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**PRIME TIME Online**

**How-To Guide**

This guide answers frequently asked questions and presents best practices for offering Prime Time Online. It was developed by Humanities Nebraska and the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities in collaboration with three Nebraska teams who offered Prime Time Online during the summer of 2020.

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# Prime Time Going Online!

**How do we take Prime Time online?**

Program Coordinators are responsible for hosting each week of Prime Time Online, but the team can determine which video conferencing tool works best for their families. You may use your school or site-based video conferencing tool or identify a hosting system that offers online links to share with families. We recommend [Zoom](https://zoom.us/) and [Google Meet](https://meet.google.com/) as reliable, affordable, and easy to use platforms. If you do not have access to any of these video conferencing tools, Humanities Nebraska has a Zoom Pro account that can be used to host your Prime Time Online.

**What do families need to participate in Prime Time Online?**

Families need reliable internet access and a device with a microphone and camera in order to participate in Prime Time Online. This could be a smartphone, tablet, Chromebook, or personal computer. They will also need program books and activity materials prior to the first session.

**What if a family lacks access to the internet?**

It is the Program Coordinator’s responsibility to make sure the families who register can participate. We know our target audience is less likely to have reliable at-home internet service and access to devices required for participation in Prime Time Online. Does the child’s school offer Chromebooks, wireless hotspots, or other relevant take-home devices that could be used for Prime Time? Are there local organizations or providers in your community who could donate hotspots, reduced or no-cost internet service, or tablets? Are there free community locations practicing social distancing that offer Wi-Fi? Humanities Nebraska is thankful for all organizations and sites that have already donated or provided technology for families to attend Prime Time!

**How do families log in?**

Prior to each weekly session, the Program Coordinator will send a message via social media, e-mail, or text with instructions and a link to help families log in. When using [Zoom](https://zoom.us/) or other online platforms, we advise Program Coordinators to:

* Set up recurring meetings so the same link can be used every week;
* Use a waiting room feature to enhance security of online sessions while also allowing team members to discuss last-minute plans before letting families into the meeting; and
* Host a pre-Prime Time meeting with families, either individually or as a group, to guide them through logging in, changing their screen name, muting and unmuting their mic, and using the chat box. Hosting preliminary “how to” meetings will help your first session run smoothly.

**Who manages the online sessions?**

The Program Coordinator will be the host for each weekly online session. Coordinators are responsible for setting up the online platform, scheduling the meetings, providing links to log in, admitting families from the waiting room, muting mics when necessary, spotlighting video of the book during reading time, sharing screens when needed, and helping with technical issues. The Program Coordinator can make the Community Liaison a meeting co-host to help with this management. Humanities Nebraska Prime Time staff are available to mentor team members who need help navigating [Zoom](https://zoom.us/).

**How do we meet the needs of the differently-abled?**

Prime Timeis committed to meeting the needs of all participants, including those who are differently-abled. Families may opt-in to accessibility accommodations during the registration process. Some online platforms like Zoom offer closed captioning for the hearing impaired. If any of your families request accommodations, contact Humanities Nebraska Prime Time staff to help you think through needed supports in advance of your program’s first session.

**How do we access planning and implementation materials?**

Planning and implementation materials that are not site-specific are available online at: <https://tinyurl.com/NebPrimeTimeResources>. This folder includes implementation schedules and checklists, attendance spreadsheets, Prime Time budgets, book options, discussion questions, descriptions of Prime Time positions, contracts, entry and completion surveys (to be printed), a new Digital Pubkit, templates for branded paper and posters, final report guidelines, invoice forms, and a certificate of completion for families. Be sure to download files instead of viewing them online so all links and functions will work. Prime Time Affiliate Agreements and Media Permission Forms are customized for your site and provided by Humanities Nebraska Prime Time staff.

# Program Coordinators & Community Liaisons

**How will family recruitment work?**

The Program Coordinator and Community Liaison are responsible for recruiting families to participate in the program. The same recruitment strategies that apply to in-person programming can be applied to Prime Time Online, but will likely be limited by social-distancing measures. Recruitment will require creative thinking and proactive communication with families. Consider using social media, e-mail, text, or phone calls instead of sending home fliers and brochures.

**Will we receive a publicity kit to help with recruitment and registration?**

No – not in its usual physical form. Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities is not providing printed publicity paper or registration cards to their sites or to affiliates like Nebraska. We do not have Prime Time branded paper, but we do have printed **registration cards** that you can request from us. Another option is for you to design your own registration cards as a paper document or online form that captures all the information you need to prepare for your program.

Instead of providing a box of publicity paper, Louisiana has created a new **Digital Pubkit** that can be used by programs throughout the country to recruit and promote for Prime Time Online. They partnered this summer with a graphic designer to refresh and update designs on recruitment materials, create a media how-to guide, and provide social media promotional tools. By September this resource will be available online at: <https://www.primetimefamily.org/digital-publicity-kit/>.

The new Digital Pubkit, as well as the older branded templates for flyers, posters, and certificates, can also be found online at: <https://tinyurl.com/NebPrimeTimeResources>. Be sure to download files instead of viewing them online so all links and functions will work.

**How many families should I recruit and register?**

The ideal number for Prime Time Online is to recruit, register, and retain **10 to 15 families**. Due to the younger age of participating children, Prime Time Preschool should be limited to 12 or 13 families. As with in-person Prime Time, we expect children and adults to participate in story time, discussion, and other Prime Time activities.

**How do I ensure families attend regularly?**

Once registered, the Program Coordinator or Community Liaison must remind families to attend and retain them by incentivizing attendance. When registering families, be sure to emphasize that all children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian during the program. Reminders can include weekly phone calls or e-mails one day before the session. You may also consider texting families 10-15 minutes before the session begins to remind them how to log in. We encourage you to budget and plan for an attractive final night door prize, and to emphasize that families who attend 4 or more sessions will be entered into the drawing. Of course, the best retention tool is building community and ensuring your team delivers a joyful and engaging Prime Time Online experience.

**How will we track attendance?**

It is important to accurately record attendance, but capturing attendance in a virtual setting will require different strategies than signing in at an in-person welcome table. The Program Coordinator or Community Liaison can write the names of attendees as they arrive or record attendance on a physical printout of the attendance sheet. Team members may request that each family indicate who is present with a verbal head count at the start of each session, or they can ask families to indicate who from their family is present in the chat box. Requesting names of all participants at the beginning of the session will be an important preparation for door prize time. Sample attendance spreadsheets are available online at: <https://tinyurl.com/NebPrimeTimeResources>.

**Should the team still have a Planning Meeting?**

Yes. The Program Coordinator should host a planning meeting with the full team prior to the first session. We recommend that you host the meeting virtually using the same platform you will use with families so you can familiarize yourselves with it. This will be your chance to become familiar with muting mics, spotlighting videos, sharing screens, using the chat box, and experimenting with other functions of the online platform. You should also discuss the format and timing of your program, family recruitment, meal arrangements, and other implementation details. If you are new to Prime Time or need help answering questions, please invite Humanities Nebraska Prime Time staff to attend your online meeting.

**What about meals? How do we do that online?**

For Prime Time Online, providing meals is an option rather than a requirement. Some sites may decide to use meal delivery as an incentive for families to participate. Sites have three options:

1. Sites may choose to provide meals every week using funds from Humanities Nebraska. The Program Coordinator or Community Liaison must plan their strategy and timing carefully to deliver meals before each session begins, or the team can contract with a caterer who will deliver meals to families.
2. Sites may choose to reward consistent attendance by delivering meals or groceries during the later weeks of the program. This could be a celebratory meal delivered to families during the last session or a special delivery to families who have attended four or more sessions.
3. Sites may choose to not offer meals.

Humanities Nebraska still provides $1,000 in pre-paid funding to be used for groceries and meal expenses.  **Our funding CANNOT be used to purchase gift cards.** To receive pre-paid funding, please send a message to Erika Hamilton at [erika@humanitiesnebraska.org](mailto:erika@humanitiesnebraska.org). Your message should indicate if you want the full $1,000 or a smaller amount, to whom the check should be made payable, and the mailing address. Team members who deliver meals can keep track of total mileage and request reimbursement from Humanities Nebraska at $.50 per mile.

**Can we use pre-paid funding for other expenses?**

The $1,000 pre-paid funding can only be used to pay for meal expenses such as food, non-alcoholic beverages, ice, plates, cups, napkins, utensils, and inexpensive food containers. Prime Time Preschool teams may receive an additional $250 of pre-paid funding to be used for preschool program materials, craft supplies, activity center items, and printing expenses. This funding cannot be used for gift cards, door prizes, technology, or any other expenses than those listed above.

Humanities Nebraska must keep an accurate account of all expenses paid through local and state funds for Prime Time. Keep copies of receipts and an account of all expenses paid for meals and preschool activities. We need to know the date, description, and cost of each expense. If you still have money left over after the sixth week, the remaining funds must be returned to Humanities Nebraska. If your meal expenses exceed $1,000, please submit an invoice for reimbursement with copies of receipts.

**How will we deliver books and materials to families?**

**Program books** and **gift books** will be shipped from Humanities Nebraska to one address as instructed by the Program Coordinator. All program books should be delivered to the families before Prime Time begins. The gift books should be delivered to families during or after your sixth week.

Your team should deliver books and materials to families safely, following the most up-to-date guidance from local, state, and national entities. While observing these practices, you can choose the following methods of delivery:

* Set up a book/materials pickup point at your school, library, center, or organization.
* Mail books and materials to families (if time allows). Shipping costs will be reimbursed by Humanities Nebraska.
* Deliver books and materials to each family, arranging contact-less drop-off times and calling families to let them know their Prime Time materials have arrived. Team members who choose to deliver materials can keep track of total mileage and request reimbursement from Humanities Nebraska at $.50 per mile.

Whichever strategy you use, we hope you will diligently observe the recommended health and safety practices of frequent handwashing, correct use of a properly fitted face covering, and social-distancing—and that you will encourage families to do the same so pick-up and drop-off occurs safely.

**How do I deliver books to my Facilitators (Storyteller, Discussion Leader, Preschool)?**

Please coordinate with your facilitators to decide a safe way for them to receive copies of the program books and needed materials. The same strategies you use for families apply here. Facilitators need their copies and supplies as soon as they are available so they have time to prepare and practice.

**Can we request books for the Facilitators, but not deliver books to families?**

An important goal of Prime Time is to encourage parents and caregivers to read aloud to their children at home. We support this goal by loaning Prime Time books to families so they can read the stories together in between sessions. We also want children to enjoy looking through books on their own. If you have questions or concerns about delivering and picking up books for online programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, please contact Humanities Nebraska Prime Time staff.

## How do we administer entry and completion surveys?

Entry and completion surveys can be completed by families online or on paper. Online surveys are bilingual in English and Spanish and can be accessed from any device that has internet access. Please contact Erika Hamilton at [erika@humanitiesnebraska.org](mailto:erika@humanitiesnebraska.org) for links to the appropriate surveys. Paper surveys can be printed from <https://tinyurl.com/NebPrimeTimeResources>.

If your team chooses to use **paper surveys**, there are different options for delivering them and picking them up. When program books are delivered to families before the first week, Program Coordinators can include an envelope with the entry survey and completion survey. When books are picked up from families after the program ends, the box should include the envelope with the answered surveys. Other options include picking up entry surveys from families during the second week or mailing surveys to families with a SASE.

During your first online session, the team should give families instructions on completing and submitting their entry survey online or on paper. You may want to provide quiet time during the session to give families a chance to work on it. Teams can do the same thing during their last week for the completion survey.

**Do we need to collect signatures on Photo Waivers?**

In most cases, yes. For Prime Time Online, photo waivers have become Media Permission forms. They allow your team to take screenshots or videos of your Prime Time sessions and share them online or in print. If you do not intend to take photos, screenshots, or videos during your online Prime Time, the permission forms may not be needed.  If you think you may want to take a screenshot as a memory of your online program, the permission forms will be necessary. Permission forms can be sent with entry surveys as a paper document or sent by e-mail. **Electronic signatures** from adults in the family are allowed on Media Permission forms.

**How do we recognize funders?**

The ideal time to recognize funders is during the welcome every week when Program Coordinators remind families about the “rules” of Prime Time Online and thank sponsors.  Statewide funders who should be recognized are the Sherwood Foundation, Carol Gendler, Nebraska Cultural Endowment, National Endowment for the Humanities, and an appropriation from the State of Nebraska. Names of local sponsors will be provided by Humanities Nebraska Prime Time staff before the first session.

## How should we handle door prize drawings?

Door prizes are an option and not a requirement, but they do provide incentives for families to stay engaged in the program. The team should decide in advance how often they will distribute prizes. To retain families, it may be helpful to have several door prizes at the end of the first, third, and final sessions. If your last week includes a grand prize drawing or special treats for perfect attendance, explain that to families during your first week. Prizes can be acquired from similar sources as regular in-person Prime Time.

There are a number of ways to draw names at the end of the online session. One way is to write names on slips of paper and draw them from a hat or bowl. Another way that takes advantage of the virtual platform is using an online selector like [www.wheelofnames.com](http://www.wheelofnames.com). Sharing the screen as it selects names is fun (although slow from online connections). The Program Coordinator or Community Liaison should enter all names into the selector prior to door prize time.

Door prizes can be shipped, dropped off, or delivered virtually to winning participants based on the Program Coordinator’s or Community Liaison’s timeline.

**How will we administer certificates of completion?**

Your program’s last night is a special one and the Certificate of Completion is a significant source of pride for many families. Certificates can be printed and mailed, e-mailed, or shared with families via social media. No matter your approach, please make sure to take time during your last session to celebrate the contributions and growth of your families who complete Prime Time! Read off the names of each family, cheer for them, and encourage them to show their certificate if they received it.

Branded paper and customizable templates for certificates are available in the Digital Pubkit at: <https://www.primetimefamily.org/digital-publicity-kit/> or <https://tinyurl.com/NebPrimeTimeResources>.

# Facilitating the Reading & Discussion

## How long should each weekly Prime Time Online session be?

Your Prime Time Online session will last approximately **30-45 minutes**. Ordinarily, a Prime Time session is 90 minutes long, including 30 minutes for the meal. The meal and book walk (for Prime Time Preschool) are rich and important program components, but delivering them online is impractical. Your online session should spend its time with a welcome, reading and discussing selected books, announcing next week’s books and themes, and (potentially) door prizes. Prime Time Preschool will also include center activities or suggestions for extension activities for families to do at home.

**How do we start the session in an online setting?**

The Program Coordinator or Community Liaison should remind families in advance that story-sharing and discussion will begin fairly promptly. You can anticipate several minutes (approximately 5) of login time, but you should not delay story-sharing for late arrivals. It is important to respect the time of your families and reinforce the importance of timely login. As families are arriving, team members can ask them to answer a question in the chat box such as: What was your favorite thing about today? What did you have for lunch or dinner? What did you like best about last week’s story?

When it’s time to begin the program, the Coordinator should remind families about the “rules” of Prime Time Online and thank sponsors. Facilitators can then launch into a welcome song or upbeat introduction that connects to the session’s theme and book.

**How do we present the book so the pictures are visible to families?**

Like with any Prime Time, facilitators must work together to display the book clearly during the read-aloud portion of the online program. One option is for the discussion leader to display the book while the storyteller focuses on reading. Practice holding the book in front of your webcam and provide sufficient lighting to ensure the illustrations are visible, but don’t block out your face entirely. Remember it’s important for children to see your reaction to the story. The Program Coordinator (as meeting host) should use the online platform to spotlight the video of the book, making the video larger and easier to see.

For bilingual Prime Time, the storyteller and discussion leader can take turns showing pages of the book when the other is reading or another team member can hold the book while the storyteller and discussion leader read.

Other options include using e-books (not available from Humanities Nebraska), scanning images of pages, or using a document camera. While these methods can display the illustrations more clearly through screen share, they do present copyright issues. Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities recommends that Prime Time teams focus on modeling practices that can be replicated at home by holding books and showing facial reactions during the reading.

## How do we comply with copyright issues when presenting a book online?

Reading a Prime Time book aloud and sharing pages online fits within Fair Use of copyright law when we do three things:

1. We make it clear that the book is being used for a transformational educational experience by asking questions and having short discussions with families throughout the reading. Prepare short questions to ask on various pages of the book, encourage families to answer in the chat box, acknowledge answers, and save your deeper questions to ask at the end of the story.
2. We do not compete with the economic market for the book. Prime Time’s library commercials can be used to tell families where and how to find copies of the book or titles with the same theme or same author.
3. We do not make the reading session available online for the general public.

This March 30, 2020 article shares more information about Fair Use and reading aloud online: <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2020-03-30-can-teachers-read-books-out-loud-online-actually-yes>.

**How do we facilitate engagement?**

Facilitating engagement is an important part of the Prime Time Online experience, just like it is with in-person Prime Time. Ask your families to turn on their cameras so you can see their faces and reactions. Introduce them to the tools available for use in your chosen online platform, such as the “reactions” tool for raising a hand to speak or the chat box to share ideas or post answers to questions. When using these tools, be consistent and make sure you acknowledge family contributions.

Some tips for encouraging family engagement:

* Along with asking questions out loud, facilitators may consider posting the questions in the chat box or screensharing a PowerPoint with questions on each slide so families can see what they are being asked.
* Ask participants if they would like to unmute their mic and share more about the answer they typed in the chat box.
* Remember to keep asking “WHY?” Questioning “why” helps turn single-word answers into humanities-rich responses.
* Encourage both children and adults to participate in the discussion and group activities. This could include posing a question for parents and children to discuss together before they share their answers with the group.

## What about the preschool component of school-age Prime Time?

Since we cannot assume families will have enough devices to participate in online breakout rooms, the preschool component has become optional in the school-age Prime Time Online. Sites can choose to not have a Preschool Assistant or they can choose to read and discuss a preschool book at the beginning of the online session before reading and discussing the school-age book. If the Preschool Assistant chooses to send home activities to go along with the preschool book, that expense can be reimbursed up to $100. Activity supplies may include crayons, construction paper, games, small toys, and instructions for each activity.

**How do we conclude the session?**

Like in regular in-person programs, the facilitators should conclude each session with positive reinforcement. Facilitators may thank families for their time and for sharing their thoughts. They may also recap the themes and ideas discussed. Before the program concludes with door prizes and announcements, the facilitators should introduce the theme and books for next week as a way to encourage families to read and return to the next session ready with questions and ideas to share.

# Prime Time Preschool

## How will Prime Time Preschool activity centers work?

As we pilot the Prime Time Preschool Online format, we are interested in how your team approaches the implementation of centers with participating families. The purpose of Prime Time Preschool centers is to extend learning through expression and play—the way many young minds learn. Your team will need to discuss how and when to facilitate centers, supplies and activities that correspond with each book, and how you will deliver center supplies to families. Facilitators may, for example, plan to lead one center activity during the online session and/or offer extension activities for families to do independently after the session ends. Activity supplies and instructions can be delivered to families along with all program books before the first week of Prime Time Preschool Online.

Humanities Nebraska provides up to $250 in funding for Prime Time Preschool center supplies. Ideas for purchasing inexpensive items to send to families include:

* Writing & Expressing: Crayons or sidewalk chalk (inexpensive, washable, can be used for multiple activities); construction paper; a travel size Magnadoodle; soft items such as plush animals can encourage nurturing and caregiving.
* Construction: [Viking Toys](https://us.viking-toys.com/educational-toys/) makes colorful and sturdy small vehicles that come in classroom sets or buckets. [Duplo](https://www.lego.com/en-us/themes/duplo) also has vehicles that are safe and sometimes inexpensive. Consider a set of little animals that come in tubes or, for higher quality/safety, look at [Playmobil “add-ons”](https://www.playmobil.us/shop-online/add-ons?prefn1=subCategory&prefv1=tierwelt&srule=New&content=false) for an animal family group. Other options are foam blocks or Tumbling Tower/Jenga game pieces.
* Drama & Pretend: A generic crown or cape; a tea or picnic set; a game with large sturdy food picture tiles; cookie cutters and a rolling pin.

**How will PGQs (Picture Graph Questionnaires) be administered?**

PGQs can be approached in a few different ways. Preschool Facilitators may select one PGQ to use during the session and ask families to respond using the chat box or reaction feature. The remaining PGQs for that week can be a suggested activity for parents and caregivers to do with their child after the session. Another option is for the Program Coordinator to provide all PGQs to families via e-mail or as printed copies delivered with the books. During the Prime Time Preschool session, adults can interview their child about the PGQs for the week and share responses in the chat box. A third option is to use the poll feature of Zoom or similar online platforms so families can take a “vote” on PGQ questions and offer their own ideas in the chat box.

PGQs are available at <https://www.primetimefamily.org/book-series/> under “Preschool Series.” Click on the different syllabus options to find the titles you are using.

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Please contact us with any questions or concerns about Prime Time Online. Thank you for taking this journey with us!

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