



APPENDIX G: Virtual Facilitation Tips

Child Trends adapted the El Camino curriculum and training guides in 2020 to allow facilitators to virtually deliver El Camino in response to the COVID-19 public health pandemic. This appendix was also created during this time. While this resource was developed to support facilitators deliver programming during the pandemic, the following tips are useful to review whenever El Camino is facilitated virtually.

Tips for Facilitating El Camino on Zoom

Get Ready to Facilitate Virtually

1. Pick a good location.

- Find a quiet spot to set up for facilitating El Camino in your home. Do your best to limit background noise (e.g., other people talking, television, music, phones, etc.).
- Sit at a desk or table or stand if you have the proper desk set up.
- Turn on a light or open a window shade (if needed) so everyone can see you clearly. Avoid a dark room.
- Avoid sitting in place where a bright window is behind you. The light will cast a shadow on you, and it will be hard to see your face.
- Be sure there is nothing in your background that you want to keep private.

2. Limit distractions.

- Silence your cell phones.
- Turn off your email and close other documents on your computer to limit distractions.
- If you are using Apple devices, turn on “do not disturb” in your phone’s settings.
- Consider closing the door to the room in which you will be facilitating.

3. Be comfortable.

- Bring a drink if you think you will need/want it.
- Dress comfortably while also maintaining professionalism.

4. Manage Zoom.

- Login at least 10 minutes before the lesson starts. Use this time to cue up PPT slides, write a welcome message in the chat box, etc.
- Be sure your laptop is plugged in or has sufficient battery charge.

- If possible, use a large screen when facilitating El Camino rather than a laptop. When facilitating El Camino, you are likely to have several items open at that same time that you will want to monitor simultaneously: 1) Chat Box, 2) Participant Box, 3) Video of students' faces, 4) Shared Screen of PPT slides or another document, and 5) Zoom Navigation Bar. The more “real estate” you have on your screen, the easier it will be to see and manage all of these items at once.

Be Prepared

5. **Cue up PPT slides, documents, and videos before the lesson.** You will be sharing your screen to show PPT slides, documents, whiteboards, or videos during each El Camino lesson. Before the lesson starts, be sure all of these items are cued up and ready to be shared. Avoid having to find documents on your computer or doing a web search during the lesson—doing so will add extra time to the lesson and may affect student engagement.
6. **Have other supplies ready.** Be sure you have the El Camino student workbook and curriculum, as well as other supplies you will need for the lesson (e.g., condom and penile model, birth control kit, etc.) at your side. Avoid having to search for these items during the lesson.

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7. **Sharing PPT Slides.** You have two options in sharing PPT slides on Zoom.
 - 1) **Share PPT slides in “Normal” view.** Normal view is the view that one uses when creating PPT slides. When you are ready to share the slides with students:
 - Click on **Share Screen** (green tab in the Zoom navigation tab).
 - Then click on the middle tab called **Advanced**.
 - Then click on **Portion of Screen**. A green box will appear on the slides. Adjust that green box (like you would a text box in a Word document) around the portion of your screen that you want to share with students.

Note that if you move the slides around on your screen, the green box will not move. You will need to readjust the green box accordingly.

When you share your screen using this option, you will not be able to use slide animation. One way around this, is to create multiple slides. For example, if you have 4 points on a slide that you want to reveal one by one by using animation, put each point on its own slide. Click to show the next slide with the next point and so on.

- 2) **Share PPT slides in “Slide Show” view.** Sharing your slides as a **Slide Show** view allows you to use animation (i.e., use if you only want to reveal parts of the slide at different points while you present information or conduct an activity).

However, you are not able to write/edit slides when they are shown in the Slide Show view. You will also have to rearrange the participant box, chat box, video of participants, and Zoom navigation bar in a way that you can see them and also see what is written on the slides.

8. **Using Virtual Flipchart.** In a face-to-face El Camino lesson, you would use flipchart paper to record student answers, ideas, or comments. In the virtual adaptation, you will mostly use a PPT slide to record student responses (in Normal view). In some cases, you may need more than one slide to record answers (depending how many ideas are shared by students). In the case that you need an additional slide, simply click on “duplicate slide” under the Insert tab or “new slide.” If you use duplicate slide, you will have to erase the content from the previous slide so you have a blank slide, but you will maintain the slide heading. If you use “new slide,” you will have a blank slide but will lose the slide heading.

As a general rule, do not cram too much on a slide as it becomes hard to read. Do not use a font size lower than 24-point. Select a font style and color that is easy to read.

Other options for virtual flipchart are to (1) use Zoom’s whiteboard feature or (2) share your screen to show a blank Word document. These are fine options but will require a few extra steps to bring the Word document or whiteboard up for students to see. When using these options, you can also use Zoom’s **Annotate** feature which allow students to type there answer directly onto the screen. This is a nice way to engage youth. As the host of the session, you can move around student responses to create a list or organize them in a particular way.

- After sharing your screen or opening a Zoom whiteboard, Instruct the students to click on the pencil icon in a new Zoom navigation bar called “**Annotate**.” A new navigation bar will pop up on the top of the screen.
- Ask them to click on the “**T**” (text) in that new navigation bar.
- Then ask them to click anywhere on the screen and a text box will show up (outlined in light blue).
- Tell them to type their answer in the text box.
- After doing so, they should click outside the text box and their answer will appear on the screen for everyone to see (this might take a second or two).

Engaging Students

9. **Encourage students to turn on their video and use their audio, but do not make it a requirement.** Some students may feel uncomfortable turning on their video because other people in their home may be watching/listening, there are people or things in the room that they rather keep private, or other reasons. A few things that a facilitator can do to help students feel comfortable are:
 - Explain how to use Zoom’s virtual background options. Click on the **Video** icon, then select **Choose Virtual Background**. Zoom provides a few backgrounds to choose from. Students can also upload their own background. Provide a set of rules about the type of background they can upload. For example, images with nudity, vulgar words, political or religious symbols, etc. will not be allowed.
 - Suggest the use of earphones so they can hear what is being said during the lesson but others in their home cannot.
 - Allow students to use the **Chat Box** to ask or respond to questions rather than respond verbally.
 - For “yes” or “no” type questions, allow them to use Zoom **Reactions** (thumbs up or hands clapping in the Zoom navigation bar, or “yes” or “no” in the Participant box) to respond.
10. **Be sure each student’s name is listed correctly on Zoom.** Students may be logging into Zoom with someone else’s Zoom account. If so, you will not see the student’s actual name appear in the participant box or on the bottom of their video. Explain to students that you want to make sure you call them by their correct name during class and you want their peers to be able to do the same. For example, *Activity 2C: Pass the Ball* requires that students call each other by name.

Students can rename themselves by doing the following:

- Open the participant box.
 - Rollover their name listed in the participant box and click on the blue “**more**” tab.
 - Click on “**Rename.**”
 - A window will appear. The student should type in the name they want to be referred to.
 - Click on the blue “**Rename**” button to confirm.
11. **Connect with students by using their names.** Facilitating El Camino on a virtual platform like Zoom can feel less personal compared to face-to-face instruction. One way to increase the feeling of inclusion and connection is to welcome students by name as they enter Zoom. Simply saying something like “Hi Michael” or “Welcome Elena” makes a difference. Give a student a compliment and use their name while doing so. In other words, show students that you “see” them.

12. **Make sure everyone gets a turn.** One challenge in facilitating virtual activities is managing group participation in a way that does not feel awkward, where participants do not talk over each other, and where participants are not unintentionally left out. One way to make sure that everyone is included is to create a participation “system” for the group to follow. For example, ask that each participant have a turn participating by:

- Alphabetical order of their first name or last name
- Number of siblings (the person with the greatest number of siblings goes first and so on)
- Birth month and day (the oldest person goes first, and so on)

You can ask students to put this kind of information next to their name by renaming themselves (see guidance on renaming above).

Students can indicate that they want to speak by raising their hand in front of the camera, raising their hand in the participant box, or sending you (or the group) a chat message. Note the last two options can be challenging to monitor while you are also facilitating discussion and focusing on facing.

As with face-to-face lessons, let participants know that they have the right to pass. Avoid making students feel like they have been put on the spot.

13. **Conduct a quick energizer.** It is challenging for adults and teens to sit for many hours in front of a computer screen—especially for students who are attending school classes virtually. If you sense that students are fidgety or losing energy, consider doing a quick energizer (less than 60 seconds). Be mindful of students’ abilities/physical limitations—they should only do what feels comfortable. Below are a few examples of quick energizers. Feel free to adapt as you see fit.

- **Body Gestures**
 - Ask each person in the group to make a gesture with their body/face that represents how they are feeling. Ask everyone to observe each other.
 - Comment on what you observed and/or ask the group to do so.
- **Dance Freeze**
 - Ask everyone to stand.
 - Play music (from your music library or from YouTube) and ask participants to dance.
 - When you stop the music, they have to freeze.
 - Repeat two or three more times.

- **Mindfulness Meditation**

- There are many free applications and videos that can help you guide participants through a short mindfulness meditation. Alternatively, rather than leading the meditation, simply play the video or app for participants (and you!) to follow.
- Sometimes just closing your eyes and concentrating on your breath for 10-30 seconds is enough to help refocus.

- **Shake It Out**

- Ask participants to stand.
- Ask participants to shake their right hand 4 times, then their left hand 4 times, then their right leg 4 times and then their left leg 4 times. Repeat, but now each body part is shaken 3 times, then 2 times, then 1 time.
- Feel free to change the exercises and the number of times that each exercise is repeated.

- **Stretching**

- Type “stretching exercises” into your browser and you will find many examples. Select ones that are relatively simple. CDC has a handout describing some simple ones (see pages, 6 and 8): <https://bit.ly/2Y7JQta>
- Tell participants that they should only do what feels comfortable.

- **Swimming**

- Ask participants to stand.
- Tell them to pretend they are in the water and swimming.
- First ask them to do a few free style strokes with their arms. Then a few breast strokes. Then a few back strokes. (For a reminder on how these strokes are done, go to YouTube and search “swimming strokes.”)
- You can change this activity by replacing swimming moves, with row boating, basketball dribbling and shooting baskets, etc.

- **Touch Blue**

- Ask participants to stand.
- Ask participants to look around the room they are in and touch something blue (or green, purple, red, yellow, etc.)
- Next, ask them to touch something made of glass (or wood, plastic, paper, metal, etc.)

- Then something soft (or hard, sharp, smooth, etc.)
- Then something square (or circular)
- End by asking them to touch something that makes them happy or brings back a fond memory.

Other Tips

14. **Maintain a positive facilitator “stage presence.”** Just like in the face-to-face facilitation of El Camino, facilitator body language and energy are important in the virtual adaptation. Here are a few tips:
 - Sit up straight in your chair or standup straight if you are standing at your desk.
 - Show enthusiasm.
 - Smile.
 - Speak loud enough.
 - When you can, talk to the camera (as opposed to your screen).
 - Keep in mind that although you may be looking at a student on *your* screen, they might not perceive it that way on *their* screen. Use student names when addressing them.
 - It can be distracting to present during a Zoom meeting and see your face on the screen. Zoom allows the host to hide their video, but still display their video to other participants. Zoom automatically begins in Speaker View and you can see your own video. Right-click your video to display the menu, then choose “Hide Myself.” You will no longer see the video of yourself, but others in the meeting will still see the video of you.
 - Look professional (as you normally would) in how you dress.
 - Pay attention to student body language. If someone looks lost or confused, check in with them. If someone is raising their hand on camera or using a reaction icon, address their question.
 - Use humor when appropriate.
15. **Minimize long pauses.** You might find that in the virtual delivery of El Camino, pauses may seem awkward or longer as compared to face-to-face instruction. Practice how you are going to transition smoothly from one activity to the next.
16. **Get comfortable with Zoom.** There are many fun and interactive features on Zoom. Take some time to explore settings and options. If you find something that you think will enhance virtual facilitation of El Camino, share it with your team!

17. **Ask students to keep their audio off when not speaking.** Noise in student home backgrounds will make it difficult for a person to talk and for others to listen on Zoom. Ask everyone to mute themselves when they are not talking. Remind students to turn on their audio when they want to share. You (the host) also have the ability to “mute all” in the participant box. This might be helpful when multiple students have been participating and forget to mute themselves.
18. **Keep students’ home context in mind.** Whenever students are joining a lesson remotely from home or another public setting, keep in mind that some students may:
- Have others in the room who can overhear the lesson or how the student participates
 - Have responsibilities at home (e.g., caring for a younger sibling or family pet) that compete for their time and attention during the lesson
 - Be experiencing food or housing insecurity
 - Be feeling depressed or anxious
 - Be experiencing “Zoom fatigue”
 - Be underperforming on their school assignments for various reasons and feel frustrated as a result
 - Be witnessing or experiencing increased violence (physical, sexual, or emotional) in their homes

Keep these contextual factors in mind as you interact with students. Adjust your expectations accordingly.

Recognize your own fatigue and feelings. Take care of yourself and get support from your colleagues and/or others.

19. **Have patience!** Have patience with yourself, students, and the process of facilitating El Camino virtually. This is a learning experience for all of us!