



Julie Billiard Schools

BEYOND EDUCATION. BEYOND EXPECTATIONS.

DISTANCE LEARNING AT JULIE BILLIART SCHOOLS

Our comprehensive, whole-child approach
for children with learning differences.



RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

At home tips and videos
for distance learning and
beyond.

WHAT FAMILIES ARE SAYING

JB parents weigh in on
the reality of distance
learning.

EXTRA SUPPORT AT HOME

BCBAs, and occupational,
speech, music, and art
therapy help.

Committed to the journey

When you choose to enroll your child at Julie Billiard Schools, you are making an investment in his or her future. We are fully committed to honoring your investment in your child through distance learning and beyond. JB's distance learning is led by certified intervention specialists who understand and adapt to your child's unique learning needs.

We offer virtual therapy sessions and activities, as directed by your child's IEP, as part of your tuition. Our BCBA's offer office hours and extra support for any behavioral challenges that may arise during distance learning. As a small school community, we're able to offer increased collaboration and innovation during this time. We're proud of our schools' responsiveness and out-of-the-box thinking when faced with a global pandemic, and we're committed to always leading with resourcefulness, flexibility, expertise, and transparency.

Our preference and prayer is to have our students safely learning from our school buildings. However, if distance learning is mandated by the state of Ohio, we're prepared to serve you and your child.





A Silver Lining

JB students and Intervention Specialists illuminate the silver lining of distance learning

Amidst the many changes to society, Julie Billiard Schools' Intervention Specialists weave threads of consistency into the lives of children with learning differences. JB began distance learning, an education method in which lessons and classes are either broadcast or conducted through virtual correspondence, in March as a result of the mandatory stay-at-home order and school closings surrounding COVID-19.

"It was a little scary when we heard the announcement," said Josh Mozzocco, a seventh grade Intervention Specialist at JB Lyndhurst. "To completely move our lessons online in two weeks was a feat, but we did it."

A Silver Lining

All JB kindergarteners receive an email address that will follow them through their years at JB. As they advance into middle school and junior high, the students begin to use their email addresses to submit work, log in to approved education platforms, and correspond with their teachers. This technological preparedness has aided both the teachers and students.

Naturally, distance learning looks a little different for each child, each teacher, and each grade level. Kindergarten teachers are leveraging lessons in Google Classroom and take-home materials, while some of the older grades engage in interactive video lessons. Julie Billiard Schools therapists are offering virtual sessions and practice materials for students. Every teacher is committed to supporting their students through this.

“There is a silver lining to all of this. None of us would have wished for this situation, but it’s forcing our students to learn a very important life skill,” said Mozzocco. “Even five years ago, this would have been a huge thing to make a reality. But it’s happening, and our students are doing great.”

For Mozzocco, a typical day of distance learning starts with a video of that morning’s announcements and the Pledge of Allegiance. He talks with almost all of the junior high students every morning over Google Hangouts video or chat platform. He answers their questions and provides a sense of normalcy.



“Our main goal as junior high teachers is to Fill Buckets FIRST to make sure the kids are safe and happy, then help them with some fun school work,” he said. After chatting with teachers, students engage in a blend of live, virtual classes, interactive sessions, and autonomous lessons.

Each day, they’re assigned work in Google Classroom. Students are encouraged to use good time management, a skill they’ve been building for years at Julie Billiard Schools, to submit their work every Friday by 5 p.m. On Fridays, Junior High offers office hours for live help. “We are also teaching online social etiquette and online social skills,” said Mozzocco. “We have to coach them and help shape behaviors, just like in regular school.”

JB educators recognize that this is one more hurdle for children who learn differently, but that with a foundation of classroom education and a blend of freshly practiced technological and social skills, the JB community can get through this together.

“Our kids deal with diversity every day. Diversity is a part of our education,” said Mozzocco. “This is just one more lesson for us, and we’re figuring it out.”



Using what's on hand

JB Occupational Therapists get clever with household items

One brick. Two bricks. Line them up just right. Continue stacking. Be sure to breathe. Take your time. Practice. Make it fun.

The Whitaker children spent an afternoon this way - building a structure in their backyard and having a blast doing it. What may not traditionally be considered school work is celebrated by the Whitaker's Occupational Therapist, Cathy Parrino. Parrino, the OT of Julie Billiart Schools' Lyndhurst campus, says that the majority of her students lack body awareness and need movement breaks. Because students are no longer in the physical classroom or OT room, she has encouraged more freedom and collaboration to explore movement in the child's home setting.

Using what's on hand

JB Akron Occupational Therapist, JJ Schweikert, is also getting creative to make sure that OT is a session that students look forward to each week. "It's been so fun to connect with the kids, and their parents, through distance learning," said Schweikert.

"I get to learn more about their experiences and challenges, and can bring that back to the classroom next year. It's been a big positive."

Both Parrino and Schweikert, and all of the therapists and intervention specialists at Julie Billiart Schools, had to quickly move from an in-person to an online format in March of 2020. While virtual, or "tele"therapy can present challenges, JB knew that pausing therapy services was not an option.

"We had to figure it out quickly," said Schweikert. "The first week was setting up a schedule for our kids and parents. I sent a survey to figure out what days and times best suited our families. Now I see all of our kids at least once a week for one-on-one sessions."

JB therapists have always taken an individualized approach to each student. Now, they must think even more critically about the unique environment and resources of each student. Without the dedicated OT rooms and gyms at each JB campus, therapists have gone above and beyond to creatively engage each student from the comfort of his or her home.

They've also taken this opportunity to continue the social and emotional growth of students. Parrino has encouraged kids to become pen pals in an effort to practice fine motor skills and encourage social bonds. Schweikert has organized virtual sessions alongside the JB Akron Speech Therapist, Victoria Kuzyk, and a group of students. Group work allows the students to practice communication skills and catch up on each others' lives.

Ely Whitaker, the mother of three JB Lyndhurst children, said that virtual OT has been an amazing resource for her family.

"We played handwriting games, did a lot of artwork that utilized the children's developing fine motor skills, and worked on gross motor coordination with fun games and dances," she said. "On days where the children were more reluctant to participate, she (Parrino) easily adapted the activities so they would become interested or worked with them on breathing and calming techniques."

"I have a large circle of friends with special needs children and the services that JB prepared are very rare in this community, and they started immediately after the first at-home school order was initiated," said Whitaker. "At JB, we are a part of an incredibly special community of therapists and teachers, and I have to say that the children's services were not interrupted in the least."

Resources for families



Tips from our JB Akron BCBA
for distance learning and beyond

How can I reward my child without using bribery?

REINFORCEMENT AND STRATEGIES



Tips from our JB Akron BCBA
for distance learning and beyond

"Why do you act the way you do?"

UNDERSTANDING FUNCTIONS



Tips from our JB Akron BCBA
for distance learning and beyond

Cutting Down on Power Struggles

USING CONTROLLED CHOICES



Tips from an Intervention Specialist
for distance learning and beyond

How to: Plant a garden

FOLLOW ALONG WITH MRS. SCHMIDT



Tips from our JB Akron BCBA
for distance learning and beyond

The ABCs of Behavior

HOW SMALL CHANGES CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE



Tips from our JB Akron BCBA
for distance learning and beyond

WEBINAR :

INCREASING MOTIVATION
AND PROMOTING
INDEPENDENCE DURING
DISTANCE LEARNING



Tips from our Music Therapist
for distance learning and beyond

Two minutes to calm

A SQUARE BREATHING TECHNIQUE
FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

FIND MORE

What our families are saying

Thank you for all you're doing and all your support! Everything is so organized and really helps me since I'm still working from home. God bless!

Liam really enjoys the Zoom meetings and the videos that they have prepared and shared. It has really made a difference.

This has been a difficult adjustment , but these new supports that have been put in place have been wonderful!

Thank you again for all of your efforts and we are so grateful for Liam's awesome teachers!

I just wanted you to know what a great job Gavin's teachers are doing!! Above and beyond..twice a week Zoom classes, plus PowerPoint for social studies, and YouTube videos for English and math!!! I'm very impressed!! I love the morning announcements that you've been conducting. A BIG THANK YOU TO YOU AND YOUR STAFF!!!

Thank you for all of your ongoing support. What a blessing to have JB as our school in this most challenging time. I can not thank you and all of the staff for the ongoing support.

I thank God for guiding me to JB. I thank Him for the kindness and love my child has experienced. My son misses you all so much. Most of all in this insane time in this world I thank you all for how beautifully you have provided an education and socialization virtually.



MISSION

To nurture and empower students with special learning needs. As Catholic K-8 schools rooted in the educational principles of the Sisters of Notre Dame, we welcome diverse faith traditions.