Virtual CPS Class Best Practice Guide for CPSTs

SKW Virtual Education Best Practice Guide

With the spread of COVID-19 and the need for social distancing, Safe Kids Worldwide and our coalition network are facing the challenging task of moving from in-person education sessions to virtual online platforms. To assist coalitions with this task, Safe Kids has prepared a Virtual Education Best Practices Guide to provide an overview and guidance on things to think about when translating existing lesson plans, activities and evaluation into an online format. This guide will also help coalitions choose a virtual education platform, prepare for technical challenges of virtual education, contend with various learner distractions, and plan for dynamic learner engagement. Please note that the guide is written under the assumption that you already know how to teach your target population (e.g., adult caregivers), but are looking for guidance on how to move your existing educational session from an in-person setting to a virtual online class.

The SKW Virtual Education Best Practice Guide can be accessed on the Safe Kids Resource and serves as an additional resource to support coalitions using the [Virtual CPS Classroom Best Practice Guide](https://5e5fc7b7344c12ee5274-e42d25df1051a53dd2a7cd0a2a0f86ad.ssl.cf5.rackcdn.com/Virtual%20Education%20Best%20Practices_%20V3.pdf).

Virtual CPS Classroom Logistics

**CPST Preparation for Providing Virtual CPS Education**

The quality of program delivery for virtual education sessions is dependent on CPST preparation. Guidance and resources are available to assist CPSTs with that preparation prior to conducting their virtual CPS education session(s).

It is highly recommended that a CPST without virtual education experience find a mentor with proficiency in virtual education to help them prepare for leading their own class or if you are a CPST with experience, consider recruiting and mentoring fellow CPSTs. The goal of mentoring is to increase the number of CPSTs conducting virtual education, to focus on quality versus quantity, and to offer recommendations that allow CPSTs to feel more confident in their technical and communication skills. CPSTs should also prepare by refreshing their technical knowledge and skills through available webinars, car seat technical publications, and general explanations of selection, direction, installation, and harnessing [terminology](https://cert.safekids.org/resources-faqs/forms/recertification).

Types of Virtual Classes

The type of virtual CPS class will help determine class size, content, length, and the overall structure. Coalitions already undertaking CPS virtual education have identified three types of classes:

* *Required Classes:* The attendees are required to participate and complete specific tasks to receive a free or low cost car seat or possibly to fulfill a court order. We recommend that attendees participate both on video and audio to ensure participation and comprehension of the class content.
* *Requested Classes*: An organization or group requests the virtual CPS education such as a Mommy and Me group or local Head Start. Participation is voluntary and the lead, in conjunction with the organization/group, determines whether there are required tasks.
* *Public Classes*: This type of class is set up for anyone interested in attending and typically is promoted to the public through social media or other community-based communication channels. Participation is voluntary and there are no required tasks unless determined by the lead.

Classroom Size

The number of attendees impacts the level of engagement between the presenter and attendees. As the size of the group gets bigger, the flexibility of the classroom structure naturally becomes more restrictive.

* *Smaller classes (up to 10)*. This size classcan allow caregivers to ask questions and the presenter can gauge the level of understanding from visual cues if video is used. If it is a Mommy and Me class or Head Start parents, caregivers might already know one another making this a more informal learning environment.
* *Medium classes (up to 30).* Depending on your comfort level and your ability to manage time, you may elect to either field questions throughout the presentation or all at the end.
* *Larger classes (30 and beyond).* It is generally easier to hold all question until the end to ensure you get through all the material. This class size restricts the amount of time that will be available to answer questions. A suggestion is to build in a mechanism to receive questions after the class ends or offer follow-up one-on-one appointment with those caregivers who are interested.

Technical Considerations

Technology can either make or break the virtual CPS classroom experience. Based on CPST experience to date, here are a few recommendations to consider during your planning process.

* Have a two-person teaching team with a presenter, who strictly is responsible for running the video/audio, answering questions in the chat box, and helping attendees with connectivity issues so the presenter isn’t distracted.
* Provide the attendees with direction on how to access the platform prior to the class and if possible, provide screenshots of the process as a guide.
* Encouraging active engagement:
  + Encourage attendees to shut down as many distractions as possible (e.g., don’t try and multi-task).
  + Request that attendees use both their online camera and mute their audio when not talking – being able to see them on video provides valuable feedback as you teach, and muting attendee audio reduces distracting noises.
  + If the online platform allows, incorporate polling questions periodically throughout the session to re-engage attendees.
* Technology can be challenging to navigate so having the right equipment can help make it easier.
  + Consider adding an external camera (e.g., smartphone camera) if using a desktop or laptop computer to present.
  + If using an external camera also consider a tripod to hold it steady; this reduces the risk of attendees getting motion sickness.
  + Use Bluetooth earbuds if you are moving around to demonstrate so attendees don’t have to struggle to hear you.

Length of Class

Research suggests that 30- 45 minutes is the ideal length for a virtual class. Beyond that timeframe it becomes more difficult to hold a person’s attention. However, class length also depends on the content you are trying to cover (e.g., focusing only on rear-facing car seats in a given class vs. trying to cover rear-facing all the way up to seat belts).

Based on CPST experience to date, we recommend the following class lengths:

* *Rear-facing only:* maximum 30 minutes with 10 minutes Q & A
* *Forward-facing only:* maximum 30 minutes with 10 minutes Q &A
* *Booster to seat belt:* maximum 15 minutes with 5 minutes Q & A
* *Rear-facing to seat belt:* maximum 60 minutes with 15 minutes Q & A (best for required courses).

Class Structure

The virtual CPS class can be taught in a variety of ways depending on a CPST’s capacity, but the three main ways are:

* *Live Online Presentations:* SKW is providing customizable presentations that align with the National CPS Certification Curriculum and current best practice. The CPST can combine the three presentations to go from rear-facing to seat belts or leave them separate depending on the target audience, class objectives and available time.
* *Pre-taped Presentations:* Safe Kids has also taped each of the presentations and made the recordings available to allow CPSTs to send one or more presentations to a caregiver and schedule a follow-up call to answer questions.
* *Script/Outline:* For a CPST who decides not to use a presentation format and wants to demonstrate the key points by using props (i.e. car seats, dolls, training seat, etc.), customize the presentation notes above.

Offering Classes in Multiple Languages (Good, Better, Best)

* Good – Provide handouts in native language(s) of attendees
* Better – CPST and a non-CPST translator work side by side using the English presentation (this arrangement requires more time, so you will likely be able to cover less content)
* **Best** – Bi-lingual CPST translates the English presentation and presents in the native language of attendees.

Planning Logistics

Scheduling

Scheduling can be as simple as a caregiver registering for the class (online or by calling the scheduler). At the time that they register, ensure you communicate expectations. For example, a caregiver may just need to show up for the class or there could be pre-class requirements such as homework and/or a pre-survey before attending the class. The scheduler could also interview the caregiver and complete the optional Schedular Worksheet. The worksheet is a table that the scheduler completes to capture the number of children in the family and their individual ages, height, weight, and type of car seat or booster seat. It is used to ensure whether or not each child is in the correct car seat and booster seat (perfect for a car seat distribution program).

* By phone: Personal interaction with the scheduler via a distributed phone number to allow for completing the optional Family Assessment as part of their scheduling protocol.
* Electronically: Utilizing a free platform such as [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com/), which allows you to post any kind of free event, such as a virtual CPS classroom. Events that are free for attendees, also are free to you, the organizer. The organizer can customize an event page with a maximum number of registrations, etc.
* Community partner: The community partner can help recruit and sign up caregivers for the class by providing a link to an online scheduler or working directly with the scheduler.

After the caregiver is confirmed for a class, it is strongly recommended that the scheduler sends a confirmation email that includes:

* Instructions on how to access the virtual class (link, phone #, etc.)
* Class expectations. For example:
  + make sure children at home are supervised during the class
  + sign-in to the class 5 minutes early to check audio/video
  + require video (especially if it is a required class)
  + request attendee has their car seat and vehicle manuals handy
  + request attendee has their car seat(s) available
* CPST/Coalition contact information
* Best practice: if you are going to tape the webinar, check with your lead agency in case they need a waiver to be signed by the attendee (optional)
* Directions for accessing the platform
* Link to any pre-survey

Attendee Prework Optional Requirements

Request that attendee’s complete homework on their specific car seats prior to the class. This empowers the attendee to begin to look for answers to their own questions, know where to seek reputable sources to follow best practice and be prepared for class if they have additional questions.

* Caregiver Prework Worksheet: The attendee locates and documents their car seat manufacturer name, brand, model number, date of manufacturer and expiration date using the labels on the car seat and the car seat manual. As a result, the attendee comes prepared with the information needed for a CPST to assist them in confirming car seat selection, direction, installation and proper harnessing.
* Car seat manufacturer installation videos: If the scheduler captures the brand, make, model, date of manufacture, the attendee can be directed to watch a specific video prior to the class.

Teaching Props

While providing a presentation or video is a great way of reaching caregivers, having the capabilities to incorporate a live demonstration during the question and answer time is highly recommended. For a CPST to conduct live demonstrations, they will need to have specific equipment and teaching props readily available.

Teaching props recommendations:

* Variety of car seats/booster seat
* Dolls
* Table
* Training Seat/Seat Buck/ Vehicle Seat
* Checklist form (as a guide)

Evaluation of Virtual Classes During CPS Month 2020

The SKW Virtual Education Best Practice Guide provides guidance on when and how to build in pre- and post-tests around virtual education sessions for those coalitions interested in adding knowledge assessment to their program evaluation. So, rather than repeating that content here, this section outlines plans for a post-session survey we’ve developed to help evaluate the impact of virtual sessions during CPS month. The post-session survey consists of five questions plus a comment section, and can be utilized in two ways:

Share SKW Post-Session Survey Link with Attendees: Safe Kids has provided a follow-up email template that includes a link to a Survey Monkey that will capture the five questions plus any comments. Coalitions are asked to follow-up after their virtual session by sending out the email to all attendees. In addition to the questions, attendees will also be asked for the date of the virtual session along with their city, county and state so we can match up responses to coalitions and share the data back with coalitions at the end of the month.

Add the Post-Session Survey Questions to Their Own Post-test: For coalitions who are already doing virtual session evaluation or intend to add a pre- and post-knowledge assessment going forward, we are requesting that they add the five questions to their post survey. Once the data are collected, we are requesting that they upload summary data for the class (aggregate responses for each of the five questions) using the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VX8XQDZ>.

If you have any questions, please contact Mark Chandler at [mchandler@safekids.org](mailto:mchandler@safekids.org).

Promotion

The level of promotion is most often dependent on the maximum number of attendees allowed in the class. If the virtual CPS class is required, promotion may not be necessary. However, if the class is open to the public, promotion may play a vital role in attracting caregivers. To support promotion, we have prepared:

* Social Media Posts
  + Use social media guide in the tool kit.
* Sample Flyer
  + Print and post this customizable flyer in your community or email directly to caregivers
* Community Partners
  + Community partners recruit to their families and sign them up to participate in the virtual class.

Implementation

Like an in-person class, there are a lot of moving parts when hosting a virtual CPS class. But with proper planning and practice it can be a fun way to engage attendees and expand your CPS

program’s reach to caregivers who wouldn’t attend a traditional car seat checkup. For example, Safe Kids California reported that they are seeing an increase in male attendees during their virtual CPS classes.

Please refer to the SKW Virtual Education Best Practices Guide on “Engaging Learners” for top tips on how to connect with the participants, maintain their attention and evoke audience participation.

Post Class

Staying connected with the attendees is important especially with those that have very young children because they will benefit from additional assistance as the child transitions from one type of car seat to the next. We recommend sending a follow-up email that includes:

* Your contact information
* Link to a post-survey; optional
* Links to resources that were mentioned in the class, including the Ultimate Car Seat Guide

Based on feedback from the attendees and self-reflection, the CPSTs should tweak the presentation as needed to improve the flow of the information, timing, questions asked and any other components.

* Review your presentations and make alterations for future classes
* Review surveys or evaluations to improve your classroom presentation
* Survey data can help with funding, building capacity and engaging partners

We know these are challenging times so thank you for making the extra effort to adjust the specific needs of parents and caregivers. Your work is preventing injuries and saving lives, and for that, we are forever grateful.

A special thank you to Safe Kids Northern NJ, NJ; Safe Kids Utah County, UT; Safe Kids California, CA; Safe Kids Cumberland Valley, TN; Safe Kids Tucson, AZ; Safe Kids Broward, FL; Safe Kids Great Dallas, TX for joining the Virtual CPS Classroom Advisory Committee and providing the insights that are included with this guide.