

# Resources for Children’s Literacy Tutors

## Summer Reads



**Title:** Behavior Management During COVID-19

**Author:** Kadey Seeger, Summer Reads VISTA

**Date:** 7/30/2020

**Target audience:** Elementary school children; Middle school youth

### Topic(s):

- |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy      | <input type="checkbox"/> Fluency             | <input type="checkbox"/> Phonics                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual tutoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alphabetics   | <input type="checkbox"/> GED                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Pronunciation                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship   | <input type="checkbox"/> Grammar             | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College Prep  | <input type="checkbox"/> Job Skills          | <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking                       | Management                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehension | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening           | <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Culture       | <input type="checkbox"/> Math                | <input type="checkbox"/> Standards Aligned              |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enrichment    | <input type="checkbox"/> Navigation          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teaching Techniques |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ESL           | <input type="checkbox"/> One-to-One Tutoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology                     |   |

### Format:

- |                                     |   |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activity   | <input type="checkbox"/> Instructional Kit    | <input type="checkbox"/> Video     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum | <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson Plan          | <input type="checkbox"/> Worksheet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Handout    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tutor Tip |                                    |

### About Summer Reads:

This children’s literacy tutor resource was created by Summer Reads VISTA members. Summer Reads is an [AmeriCorps VISTA national service](http://www.americorps.gov/vista) program of Literacy Minnesota. For 8 weeks over the summer, Summer Reads VISTA members volunteer full-time as children’s/youth literacy mentors in schools, libraries and out-of-school-time programs across Minnesota. They bring literacy to life for low-income students through a variety of activities – one-on-one tutoring, creative enrichment activities like using arts and drama to explore language or practicing vocabulary and comprehension in science and other subjects. They also connect students and parents/caregivers to community resources through wrap-around basic needs support. At the same time, the VISTA members build their own leadership, explore career paths, pay for college and become lifelong advocates for the communities they serve due to the power of their experience. [www.literacymn.org/summerreads](http://www.literacymn.org/summerreads)

# Behavior Management During COVID-19

This is an instructional guide for how to manage behaviors during COVID-19, with teaching techniques that may be applicable to most educators, both classroom-based and one-to-one tutoring. This guide is intended for elementary and middle-school-aged children but may be applicable for high-school students as well.

## **COVID-19 may be stressful for a lot of people due to many reasons:**

- Social distancing
- Isolation and loneliness
- Concerns over health
- Changes in job
- Financial insecurity
- Loss of loved ones
- Preexisting health conditions (depression, anxiety)

## **These stressors can cause strong fears, emotions, and behaviors:**

- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty concentrating
- Increased use of substances (alcohol, tobacco, addictions, etc.)

Children may experience varying levels of stressors as well. These may arise as behaviors in the classroom as students may not have the 'toolkit' to deal with these emotions in positive ways. COVID-19 presents unique challenges too for in-person programming, with physical distancing, cleaning and sanitizing, masks, and other health and safety measures.

## **Common children's behaviors that have grown more pronounced during the COVID-19 pandemic include:**

- Separation Anxiety – *page 3*
- Attention Seeking Behavior – *page 4*
- Social Distancing – *page 5*
- Use of Masks – *page 6*
- Handwashing – *page 7*
- Attendance Issues – *page 8*

On the following pages, each topic contains commonly asked questions or concerns, tips for behavior management, and additional resources. Please note that some of the topics and tips may be more applicable to certain age groups than others. Behaviors may also vary depending on the educational delivery method (fully online, hybrid, in-person). Thus, these tips may need to be adjusted to fit the needs of your system and students. At the end of this guide you will also find general tips for behavior management and additional resources for more info.

# Separation Anxiety

## The Concern

*“Some of my students are having a really hard time during drop-off and are experiencing separation anxiety throughout the day.”*

This is a common issue that depending on its intensity, is a normal part of child development. Separation anxiety may be amplified due to the virus. This can look like:

- Difficulty saying goodbye
- Tantrums when a child is faced with separation
- Need to know where parents are and when they will come back
- Physical symptoms such as stomachaches, headaches, dizziness

## Tips

- **Acknowledge how the child is feeling**
  - *“I can see that you really miss your mom.”*
  - *“Grandpa will pick you up in a few hours.”*
- **Work with drop-off adult to establish a routine**
  - Same person greets the child every day that they arrive (if possible)
  - Create patterned routine to signify transition of caregivers (from drop-off adult to teacher)
    - Eye contact, touch, presence, and playfulness between the child and greeter
    - *“Everyday, we will look each other in the eye, tap our toes together, and say ‘hello, hello, hello!’ to one another as you come into the classroom.”*
- **Have a calm attitude**; this helps the child return to a calm state using your calmness as a model
- **Avoid having the caregiver sneak out**– this will only make the child feel unsafe and cause future goodbyes to be even more difficult
- **Family pictures**: allow students to bring a picture of their family or other loved ones to have in their backpack. This can create a sense of comfort for the child.
- **Schedules**: have the daily/weekly schedule posted throughout the room
  - May need to include visuals and post at eye level depending on developmental level of students
- **Focus some activities on family and community connections**, especially at the beginning of the year
  - Letters to loved ones
  - Drawing pictures as gifts

## Resources

- [Children’s books](#) can be a great way to talk about goodbyes when they aren’t occurring

- 'The Kissing Hand' by Audrey Penn
- 'Llama Llama Misses Mama' by Anna Dewdney
- 'Bye-Bye Time' by Elizabeth Verdick
- **Tips for parents:**
  - [Ease Separation Anxiety, Children's Community Pediatrics](#)
  - [Separation Anxiety and Separation Anxiety Disorder, Help Guide](#)
  - [Top Tips for Surviving Tantrums, Healthy Children](#)
  - [Older Kids and Separation Anxiety: How It Happens and What to Do, Riley Children's Health](#)

## Attention Seeking Behavior

### The Concern

*"Students are engaging in attention seeking behavior."*

Students may seek attention as they are searching for connection (love, support, and care).

This may appear in negative behaviors such as:

- Outbursts
- Tantrums
- Teasing
- Throwing things
- Or other 'annoying' behaviors

### Tips

- **Catch students displaying good behavior and praise them for it**
  - *"Thanks for stacking those blocks nicely, we wouldn't want to ruin them."*
- **Do not always ignore the attention seeking behavior**, but instead verbalize to the student what emotion you see happening
  - *"It seems that you are **mad** because you are throwing the blocks."*
  - *"It looks like you are **angry** because you ripped the paper."*
- **Show empathy**
  - *"I am sorry that you are having a difficult time at the moment."*
- **Then, you may be able to ignore the behavior until it is over**
  - Unless the behavior is hurting themselves or others
- **Praise positive behaviors** after a student is done with their attention seeking behavior; in other words, praise the behavior that you want to see in the future
  - *"I really like how you picked up the blocks, thank you for your help!"*
- **Give children ways that they can get your attention in positive ways**

- Tapping your shoulder
- *“If you want to me to pay attention to you, you don’t have to throw blocks. Instead, you can ask me if you can tell me something.”*
- **Practice and consistency is key**
  - Work with parents to encourage this approach at home

## Social Distancing

### The Concern

*“How do I keep students 6 feet apart from one another?”*

Students may have difficulties socially distancing. It is important to educate students on the importance of keeping distance from one another, ensuring that you are following any guidelines from your school district. Keep in mind that this is a new skill that everyone needs to work on, it does not come naturally to a lot of people that they need to stay further apart from others.

### Tips

- **Explain the importance** of social distancing (videos like [this](#) or [this](#) may be helpful)
- **Encourage the use of masks** in conjunction with social distancing and proper hand hygiene
- **Use outdoor spaces** for instruction and meals
- **Markings on the ground** may be helpful for some students
- **Work with district officials and school/program administration** to understand protocol for different parts of the day
  - Lunch
  - Transition times
  - Gym

### Resources

- [Explaining Social Distancing to Kids, Munson Healthcare](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Social Distancing With Children, Kid’s Health](#)
- [Social Distancing: Keep On Keeping Your Distance, Healthy Children](#)

# Use of Masks

## The Concern

*“Students keep touching their masks, pulling them down, etc.”*

*“Students cannot see my mouth, so they can’t see my emotions.”*

This may certainly become an issue with students, particularly younger children, if they must wear a mask for several hours in a day. Here are some tips for helping students with wearing their face masks in the safest ways possible, as well as some tips for how to display emotion to students while you wear a face mask. The use of masks may depend on your school district’s, program’s or community’s guidelines, so be sure to check with administrators/staff for the latest information about facemasks.

## Tips for Fidgeting

- **Students will fidget less if they have face masks that properly fit** their face ([here](#) are some tips for this)
- **Work with parents** to ensure practice with masks
  - Start with a short time and build upon this bit by bit
  - Reward that time that they have the masks on
    - Decorating mask with stickers or fabric paint
- **Model positive behavior** about wearing masks
  - Students are more likely to wear masks and not mess with them if you are not either
- **If students need breaks** with their masks off, make sure this is done away from others
- **Some students may benefit from the use of fidgets**
  - Create a list of budget-friendly fidgets (keeping in mind guidelines for cleaning and sharing)

## Tips for Showing Emotions

- **Add drawings of smiles** to masks
- **Create hand gestures** or teach/use American sign language to express feelings that cannot be expressed when wearing a mask (thumbs up, sign for smile)
- **Explain other signs of emotions**
  - *“Just because you can’t see my smile doesn’t mean I am not happy. Look—when I am happy, my cheeks lift up, my eyes crinkle, and my shoulders and arms look like this.”*
- **Verbally express your emotions**
  - *“I am **happy** that you are in my class!”*
  - *“It makes me **frustrated** when you make a mess without cleaning it up.”*
- **Use a plastic face shield** (if applicable or able to)

## Resources

- [Getting Your Kids to Wear a Mask, Dutch Dutch Goose](#)
- [Colorado Parents Urged To Prepare Kids Now For Mask Wearing In Class, CBS Denver](#)
- [Helping Children Understand Emotions When Wearing Masks, NCPMI](#)
- [The Psychology of Wearing a Face Mask, Psychology Today](#)

# Handwashing

## The Concern

*“Students aren’t washing their hands the right way. How can I encourage students to properly wash their hands?”*

Students may be engaging in unhealthy handwashing techniques:

- Not using soap
- Rinsing soap off without scrubbing
- Finishing too quickly

Luckily, there are ways that you can encourage students to correctly wash their hands and keep themselves and others safe.

## Tips

- **Explain the importance** of handwashing ([here](#) is a good resource)
  - This doesn’t have to be scary by any means!
  - Talk about germs and that although they are invisible, they could still be there
  - When children understand why they need to wash their hands, they are more likely to do so properly
- **Make it fun**, especially as children are learning how and when to wash their hands
  - Sing “Happy Birthday”, “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”, or other songs like this [one](#)
  - See who can get the most soap bubbles on their hands and between their fingers
  - Use fun soap (soap bottles with characters on them, soap that changes colors)
- **Model proper handwashing**
  - Children are more likely to wash their hands properly when they see you do it the right way

## Resources

- [How to Teach Kids Handwashing to Prevent Coronavirus, Washington Post](#)
- [Handwashing Posters, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Teaching Kids to Wash Their Hands, Stanford Children's Health](#)
- [Stop Germs in Their Tracks With Fun Hand-washing Tips for Kids, Advent Health](#)

# Attendance

## The Concern

*“My students aren’t showing up for class, and I’m worried that they are falling behind.”*

Chronic absenteeism may already have been an issue for some students, but COVID-19 may exasperate this. Student attendance may start to fall short for a variety of reasons, including:

- Quarantining while awaiting test results of themselves or a family member
- Quarantining due to positive test results of themselves or possible exposure to someone who tested positive
- Lack of ambition/motivation
- Death of a loved one
- Anxiety around attending school with the possible exposure of COVID-19

## Tips

It is important to follow the school district’s or program’s COVID-19 attendance policies, but in general:

- **Emphasize leniency and flexibility**; after all, you want students to stay home if they may have COVID-19 to avoid mass spread.
  - Flexible attendance requirements and punishments
  - Focus more on how to still give students the materials they need (instead in an online format)
- **Clear open and honest communication with students and families**
  - Connect with families after so many absences to check in and see why
  - May be necessary to talk about online options instead if in-person learning isn’t working
- **Keep a safe and healthy classroom environment** to lessen students’ anxiety about COVID-19

# Overall Strategies for Behavior Management

- **Consistency and routine**
  - Try to maintain as much consistency as possible, both from what a ‘normal’ school year typically looks like, but also in the daily/weekly schedule. Having a routine helps students feel safe and secure.
- **Maintain positivity** as best as you can
- **Be in contact with families** throughout the program session
  - Connect about similarities and differences to previous years



- **Caregiver modeling and self-care:** be a positive role model for the children you are working with
  - Ask yourself: am I behaving in a way that I would want my students to?
  - Verbalize your emotions
    - “It makes me **sad** that we cannot give each other a hug.”
  - Self care like sleep healthy eating, water, breaks
- **Acknowledge this year will be different and try your best**– that is all you can do

## Additional Resources for Behavior Management during COVID-19

- [Strategies for Managing Challenging Behaviors during COVID-19 Health Crisis, Mental Health Partners](#)
- [Managing Disruptive Behavior During COVID-19, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia](#)
- [Coping with Stress, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Return to School During COVID-19, American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
- [Supporting Your Child’s Mental Health as They Return to School During COVID-19, UNICEF](#)
- [Behavioral Health Impacts after COVID-19 Shelter-at-Home Orders: What to Expect and Ways to Prepare for the Return to School, Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network](#)
- [Returning to School: Supporting the Social, Emotional and Behavioral Health of Students and Staff, Ohio Department of Education](#)