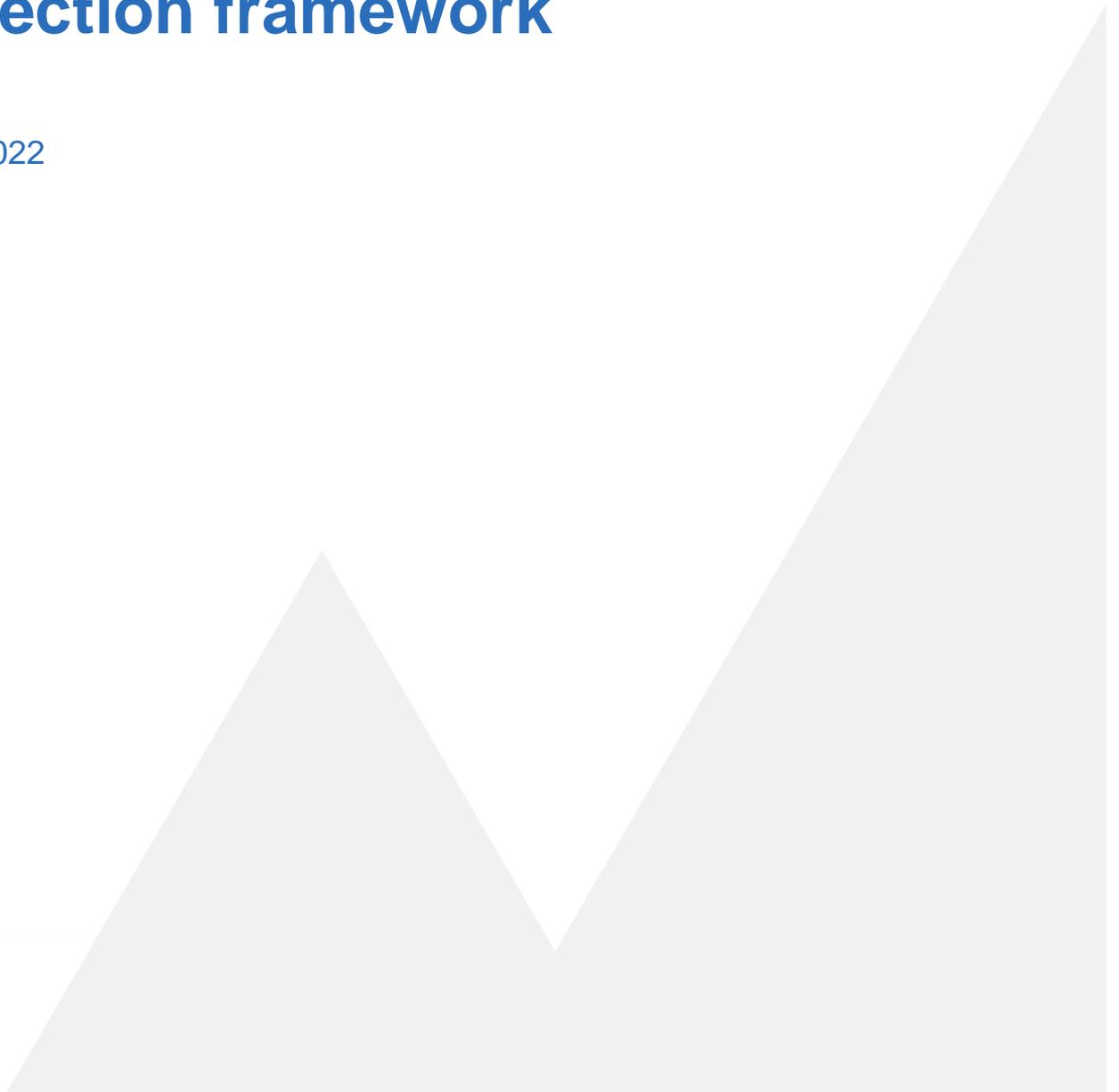




Incredible Years guidance for group leaders, under the COVID-19 protection framework

March 2022



Introduction

It is essential that these guidelines be read in conjunction with latest updates and advice on COVID-19, as found on the following websites:

[Covid-19 Website](#)

[Ministry of Education Covid-19 Webpage](#)

[Ministry of Health Covid-19 Webpage](#)

[Learning from Home Webpage](#)

[Face mask requirements for public facing roles](#)

Our response to COVID-19

As we continue to respond to COVID-19, the Ministry of Education, the Incredible Years programme developer, Dr. Webster-Stratton, and New Zealand Incredible Years mentors have worked together to develop the following guidance for group leaders to support ongoing implementation under the COVID-19 Protection Framework.

When face to face group sessions is not possible, we still expect that you

1. Look after your wellbeing

Take the time to take care of yourselves and your whānau. Group leaders' whānau and work commitments may overlap during these times. To be able to continue to provide quality services and supports, we understand the importance of prioritising your wellbeing alongside the wellbeing of others.

2. Provide virtual programme delivery

Group leaders are expected to stay connected with participants who have started IY programmes, and to continue to deliver programmes online as well as providing caregivers and teachers with resources and strategies they can use during this time.

Before starting an online programme, allow time to practise with your colleagues to increase your familiarity with online strategies, tools and processes which increase engagement. For instance, use of chat functions and break out groups on zoom.

As part of gaining informed consent for children and whānau, it is important to discuss potential risks such as limitations to the confidentiality and privacy of connecting with families online.

It is also important to establish the support that whānau are comfortable receiving – e.g. via skype, phone call, zoom etc., and to keep records of their consent. It is important to recognise that some whānau may not have used these methods of communication before and may need extra support to access these.

When considering delivering programmes online during this time, we all need to consider the additional stressors on children, whānau and teachers. We understand that professional judgement is needed when considering any new invitations to online or one on one telephone support.

3. Be flexible

Some whānau may not have internet access at home or may experience technical difficulties. Some families may have too many distractions which make it hard for them to have a quiet space for discussions. Also, some families and teachers may be unable to attend sessions during the day due to their work and childcare

commitments. It is important to communicate to participants your intention to deliver online rather than face to face ahead of time. Remember that what works for some may not work for others.

4. Make the decision during COVID 19 protection framework

See [Appendix](#) for help decide the mode of IY programme delivery. (IY delivery during COVID-19 protection framework PDF)

PART 1: IYP/IYAP GROUP LEADERS

The Ministry of Education recommends that IY group leaders deliver programmes. When the decision for on-line delivery is agreed

While we are working under the COVID-19 Protection Framework, virtual sessions can replace your face-to-face IY programmes for participants. More information about online training for caregivers can be found at [Resources for Incredible Years® Online Training Workshops](#)

In a time of social distancing and self-isolating, support from group leaders can reduce feelings of loneliness and enhance feelings of connection because families and/or teachers can share common experiences. The online delivery sessions allow parents to practise with each other online and to experience different solutions and ideas from each other.

If you have started delivering face to face sessions, and this is no longer possible due to COVID-19 restrictions, you are encouraged to continue programme delivery for parents, caregivers, whānau. online. If this is not possible for some caregivers, telephone support should be provided (see useful discussion points below).

If you have not started face to face programme delivery and you consider the likelihood of parents dropping out due to COVID-19 'rules' is high, you can check with your participants if they are interested in participating in an online or hybrid IY parent programme. Where possible, it is ideal to meet parents before you begin online groups. This could be face to face with appropriate COVID-19 precautions or by an individual online session.

In the online environment, consider protocols for privacy and engagement. For more information about zoom security advice, see [National Cyber Security Centre](#).

As with face to face delivery, consent for recording sessions should be obtained from each participant the recordings can only be used for your own professional development purposes.

Useful discussion points to support parents unable to access online programme delivery

1. Encourage keeping things simple with the focus on the relationship between parent(s) and child/ren.
2. Support allowing the child to take the lead in play activities
3. Focus on predictable morning and evening routines.
4. Discuss coping strategies.

5. Focus on play, the attention principle and social and emotional coaching.
6. Emphasise the value of social and emotional coaching during isolation and times of restriction at home.
7. Problem solve around behaviours parents are finding difficult to manage always bringing them back to the bottom of the pyramid.
8. Focus on parent stress management strategies and self-care.
9. Normalise and validate parenting efforts. Everyone is going through the process of adapting to a new and rapidly changing situation.
10. Help caregivers know how to talk to their children about is happening in age-appropriate ways.

Adhere to usual IY principles and processes when delivering the programme online

11. It is intended that any online delivery sessions follow the usual IY content and where possible follows the usual IY processes. Please be aware that ensuring a collaborative approach in a zoom session may require extra effort and flexibility to avoid an overly directive approach. Focusing on capturing caregiver's gems and principles can help.

Facilitating an online session format for groups of 60-90 minutes

12. Here is an example of an online session format developed by Dr Webster Stratton:
 - **15 - 30 Minutes:** check in on parents' current family situation, stress level, and self-care and coping strategies (*there will not be time for every family to do a detailed check in*).
 - **20 - 30 Minutes:** new content – group leaders to facilitate discussion of 2-3 vignettes and practise through role play addressing parent barriers noted. Main room practises are often followed by practises in small breakout zoom rooms.
 - **10 Minutes:** closing sessions – group leaders use the screen sharing function to show the refrigerator notes and highlight key learning principles and incorporate any parent principles that have been recorded in the chat. Set new goal, review home activities and reading assignment, session evaluation, confirm time for next session.

Consider the following during online sessions

13. Establish rules for discussions such as muting microphones to avoid disruptive background noise (regular in-person ground rules will also still apply: respect others, take turns, confidentiality, etc.).
14. Indicate how participants will let others know they want to speak; using chat function or raise hands.

15. Reassess goals and relevance for current situation.
16. Script practices that are simple and clear. Remember you can share the white board of your scripts with caregivers and teachers.
17. For further information please go to IY resources for group leaders working remotely and for the updates got to the [IY blog](#).

PART2: IYT/IYAT GROUP LEADERS

The Ministry is encouraging group leaders to deliver IYT content remotely to participant teachers who are social distancing / self-isolating due to COVID-19.

It is important to note that some group leaders working from home may have family situations that make it difficult to schedule online sessions with teachers.

In turn, some teachers with families may also find it hard to block out times to speak with group leaders due to competing demands in their own homes, or homes of the children and parents they are supporting.

Teachers may be dealing with their own stress related to working from home, meeting demands of the school system, and coping with expectations to work with on-line platforms. Before starting work with teachers, it is important to assess the conditions that teachers are working under, their goals for connecting with families and children, and the expectations placed on them delivering online learning to their students.

Useful discussion points to support teachers at a time of social distancing / self-isolation

18. Ask teachers about their current working-from-home situation.
19. Establish their immediate stressors they are dealing with.
20. Check what expectations their school has given them for how they should work and connect with families and whānau.
21. Establish goals for working with children and their families and whānau.

Useful discussion questions to have with teachers attending online sessions

22. How are they involving parents in supporting their children in their learning?
23. What are the pros and cons of online versus face-to-face teaching?
24. How often are teachers organising times for children to connect socially online?
25. What percentage of their students are able to engage in social online sessions?
26. How are teachers supporting families that are not able to meet these expectations?
27. What are possible ways to communicate with families and whānau?
28. What more support do families and whānau need?

29. What resources can teachers and other school staff offer?
30. What are the roles of teachers during this social distancing time?

Examples of how teachers can support parents help their children cope with social distancing / self-isolation

31. Involve children in discussion of new family routines.
32. Engage in child-directed play activity time; suggesting ideas.
33. Notice and label children's positive emotions such as being brave, courageous, helpful, patient, persistent, creative, caring and loving.
34. Validate children's emotions and pairing with coping statements.
35. Praise and give attention to children for doing things that help others stay safe and healthy.
36. Reassure and listen to children's worries and concerns.
37. Use puppets to encourage imaginary play and expression of feelings.
38. Answer questions honestly at the child's developmental level.
39. Limit talk about COVID-19 around young children.
40. Have a predictable schedule which helps children feel secure and safe; but does not need to be rigidly adhered to.
41. Help children have social connections with family and friends (FaceTime etc.)
42. Encourage physical activity.

Other ideas for supporting teachers and helping them to support each other

43. Read the Incredible Years Teachers book and set up a book club to talk about assigned chapters.
44. Explore with teachers ways they can enhance the base of the IYT pyramid when working remotely.
45. Set up a teacher support group to share ways they are using puppets with their students or other teaching ideas. For more support see: [IY blog - using puppets](#)
46. Set up zoom calls with a teacher buddy to share ideas, successes and to problem solve where needed

PART 3: SUPPORT FOR ALL IY PRACTITIONERS

Support available for IY group leaders

Our IY workforce support partner, Whāraurau is available to support group leaders delivering IY support sessions remotely for IY participants. This support includes:

- access to mentors and peer coaches online, such as Whāraurau - “Connect with your IY Mentor – What’s on Top” sessions
- Opportunities to collaborate on online delivery with your fellow group leaders at “Community of Practice” meetings and
- Via the “Online Discussion Forum” on the Whāraurau website [Home | Whāraurau \(wharaurau.org.nz\)](https://wharaurau.org.nz)
- Please direct enquiries including how to use Zoom or teams to parentingteam@werryworkforce.org for IYP, IYAP, IYT and IYAT programme support.

Contact advice for IY providers

If IY providers have any enquiries about your contract, please email askus.procurement@education.govt.nz

Appendix 1

Checklist - If kanohi ki te kanohi IYT not possible due to COVID-19 restrictions

	Y	N	N/A
1. Assess needs and readiness			
→ Collaborate with teachers and principals/senior leadership/centre management to clarify expectations and needs of schools/services.			
→ Establish shared understanding of distinction between full IYT delivery and IYT tailored delivery driven by teacher needs. <i>Recognising that in order to complete the programme, participants will need to have received full delivery.</i>			
→ Talk with local MOE office before starting, clarifying if planning to provide full delivery or tailored delivery and supports.			
2. logistical/technical			
→ Group size between 8 and 14 <i>Could be bigger - most groups are between 16-20 teachers.</i>			
→ 3 hours max/session – provide regular breaks. <i>Some facilitators are opting for full day sessions, with regular breaks every</i>			
→ Practice with the technology to check it is working ahead of time. <i>a.) If you have a split group (some on Zoom, some in the room) use 2 laptops to run the session, 1 for the person leading session, and 1 to show other people in the room. 1 computer should be muted to eliminate audio feedback. An external microphone is also highly desirable.</i> <i>b.) If everyone is on zoom, it's desirable for both group leaders to have access to the videos if they are leading the vignette parts. Check that your technology enables you to play the videos and share sound, and that the videos play smoothly over your internet connection. (For Mac users, VLC is required rather than the Mac DVD Player).</i>			
→ Check with teachers ahead of time that session technology, video & audio are working. <i>Create a group chat with everyone in the group, either via Messenger or What's App, so that photos and comments can be shared easily, and to enhance connection/communication between sessions.</i>			
→ Create a back-up plan in case of technology failure. <i>e.g using the teachers cell phone number.</i>			
→ Establish protocols for online delivery via Zoom. <i>e.g. private space, screens on and be present, raise a hand when wanting to speak, ok to mute, cell phones on silent, ok for backgrounds to be blurred. It is important to be aware of who is around you to help ensure confidentiality when on Zoom.</i>			
→ Encourage participants to stay unmuted if their background noise is minimal because this allows for more seamless communication, except when playing videos.			
→ Use screen share to mediate vignettes.			
→ Have a process for recording groups key concepts.			

e.g. via chat or whiteboard. If using a split deliver - taking photos of flipchart brainstorm and posting them immediately to the group chat enables virtual participants to have the same access as people in the room.			
→ Use the breakout room function to buzz and explore ideas and to tailor learning for specific child's developmental level. <i>Break out rooms can be set up a number of ways, including allowing people to choose which group they want to be in (e.g. based different language levels).</i> <i>When using split delivery, breakout rooms can be done with 2 computers in the room, enabling zoom participants to be split into groups with people in the room.</i>			
→ Following return from breakout room discussions, teachers share their discoveries and key points learned.			
→ Remember to record a small section of the day to share with your peer coach.			
3. Format of sessions			
→ Go through content of program in order presented in manual.			
→ Select vignettes based on key concepts/principles you want to cover.			
→ Condense the material to cover with around 2-3 vignettes per hour.			
→ Go through content of program in order presented in manual.			
→ Use the key concepts from the manual to plan out each session.			
4. Follow IYT methods & process			
→ As per kanohi ki te kanohi deliver follow all IY method & processes. Including: homework check in, intro new topic, vignettes, buzz & brainstorm, role play, session summary, between actives and goal setting.			
→ Continue to use vignettes to start discussions. Highlight key concepts with the group then explore how this fit own situation.			
→ Pause vignettes to ask teachers open ended questions to promote discussion and sharing of ideas.			
→ Have participants set goals and check in with these goals at the next session.			
→ Continue to use regular IYT checklists to assist with planning and adapting your sessions for the online format.			
→ Check in with participants between sessions <i>e.g vis phone, texts, video chats.</i>			
→ Consider sending care packages to your participants between sessions, such as: snacks/drinks for breaks, stickers/lollies, any other resources that would help. Use home addresses rather than work addresses so that participants receive them promptly, especially if people are isolating.			
→ Be creative in your role plays – some version of them are possible! Get people to do them in breakout rooms.			
→ Use the book to establish questions on the pre-readings.			
→ Add all notes to folders prior to delivery of session 1.			