Exploring Strategies for Learners in Special Education
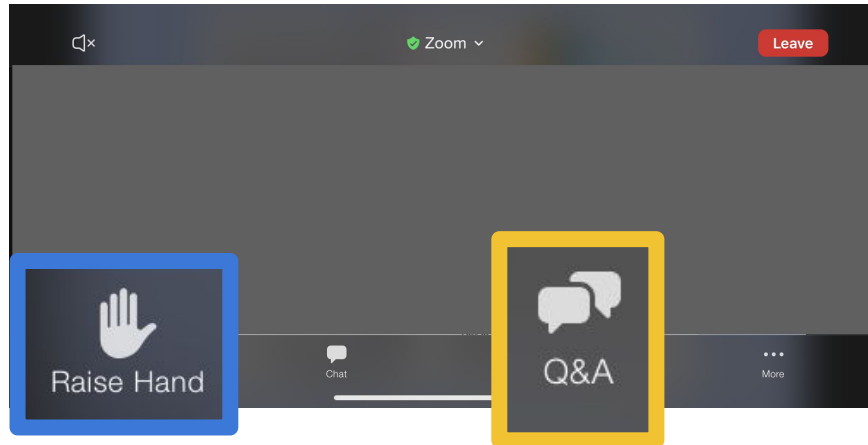
October 1, 2020

Welcome!

- The links and this presentation will be posted to our website: u-46.org/webinars.
- Comments and questions can be included in the Q&A box.
- The Chat box will be available for presenters to share main points and links.

Our Topics for Today:

- 10 Things Parents can do to Maximize Distance Learning for their children

- How to create a home learning environment that will promote academic success

- Be able to identify and address behavior expectations in the context of any routine where learning takes place

- Learn the foundations of behavior and academic support available to learners receiving special education
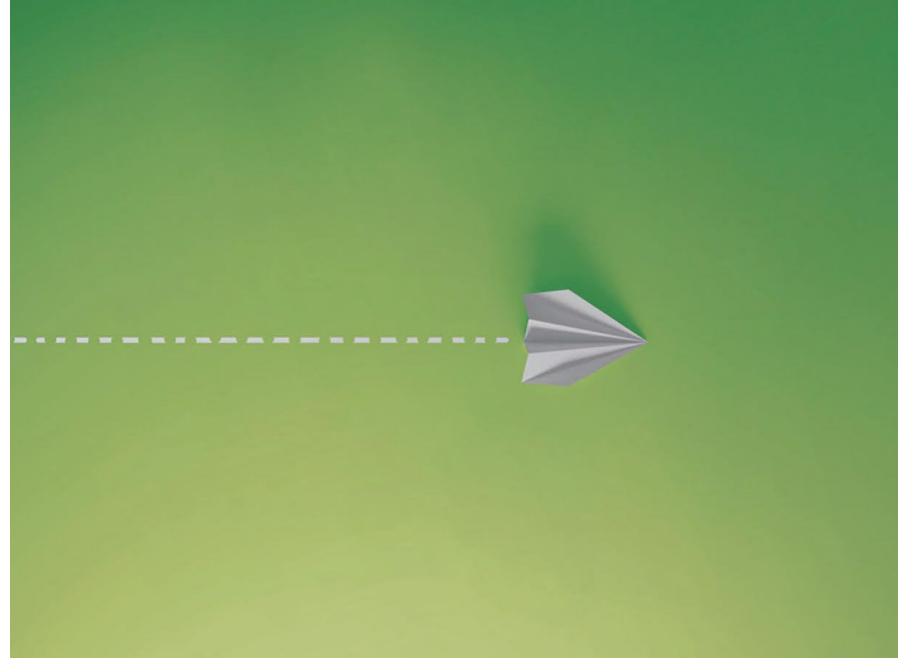
10 Strategies for Parents to Maximize Distance Learning

1.) Focus on Establishing Routines

2.) Create a Learning Environment

3.) Familiarize yourself with the Learning Management System (i.e. Canvas) & Instructional Tech

4.) Model & Practices Distance Learning Skills

5.) Make Sleep a Priority

6.) Monitor "Screen Time"

7.) Be Positive, Stay Positive, Reward & Praise!!!

8.) Home - School Collaboration is KEY!

9.) Take Care of Yourself

10.) It Takes a Village...Know When To Reach Out!!

1 - Establish Routines

- Days are really just a series of "routines" spanned together

- Focus on the the CRITICAL ROUTINES first...
  - Morning Routine
  - Breakfast Routine
  - School Routine(s)
  - Break(s)
  - Snack/Lunch
  - Play / Social / Leisure
  - Chores *
  - Bedtime / Sleep

1 - Routines *(Cont.)*

- At minimum, try to establish routines for all your child's self-care
    - Eating, Feeding, Dressing, Toileting, and Daily Living

- Develop a daily schedule for routines

- Ensure the routines you establish help develop independence and align with helping your child become ready for the day

- Reward and praise behaviors aligned with following the routines

- Remember...it takes 28 days to develop a habit.

TIP: Think Beyond School...Chores, Breaks, Activities, Social, etc.

2 - Create a Learning Environment

- **Develop a dedicated "work space" for your child.**
  - Ideally, NOT in the bedroom, or where there are toys.
  - Doesn't have to be fancy...can be at a desk, table, kitchen table, counter, etc.
    - *Goal = Establish a Consistent Space*

- **Be Strategic About Positioning & Layout of the "work space"**
  - Limit distractions & build efficiency by design
    - Where will it be located?
    - Are there distractions to address?
    - What direction will the child be facing?
    - How is the internet signal in this space?
    - Is there an outlet nearby?
    - Can the child be easily be monitored while in this space?

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2 - Learning Environment *(Cont.)*

- **Prepare & Organize School Materials**
  - Technology
  - Paper
  - Writing Tools
  - Fidgets (if necessary)
  - Sensory Supports

- **Setup & Post Learning Expectations** *(i.e. The Classroom Rules)*
  - Teachers Classroom Expectations (ex. Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible)
    - Ask the Teacher for a Visual of These...

TIP: Try Not To Use Learning Environment for Multiple Activities at Once...

3 - Learn About the Learning Mgt. System

U-46 has shifted away from Google Classrooms and is now utilizing CANVAS as the Learning Management System (LMS)

Parent report one of the most commonly reported sources of stress during distance learning is technology

Be Brave & Proactive!

- Commit to learning about CANVAS through parent training

#3 - Learning About the LMS *(Cont.)*

U-46 already has some GREAT resources and Training Videos for Parents related to Learning to use Technology & CANVAS:

[Parent Training Site for Technology (CLICK HERE)](#)

[U-46 Canvas Training Site for Parents (CLICK HERE)](#)

Instructional Technology: Critical Things to Know…

1. ***Reach Out***: What Instructional Tools, Apps, and Programs are Being Used.
   a. Sources: Teacher, Case Manager, Interventionist, Service Providers, etc.

2. ***Familiarize*** yourself with the login process for both parents & students for these tools, apps, and programs.
   a. Action: Know & record both you and your child's login information. Please don't rely on *autosave* feature.

3. ***Learn & Practice*** how to navigate each of the programs used.
   a. Don't be Shy…Ask the teacher, service provider, or interventionist to help you learn.

Instructional Technology: Critical Things to Know...

4.   Now that you are able to get in.....***Dive in*** and utilize the features!

Suggested Starting Place:

   a.   How to submit assignments & activities
   b.   How to send messages to the teacher, service provider
   c.   Ways to ask/submit questions
   d.   How to Inquire on progress, performance, and missing work

Remember, as a parent you will know your child better than anyone else. You are their biggest and best advocate and an equal and important member of the IEP Team!

4 - Model & Practice Distance Learning Skills

There are some unwritten rules to distance learning. Following these practices to help take advantage of ensuring as much engagement as possible.

1. ***Be Prepared*** - Have the necessary materials ready for learning
   a. Laptop/Tablet, Charger, Clever Badge*, Books, Pencils, Printed Materials, Snacks, Drinks, Fidgets, etc.

2. ***Use the Learning Environment*** - Try to stay in one spot for instruction (if possible)
   a. Break "away" from the spot. Reward/Praise returning after a break.

4 – Practice Distance Learning Skills *(Cont.)*

3. Try to **limit "Digital Distractions"** for others.
    a. Be cognizant of what your background displays *(location & position)*

    b. Consider using the "Virtual Background" feature in zoom
        i. [ZOOM Virtual Background](#)

    c. Practice [Helpful Zoom Skills](#) to Know:
        i. Camera: On / Off
        ii. Microphone: On / Off
        iii. Questions: Raise / Lower Hand

4 – Practice Distance Learning Skills *(Cont.)*

4. Reach out to the Teacher / Case Manager and ask for their behavioral expectations

    a. Should be 3 - 5 positively stated behavioral expectations
        i. ***Reward and praise these early and often***

    b. Ask that they be provided to you in a format most developmentally appropriate for your son/daughter given their skills & abilities
        i. Written, Visual, Etc.

    c. Discuss & Model the expectations with your child
        i. Verbally, Use of Social Stories, Direct Modeling, Role Play, Games, Etc.
            1. MAKE it Both FUN & EXCITING!

Example of Expectations

Praise, Recognize, and Reward Behavior Aligned to Expectations

5 - Sleep is Critical!!

Sleep is as important to the human body as food, water, and physical/emotional safety. It impacts mood, memory, learning, and eating

School Closures have changed sleep in two ways for some children
- Some were sleeping more *(potentially positive outcome)*
- Some received less sleep or slept in non-predictable patterns
  - Children = Most likely population to have developed non-predictable sleeping patterns

Sleep Foundation Recommendations:
- Age 3-5: 10 - 13 hrs/day
- Age 6-13: 9 - 11 hrs/day
- Age 14-17: 8 - 10 hrs/day
- Age 18 - 25: 7 - 9 hrs/day

Toddlers 1–2 years	11 to 14 hours
Preschoolers 3–5 years	10 to 13 hours
School-Age Children 6–13 years	9 to 11 hours
Teenagers 14–17 years	8 to 10 hours
Young Adults 18–25 years	7 to 9 hours
Adults 26–64 years	7 to 9 hours

5 – Getting Sleep Back on Track

Resetting a Sleep Routine - A 10 Day Plan

1. Identify the "ideal" time for a child to go to sleep
   - Base this off the recommended # of hours for the age

2. Identify the "current" time the child *actually* goes to sleep

3. Calculate the difference in minutes between the "ideal" time and "current" time

4. Divide that by 10, and you get how many minutes earlier each days bedtime should be

5. Develop a schedule with each of the 10 days being shorter by the amount calculated

Resetting a Sleep Routine (Example)

Chris is a 10 year old student who typically goes to bed at 10pm & wakes a 6am.

- Hours Recommended = *9 to 10 hrs*

- Wake Time = *6:00 am*

- Current Sleep Time = *10:00 pm*

- Ideal Sleep Time (i.e. 10 hours before 6 am) → *8:00pm*
  - Difference Between "Current" and "Ideal" (between 10:00 & 8:00) = 120 min (2 hrs)

- How Many Minutes to Roll Back Each Day → 12 minutes

New Sleep Times (10 Day "Resetting" Plan)									
9:48pm	9:36pm	9:24pm	9:12pm	9:00pm	8:48pm	8:36pm	8:24pm	8:12pm	8:00pm

6 – Monitor Screen Time

We know there is research on TV time. Research is limited on general "screen" time as it pertains to education

While fun...not all "apps" and "activities" are educationally sound!
- Communicate with the teacher, case manager, or IEP Team for recommendations

Find a Balance!

Build in breaks
- Movement
- 20-20-20 Rule (Every 20 min, look at something 20 feet away, for 20 sec.)

6 – Tips for Limiting Screen Time

1. Try to vary the reading format for activities. Mix it up!
    a. For complex tasks, paper often are the most ideal format.

2. Build breaks into the schedule and make them part of your child's routine

3. During instructional breaks engage in activities that are "active" and are done off or away from a device (ex. Exercise, play, dance breaks, movement breaks, etc.)

4. Establish regular "tech breaks" or identify "tech free zones"
    a. Dinner Time, Family Game Time, Back/Front yard = Tech Free Zone

7 - Be Positive & Stay Positive

1. Always try to *Start on a Good Note & End on a Good Note*!
    a. Sometime "forcing" the last 2 problems can overshadow the 8 that were just done perfectly!

2. Be sure to "*Meet your child where they are at*!"
    a. Remember, go slow to go fast.
    b. Goldilocks (not to hard, not to easy...just right)

3. ***Be the Carrott***!
    a. Praise & Reward early & often!
    b. Empower the Positive Behavior!!
    c. Consider the need to utilize a reward system

7 – Be Positive & Stay Positive (Cont.)

4. Consider implementing a reward system within the home

   a. Most Common is a "Token Economy System"
      i. Can be points, stickers, check marks, thumbs up, etc

      ii. Focus on bringing value to the "right" behaviors rather than empowering the "challenging" ones

      iii. While it's hard, always try to be the carrot, not the stick

   WHAT IS A TOKEN ECONOMY SYSTEM (CLICK HERE)

   Video: Parents Overview - Token System

7 – Be Positive & Stay Positive (Cont.)

5. For older kids, consider a Behavior Contract

   a. Child has a "Say" in the terms

   b. Agreed upon by both parties to be "fair"

      i. Clearly spells out the behavior to change
      ii. The Goal / Outcome to be achieved
      iii. The Payoff for meeting the goal

      What is a Behavior Contract (CLICK HERE)

      Basic Behavior Contract Example

8 – Home School Collaboration is KEY!

Think of school as a partnership between you and your child's teacher

Parents are NOT subject level experts!

Communication & Feedback are PARAMOUNT for Success
- Research on Parent Frustration
  - *Most Common Frustration* = Limited or insufficient communication regarding schedules, tasks, and assignments
  - *Second Most Common* = Feelings of not enough feedback from teacher-to-students & time from teacher-to-student

8 – Home School Collaboration is KEY!

Expressing you and your child's needs is NEVER a bad thing

- Time has taught us that sometimes, the approach we take can influence the outcomes and responses we receive

An intelligent attorney once taught me that effective communication often starts with **_GAWFU_**

_GA_ = Project a **G**ood **A**ttitude
_W_ = Keep Your **W**its About You
_FU_ = **F**ollow **U**p

Like any relationship (Home - School)...Sometimes we need more...Sometimes we need less. Communicate that to your partner

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9 – Take Care of Yourself!

1. Strive to develop a balance
2. Keep a dedicated workspace for yourself
3. Creating a monitoring plan to help you monitor your child's success
4. Set a routine & include sleep as a priority
5. Establish a morning routine
6. Schedule breaks
7. End your day with a positive routine
8. Take time for yourself
   a. Exercise
   b. Stress Relief
   c. Relaxation

10 - It Takes A Village...Know When to Reach Out!

Team Based Approach is critical for success when supporting students

People & Groups Vested in the Success of Your Child...

- Family Members
- External Service Providers
- IEP Team
- Classroom Team
- Coaches, Consultant, & Service Providers
- Special Education Administrators
- Etc.

Communication within and amongst these groups is critical for effective supports

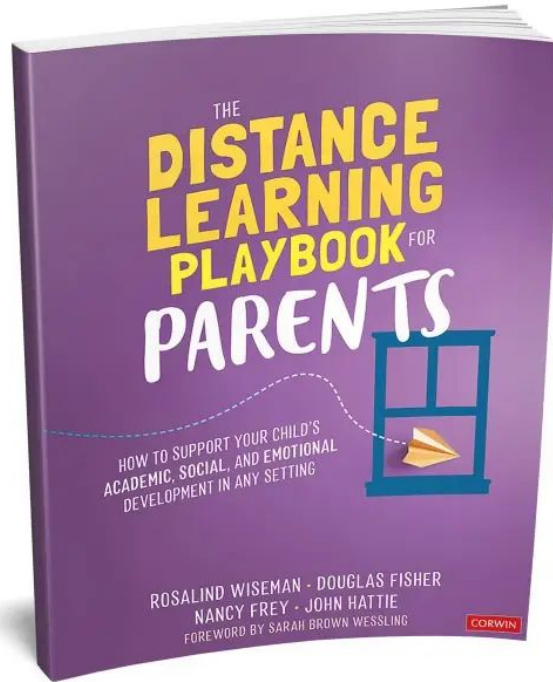# # 10 - It Takes A Village…Know When to Reach Out!

Support is like many things in life…Better to have it and not need it than need it and not have it

If you find yourself or your child struggling, Don't Wait…Immediately Seek Out Help!

If we wait until our cup is empty, we have nothing left to offer to others…

If You Liked This & Want More....

Check out the....

References

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Thank you! ¡Gracias!

- Please don't forget to complete the survey.
- *U46Engage* Webinars: u-46.org/webinars
- Digital Classroom: u-46.org/learning
- Questions?
  - **u-46.org/SpecializedServices**
  - High School - Assistant Principal of Student Services
  - Middle and Elementary School - Special Education Administrator
  - Let's Talk

U-46 Digital Classroom

The new U-46 Digital Classroom section is designed to help your family make a successful start to Distance Learning.