appreciate your feedback and ideas.

Secondly, based on discussion in conferences we want to offer some clarifications:

- Wintonbury Preschool program is a developmental, multi-age preschool. Students in September range from 2.9 years of age to 4.9 years of age. Older students are models for younger students and they enjoy being the “leaders” in the classroom. Virtually, the older children offer language models (vocabulary/conversation) and higher level thinking skills.
- On Seesaw a wide range of abilities and skills are posted and observed. As teachers we appreciate seeing the growth students make over time in their language and creations and we honor and respect exactly where each child is in his or her developmental range. *However, if you and your family are uncomfortable posting publicly on Seesaw, we can arrange a private setting for you.* Our initial intentions were that the public platform would create a feel of a community and allow students to comment on each other’s posts. Please reach out to your teacher if you would like to make a change.
- We acknowledge that it is challenging to wear a parent hat and a teacher hat at the same time. A lot of parents are navigating working at home and supporting remote learning with multiple children and levels. We offer two Zoom meetings Monday through Thursday and two Seesaw Monday through Friday. *If this is too much, just do what you can reasonably manage.* Our goal is that at least once a day, your child participates in at least one activity whether it is a live meeting or a Seesaw activity. Seesaw activities can also be done at your convenience.
  - To reiterate, students are marked present if they attend a zoom meeting or do a Seesaw activity on any given day. Students are marked present on Fridays for any Seesaw done on Friday or over the weekend.
- Your children are young and for many, this is their first school experience. It is not unusual for a three or four year old to not sit for the entire group lesson (especially when it is virtual). We suggest that even if your child is resistant, having the zoom meeting on, allows some level of participation. Children are often listening even if they are playing with other things. If possible, sit with your child for the meeting as your presence can facilitate their attention. Remember sometimes exercise before the zoom meeting can help your child expend some energy before sitting.
- If you are looking for more activities or ideas, please refer to the lesson plans which are distributed on Fridays. There are play and outdoor recommendations for each day. Additionally, most lessons posted on Seesaw have suggestions for “extensions”. These are things that can be done to extend the lesson for deeper and more challenging thinking.

## Second Step Home Link

Your child is learning how to wait. Calming down and then doing something quiet helps your child wait.

Counting things is a quiet thing your child

can do while waiting. This helps your child stay calm and not disturb others.

Play a game with your child to practice waiting.

Say: **We’re going to play Wait and Count. You will wait here while I walk into the kitchen and back** (or into any other room or place in your home). **While you wait, count all the red things you see. When I leave, start counting.** Walk to the other room and come back. When you return, ask: **How many red things did you count?** Take turns being the one who counts. Continue to play, counting items of other colors or shapes.