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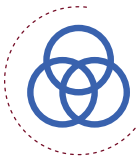
Positive Behavioral  
Interventions & Supports



**GUIDANCE ON  
ADAPTING CHECK-IN  
CHECK-OUT (CICO)  
FOR DISTANCE  
LEARNING**

CENTER ON PBIS

**May 2020**

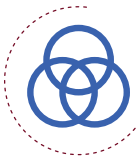


# Guidance on Adapting Check-in Check-out (CICO) for Distance Learning

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## Introduction

**W**hen schools are closed and educators switch to distance learning for classroom instruction, it is important to attend to maintaining continuity of social-emotional-behavioral learning. There are resources for adaptation<sup>1</sup> of PBIS Tier 1 classroom behavior support<sup>2</sup>, but it can be more challenging to consider how to provide Tier 2 support<sup>3</sup> for students through distance learning. This brief provides considerations and suggestions for adapting Check-in Check-out (CICO), an evidence-based Tier 2 school intervention (Drevon et al., 2019), for situations where students are learning from home.



## Understanding How CICO Works

When planning to adapt an evidence-based practice such as CICO, it is useful to understand its mechanisms (or more simply, how and why CICO works at school) before making changes to suit distance learning environments. CICO works because it adds to following elements to the student's day:

- Increased positive interactions with adults throughout the day
- Additional structure to the school day
- Instruction and practice in self-monitoring of behavior

Although it is easy to focus on the tangible aspects of the CICO card and behavior ratings, it is critical to keep these elements in mind when making adaptations. Anything that preserves these critical features will help keep it as effective as possible.

## Considerations in Adapting CICO for Distance Learning

Although situations will vary based on each district's distance learning plan, some needs to adapt CICO are apparent.

### Home as a Setting for Rating and Feedback

It can be difficult for students to make the shift in expectations when instruction takes place at home, a familiar context but one that is not designed for structured learning. Families may need help getting students to identify a distraction-free environment, log in on time, attend to instruction, troubleshoot technology, and complete independent work. Beyond schoolwork, it may be useful to consider whether



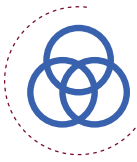
families could benefit from extending CICO support to non-instructional routines as well, such as chores, free time, and meal preparation. To assist families in implementing [effective Tier 1 PBIS practices in their homes](#),<sup>4</sup> school and district personnel could modify CICO to become an intervention for educators to teach and coach families in their own Tier 1 family behavior support systems.

### Programming for Flexibility in Family Capacity

It is important to recognize that some families may not be able to take on many (or any) additional responsibilities. In these cases, it may be better to pause CICO while students are on distance instruction to avoid additional stressors.

### Less Classroom Teacher Availability for Ratings

In distance learning environments, teachers may not have as much time to rate behavior—if they are able to do so at all. Classroom teachers may be too busy



troubleshooting student technological issues or at the start and end of synchronous lessons, and of course, they are not present at all to rate behavior during asynchronous learning (e.g., educational tech applications, independent reading). Hence, it is important to be flexible with ratings (e.g., who rates, how many ratings per day).

## Suggestions for Adaptations Organized by the CICO Process

The following section describes what adaptations can be made at each step in the typical CICO process.

### 1. Screening

A move to distance learning may change students' behavior support needs. Some students needing CICO at school may not need it at home, and others who did not need it when school was open may have increased needs during distance learning. Suggestions:

#### REASSESS NEEDS OF STUDENTS

For any students enrolled in CICO before the change to distance learning, it is important to reassess their needs for behavior support for any possible changes in support that might be helpful in increasing their success. This reassessment could be formal or simply a periodic check-in to monitor progress.

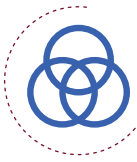
#### RE-CONDUCT UNIVERSAL SCREENING TO IDENTIFY MORE STUDENTS

Being away from school cuts off natural opportunities to connect with students and their families, so it can be worthwhile to conduct district or school wellness checks to identify students and families in need of support.

### Example: Family Wellness Check Survey

1. Overall, how are you feeling?  
(please choose all that apply)
  - Happy
  - Safe
  - Sick
  - Anxious/Nervous
  - Scared
  - Mad/Angry
  
2. How do you feel your at-home learning is going?
  - Very bad
  - A little bad
  - Neither good nor bad
  - Pretty good
  - Really good
  
3. My family could use help with...  
(please choose all that apply)
  - Technology
  - Completing work from home
  - Communicating with teachers
  - Household necessities  
(e.g., food, paper products, utilities)
  
4. Would you like your school counselor to contact you?  
  
If so, please provide the best way for them to contact you: \_\_\_\_\_

*Adapted with permission from Normandy Schools Collaborative, Missouri*



## 2. Orientation

As both needs and contexts change, consider the need to re-orient students, teachers, and families to this adapted version of CICO. More likely than not, the card will need to be changed to fit distance learning environments. Processes for checking in and out will need to be adapted, and it is critical to reteach what the daily CICO cycle will “look like” at home:


### REVISE THE CARD AND RETEACH EXPECTATIONS

It is almost certain that the card will need to be changed to fit the new schedule. Work with families to create an individualized card schedule that reflects their needs

and the various modes of distance learning delivery and teach the expectations explicitly. Options include:

- Ratings only for one subject of instruction (e.g., a time when CICO would be most needed or most practical)
- Ratings for each for distance learning activity (e.g., morning announcements, live instruction, independent reading, homework)
- Ratings for the student’s full daily schedule (e.g., AM routine, breakfast, distance learning, lunch, PE, free time, chores, dinner, PM routine)

### Sample Adapted CICO Card with One Daily Rating for a Single Period



## Cougar Leaders Card

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_ Check-in Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Check-out Time: \_\_\_\_\_


School-wide Expectations	Focus Period: _____	Comments
Be Safe	0   1   2	
Be Respectful	0   1   2	
Be Responsible	0   1   2	

TOTAL POINTS: \_\_\_\_\_ Point Goal: \_\_\_\_\_ Goal Met?  Yes  No

REWARD: \_\_\_\_\_



**Sample Adapted CICO Card with Ratings for Multiple Instructional Activities**




## Cougar Leaders Card

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_ Check-in Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Check-out Time: \_\_\_\_\_

School-wide Expectations	Morning Circle	Live Instruction	Independent Reading	Math App	Homework
Be Safe	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Be Respectful	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Be Responsible	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>					

Point Goal: \_\_\_\_\_ Goal Met?  Yes  No REWARD: \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample Adapted CICO Card with Ratings for Home Activities**

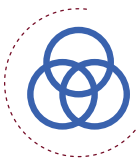


## Cougar Leaders Card

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_ Check-in Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Check-out Time: \_\_\_\_\_

School-wide Expectations	Morning Routine	Remote Instruction	Free Time	Chores	Bedtime Routine
Be Safe	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Be Respectful	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
Be Responsible	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2	0 1 2
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>					

Point Goal: \_\_\_\_\_ Goal Met?  Yes  No REWARD: \_\_\_\_\_



### INCLUDE FAMILIES IN THE ORIENTATION

Because families will probably be more involved in this variation of CICO, it is important to include them in the orientation and consider coaching them in developing home expectations and designing daily schedules and routines. It will be critical to identify and obtain agreement for any family roles (e.g., ratings, reward provision) and teach them explicitly (including with visual reminders).

### REVISIT POINT GOALS

Given the potential differences in the adapted CICO process and raters, monitor students' point totals closely to determine appropriate goals.

### INDICATE THE DIFFERENT PLAN

If using an application to track progress such as CICO-SWIS, it will be helpful to add a phase change to indicate the shift to CICO for distance learning.

### 3. Check-ins and Check-outs

Connecting with a trusted adult at the start and end of the day (or perhaps week) is a key component for providing positive attention, encouragement, and preventive support for students. This aspect can be continued with some options for adaptation:

### USE TECHNOLOGY TO RE-CREATE THE SCHOOL'S CHECK-IN AND CHECK-OUT EXPERIENCE

Facilitators could establish a daily videoconference room (with breakouts for individual check-ins as needed) that could be provided in a wider time window

to allow for varied home schedules. In place of live video, mentors could use texts, brief video chats, or pre-recorded daily greetings and exits that students could view on their own timeframe.

### INCLUDE FAMILIES

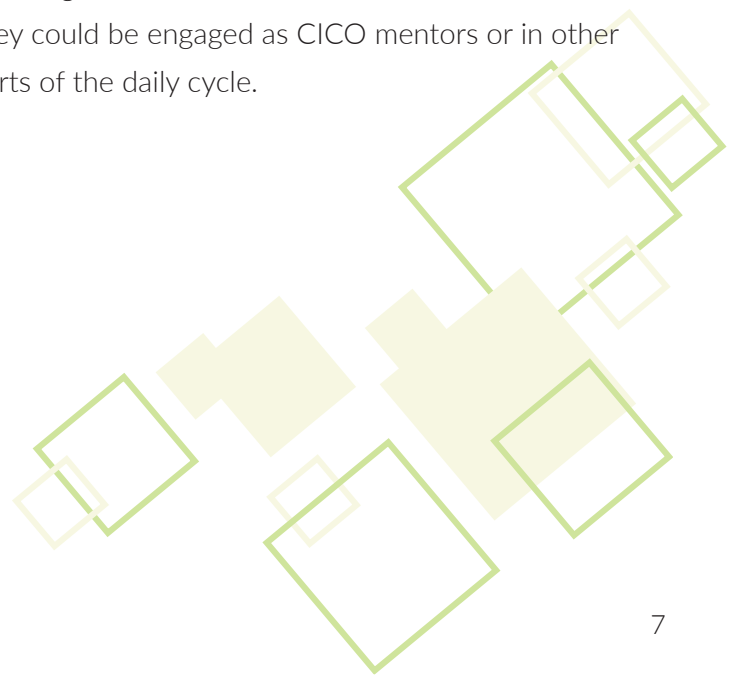
Mentors can check in with both students and families (either together or separately) via videoconference or phone to assess how the day is going and provide support as needed. If not daily, family check-ins could be conducted weekly.

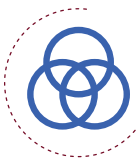
### ALLOW FOR INDEPENDENT MEETINGS

If desired, coordinators could provide resources and a sample routine for families to run their own check-ins and check-outs on their own (with modeling and additional support as needed).

### ENGAGE OTHER SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Many staff (e.g., bus drivers, cafeteria workers, counselors, custodians, paraprofessionals) have positive relationships with students but may no longer have regular interactions with them. Consider how they could be engaged as CICO mentors or in other parts of the daily cycle.





#### 4. Behavior Ratings

Rating student behavior throughout the day is likely to look the most different from CICO in school, so it will be important to re-teach the process to raters and students alike. It may also not be feasible at all, especially without extensive family involvement, in which case the adapted version simply includes checking in and out with a mentor periodically (to provide the positive adult interactions). Here are some options for those who plan to continue using ratings:

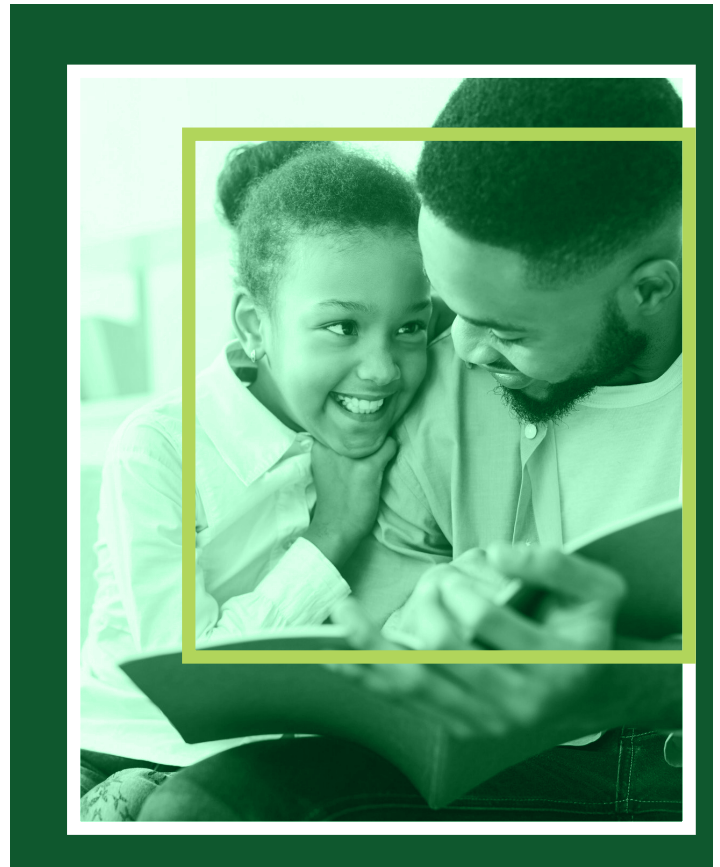
##### USE TECHNOLOGY FOR RATINGS

Students could be given feedback privately through various avenues (e.g., breakout room, private chat, text message) and recorded on a shareable electronic form (e.g., CICO-SWIS, Google forms, OneDrive). It may be that a CICO Coordinator follows up with each rater to obtain and enter the scores.

##### EXPAND WHO PROVIDES RATINGS

Based on availability, it will be important to look beyond classroom teachers as the raters. Options include:

- Family members (especially for home routines)
- Other school personnel (e.g., classified staff) assigned to sit in on live class sessions with the student and monitor, prompt, and rate behavior
- The students themselves (i.e., self-monitoring), with review of their ratings with their mentor at the end of the day



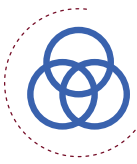
#### 5. Rewards

Families can play an important role in providing rewards when students meet their daily (or weekly) point goals. Family members often know what incentives students would like to earn but may need instruction and coaching in structuring the process (e.g., clear criteria and goals, no loss of rewards once earned). Consider the following expanded menu of rewards:

##### IDENTIFY FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Help family members identify no-cost rewards that align with family routines and rituals and celebrate success (e.g., choose a family meal or a movie to watch).





## CONSIDER BRIEF VIDEO MEETINGS

Students may want to work toward earning additional time on video or phone with a favorite teacher or classified staff member. This kind of reward would help maintain bonding with school and preferred adults as well as provide some very brief respite care for families.

### 6. Family Communication of Progress

A key part of CICO is communicating student performance to families so they can acknowledge success after good days and encourage (not punish) after hard days. In contrast to behavior ratings, school-home communication might be easier with distance learning adaptations to CICO.

## USE THE SAME SYSTEMS FOR SCHOOL-HOME COMMUNICATION

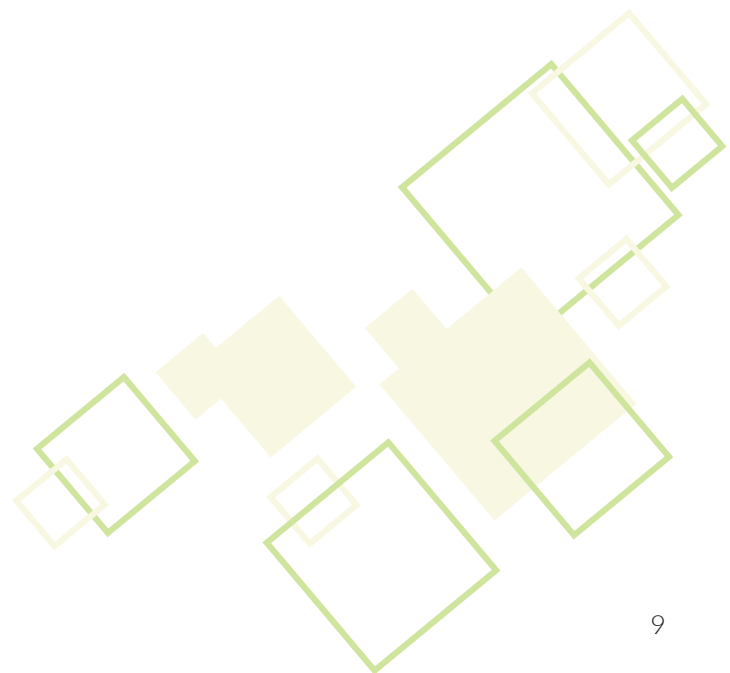
Instead of adding an additional method of contact, try to utilize any existing distance learning communication mechanisms (e.g., app, email, text). This will simplify the work and avoid overwhelming families with too much messaging (or at least minimize the overwhelming communications).

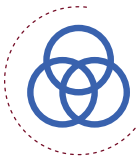
## EMBED FAMILY COMMUNICATION INTO THE PROCESS

Active and timely communication is much easier when family members are included in the CICO daily cycle, such as check-ins, behavior ratings, or ongoing coaching. Inviting families to check-outs can be especially helpful if appropriate, especially if they can be done on a flexible schedule.

## Conclusion

A key message in this brief is to assess, adapt, monitor progress, and readapt CICO as often as is needed to maintain continuity of Tier 2 support. Student and family needs will vary, both in transitioning to distance learning and returning when school buildings open. As students' needs may fluctuate, families' needs and capacity to help may fluctuate as well. However, even if it could potentially improve behavior, more family participation in CICO (e.g., attending check-ins, providing behavior ratings) may be too much. If so, reducing CICO to simply daily or weekly check-ins may provide the positive adult interactions to help students be successful. In any case, data can guide the CICO adaptation process.





## References

Drevon, D. D., Hixson, M. D., Wyse, R. D., & Rigney, A. M. (2019). A meta-analytic review of the evidence for check-in check-out. *Psychology in the Schools, 56*, 393-412. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22195>

## Embedded Hyperlinks

1. <https://www.pbis.org/resource/creating-a-pbis-behavior-teaching-matrix-for-remote-instruction>
2. <https://mimtsstac.org/covid-19-resources>
3. <https://www.pbis.org/pbis/tier-2>
4. <https://www.pbis.org/resource/supporting-families-with-pbis-at-home>

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