

# INTRODUCTION: Guidance Note 2, Teacher Resources

---

## **A new series**

This guidance is part of a series to support you during the Covid-19 crisis. The guidance notes include #1- Inclusive Digital learning #2 - Teacher resources and #3 Home support. We will keep selecting interesting resources and develop new guidance as the crisis continues. Feel free to contact the IE sector and share if you have specific guidance needs, with your usual contact. Please share also the material you developed at country level, it might be relevant to other programs and partners.

## **A quick note about translation**

If material that we have collected for your use at programme level is not available in language(s) you need, we can contact Translators without Borders to support us with translations. Let us know.

You can also adapt some material, simplify it and make it more accessible, illustrated (e.g. with Widget). There is free trial [version here](#), and more info is available in brief 1, tip 7. Please simply ensure you quote the original source and mention “adapted or translated from xxx”.

## **Format**

1. Introduction
2. Pictorial based summary of the top tips
3. Explanation of the resources and more information about top tips, with hyperlinks of relevant resources

## **IE Sector contacts**

Julia McGeown, Global Inclusive Education Specialist (English speaking countries):  
[j.mcgeown@hi.org](mailto:j.mcgeown@hi.org)

Sandra Boisseau, Global Inclusive Education Specialist (French speaking countries):  
[s.boisseau@hi.org](mailto:s.boisseau@hi.org)

Sandrine Bohan- Jacquot Inclusive Education policy officer, and EIE focal point (for Kenya/ Uganda/ Palestine/ Chad/ Algeria): [s.bohanjacquot@hi.org](mailto:s.bohanjacquot@hi.org)

These briefs were developed with the support of Erika Trabucco, Accessibility specialist.

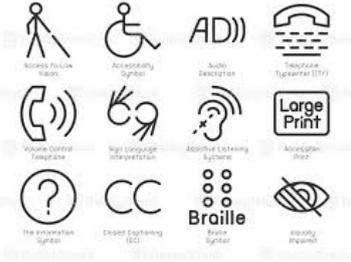
# 10 tips for teaching children with disabilities during COVID-19

*Suggestions and recommendations for HI's field programs*

**Remember that education goes beyond academics, learning continuity is crucial and it can be done, by keeping realistic expectations and by making learning fun!**

1	<p><b>Keep the link with your learners as much as possible and check on their wellbeing</b> with any means available to you (phone call, SMS, individual home-visit<sup>1</sup>, etc.). It is crucial to mitigate learning difficulties and the risks of permanent school drop-out and to let parents know they are being supported through this period.</p>	
2	<p><b>Give specific support to the most vulnerable children</b> who may struggle the most with distance learning. In some contexts it may be possible to maintain some opportunities for classroom learning, with small groups of learners who have special educational needs (either because of disabilities or other reasons) when restrictions ease.</p>	
3	<p><b>Use any technological means available to you to teach.</b> If you have technology available, including lower cost options such as basic mobile phones, take advantage (e.g. Send information, explanations, a quiz, or a game idea by SMS). Don't overwhelm parents with lots of requirements though – remember they aren't teachers! Focus on the needs of learners with disabilities in terms of modality and style of teaching, as well the materials they/you could make.</p>	
4	<p><b>Check and improve the basic accessibility of the content and format of the learning material.</b> Digital measures are not always inclusive or accessible (e.g. poor accessibility of</p>	

<sup>1</sup> Be careful always to comply with health protection measures whenever in close physical contact with anyone.

	<p>some E-learning platforms for Low-vision and Blind children), complex language for children who have difficulties understanding or simply because they are not appropriate. There is no “One fits all” solution. Radio can often be the easiest means to reach out to learners as they are widely available but it is not accessible to all, due to the language used, lack of coverage, not accessible for children with hearing impairments, etc.) <u>Note</u>: For more information, check the specific guidance in Brief 1 on inclusive digital learning.</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>It is important to <b>understand “Education” in its wider sense</b>; education is about learning skills and knowledge, whether in school or out of school (e.g. life skills). It is especially important to focus on these sorts of skills for children who struggle with the pace of more academic subjects taught in school. Other activities (cooking, playing, learning to take turns, etc.) are very valuable learnings as well.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p><b>Be realistic with distance learning expectations.</b> Parents are not teachers and sometimes cannot support their children’s learning process; Advise parents to keep a learning routine for their children, even just an hour or a couple of hours a day with plenty of breaks. This helps to keep up the child’s motivation and spirits and reduce stress. This is especially important for children who find learning difficult. Breaking up learning into short chunks of 15 to 20 minutes will work the best. It is best to revise previous topics already covered at school, but if the ministry of education is providing materials for new topics, make sure that parents are aware that they should just do their best to support, based on their child’s ability and level. For some children revision of old topics only is the best.</p>	

7	<p><b>Tap into available human resources such as brothers and sister to support children.</b> In particular older siblings may support with the knowledge they already acquired. The best way of learning is to teach! Passing their knowledge on will consolidate older siblings' knowledge as well.</p>	
8	<p><b>Use posters rather than leaflets.</b> Be mindful with homework material distribution as the Covid-19 virus can stay for a few days on physical surfaces. Posters showing key messages for all, are better to use than leaflets, because they are not to be handled by students. Leaflets or guidance sheets are okay if they are sent to individual households. Remember to present information in easy reading format for learners that need it.</p>	
9	<p><b>Playing is learning.</b> Make learning as playful as possible. Play is also an important element of well-being. Many games can be played without material (using your body to do letters, shapes, mimes, scissors/paper/stone, counting games, or using what's available (stones, a piece of wood to play hopscotch, a rope to jump, old paper/tissue to make a ball, sand and sticks to draw and build, "treasure hunts", etc.).</p>	
10	<p><b>Protect children from abuse</b> during these difficult times. Keep in touch with children with disabilities in particular as they are more vulnerable, especially girls. Unfortunately the risks of violence against children are likely to increase (e.g. child labor, exploitation, domestic violence, sexual abuse, early marriages, etc.). If you have the opportunity to do short one-to-one home visits to children with disabilities<sup>2</sup>or to call parents, pay attention to any sign of potential violence. Refer to relevant staff and services if you think you identify anything suspicious.</p>	

<sup>2</sup> Be careful always to comply with health protection measures whenever you are in close physical contact with anyone.

# 10 TOP TIPS for Teacher support

*For teachers of children with disabilities*

**PLEASE CLICK on the HYPERLINKS (underlined words) for the resources.**

To help teachers support their students during school closure, and to improve both wellbeing and learning outcomes for girls and boys affected by the COVID 19 crisis, a wide range of resources have been developed. Although not every idea or resource suggested will be relevant or possible in every situation and context, we tried to select the most appropriate ones that cover the main areas of recommendations of this note. We have also included some internal guidance documents and resources that HI has produced.

## **1. Keep the link with your learners as much as possible and check on their wellbeing**

The following resources explain how teachers can support parents to talk about COVID 19 and check on children's wellbeing and support them to understand the crisis.

### **How to talk about Covid-10 to children**

- UNICEF has some useful advice sheets to explain how teachers can talk about Covid-19 with children in different languages ([English here](#))
- Cartoon Les dessins de Marge (available now in French, Italian, Arabic) has [new stories](#) which are published regularly
- There are also explanations, stories and poems about Coronavirus

Explanation of Coronavirus adapted for children (in French)	A story about Coronavirus from Iraq (in English)	A poem to help children understand coronavirus (in English)
 Explication adaptée aux enfants.pdf.pdf	 Coronello story_ENG.pdf	 The Time We Spring.docx

- [My hero is you](#), a lovely story about Covid-19 (currently available in 9 languages) recommended by our MHPSS specialists, which you could use/adapt to your context.

## **2. Give specific support to the most vulnerable children**

The education community is actively compiling interesting resources on Covid-19 and inclusion. The Inter-Agency Network for education in emergencies (INEE) website is updated regularly, with new translations and materials, and has a [collection on COVID 19 on inclusion](#) specifically. Click [here](#) for information on their webinars.

### **If possible, do small groups and provide individual learning**

UNESCO recognizes the possible need for learners with disabilities to work in small groups and advises that “Education authorities must also take special care in planning for the diverse needs of all learners during school closures”. This is paramount for students with learning difficulties, who may struggle to work independently and at a distance. It may be desirable to maintain minimum opportunities for classroom learning, with small groups of special needs learners. Providing direct individual online learning through daily check-ins with teachers and videoconferencing with other learners may also be necessary, as is the provision of resources to parents and caregivers taking on the role of teacher during school closures”. Click here for [more](#) info.

### **Use the Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**

In this difficult crisis situation with schools closed and restrictions on contact and movements, it might seem and difficult to know how to teach.

One important principle to keep in mind is the [Universal Design for Learning Framework](#), often part of IE training. Use it to design lessons in an interactive way. The three key principles are to use multiple ways to keep learners motivated, present information and lesson content in a variety of ways and to ask learners to express what they have learnt in a variety of ways. In other words, multiple means of engagement, representation and expression. There are some useful resources based on these principles to help teachers to think about how to teach in different ways to support learners with different needs, and in new contexts, where schools are closed.

- Check these recommendations: [Applying Universal Design for Learning in Online Courses: Pedagogical and Practical Considerations](#)
- A good resource on UDL from USAID is available on [literacy](#)

### **Adapt the existing learning material and ensure it is understood**

You do not necessarily have to create new material, but you should adapt the learning material provided by the government / an organization and ensure it is

accessible and understood by children with disabilities. So for a quick reminder on clear communication whatever means of communication you will use (radio, TV, phone...) see this resource:



Communication tips  
for distance learning.

### **3. Use any technological means available to you to teach**

It is better to use the technology you know if you only have a phone, use it; call to check if parents are struggling, send SMS, share an additional explanation. If you have a smartphone, you can use videos, or communication applications such as WhatsApp.

It is true that with access to internet a lot can be done but there are some **off line technologies** (see guidance on distance digital learning) that can be used so you can have access to learning information without internet on a tablet for example. This learning material can be used during individual visit or with a small group.

For Digital learning when you have access to internet and “High tech” devices such as laptops, smartphones or tablets, please see the guidance # 1 on digital distance learning.

[This crisis can be an opportunity for new learning and introduction of more technology in your teaching!](#)

### **4. Check and improve the basic accessibility of the content and format of the learning material**

Whichever material is used or recommended, ensure that basic guidelines on accessibility are followed. This is true for any lesson in class, via the radio, on the internet. You do not have to recreate everything but adapt existing materials.

USAID published an [article](#) about the importance of accessible learning materials. Below a quick reminder on how to make lessons accessible when teaching in class or online:



Accessibility tips for  
teaching.docx

Note: For more on accessibility, check the guidance on distance digital learning.

## 5. It is important to understand “Education” in its wider sense

Education is about learning skills and knowledge, whether in school or out of school (e.g. life skills). It is especially important to focus on these sorts of skills for children who struggle with the pace of more academic subjects taught in school. Other activities (cooking, playing, learning to take turns etc.) are very valuable learnings as well.

Check on essential life skills you could teach or advise parents to help their children with [10 essential life skills for children with special needs](#), [tips for teaching children with disabilities self-care](#), and a longer list of [60 life skills for children with special needs](#) and more on [Do2 learn](#).

## 6. Be realistic with distance learning

Some guidance and recommendations are available for distance learning including low technology too. GPE published [a report](#) about 4 options to ensure learning using low cost technology such as phones and radio UNESCO shared [10 recommendations](#) to plan for distance learning.

### Main recommendations

We acknowledge that distance learning is new to many teachers; it is even more difficult when technology and internet is not available and one faces material distribution limitations.

- Assess the amount of information you can reasonably share with your learners within the context you are in. Do not expect to keep up with the same pace as school. 1- 2 hours of learning a day is already something and enables children to have some continuity of learning.
- Remember that it's still important for children to “learn by doing” through manipulation of objects and active movements. If you are doing mathematics via the radio, you can still ask children to use items of any kind like stones, buttons, bottle tops or any available item in the house. And if you are doing addition, ask them to hold 2 in the right hand and 3 in the left hand and then count how many they have in their hands.
- It is possible even when you have no material. Remember you can use your body (see below alphabet with movements' examples), use songs and gestures that children already know or invent one!



Bouge ton  
alphabet.docx



Let's make an  
alphabet.docx

## **7. Tap into available human resources such as brothers and sisters to support children**

If not adding extra burden on them or leading them to miss out on their own learning, brothers and sisters can take part in the lesson (via radio, one to one...) and help their sibling with disability to understand. Remember children might be better at explaining than us!

In particular older siblings may support with the knowledge they already acquired. The best way of learning is to teach! Passing their knowledge on will consolidate older siblings' knowledge as well.

## **8. Use posters rather than leaflets**

Be mindful when distributing paper materials as the Covid-19 virus can stay on physical surfaces for a few days.

In addition to sharing written material and suggestions for home, it is advisable to communicate with parents about how to use the learning packs.

Be mindful of the cleanliness of materials such as phones, tablets, etc. that maybe touched by several users.

## **9. Playing is learning**

Playing is learning. Make learning as playful as possible. Play is also an important element of well-being. Many games can be played without material (using your body to do letters, shapes, mimes, counting games, or using what's available (stones, a piece of wood to play hopscotch, a rope to jump, old paper/tissue to make a ball, sand and sticks to draw and build, "treasure hunts", etc.)

Powerpoint about creating inclusive and accessible teaching and learning materials particularly for children with disabilities



accessible teaching  
and learning sierra lex

Note: Check the guidance on home support for other ideas about educational games.

## **10. Protect Children from Abuse**

Protect children from abuse during these difficult times. Keep in touch with children with disabilities in particular as they are more vulnerable, especially girls. Unfortunately the risks of violence against children are likely to will increase (e.g.

child labor, exploitation, domestic violence, sexual abuse, early marriages, etc.). If you have the opportunity to do short one-to-one home visits to children with disabilities or to call parents, pay attention to any sign of potential violence. Refer to relevant staff and services if you think you identify anything suspicious.

## **Annex: Websites for further reading**

An interesting read about required competences and technology needed for distance learning	<a href="#">Discussion on distance learning training for teachers</a>
GEM UNESCO share about Senegal strategy to ensure learning continuity	<a href="#">Comment le Sénégal entend assurer la continuité pédagogique</a>
UKFIET website has several blogs in relation to Covid-19, the below article reflecting on the educational inequality	<a href="#">Access to digital learning during Covid-19 closures compounding educational inequality</a>
A link to report on “Evidence on efforts to mitigate the negative educational impact of past disease outbreaks”	<a href="#">Evidence on efforts to mitigate the negative educational impact of past disease outbreaks”</a>
If you are more ambitious and plan to design an accessible course, train yourself	Check this online <a href="#">toolkit</a> .

IE Sector (Julia, Sandra and Sandrine), supported by Erika Trabucco (Accessibility global specialist), Humanity & Inclusion, April 2020.