

Helpful Tips for Zooming with Preschoolers

Part A: How to Zoom

If you are unfamiliar with the Zoom platform, follow the steps below to join a meeting or watch “How to Join a Zoom Meeting” on Youtube.

Basic Steps to Zooming:

1. You will be sent an email with a Zoom Invitation. Click on the blue link in the email.
2. Once you click on this, a window will appear giving you the option of downloading Zoom or joining. If this is your first time, please click download. (This may take a minute or two, so please allow enough time before our first virtual class!)
3. You will be asked if you want to use your video and/or audio. Please select “use computer video & audio”.
4. You will then receive a window that says “Waiting for Host”. At this time it will give you the option of testing your audio which you can do while waiting. The teacher will give you permission to enter into the Zoom meeting. (This is for security purposes.)
5. Once you are in the Zoom meeting you will see yourself in a little square as well as the others in the meeting. Use the full screen format so that the squares are bigger.
6. At the beginning of the meeting it will be helpful to use the “Gallery View” so that the children can see one another as well as the teacher in all of the little boxes (think the beginning of the Brady Bunch show) at the same time. Your child can remain in this view during the entire meeting, however if you feel it is too overwhelming or distracting, have them switch to the “Speaker View”. This will allow them to see who is talking in a bigger frame with just a few of the others down the one side. To switch between Views, click on the icon in the upper right of your screen.
7. You can mute/unmute your own audio by hovering your cursor over the upper right corner of your video square, or by clicking on the mute/unmute button in the bottom left of the whole screen.
8. If you need to leave the meeting, click on the red “Leave Meeting” button in the bottom right of the screen.

Part B: Elfinwild Asks!

1. Use the bathroom before you sign on!
2. Be prepared!

Have everything your child might need close by including the packet of materials you picked up at the drive thru and the supplies we suggested at the beginning of the year. Here is that list again:

 - ~ 1 box of Crayola crayons (24 ct)
 - ~ 1 box Crayola Fine Tip Markers (10 ct)
 - ~ 1 pair cold size scissors
 - ~ 1 bottle of glue
 - ~ several glue sticks
3. Be on time!

Before beginning the instructional part of the Zoom meeting, there will be a time for the children to greet their classmates, please be as prompt as possible so your child doesn't miss out on this special time.
4. Have a designated learning space!

You don't have to have a fancy home office set up, but providing your child with a designated comfortable place to work can make it easier to stay focused as well as a more enjoyable experience. Sitting at a table would be best, as this will allow space for your child to work on a project while still being able to see the screen.
5. Stay close by!

Because electronics are usually used for play and entertainment by preschoolers and because they might be unfamiliar with how to maneuver in this virtual classroom, adult assistance will be needed. Facilitate the learning for your child, but don't do it for them! It's ok to allow some "struggle" time before jumping in to help or rescue. It's often in the struggle that we learn the most!
6. Allow for some movement!

Remember, the younger the child, the bigger the wiggle! We will build in time for getting up and moving but for some this will still be challenging. Kids aren't getting the same sensory-rich experience on Zoom calls that they'd be getting in person, which can make sitting still in front of a screen even harder. It's ok to allow them to hold a favorite Stuffedie in their lap or drape their blankie across their legs, or even hold a quiet, non-distracting fidget toy such as a Tangle. These can help children keep their bodies engaged without pulling focus from the teacher.
7. Raise your hand!

The teachers will have the ability to mute everyone after the initial greeting time to limit distractions. If your child wants to ask or answer a question or share some information,

encourage them to raise their hand so the teacher can see it and can then unmute their microphone. There may be times when the teacher will leave it up to each child to mute their own microphone. Please show your child how to do this.

8. Please join in!

The sound on Zoom is calibrated for meetings, not sing-a-longs, so if we sing or play music, it may be too loud, too soft or even choppy. To prevent this, the teacher will keep everyone muted so your child can hear the best, but please join in! None of us wants to sing a solo - together we all can make a joyful noise or do a happy dance!

9. Anticipate some "homework"!

There may be an activity prompt at the end of the Zoom meeting that will be revisited during the next class. This may consist of going on a search around your home for 5 things that are circles or that begin with the letter that is being learned or it might be part of an art project to finish so as not to take a lot of time on the Zoom meeting. These things would then be shared during the next class.

10. Learning Together!

Please understand, we are all in this together, learning and growing as we take each step at a time. We all long for that day when we can be together again. While Zoom will allow us to teach remotely in inventive ways, it's no substitute for an actual classroom. There shouldn't be such a thing as online preschool. We need to sit beside our students, to hold hands, to sing together unencumbered by glitchy mics and tinny laptop speakers. But until it is safe to do so, we must do the best we can with the technology we have.

11. Reach out!

If you have any questions or concerns, please give the office a call to receive the quickest response.