

GOING THE DISTANCE



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

From the Distance Learning Coordinator, Lisa Smith-Horn DECEMBER 22, 2020

Important Dates:

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

January 8 First Friday Chats

Play Dates in a Socially Distanced World



Many children are starting to make connections with peers on Zoom meetings. Teachers are starting to notice spontaneous conversations developing among peers. Unlike the ‘in school’ experience, children have very limited contact with their school friends. To develop some essential skills, time with peers is essential.

Although in person interactions offer the most opportunity for social-emotional development, virtual play dates can often give children the opportunity to build social, emotional and language skills, make connections with one another and cultivate friendships.

Thus, we encourage parents to reach out to one another to schedule virtual playdates.

Here are some tips for success:

-Parents should communicate before the meeting to decide on what the children might do together and collect the necessary materials.

-Consider just one or two friends so it is less overwhelming and it makes it easier for the children to interact with one another.

-Keep the time manageable. Decide beforehand on an estimated time frame but also take cues from the children. Are they done earlier? Do they need more time?

-Keep an eye on the children during the meeting.

-Agree to keep cameras out of bathrooms.

-Don't take a screen shot unless all parents agree.

What to do?

- Involve the children in planning the play date: What would they like to

show their friend? What would they like to play?

- Do art work together: color, paint, cut, glue. Talk while you create and share your creations.
- Have a tea party!
- Have snack or lunch together.
- Build together: Legos, Duplos, blocks. Talk while you build and share your creations.
- Play with cars, dolls, figures together.
- Exercise together: Access some movement and/or yoga videos on YouTube (View it beforehand to access appropriateness, length, interest, etc.)
- Read a story together: One parent can read to the children and discuss or a story can be accessed virtually. Maybe read/ share a favorite story!
- Let us know how it goes and what worked well.
- Look for links from your teacher to share contact information.

Second Step Home Link



This week students learned three ways to play fair. Do your children ever argue over toys? These strategies are helpful with siblings as well as with friends.

Play together: Children play together with a toy.

Trade: Children switch toys.

Take Turns: One child gets a turn

with a toy and then the other child gets a turn.

Hint: Sometimes a timer works well for this, but set for an amount of time appropriate for the children's ages. For example, 5 minutes give one child a solid chunk of time to explore but it's also not too long for the other child to wait.

Play a game with your child to practice taking turns:

Play this game while you are making food that you have to mix or stir, such as batter. Or take turns with a task, such as putting napkins and forks on the table.

Say: **We're going to play My Turn, Your Turn**

"While we mix up this batter. I will stir the batter five times." Count out loud while you stir. Then you will ask me, "May I have a turn stirring, please?" Then it will be your turn to stir!