



Preschool During the Pandemic, Episode 16: Through a Mother's Eyes: A Year of Preschool During the Pandemic Facilitator Guide

Early Care and Education Environment
Indicators and Elements of High-Quality
Inclusion: E1: Promotion and Affirmation of
Individual Differences, E2: Family
Partnerships

DEC Recommended Practices: Family

As you watch [this episode](#), take note of the successful adaptations Elizabeth, Brittany, and Tara made to address the struggles and to find the silver lining of remote learning.

Reflection Questions

- Elizabeth Smart discusses her initial concerns about remote learning and her sons' ability to attend to a screen for an extended amount of time. The teachers engaged her in thinking through strategies and suggestions for helping them stay engaged (incorporating modeling clay and favorite toys) and even sent her some materials (a schedule board) to use at home to help hold their attention. What other suggestions, supports and strategies you can use to help students who struggle with staying engaged?
- Elizabeth's family members have routines and preferences for setting up her environment when supporting her children's learning. Which details about the people, environment and routines at home can you leverage to enhance instruction in the classroom? Knowing what you know about the home environment and routines, how do you think Elizabeth can extend classroom instruction in her home and community?
- Elizabeth mentions engaging older siblings to help with learning. What are some examples of ways you can suggest a parent engage siblings in supporting a child's learning in home and community settings?
- Elizabeth mentioned the challenge of having her children sit still in front of a screen. How can you incorporate movement during learning activities and instruction in remote and classroom settings?
- Elizabeth mentions that she would not have been as involved in speech therapy if her children had not been learning at home, since they would have otherwise received speech therapy at school. Elizabeth wouldn't have had the benefit of observing and asking questions during the session. How can you facilitate connections and communication between families and specialized therapy providers, so that families are fully informed about what is happening during therapy sessions? How can you provide opportunities for families to ask questions?

- Elizabeth points out the challenge the teacher has of building relationships with children when they've never met face to face. What examples of good teaching practices to support relationship-building did you hear in this episode? What are other strategies you have used or observed that support relationship-building between child and teacher and among the children as they learn and play together?
- What are some strategies you use to help students who struggle with staying engaged in lessons when in the classroom?

Group Activity

Word Cloud Reflection

The final video in the *Preschool During the Pandemic* series has the theme of reflection throughout. Elizabeth shares her memories, observations, images and thoughts about the past year and the challenges and opportunities that remote learning provided. As we all are hoping to transition to a “post-pandemic” world, it’s important to remember to take time to reflect on the lessons learned over the past year and consider how we might use that information to improve our practice going forward.

One way to foster this type of reflection in groups is through word association. The remote environment has given us a useful tool to facilitate a type of word association game through word cloud activities. Your group can create a word cloud together as a learning community using an online presentation tool called [Mentimeter](#).

Participants can use a browser or phone access the Mentimeter website at <https://www.mentimeter.com>

Note to Facilitators: Be sure to spend some time with the Mentimeter tools to explore options and decide how best to orient participants to use it.

For this reflection activity, consider one or more of these questions for your word cloud:
In one word, how would you describe:

- the best lesson you learned from the remote teaching and learning experience?
- the resilience of children and families over the past year?
- the strategy showcased in the *Preschool During the Pandemic* series that you expect to continue to use in the future?
- the way that you connected with families as an educator over the past year?
- your feelings about going back to in-person learning?

Following the activity, participants may want to engage in deeper discussion with peers about their experiences from the past year, and how they might learn from the experience going forward.

Additional Resources

Practice Improvement Tools

- [Family Practice Guides for Practitioners](#)

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