



Are you still trying to figure out how to support your child's learning in a way that is safe and works for your child and family? Many families are in the same situation.

We hope this guide lightens your load and helps you make schooling decisions that meet your needs. Inside you will find practical tips, resources, and tools for use during the pandemic and beyond.

## To use this resource:

- 1 Read this introductory section.
- 2 Choose which pathway you and your child will follow for the rest of the year.
- 3 Read that Pathway Guide.

Regardless of which pathway your family takes, this guide will help you recognize what your family is already doing well. It will also give you ideas about how you can better support your child's learning and make your life a bit more manageable.



Each Pathway Guide begins with a checklist of steps. The checklists are organized around categories of activity that are important for supporting your child’s learning and development:



### Set-up and Routines

How to create a safe, consistent learning environment

- Schedule
- Learning Space
- Digital Access and Safety



### Learning and Growing

How to engage your child in learning

- Learning Materials
- Learning Support
- Enrichment Activities



### Community and Connection

How to establish and support meaningful relationships

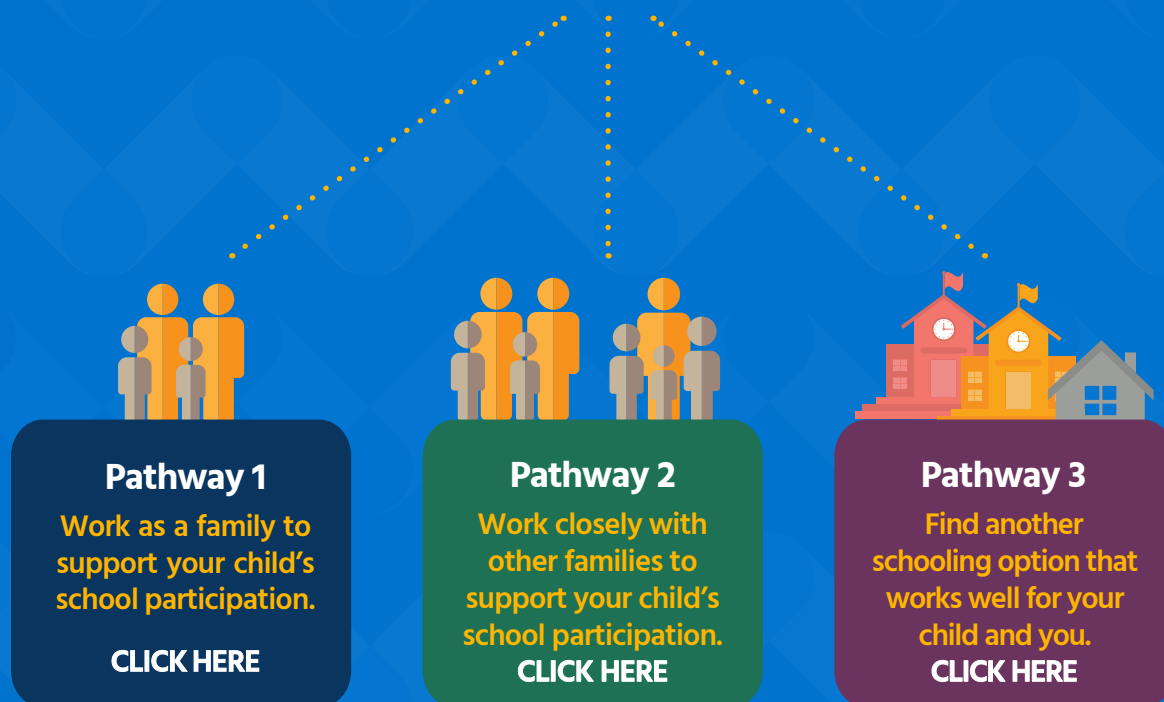
- Socialization
- Support Systems
- Mental and Emotional Health

After you read your Pathway Guide, determine your family’s next steps. Keep in mind that you don’t need to address everything at once—small changes can often have a real impact on your family and your child’s learning.



# Which Pathway is Right for Your Child and Family?

Your family will take one of three pathways to support your child's learning over the course of the year:



Which pathway you take depends on whether:

1

You work closely with other families to support your child's learning.

2

Your child remains enrolled in the same school.

If you feel a bit lost, check out the reflection questions on the following page to help you think through these decisions.



## Reflection Questions

Making schooling decisions during this unpredictable time can be challenging. Breaking down questions that seem overwhelming into a series of simpler questions can help you select next steps—and the pathway—that make sense for your family.

To decide whether to work closely with other families to support your child’s learning, consider the following questions:

- Is your current school set-up meeting your child’s needs and your family’s needs?
  - » Is your child happy? Is your child lonely? Is your child building strong relationships with peers and adults? Is your child generally engaged in their school community?
  - » Does your child need more support staying focused during distance learning?
- Would working with other families help address gaps?
- Would working closely with other families help you free up time and energy? Or would working closely with other families create too many additional challenges?
- Are you interested in making decisions with other families about learning and socialization? Or would you prefer to make these decisions on your own?
- Do the benefits of working with other families outweigh the safety concerns?

To decide whether your child should remain enrolled in the same school, consider the following questions:

- Is your child’s current school meeting your child’s academic needs? Is it meeting their social needs?
- Are there resources (either in-person or online) that you can realistically use to make up for gaps?
- Are there other school options available in your state and community that are accepting new students?
- Can your family shoulder any additional financial obligations that come with enrolling in a new school?
- Is your child open to the idea of attending a new school and meeting new friends? Or would this large of a change be too difficult given all the disruptions over the past year?

If your family is still unsure which pathway makes sense after reviewing these questions, skim one or more of the Pathway Guides. Reading the guides can give you a sense of how well each pathway will (or will not) work for your family.



## Acknowledgements

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With gratitude,  
The CPRL Team  
Elizabeth Chu, Executive Director  
Madeline Sims, Director  
Michael Arrington, Fellow  
Josefina Lavin, Student Associate  
Denise Recinos, Student Associate

## About the Center for Public Research and Leadership (CPRL)

CPRL is a partnership of university-based professional schools that works to revitalize public education while reinventing professional education. Since its launch in 2011, CPRL has trained over 450 future leaders, all of whom have helped staff CPRL's research and consulting projects. CPRL's emphasis on broad community and family participation and collaborative problem-solving ensures that CPRL's recommendations and tools leverage diverse perspectives and strengths, are customizable to local communities, and promote equity and lasting change.



If you have questions or feedback on this Family Guide, contact CPRL at [cprl@law.columbia.edu](mailto:cprl@law.columbia.edu) or CPRL Executive Director Elizabeth Chu at [emc2170@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:emc2170@tc.columbia.edu).