



Dear First School Families,

I hope you are well, healthy and staying safe in these truly unimaginable times. Our daily lives have dramatically changed, and with the latest announcement of an extended school closure through April 24, we will need to settle into our new routines a bit longer.

I have had the good fortune to connect with and “see” each member of the First School faculty often over the past ten days through online conferencing in Google Hangouts Meet and Zoom. Everyone is healthy and in good spirits but each of us in the First School desperately miss being with your children. They are the reason we come to school each day and while Seesaw offers us a window into their lives, there is a missing connection that is keenly felt. As you’ve experienced during the first ten days of distance learning, the First School faculty and staff have remained hard at work to craft and refine high-quality early childhood lessons and activities. Each grade level team and our Specials teachers are striving to create content that is age-appropriate, can be accomplished in the home-setting, and achieves the goals of our program. Believe me when I say, they LOVE seeing what your child is doing at home, so please continue to post photos, videos, artwork, and more to Seesaw. If you are having difficulty connecting to Seesaw, please let me know.

Additions to First School Distance Learning

Since the initial closure, the teachers have been considering what would be the next evolution in our distance learning program if we were unable to return to school this month. Through conversations and careful planning, the teachers have developed a list of physical materials they want to be sure each student has in the coming weeks. It is our plan to package and mail the items to each child over the course of the next week.

In addition to some new materials and the ongoing Seesaw learning activities, beginning next week teachers will organize Zoom online calls with their classes. These calls will take place three times each week so children are able to connect in real-time with their teachers and classmates, which helps to maintain important relationships and continued interactions. Your child’s teacher will share the Zoom schedule and meeting ID with you via Seesaw. While there is no obligation to participate, the teachers would love to see each child as you are able. Plus, we know the children will want to see classmates, too! [Here is a link to directions for families to join the calls.](#)

We anticipate these calls will be exciting and maybe even frenzied, particularly at first as the children become accustomed to the technology and seeing familiar faces. I suggest that an adult join your child on the call to help build understanding and connection through this new community gathering.

Upcoming Parent Survey

Teachers are continually discussing, refining and developing the distance learning program as well as striving to comment on Seesaw posts from families. While the work continues in earnest, we are all eager to hear from parents and caregivers about your thoughts on the curated lessons and activities. Next week a parent feedback survey will be sent, please take the time to complete it so your input can help to inform the upcoming weeks of First School distance learning.

Taking Care of Ourselves

While much of our focus the past two weeks has been launching our distance learning program, the real work during this time is taking care of yourself and loved ones. As we do with every part of our First School program, we always consider the whole child through the cognitive, social and emotional domains. The learning activities sent through Seesaw purposefully ask children to work alongside adults for support and meaningful interactions. While we believe this is the right approach with young children; we also recognize the enormous challenge it presents to families with work and home responsibilities. With this in mind here are a few thoughts regarding daily priorities:

- Please [take care of yourself](#) so you are able to care for and engage with your children.
- The [emotional security](#) of your child is the top priority. Key's Counselors have provided a wealth of resources to support families on [Key's COVID-19 webpage](#).
- Basic daily routines are important but allowing for as much choice and [flexibility](#) in those routines is important. For all young children, their play is their work as they develop problem-solving and decision-making skills, as well as independence.

We are treading in this new territory together and are relying on one another for guidance and support. Please let me know if you have questions or concerns in the days ahead.

My thoughts are with you and your families at this time. Stay safe and healthy!

All the best,

Becky Feters
bfeters@keyschool.org