



Top 15 Tips for BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WHILE WORKING REMOTELY

One of the most troubling things this year is the impact of the pandemic on building positive school relationships. Trust and positive interactions are vital for both for students and adults. Working from home can make this feel like an impossible challenge. But for creative and committed educators, nothing is impossible! Below is a round up of tips for creating a caring community in your classroom and with your school team.

GET TO KNOW YOUR GROUP

Icebreakers aren't just for the beginning of the year. Use polls, chat messages, or invite each participant to share something about themselves. This website has a list of fun and creative activities like a Zoom Background Challenge! blog.sli.do/virtual-icebreakers/

Don't Worry, Be "Appy". Ask your staff group to **show their most useful app or favorite website** during your next meeting. Sharing useful tools and resources is a great way to start conversations and build connections.

Check out this NAEYC link for many **helpful resources to support children and families**:

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/supporting-families-and-teachers-through-change-blog-series>

BUILD TRUST

For staff teams, have regular conversations about expectations for roles and tasks. Make sure you are "on the same page" when it comes to what **work & home life boundaries** look like and how you will address it when it is difficult.

Teaching online or in-person this year is HARD! There is so much to do. Avoid overcommitting and **check in regularly** to ensure that you are prioritizing as a team. Even with your children, you can talk about the goals and plans.

Be flexible. No matter how organized and optimistic you are this year, there are bound to be challenges. Be clear in communicating new problems, connect back to what is most important, and be open to things looking different.

INCREASE COMMUNICATION

Send regular **gratitude notes**, texts, or emails. Take time every week to tell your team or students about something you appreciate. The benefits are well worth the time investment!

Send a short & sweet **newsletter** with your families and your work team. It doesn't have to be big or fancy. Be creative and send out something different that your regular information - include positive quotes, links, or celebrations.

Use an app like Slack, Facebook Groups, or Google Chat for your team to **send texts and chats**. Sharing funny stories, memes, photos, and quotes encourages staying in touch beyond just sharing information.

BE PRESENT

When meeting online, encourage everyone to **use video whenever possible**. It's the next best thing to real "face to face".

Pick a fun "theme" for meetings. Invite everyone to bring their favorite mug for Zoom meeting, wear a favorite color, or have a pajama party. Ask children to bring a stuffed animal or pillow to a virtual story time. The more hands-on, the better.

Meeting with your teaching team to plan? Why not make it a "Coffee Club"? Or "Happy Hour"? **Make time for fun too!**

HAVE SOME FUN

Take a **virtual field trip** together - many parks, museums, and programs have websites that offer great resources. To plan a fun event for your class or next staff meeting, start here: www.weareteachers.com/best-virtual-field-trips/

Start your online meeting with a **fun virtual game**. Check out this link for ideas for your next staff Zoom. www.marieclaire.com/home/a32268495/games-to-play-on-zoom/

Whether with your class, teaching team, or school staff, build a little spirit by **picking a team name**. Choose a mascot, colors, a group quote or even a song. Get Creative!

