



A PROGRAM OF JCRC

Greater Boston Jewish Coalition for Literacy

## How Do I Get to Know My Student(s) Virtually?

*Written by Judi Locke*

*Getting to know you  
Getting to know all about you  
Getting to like you  
Getting to hope you like me  
Getting to know you  
Putting it my way  
But nicely  
You are precisely  
My cup of tea  
Getting to know you  
Getting to feel free and easy  
When I am with you  
Getting to know what to say  
Haven't you noticed  
Suddenly I'm bright and breezy?  
Because of all the beautiful and new  
Things I'm learning about you  
Day by day*

*Song lyrics by Rogers and Hammerstein, The King and I*

When I was a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher in Framingham, my school year began with having to get to know each and every new student in my classroom and my students would get to know Mrs. Locke. Routines also had to be established in order for my classroom to run smoothly. Most students start out cautiously and then many will test you. Children need consistency, especially at this time.

**Getting Started:** Meeting students remotely will be a little different and in some ways, it will be the same. It is important that you develop a relationship with your student. You will make a difference to this child by showing him/her that you care and that you want your reader(s) to feel your passion for reading and learning. You are a role model. It is important that your student trusts you and with some children this can take time.

**Transitioning to Remote:** Last October, I started working with a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade boy in his classroom and in March it ended. After a few weeks, I was in contact with the teacher and suggested that another tutor and I continue with him virtually. The mother was thrilled. I would call the mother's cell phone and my student got on the phone. He

logged in to Epic on his home computer and I logged into Epic on my ipad under his name. This way I could see the book he was going to read. After three weeks, I asked the mother if I could Face Time him and this was wonderful. Being able to see each other is important to help build the relationship if that's possible.

**Building Trust:** Let your child know that your role is to help him/her grow as a reader. You will want to get to know about your student and your student might be very curious about you. Keep this simple. You could ask your child what he/she likes to do after school, favorite books, food, games, sports, movies, etc. You may not get any answers, so you could share things you like to do. You both might find out that you like similar things.

**Giving Feedback:** When working with your student, tell your reader what you liked about what he/she did and be specific. For example, after reading you could say, "I like how fluently you read today; your reading was smooth and it flowed." "When you came to unknown words, I noticed how you looked for a smaller word inside the bigger word and then you blended the sounds. Try to remember to reread the whole sentence, so you do not lose the meaning."

**Boundaries:** As your relationship develops you may find yourself sharing basic information about yourself as well as your student might share things about his/her life. It is important to be mindful of what to share; just keep it simple. Maintaining healthy boundaries and modeling best practices in sharing ensures that both you and your student feel comfortable with the level of trust between you. If something concerning does come up from your student, it is important that you inform the teacher so support can be provided for the student.

**Relationship Building Activities:** Recommendations for fellow volunteers

**Background:** Look around their background and ask questions about themselves  
*(from Fern Kaplan)*

**Pets and Family:** Take advantage of the kids being at home in a comfortable space and have their family and pets around  
*(from Fern Kaplan)*

**Asking Questions:** Ask personal questions, like how they are doing and were they able to go outside  
*(from Mady Holzer)*

**Book Selection:** Both student and tutor picked out books – a great way to learn more about your students' interests  
*(from Mady Holzer)*

**Culture:** Tutors can learn if students' families speak English at home. Learn more about the student and their culture  
*(from Irene Rubin)*

**Icebreakers:** Ask silly ice breaker questions, I.e. if you had a superpower what would it be  
*(from Judi Locke)*

**Literacy Engagement and Relationship Building – from Marcia Shimshak**

Below is a list of engagement games and activities from tutor Marcia Shimshak based on her work with her grandchildren of kindergarten age. While the relationship is different with a student than a grandchild, much can be transferrable and hopefully this list will

spark new ideas for the tutoring environment. Please send along any other ideas you may have that are relevant from your prior experiences with family members.

### *Relationship Building Activities*

**Brainstorming:** Pick a topic and come up with a list with your student.

**Interview:** each other. Jot down the information. Read aloud to share.

**Stop and Jot:** Ask a question and have the students write down an answer. Share.

**Scavenger Hunt:** Find objects that-

-begin with the letter \_\_\_\_\_

-have a long vowel sound

-are round, square, etc.

**Exercise:** Get up and do 5 jumping jacks, etc. to get the kids to move in between activities.

**Reading:** Jokes, Riddles

**Spot It:** Play this matching card game by showing the cards in the screen and asking the student to select the matches

### *Literacy Activities*

**Rhyming Words:** Say a word and ask the student to come up with words that rhyme.

**Opposites:** Say a word and ask the student to think of the opposite of that word.

**YouTube** videos include a variety of science (bees, animals, etc.), numbers, books and stories, letters and other videos.

### *Simple Math Activities*

**Combinations of Numbers:** Ask what two numbers make (“A one and a two make twelve”)

**Display by:** A number line, drawings with two dice, equations, sticks (8= five sticks with one line through it and three single sticks)

**Bingo:** The board and chips need to be with the child learning two digit numbers. The numbers will be called out by the tutor. The child puts the chip on their bingo card and when s/he get bingo, the numbers are called out by the child.

**War Card Game:** learning values of numbers and which is higher and lower.

[cardgames.io](http://cardgames.io)

**Closing Thoughts:** We have never tutored virtually before so we must be patient; it might take time, but we can do this! Think of it this way; with change comes growth.

Enjoy your time with your student and watch the progress he/she is making. Feel proud of yourself for the commitment you have made to this child. Thank you for helping children grow as readers and become more confident.