



EAST LYME PUBLIC SCHOOLS

P.O. Box 220 • East Lyme, Connecticut 06333 • (860) 739-3966 • Fax (860) 739-1215

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

There has been statewide discussion around the concept of distance learning during prolonged school closings. No directive or guidance from the Connecticut State Department of Education has been provided in regards to distance learning. Concerns over instructional consistency (especially in the early grades), equity of access within the district and disruption of special education/student services need to be discussed further at both the state and local level prior to any distance learning implementation. We will continue, during this school closing, to seek ways to provide interim engagement activities to our students. Should we be able to utilize a distance learning model, I will notify parents, students, and staff members of how this will be implemented.

East Lyme Public Schools understands that school closures affect the entire family unit. As a means of supporting all of our families, we want to provide parents with both online resources as well as home tasks as a means of providing learning opportunities in the home. Use the time you have in the next two weeks to engage in activities at home, the outdoors and learning through media.

Some tips to help you support your child during this unplanned school closure:

- Establish routines and expectations to maintain a familiar rhythm of the day.
- Balance screen time and non-screen time activities.
- Students should take brain breaks and move regularly as they engage in activities and studies.
- Discuss what your child is learning and ask questions.
- Establish times for quiet and reflection.
- Remain mindful of your child's stress.

How can you support your child's learning through media?:

East Lyme Public Schools, in partnership with Common Sense Media, is providing you access to rated movies, TV shows, books, and more, so parents can feel confident about how media supports learning experiences for students. By clicking on the Common Sense Media link below, parents can have access to a trusted library of independent, age-based rated and reviewed resources for online/screen-based learning. This resource will help support families as you navigate learning tasks in the home.

[Common Sense Media](#) (Free Educational Apps, Games and Websites)

****If you are a family that is in need of digital access at home during this time, please refer to [Digital Access National Programs](#).***

How can you support brain breaks in the great outdoors while students are engaged in home learning tasks?:

The goal of brain breaks for kids is to help their brains shift focus. Sometimes that means getting up and moving, especially if your child has been sitting for a while. Exercise increases blood flow to the brain, which helps with focus and staying alert. Exercise also reduces stress and anxiety making it easier to focus on

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important tasks. Consider these tasks listed below to engage students in learning outdoors and allowing the natural environment to guide new learning while they are home for an extended period of time.

Here are some examples of typical physical activities:

- Stretching breaks that include yoga poses (dog, cat, cow, bug, rock) and animal walks (walk like a bear, hop like a frog, stand like a flamingo, fly like a bird)
- Wall or regular push-ups
- Walking laps in backyard
- Yoga ball activities
- Sit-ups
- Jumping Jacks
- Running in place as fast as possible
- Cross crawls (touch hand to opposite knee)
- Rocket ship jumps (bending down, touching toes and bouncing while counting down from 10, then blastoff)

Further Guidelines for Learning at Home:

1. Build a routine. Create a calendar or daily schedule for each day. Give each day a learning activity or even a small daily “homework” assignment that you might give your child. You can build in games or rewards around finishing those assignments. Kids operate well around schedules, and a routine schedule can help a child stay focused and centered on the regularity of a daily routine. This will help balance both small pockets of working time with playing time.
2. **Identify creative tasks.** Time flies when you’re having fun, and creativity comes from a place of passion and breeds out of the box thinking which supports tapping into personal mindset! Ask your child what he/she would be interested in creating. Find small household material to make interesting creations.
3. **When in doubt....READ!** Just because you are home does not mean that the books go away! This is the best time to read books for fun. So whether it’s your child’s favorite comic, story, or holiday tale, be sure to visit your local library online collection or check out the books available on the school library websites.
4. **Too many chefs in the kitchen...that’s a good thing!** Whether it’s a favorite family recipe or side dishes for dinner, cooking together can be an engaging way not only to bond but also to learn! Reading recipes is a great way to practice real-life math skills and involves following directions, which is a good skill for students to continue to learn!
5. **Have a game night.** This can be a fun way to bond with loved ones while playing interactive games that will continue to teach your child things such as cooperating, working in a team, strategizing, and having fun!
6. **The outdoors is calling!** Time outside playing a game, hiking, walking, riding your bike within your own backyard and neighborhood are ways to keep bodies moving which is so important that our kids growth and development.

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This is a trying time for our students. Their education and normalcy to their day has been impacted. Please make sure that you take the time to support one another during these two weeks and engage in learning that feels right for your student/family. Take care and I will be in touch in the coming days as new information unfolds.

Sincerely,

Amy Drowne
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
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