



Beginning-of-Year Guidance for the 2020–2021 School Year: Responding to the Impact of School Closure

Introduction

Collaborative Classroom acknowledges the lasting impact of events over the spring and summer months on the normalcy of life and schooling, as well as access to learning for teachers, students, and parents/caregivers. To that end, we want to intentionally plan for beginning-of-year instruction in the 2020–2021 school year—instruction that attends to the academic, social, and emotional needs of the entire school community.

This document provides guidance to support *SIPPS* teachers with considerations for the 2020–2021 beginning-of-year in-person instruction. The guidance was written with the following assumptions in mind:

- Reconnecting to schooling and the school community will be essential for teachers and students.
- While the remote learning that took place at the end of the 2019–2020 school year was fragmented, students did learn or practice skills during the hiatus.
- Mastery of foundational skills was not achieved by students.
- Some students lacked the high volume of reading and writing experiences needed to make progress.
- Some students experienced increased trauma, including neglect, hunger, and abuse, while others may have family members who became ill or passed away.
- Students may have academic needs that cause them to feel more frustrated or stressed than normal.

The guidance was written with the goal of ensuring that:

- Students feel calm and connected to school so that real learning can occur.
- Foundational skills are mastered at grade level by accelerating and prioritizing this strand of instruction.
- Teachers leverage the in-person instructional time to increase participation during remote and blended remote learning.

This document can be used alongside Collaborative Classroom's Remote Learning Guidance (accessed through the Learning Portal, [cclearningportal.org](https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/learning-portal)) to plan for fully or blended remote learning.

ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the guidance offered, collecting data will provide the information needed to plan for and make strategic decisions to best meet the needs of students. We recommend entering into the data collection phase at the beginning of the school year as if all students were “new to the school” in order to gain a fresh perspective and understanding of their growth, development, and learning needs. Keep the assumptions listed above in mind as you collect the data.

Due to this unique start of the year, we suggest shifts in the timing of when some assessments are administered. Additionally, given that foundational skill acquisition is a priority, we recommend using specific assessments to quickly identify students who need acceleration. The assessment guidance that follows is intended for this school year only and is not recommended under “normal” circumstances.

At the beginning of the school year, consider administering the formal and informal assessments listed below.

Formal Assessments

- [SIPPS K–3 Placement Assessment](#) (found in Appendix C of the *SIPPS Teacher’s Manual*)
- [SIPPS 4–12 Placement Assessment](#) (found in Appendix C of the *SIPPS Plus Teacher’s Manual*)
- Any district- or school-required assessments

Informal Assessments

Consider using the questions listed below when gathering observational data. Use this data in conjunction with formal assessment data when making instructional decisions.

- *What do you notice about the student’s interactions with their classmates?*
- *What do you notice about the student’s responses during assessments?*
- *What do you notice about the student during whole-class instruction? Small-group instruction? Class meetings?*
- *What do you notice about the student’s engagement during independent work?*
- *What do you notice about how the student responds when things are hard or stressful?*

For students in grades K–1, also consider the following questions:

- *Is the student able to have a conversation with a classmate? An adult?*
- *Is the student able to sing a song?*
- *Does the student recognize their own name in writing?*

PRIORITIZING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

We recognize that students’ social and emotional needs may be significantly different at the start of this school year than in previous years. To support this need, we have developed *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit*, which is a supplement to help classrooms build relationships, support students, and revive learning communities. The *Toolkit* is designed to help you plan and facilitate Community Chats in grades K–1 or Class Meetings in grades 2–6. In addition, specific

guidance (aligned with trauma-informed practices) is provided on how to support students who have experienced trauma.

The Introduction of *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit* will provide guidance on:

- Using the materials
- Modifying or adapting lessons for specific circumstances
- Facilitating group discussions
- Considering classroom management and discipline
- Preparing for remote learning

The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit (accessed through the Learning Portal, [ccclearningportal.org](https://www.ccclearningportal.org)) includes 10 Community Chat lessons for grades K–1 and nine Class Meeting lessons for grades 2–6. The lessons focus on building community and relationships, while giving teachers tools to have hard conversations. See the “Social and Emotional Focus” sections for each grade level for more information.

PRIORITIZING FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS INSTRUCTION

We strongly encourage schools to prioritize foundational skills instruction to support students’ ability to access increasingly complex texts with accuracy and automaticity. Ensure that the schedule allows adequate time for small-group foundational skills instruction through the *SIPPS* program in addition to the core Tier 1 literacy instruction. Literacy instruction should include a sustained amount of time for students to engage in independent reading and writing.

MAINTAINING SOCIAL DISTANCING

Maintaining social distancing within the classroom will be of primary importance. As you plan for instruction, consider the elements and intent of cooperative structures and how to appropriately adjust them to allow for social distancing. Listed below are some suggestions you might consider.

- When gathering for whole-class lessons, you might have students:
 - Sit in designated, appropriately spaced spots on the rug
 - Participate in the lessons from their desks or tables
- During “Turn to Your Partner” and “Think, Pair, Share,” you might have students:
 - Sit feet-to-feet, with their legs extended
 - Stand six feet apart
 - Discuss the questions as a whole class

GRADE-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Use the following grade-specific recommendations to plan the first several weeks of school.

<u>Kindergarten</u>	5
<u>Grade 1</u>	7
<u>Grade 2</u>	10
<u>Grade 3</u>	12
<u>Grades 4–6</u>	15

Kindergarten

WEEK 1 GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

To ensure that students gain a sense of calm and connectedness, consider spending this week engaging in the following Community Chat lessons from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit* (accessed through the Learning Portal):

- Welcome Back 1: Introducing Community Chats
- Welcome Back 2: Introducing Community Chat Rules
- Welcome Back 3: Keeping Each Other Safe
- Welcome Back 4: Learning About Feelings

Foundational Skills Focus

To ensure that students are prepared for learning, focus on establishing routines and procedures for core literacy instruction.

WEEK 2 GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

To ensure that students gain a sense of calm and connectedness, consider spending this week engaging in the following Community Chat lessons from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit*:

- Problem Solving
- Managing Difficult Emotions
- Handling Loss (optional)
- Responding to Tragedy (optional)

Foundational Skills Focus

Continue to focus on establishing routines and procedures for core literacy instruction.

WEEK 3 GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

Continue to ensure that students gain a sense of calm and connectedness by regularly checking in with the class. Use the following Community Chat lessons focused on remote learning as needed from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit*:

- Preparing for Remote Learning (optional)
- Returning from Remote Learning (optional)

Foundational Skills

Continue to focus on establishing routines and procedures for core literacy instruction.

WEEKS 4-19 GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

Continue to support students' social and emotional needs by regularly checking in with the class to maintain a sense of calm and connectedness and nurture a sense of community. Revisit Community Chat lessons from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit* as needed.

Foundational Skills Focus

Continue to focus on establishing routines and procedures for core literacy instruction.

WEEKS 20+ GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

Continue to support students' social and emotional needs by regularly checking in with the class to maintain a sense of calm and connectedness and nurture a sense of community. Revisit Community Chat lessons from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit* as needed.

Foundational Skills Focus

If students do not know 21 of the 26 letter names, place them in Lesson 1 of *SIPPS* Beginning Level. Then do the following:

- Add learning letter name instruction into the “Spelling-sound Review” section of the lesson to solidify students’ ability to name the letters.
- Continue the instruction until students have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Mastery Tests.
- Engage students in the core Tier 1 literacy instruction.

Grade 1

WEEK 1 GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

To ensure that students gain a sense of calm and connectedness, consider spending this week engaging in the following Community Chat lessons from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit* (accessed through the Learning Portal):

- Welcome Back 1: Introducing Community Chats
- Welcome Back 2: Introducing Community Chat Rules
- Welcome Back 3: Keeping Each Other Safe
- Welcome Back 4: Learning About Feelings

Foundational Skills Focus

To ensure that students are prepared for learning, focus on establishing routines and procedures for core literacy instruction.

WEEK 2 GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

To ensure that students gain a sense of calm and connectedness, consider spending this week engaging in the following Community Chat lessons from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit*:

- Problem Solving
- Managing Difficult Emotions
- Handling Loss (optional)
- Responding to Tragedy (optional)

Foundational Skills Focus

To ensure that students have access to the foundational skills instruction necessary to continue to develop as independent readers, and to determine the most effective way to meet their needs, administer the *SIPPS* K–3 Placement Assessment individually to all grade 1 students.

If students place into *SIPPS* Beginning Level:

- Group them by similar instructional needs and begin instruction.
- Continue instruction until they have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Mastery Tests.

If students place into *SIPPS* Extension Level:

- Engage students in the core Tier 1 literacy instruction.

WEEK 3 GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

Continue to ensure that students gain a sense of calm and connectedness by regularly checking in with the class. Use the following Community Chat lessons focused on remote learning as needed from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit*:

- Preparing for Remote Learning (optional)
- Returning from Remote Learning (optional)

Foundational Skills Focus

To ensure that students gain access to the foundational skills instruction necessary to continue to develop as independent readers, provide the instruction that best meets the instructional needs of the students based on the Week 2 guidance. The instruction in the *SIPPS* lessons prioritize phonological awareness and decoding, which may be delayed due to extended time away from school.

WEEKS 4-11 GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

Continue to support students' social and emotional needs by regularly checking in with the class to maintain a sense of calm and connectedness and nurture a sense of community. Revisit Community Chat lessons from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit* as needed.

Foundational Skills Focus

Continue to ensure that students acquire the foundational skills necessary to continue to develop as independent readers. Provide the instruction that best meets their needs based on the Week 2 guidance.

If students are receiving *SIPPS* Beginning instruction:

- Continue the instruction until they have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Mastery Tests.
- After successfully completing the Level, engage students in the core Tier 1 literacy instruction.

WEEKS 12+ GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

Continue to support students' social and emotional needs by regularly checking in with the class to maintain a sense of calm and connectedness and nurture a sense of community. Revisit Community Chat lessons from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit* as needed.

Foundational Skills Focus

Continue to ensure that students acquire the foundational skills necessary to continue to develop as independent readers. Provide the instruction that best meets their needs based on the Week 2 guidance.

If students successfully complete *SIPPS* Beginning Level at Week 12 or beyond:

- Place them in Lesson 1 of *SIPPS* Extension Level.
- Continue the instruction until they have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Mastery Tests.
- After successfully completing the level, engage them in the core Tier 1 literacy instruction.

Grade 2

WEEK 1 GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

To ensure that students gain a sense of calm and connectedness, consider spending this week engaging in the following Class Meeting lessons from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit* (accessed through the Learning Portal):

- Welcome Back 1: Introducing Class Meetings
- Welcome Back 2: Keeping Each Other Safe
- Welcome Back 3: Developing Empathy

WEEK 2 GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

To ensure that students gain a sense of calm and connectedness, consider spending this week engaging in the following Class Meeting lessons from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit*:

- Problem Solving
- Managing Difficult Emotions
- Handling Loss (optional)
- Responding to Tragedy (optional)

Foundational Skills Focus

To ensure that students gain access to the foundational skills instruction necessary to continue to develop as independent readers, and to determine the most effective way to meet the instructional needs of the students, administer the *SIPPS* K–3 Placement Assessment individually to all grade 2 students.

If students place into *SIPPS* Extension Level:

- Group them by similar instructional needs and begin instruction.
- Continue the instruction until they have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Mastery Tests.
- After successfully completing the level, move students onto *SIPPS* Challenge Level and continue instruction until the level is completed.

If students place into *SIPPS* Challenge Level:

- Group students by similar instructional needs and begin instruction.
- Continue the instruction until they have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Progress Assessments.

WEEK 3 GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

Continue to ensure that students gain a sense of calm and connectedness by regularly checking in with the class. Use the following Class Meeting lessons focused on remote learning as needed from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit*:

- Preparing for Remote Learning (optional)
- Returning from Remote Learning (optional)

Foundational Skills Focus

To ensure that students acquire the foundational skills necessary to continue to develop as independent readers, provide the instruction that best meets their needs based on the Week 2 guidance. The instruction in the *SIPPS* program prioritizes phonological awareness and decoding, which may be delayed for students due to extended time away from school.

WEEKS 4+ GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

Continue to support students' social and emotional needs by regularly checking in with the class to maintain a sense of calm and connectedness and nurture a sense of community. Revisit Class Meeting lessons from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit* as needed.

Foundational Skills Focus

Continue to ensure that students acquire the foundational skills necessary to continue to develop as independent readers. Provide the instruction that best meets their needs based on the Week 2 guidance.

If students are receiving *SIPPS* Extension Level instruction:

- Continue the instruction until they have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Mastery Tests.
- After successfully completing the level, continue foundational skills instruction in *SIPPS* Challenge Level.
- Continue the instruction until they have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Progress Assessments.
- Then provide core Tier 1 instruction.

If students are receiving *SIPPS* Challenge Level instruction:

- Continue the instruction until they have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Progress Assessments.
- After successfully completing the level, continue to provide students with ample opportunities to use the word learning strategies they learned in increasingly complex texts.

Grade 3

WEEK 1 GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

To ensure that students gain a sense of calm and connectedness, consider spending this week engaging in the following Class Meeting lessons from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit* (accessed through the Learning Portal):

- Welcome Back 1: Introducing Class Meetings
- Welcome Back 2: Keeping Each Other Safe
- Welcome Back 3: Developing Empathy

WEEK 2 GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

To ensure that students gain a sense of calm and connectedness, consider spending this week engaging in the following Class Meeting lessons from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit*:

- Problem Solving
- Managing Difficult Emotions
- Handling Loss (optional)
- Responding to Tragedy (optional)

Foundational Skills Focus

To ensure that students have access to the foundational skills instruction necessary to continue to develop as independent readers and to determine the most effective way to meet their instructional needs, administer the *SIPPS* K–3 Placement Assessment individually to all grade 3 students.

If students place into *SIPPS* Extension Level:

- Group them by similar instructional needs and begin instruction.
- Continue the instruction until they have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Mastery Tests.
- Once they have completed Extension Level, move on to *SIPPS* Challenge Level and continue the instruction to the end of the level.

If students place into *SIPPS* Challenge Level:

- Group them by similar instructional needs and begin instruction.
- Continue the instruction until they have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Progress Assessments.

If students pass all levels of the placement assessment:

- Consider providing instruction from *SIPPS* Challenge Level to ensure that they solidify their use of polysyllabic and morphemic word analysis strategies.
- Differentiate instruction for small groups by using the A, B, and C word lists.

WEEK 3 GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

Continue to ensure that students gain a sense of calm and connectedness by regularly checking in with the class. Use the following Class Meeting lessons focused on remote learning as needed from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit*:

- Preparing for Remote Learning (optional)
- Returning from Remote Learning (optional)

Foundational Skills Focus

To ensure that students acquire the foundational skills necessary to continue to develop as independent readers, provide instruction that best meets their needs based on the Week 2 guidance.

WEEKS 4+ GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

Continue to support students' social and emotional needs by regularly checking in with the class to maintain a sense of calm and connectedness and nurture a sense of community. Revisit Class Meeting lessons from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit* as needed.

Foundational Skills Focus

Continue to ensure that students acquire the foundational skills necessary to continue to develop as independent readers. Provide instruction that best meets the needs of students based on the Week 2 guidance.

If students are receiving *SIPPS* Extension Level instruction:

- Continue the instruction until they have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Mastery Tests.
- After completing Extension Level, continue foundational skills instruction in *SIPPS* Challenge Level.
- Continue the instruction until they have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Progress Assessments.
- Provide instruction in the core Tier 1 literacy curriculum.

If students are receiving *SIPPS* Challenge Level instruction:

- Continue the instruction until they have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Progress Assessments.
- After completing Challenge Level, continue to provide students with ample opportunities to apply word learning strategies in increasingly complex texts.

Grades 4-6

WEEK 1 GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

To ensure that students gain a sense of calm and connectedness, consider spending this week engaging in the following Class Meeting lessons from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit* (accessed through the Learning Portal):

- Welcome Back 1: Introducing Class Meetings
- Welcome Back 2: Keeping Each Other Safe
- Welcome Back 3: Developing Empathy

WEEK 2 GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

To ensure that students gain a sense of calm and connectedness, consider spending this week engaging in the following Class Meeting lessons from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit*:

- Problem Solving
- Managing Difficult Emotions
- Handling Loss (optional)
- Responding to Tragedy (optional)

Foundational Skills Focus

To ensure that students solidify the foundational skills to support their ability to access increasingly complex texts with accuracy and automaticity, determine the most effective way to meet their instructional needs. Reflect on the following questions:

- *Does the student read inaccurately?*
- *Does the student read without fluency, phrasing, or intonation?*
- *Does the student read at or below a Fountas & Pinnell Level J or DRA 16/18?*

If you answered “yes” to one or more of the questions for any students in grades 4–6, administer the *SIPPS 4–12 Placement Assessment* to them.

If students place into *SIPPS Plus*:

- Group them by similar instructional needs and begin instruction.
- Continue the instruction until they have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Mastery Tests.

If students place into SIPPS Challenge Level:

- Group them by similar instructional needs and begin instruction.
- Continue the instruction until they have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Progress Assessments.

WEEK 3 GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

Continue to ensure that students gain a sense of calm and connectedness by regularly checking in with the class. Use the following Class Meeting lessons focused on remote learning as needed from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit*:

- Preparing for Remote Learning (optional)
- Returning from Remote Learning (optional)

Foundational Skills Focus

To ensure that students acquire the foundational skills necessary to continue to develop as independent readers, provide instruction that best meets their needs based on the Week 2 guidance.

WEEKS 4+ GUIDANCE

Social and Emotional Focus

Continue to support students' social and emotional needs by regularly checking in with the class to maintain a sense of calm and connectedness and nurture a sense of community. Revisit Class Meeting lessons from *The Reconnecting and Rebuilding Toolkit* as needed.

Foundational Skills Focus

To ensure that students acquire the foundational skills necessary to continue to develop as independent readers, provide the instruction that best meets their needs based on the Week 2 guidance.

If students are receiving SIPPS Plus instruction:

- Continue the instruction until they have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Mastery Tests.
- After completing Plus, continue foundational skills instruction in Challenge Level.
- Continue the Challenge Level instruction until they have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Progress Assessments.

If students are receiving SIPPS Challenge Level instruction:

- Continue the instruction until they have successfully completed the level based on evidence from the Progress Assessments.
- After completing Challenge Level, continue to provide students with ample opportunities to apply word learning strategies in increasingly complex texts.