



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局
Education Bureau
Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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To: Supervisors/Principals of All Kindergartens

Dear Supervisors/Principals,

Support for Children's Learning at Home

As announced by the Education Bureau (EDB) on 5 May 2020, having regard to the advice of health experts and the views of schools, the EDB considers that schools in Hong Kong can resume classes by phases in a gradual and orderly manner. In respect of kindergartens (KGs), classes of upper kindergarten (K3) will resume on 15 June 2020. At this time when vigilance against the epidemic should not be relaxed, since students of nursery (K1) and lower kindergarten (K2) classes are at a younger age and their abilities in self-care are relatively weak, it may not be suitable for them to resume classes in the current school year. Hence, schools should continuously engage these students in learning through other modes. The EDB is pleased to learn that during class suspension, many KGs have been making great efforts to enable children to learn at home, so as to achieve the goal of "suspending classes without suspending learning". By so doing, schools are able to sustain children's learning interest and foster their physical and psychological development. In this regard, an information note entitled "Strategies for Kindergartens to Support Children's Learning at Home" (see Annex) has been prepared, which incorporates some KGs' implementation experiences gathered by the EDB for the reference of KGs.

While we understand that home learning cannot entirely replace classroom learning, we trust that with professionalism, love and enthusiasm of staff in KGs, our children will continue to learn and grow up healthily.

Yours sincerely,

(Ms Y Y SO)

for Secretary for Education

Encl.

Strategies for Kindergartens to Support Children's Learning at Home

Overall Planning

For planning purposes, schools are advised to conduct an overall review to identify the foundation for school development, understand the needs of children, teachers and parents, and learn about the resources available within and outside school, in a bid to formulate clear objectives and action plans. As the challenges and difficulties facing schools keep changing along with the social situation, schools need to keep in view of the development and flexibly adjust their strategies.

Strategies:

- The management and staff sides maintain close communication and work collaboratively as a team to tackle challenges.
- In making plans for engaging children in home learning, schools need to obtain a clear picture of their manpower, the expertise of staff members, as well as teaching resources and equipment, and when necessary, seek advice and support from professionals or relevant departments.
- To facilitate children's home learning with concerted efforts, schools should duly consider the workload of teachers and the challenges they face, and offer them support and encouragement.
- Effective means of home-school communication could be developed to engage parents in supporting children's home learning.
- An inspection of school premises should be conducted to ensure that teachers could work in a clean and safe environment.
- When planning activities, schools should cater for the diversity of children by taking into account the diverse needs of grassroots children, non-Chinese speaking children (NCS) and children with special needs, etc.
- A review on the implementation of work should be constantly undertaken in order to grasp the prevailing limitations and challenges facing teachers, parents and children, so as to make adaptations or take follow-up actions flexibly.

Experience sharing:

- Schools maintain regular and close communication with parents via school website or by phone, smartphone chat group or post, etc.
- Schools liaise with parent representatives of respective grade or class as a way to foster home-school communication.

Design of Activities

It is imperative that children learn in authentic settings. To achieve the goal of “suspending classes without suspending learning”, schools should design learning activities in line with the principle of child-centredness and ensure that the contents are appropriate to children’s interests, abilities and learning needs. The learning activities should be play-based for children to acquire life skills and knowledge, and cultivate positive values.

Strategies:

- Schools may design appropriate home learning activities and arrange interesting and meaningful games to help children maintain curiosity and learning motivation, cultivate a positive and optimistic attitude, and develop good hygienic habits.
- Simple and interesting games or learning tasks could be designed to facilitate interaction between children and their family members.
- Schools may adopt suitable household items as play materials in designing simple parent-child exercises or physical play, such as stretching, gymnastics and dancing, so that children could have fun while engaging in such activities.
- Schools could motivate children to show more concern for hygiene, health, as well as people and things around them by making good use of school-based teaching materials and outside resources, such as the “Novel Coronavirus related Learning and Teaching Resources”¹ available on the EDB website. Schools may also encourage parents to use picture books for parent-child reading and storytelling.
- Schools may encourage parents to constantly help children acquire self-care abilities and develop healthy living habits, such as washing hands properly and maintaining a balanced diet.
- Schools may promote parent-child reading by recommending quality books that are interesting and relevant to children’s life experiences, and offer simple tips on parent-child shared reading to help children cultivate a reading habit.
- Schools may design activities that require greater concentration such as listening to stories and music. It is advisable to keep the duration brief and have a break between activities.
- Schools may take into account the different abilities, backgrounds, interests and experiences of children in designing activities that cater for their developmental needs. For example, the emotions of children with special needs at home should be an area of concern, and NCS children should be encouraged to continue to learn Chinese.
- Children should not be asked to do mechanical copying or excessive drills on calculation during class suspension.

¹ The “Novel Coronavirus related Learning and Teaching Resources” are available on the EDB website (EDB website > Home > Curriculum Development > Resources and Support > Learning and Teaching Resource Lists > Novel Coronavirus related Learning and Teaching Resources), among which “I am a Healthy Kid” is provided for the reference of kindergarten teachers
(Website:https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/curriculum-development/resource-support/learning-teaching-resource-list/2020/KnP/1%20am%20a%20Healthy%20Kid_En_KnP_v3.pptx).

- Learning materials or interactive games could be made available through such means as school websites and e-learning platforms. It should be noted that as recommended by the Department of Health, prolonged use of electronic screen products should be avoided for children aged 2 to 6, and children should be reminded to have breaks at times to relax the eye muscles².

Experience Sharing:

- Schools adjust the curriculum and take into consideration the home environment when designing home learning activities for children. For example, schools arrange activities of planting and observing seeds to bud and grow under the theme of “Spring”; schools arrange parent-child snack making under the theme of “Food” and remind parents to guide children to observe the changes in the cooking process.
- Schools design relaxing gross motor activities for children, introduce physical play to parents, such as gymnastics and stretching exercises by pictures and texts, and motivate parents to do exercises with children.
- Schools upload videos on physical play demonstrated by teachers onto its website, and provide log sheets to parents with a view to encouraging parents to provide their children with adequate exercises. Parents also keep records of their children’s physical activities at home for teachers to give feedback.
- Schools design simple learning tasks in real life contexts. For example, children help their parents wash vegetables and fold laundry, so that they can learn to share household chores.
- Schools guide parents to make use of daily household items, such as handkerchiefs and socks, to play counting and sorting games with children; to allow children to open lids of jars, knead a dough, use clothes pegs, etc., so as to develop their fine motor skills and enhance eye-hand coordination.
- Schools encourage parents to play with their children, explore the functions and use of different cleaning products, or reuse waste materials to create artworks and decorate the environment.
- Schools provide parents with picture books, scenarios, etc., which are supplemented with text, and encourage them to read with children and share their feelings, so as to arouse children’s interest in reading. Parents could also discuss the content of the stories with their children, with a view to strengthening education on morals, emotions and hygiene for children. For example, children are encouraged to care for patients and appreciate medical staff’s professionalism.
- Schools prepare learning kits for children, including storybooks, nursery rhymes, physical play, simple experiments, arts and crafts, and building and constructing activities. These activities may be solitary play or parent-child activities. Schools encourage parents to

² Department of Health (2018). *Physical Activity Guide For Children Aged 2 to 6 (Revised 2018)* (Website: https://www.startsmart.gov.hk/files/pdf/physical_guide_en.pdf).

guide children to engage in these activities.

- Schools offer pictures of anti-epidemic measures, such as steps for washing hands, handling sneeze, wearing masks, and suggest parents to display those pictures at prominent positions, so as to help children develop good hygiene habits as well as maintain social distancing.
- Teachers upload the songs that children have learnt and their artworks onto the school website for children to review their learning.
- On the support for NCS children, teachers select Chinese nursery rhymes that contain repeated lyrics and have relevance to everyday life so that children could sing the rhymes at home and sustain their interest in learning Chinese.

Home-School Co-operation

In enabling children to learn effectively at home, parents are the most important partner of schools. Class suspension brings more opportunities for children and parents to interact with one another. Schools and parents should work together to take care of children and foster parent-child relationship so that children could enjoy a loving and pleasant family life.

Strategies:

- Schools may review the needs of parents and children and arrange parent education activities accordingly. Through such education, parents could understand their children's emotional responses as well as healthy physical and psychological development, and realise that effective learning not only involves imparting knowledge, but also enables children to learn through play joyfully and develop a proactive learning attitude for exploration and inquisition.
- Schools may adopt different modes to maintain regular communication with parents and children, and when necessary, collaborate with other professionals (e.g. social workers and educational psychologists) to provide appropriate guidance or support for parents and children.
- Schools may provide parents with guidelines on home learning and play, such as the timetable for activities and rest, and the set-up of home environment, and encourage parents to work out a balanced activity schedule for their children to help them establish regular daily routines.
- Schools may provide parents with simple activity procedures, which elucidate parents' roles in parent-child activities, simple learning tasks and homework as well as their expectations on children's learning, thereby helping parents understand the objectives and approaches of the activities, guide and encourage their children in continuous learning.

Experience sharing:

- Schools encourage parents to prepare with their children a daily schedule for activities at home, such as morning exercises, learning of personal hygiene, parent-child games, free play, lunch, afternoon nap and story-reading.
- Schools remind parents to give a listening ear to and have quality interaction with their children.
- Schools maintain regular contact with parents and students by phone, through which schools could learn about children's performance in home learning, maintain the teacher-student relationship, and offer encouragement and support to parents.
- Schools lend learning materials for developing life skills to children with special needs for their home-based training.
- Teachers contact children by phone and encourage them to establish proper daily routines, eat more vegetables and fruits, so as to boost immunity.
- Schools remind parents to pay attention to the daily accumulated time for children at the kindergarten stage to watch TV or use computer, tablet computer, smartphone as it should

be restricted to within one hour. The screen activities should be interactive and educational, and to be carried out under the guidance of parents.