# Checklist: 5 starter plays for enhancing mental health and well-being

These plays are useful in both in-person and virtual learning environments.

Print this page to help track your progress toward completing the 5 starter steps.



#### 1. Communitybuilding activities

- Conduct daily morning meetings.
- Find time for <u>staff</u>, <u>student</u>, and family check-ins.
- Identify opportunities for peer learning (for example, lessons designed to provide ways for students to learn and work together).



### 2. Trauma-informed training

- Provide staff and teachers with professional learning opportunities.
- Review and revise school policies and procedures to be more traumainformed and adapted to a virtual context.
- Create opportunities for staff to observe each other and provide feedback.



## 3. Open discussions on environmental stressors

- Build in time to practice new routines (for example, teaching handwashing, no-touch practices, and virtual high-fives).
- Build in time during the day to allow students to express and process emotions.
- Engage in <u>curricular</u>
  <u>opportunities</u> that promote
  equity, diversity, and
  inclusion.



### 4. Social-emotional skill building

- Build in time during the day for connecting and building relationships.
- Introduce coping strategies that students can apply to those experiences.
- Integrate practices that promote social-emotional skills (for example, "mindful minutes" in between activities).
- Provide a <u>calming space</u> or set of strategies for students to de-stress.
- Work with parents and families to support social and emotional learning in the home.



### 5. Mental health support services

- Create a <u>process</u> to identify students who are struggling with mental health.
- Ensure all staff understand how to <u>refer</u> students for additional resources and support.
- Create easy <u>pathways</u> for accessing mental health resources (such as regular classroom visits by mental health staff or passes to access counseling).
- Create a process for families and school staff to collaborate on and share <u>student support</u> <u>plans</u> and resources.



# Checklist: 5 starter plays for enhancing your COVID-19 prevention strategy



### 1. Provide staff and teachers with training opportunities

- Train staff and teachers on policies and procedures and how to discuss them with students and families.
- Educate yourself, and then your staff, about COVID-19 transmission, symptoms, and effects on local communities.
- Speak with staff and teachers about employee sanitation and train them on how to establish physical space in classrooms and hallways.
- Use data on attendance, student engagement, student health records, and public health data to identify student support opportunities.
- Establish a process for raising questions and sharing feedback about COVID-19 policy changes.



### 2. Take advantage of your staff's expertise in health and wellness

- Plan and implement COVID-19 prevention strategies in partnership with school staff, such as nurses and other specialized instructional support personnel (SISP) health and physical education teachers, and custodial staff.
- Develop plans for supporting populations at high risk for COVID-19.
- Work with facility and maintenance staff to make sure proper air ventilation, filtration, and cleaning and disinfecting procedures are in place.



## 3. Engage students' families to help develop and implement your prevention strategy

- Seek family input in your school's operating plans and conduct surveys and virtual town halls to collect ongoing feedback.
- Inform families about when to send their children to school, safety protocols, and who to contact with questions or concerns.
- Communicate what's required for students to return to school, like well-child visits, immunizations, screenings, and testing.
- Share resources to help families speak with their children about COVID-19 and inform them about available school programs and services.



## 4. Work with community partners and agencies to develop and implement your prevention strategy

- Designate a point of contact on school staff to be a liaison with local public health agencies and ensure up-to-date COVID-19 information is available to share.
- Work with local public health agencies, health care providers, and community-based organizations to provide resources and support.
- Engage with local and state decision-making authorities to share successes and challenges that can inform future policymaking.
- Partner with culturally specific organizations to develop outreach materials for families.

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#### 5. Destigmatize COVID-19

- Uphold your <u>students'</u> <u>civil rights</u> by preventing bullying, harassment, and racist behavior.
- Implement truancy and absenteeism strategies to ensure students and families feel supported and engaged in the school community.
- Implement strategies that recognize the different lived experiences of families and how COVID-19 has affected their lives.



## **Checklist**: 5 starter plays for affecting the social drivers of health

These plays are useful in both in-person and virtual learning environments.



- 1. Begin to address the impact of institutional racism on education and health
- Seek out partners in equity, diversity, and inclusion to provide resources and training for all school staff.
- Build authentic relationships with formal and informal leaders of color from your community.



- 2. Connect your community to resources for food security
- Widely distribute food access information to families.
- Consider working directly with a local food pantry.
- Ensure that all staff are prepared for virtual or in-person home visits.
- Help ensure that eligible families receive Pandemic EBT.
- Work with local health and human services agencies to support applications for SNAP and WIC.
- Coordinate applications for free or reduced-cost meals or universal meal programs.
- Find meals for kids when schools are closed.
- Identify resources for families who may be ineligible for federal assistance due to immigration status or other factors.



- 3. Work with local health and human services agencies to support families enrolling in Medicaid or CHIP
- Check to see if your state is eligible for Medicaid reimbursement for school-based health services.
- Educate families about who qualifies for Medicaid's free or low-cost medical benefits: eligible adults with a low income, children, pregnant women, people who are 65 or over, and people with disabilities.
- Inform families that if income is too high for Medicaid, a child may still qualify for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). It covers medical and dental care for uninsured children and teens up to age 19.



- 4. Connect families or staff experiencing homelessness to housing resources
- Identify local opportunities for students and families experiencing homelessness and housing instability, like your local <a href="HUD office">HUD office</a>, the local Public Housing Authority, or an affordable housing locator.
- Point students and families to community housing aid, like the National Low Income Housing Coalition's legal resources and housing assistance, and community action agencies.
- Create opportunities for your McKinney-Vento liaison to educate parents, staff, and students.

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- 5. Connect families and staff to programs and organizations that support financial security
- Encourage families to take
  the benefits.gov survey to find
  government benefits they may
  be eligible to receive.
- Work with job development, skills training, and employment programs, such as the U.S.

  Department of Labor and Goodwill Industries.
- Co-host interview skill building, ESOL classes, or other workshops to support families and staff in achieving living-wage employment.



# Checklist: 5 starter plays for implementing physical activity, physical education, and health education

These plays are useful in both in-person and virtual learning environments.

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## 1. Require physical education and health education instruction

- Ensure inclusion of health education (HE) and physical education (PE) instruction time in the master school schedule. Don't allow waivers for either.
- PE and HE teachers should conduct <u>at-home student surveys</u> to design equitable and appropriate learning experiences that build meaningful relationships with students and families.
- Include students with disabilities in both in-person and virtual PE instruction. Adapt teaching strategies, equipment, environments, and assessments to meet the needs of all students.



#### 2. Make necessary accommodations

- For in-person PE class, focus on activities that require no person-to-person contact and limited or no physical activity equipment.
- For virtual learning PE class, focus on <u>activities</u> that can be done in small spaces with equipment found at home.
- For in-person HE class, follow CDC and local guidance for classroom instruction. Focus on health decisions, health information, and coping skills.
- For virtual learning HE class, focus on developing connections with students, communicating expectations, creating consistency, and making content accessible for all learners.



## 3. Provide professional development

- Provide professional development to PE teachers and recess supervisors on schoolwide COVID-19 prevention protocols, equipment sanitation, and virtual learning strategies.
- PE instruction in the virtual environment may require the use of additional technology by PE teachers in order to deliver synchronous or asynchronous instruction and to assess students.
- Ensure that health and PE teachers receive sufficient support, funding, and professional development to make necessary adaptations to their curriculums.



### 4. Offer recess in person and virtually

- Utilize multiple locations for recess throughout the school and outside to reduce the number of students playing in one area.
- Ensure sufficient adult supervision.
- Limit use of play structures or play equipment.
- PE teachers should provide students and caregivers with guidance, resources, and suggested physical activities to help students participate in daily physical activity when learning from home.
- All teachers should schedule physical activity within their class time for their students to allow breaks from seat and screen time.



## 5. Offer physical activity in person or virtually

- Provide teachers with examples of classroom-based physical activities that can be used to safely increase student engagement, build community within the classroom, and reestablish rapport between students and teachers.
- Increase the emphasis on incorporating physical activity during transitions, the beginning of the school day, and the closing of the school day.
- Provide students and caregivers with daily <u>activities</u> to stay physically active and mentally healthy at home.
- Don't withhold physical activity breaks or require physical activities as disciplinary actions for students.





# Checklist: 5 starter plays for enhancing staff and teacher well-being

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### 1. Promote equity and collaboration

- Collaborate with staff, teachers, and local bargaining units on your reopening and continued learning plan and work duties.
- Provide professional learning on COVID-19's impact on your school, particularly equity, <u>racial</u> justice, and health access.
- Gather, review, and address feedback on the effectiveness of your reopening and continued learning plans.



#### 2. Prepare staff

- Provide job-specific development opportunities, such as <u>virtual learning</u> techniques.
- Build processes that help staff and teachers express emotions and collaborate on solutions.
- Develop clear and consistent messages to use throughout your school community.



### 3. Foster collective resilience

- Build in time during meetings for staff, parents, and caregivers to connect.
- Provide opportunities for collaboration and shared decision-making about employee well-being.
- Engage staff and teachers during the workday with well-being activities.



### 4. Empower personal well-being

- Provide learning opportunities on burnout and stress reduction.
- Allow staff and teachers to schedule breaks to care for their well-being.
- Set clear and realistic expectations for in-person and virtual working hours.
- Promote healthy work routines.



#### 5. Provide resources

- Promote district-sponsored health offerings.
- Review and revise your human resource policies.
- Connect employees to community and financialplanning resources.

