
https://tulsaworld.com/news/local/education/free-program-at-ymca-helps-distance-learners-with-support-food-and-physical-enrichment/article_af5d39c4-28e9-11eb-852c-2329c53a8c09.html

Free program at YMCA helps distance-learners with support, food and physical enrichment

Kelsy Schlotthauer

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Parker Doresy (left) and Annie Moua work on a Zoom class at Tandy YMCA's Community HOPE Center for distance learners in Tulsa last week. The YMCA received CARES Act funds to help open the Community HOPE Center in its facility, which can accommodate 100 students.

Stephen Pingry photos, Tulsa World

Kelsy Schlotthauer

A free program offering help for those struggling with distance learning still has dozens of openings for Tulsa children.

Aimed at providing critical wraparound services during the pandemic, the Community HOPE Center remains open at the Tandy Family YMCA with funding through the federal CARES Act.

“We have 65 kids with the space for 100,” Kyle Wilkes, YMCA of Greater Tulsa’s vice president of mission advancement, said Monday. “And there’s no expense to the families that come.”

HOPE Centers, which Gov. Kevin Stitt and first lady Sarah Stitt announced in August would open across the state using federal coronavirus relief funds, draw on community partnerships with area agencies to serve children and families.

Tutoring, tech support, mental health and family services are available at the Tandy Family YMCA, 5005 S. Darlington Ave. The program also offers necessary gadgets, food and snacks in partnership with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Family & Children’s Services, the Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma, the United Way and the Opportunity Project.

The food bank also provides each child with a backpack full of food to take home on weekends, Wilkes said.

While at the day camp, which runs from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., the 5- to 18-year-old participants spend time with tutors and on Zoom with other students while also engaging in physical and enrichment activities with YMCA staff.

Wilkes said the response from caregivers has been a combination of relief and overwhelming gratitude.

There's been "a lot of 'I don't know what we would do,'" Wilkes said.

But parents have to continue to work, he said, and "this is an opportunity for parents to re-engage with society" while ensuring their children don't suffer learning loss.

In light of the pandemic, safety is of the utmost importance to organizers, Wilkes said, but they're also dedicated to serving the critical needs of families.

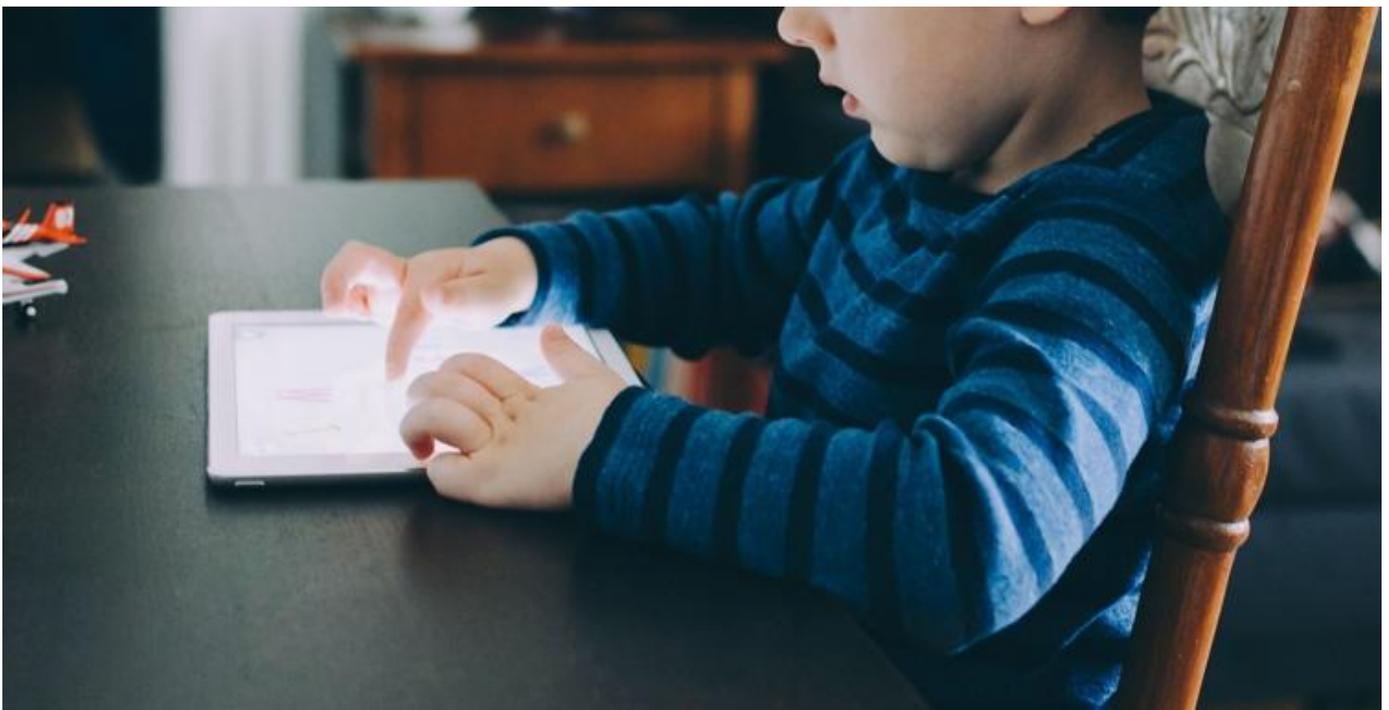
Staff members have their temperatures taken daily and wear masks and gloves while interacting with children in a 9-to-1 ratio, Wilkes said, and the designated spaces for learning allow the participants to spread out. The spaces are cleaned daily and additionally every few days electrostatically.

Those interested in the program may call 918-280-9622.

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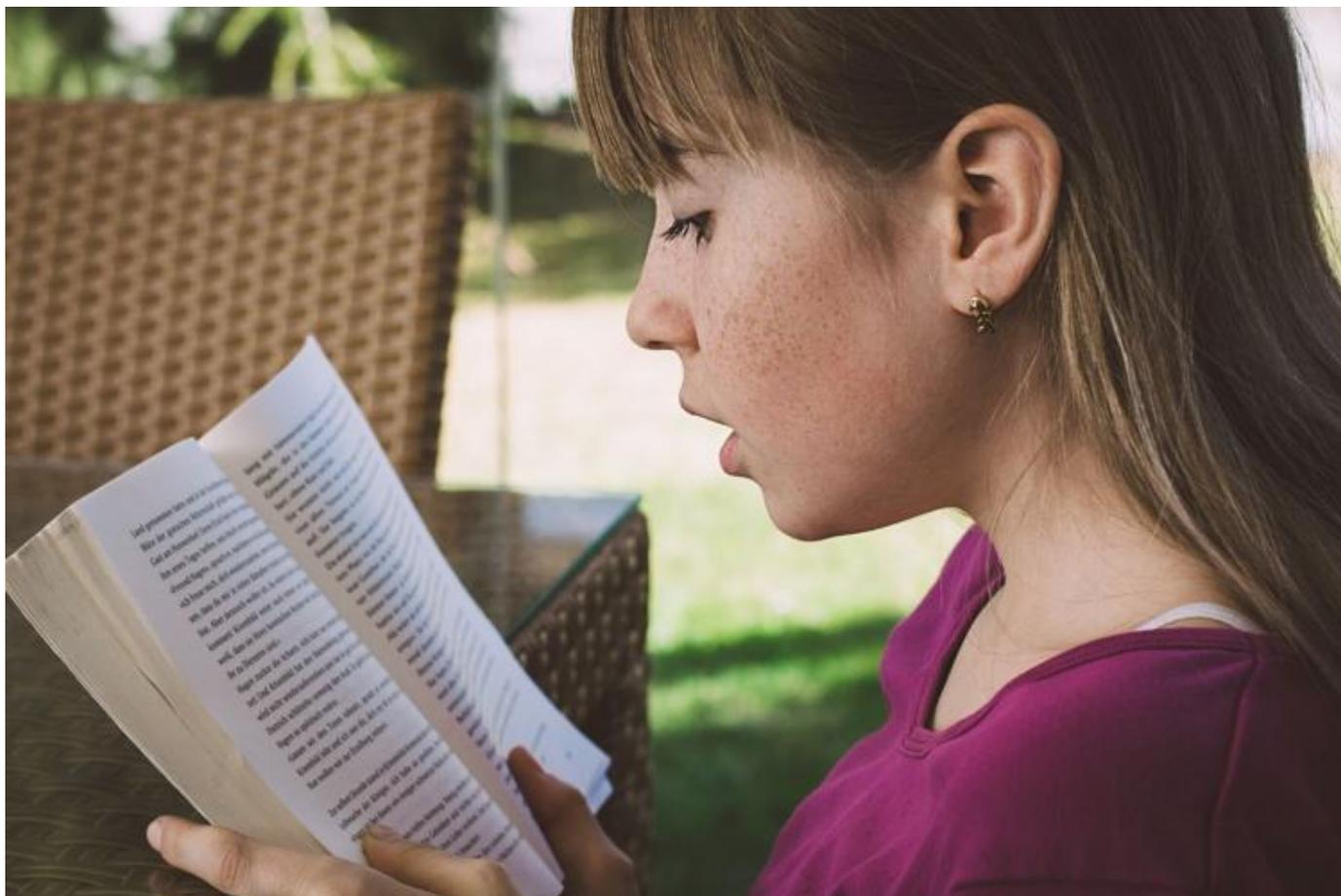
Get organized



“Set your child up for success by choosing a place that is prepped with all the supplies your child needs including pencils, paper, calculator or a computer and that is free of noise and distraction.”

If you aren't organized yourself, developing this skill set could help your own virtual work from home for the foreseeable future. COVID-19 cases are declining in Florida — including in Miami-Dade, which has had the highest coronavirus cases and deaths in the state — but not fast enough that life is going to put its February 2020 face back on any time soon.

Set Goals



These should be daily goals set for your child. The center suggests three to five clearly defined behavioral goals that focus on areas that need improvement. This might mean implementing goals to complete all the assignments for the day.

Also, advising your child to try the assignment on their own first before asking for help. This could allow them to find solutions for themselves, which leads to satisfaction and learning.

The goals should also include ones that promote following instructions from the teachers and participating in the class (Even if it is from a seat in your kitchen-turned-homeroom).

Monitor their progress.



Let your child know throughout the day if they are meeting their goals. Remind them what that goal is. Be encouraging, especially if they are struggling. Keep it a positive experience.

Praise your child

Let them know they did a great job when they have — with genuine, specific or labeled praise. FIU suggests a way to express this: “I love how you stayed at the table and finished all your math assignments.”

Tweak goals and rewards.

As they respond to the DRC, they should be able to meet behavior targets more consistently, FIU's center believes. When that happens, raise the bar. If you had built in three or fewer violations into the goal of following class rules, make it two or fewer next time. And so forth.. If you see your child is no longer motivated by a reward, change it to maintain their interest. Maybe pizza for dinner or getting Taylor Swift's new album might be more enticing.

Be consistent.



"The DRC only works if parents are consistent in implementing it," FIU's experts say. "Make sure you hold yourself accountable to implement it on a daily basis. Create a visual board or have a special notebook to keep track of all goals and rewards."

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Community HOPE Center offerings

- A mental and emotional health professional to work with children and program staff to address new, higher levels of childhood trauma
- A DHS employee to connect families to resources such as Temporary Aid for Needy Families, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, workforce programs and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
- Teachers to work with students to facilitate engagement in remote/virtual learning platforms, including help with homework and other assignments
- Deeper enrichment activities to combat social and emotional distress
- Two meals and a snack daily to address rising food insecurity

Source: Oklahoma Department of Human Services

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I write because I care about people, policing and peace, and I believe the most informed people make the best decisions. I joined the Tulsa World in 2019 and currently cover breaking news. Phone: 918-581-8455

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