

Ingham Impact Episode 43 - New Year, New Ways to Connect

[Kelly Konietzko] I'm an occupational therapist so and I'm an itinerant and I go into schools so we work with the little kids doing fine motor, sensory integration sometimes. [Jodie Fowler] Normally I just have a toolbox that I take from school to school and we all use the same materials like I'll do a theme during the week and then all of those kids do those same activities. [Rebekah Mackley] for all of us. There was a big change of switching to virtual and learning new platforms and how to really still reach kids. For me, I'm working with kids who have social, emotional, behavioral concerns as a school social worker. So for them I had to figure out how does that translate to home. [Denise Lycos] here at the Secondary Learning Center and Evergreen, we made the decision to offer our families face to face or a remote option. [Kelly] I have East Lansing District and I have LCA and they're actually hybrid, so they have some kids coming in half the time, face to face and then half remote. So I see them just the same way I would, you know, with the safety protocols in place that the kids are wearing masks, I'm wearing a mask. [Denise] We made sure that our desks were apart. We've got dividers to put up on the desks. Kids are all wearing masks and that's gone very well. We've got the cleaning processes in place. [Jodie] Knowing that this year was going to be different and I can't share all of those tools and equipment. I made fine motor kits; I've put together 30 different tool boxes for each kid, so then my idea is if we have to go to virtual or to remote learning I can pick up those kits from school. The kids are familiar with them. I can get them to the parents and the families and we can just keep kind of going right on with what we've been doing this fall. [Denise] The way we're handling that remote part: All the kids have Chromebooks and the teachers are using Google classroom and the kids actually follow their daily schedule, but from home. [Kelly] And we've learned new platforms, we've learned all kinds of ways to communicate. I've got a bunch of platforms myself. [Denise] So, in our classrooms you either have a smart board or we have big screen TV's with webcams, and so that's been our mode of operation here. [Rebekah] The nature of my work really has included a lot more community and home involvement. Now their parents are the ones trying to get them to do work instead of their teachers, so I'm working with the parents on how to help them to do their work and trying to figure out how to still maintain those relationships, but through a computer screen. [Kelly] To build their relationship in person is already difficult enough over a screen that's even harder and just missing the kids and missing being able to be with them and just experience the whole. You know all of what they do. [Rebekah] We've worked a lot together in finding like just simple little cool ways about like even using Google classrooms, and so we really are just sharing all the information and everything that we've received. And trying to just help each other all be better, and figure it all out. [Jodie] Everybody has kind of shared their ideas. That's just how we operate. Our emails are flying. Our texts are flying. It's just yeah, that's a good idea. Or that's a good idea. Or let's try that differently. We all have to do what works for the students that we're working with. But if we find success, why not share it?

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