

Dear Connecticut Invention Convention families:

Your child will participate in the Invention Convention program this school year. This engaging program celebrates young inventors and asks them to come up with their own inventions. Invention Convention fosters problem solving and critical thinking skills. This STEM, invention, and entrepreneurship program starts with our students exploring their lives and the lives of others to identify a problem they are passionate about solving. Although the invention must be the young inventors' work, inventors may receive guidance and support from adults.

We need young problem solvers and inventors now more than ever. That's why we have reinvented the Invention Convention program to support your child with virtual activities during this uncertain new school year. Every year, our inventors typically present their inventions at live Invention Convention events (at the school, at the state level, and even at the national level). We will host a virtual Finals event (similar to 2020's event) this year. Young inventors from all over the state will upload videos, pictures of their prototypes, and their invention log to our online event system. Even in this virtual world, your child can start inventing now!

The Invention Convention program includes the following components:

 **An invention must:**

- *Solve a real problem.*
- *Be something that no one has ever made before.*
- *Cannot be purchased in a store or online.*
- *May be an improvement or addition to something that already exists.*

 **Problem identification:** Inventors should be passionate about the problem they hope to solve. We encourage you to communicate with your children throughout the invention process. Your children may begin to ask about the problems you face or problems you see around the world in the news. Encourage your inventors to speak with family members and friends and record their learning in their Invention Log. This is a great way to start coming up with ideas for solutions (inventions).

 **Prototype:** Inventors must create a physical solution to a problem of their choosing. They must design and build the prototype, with adult help if needed. We encourage all families to use materials they have around the house. We do not want families and schools purchasing expensive materials for this project. The materials should be age appropriate and, if you must purchase materials, you should spend no more than \$50. Using recycled materials is celebrated!

 **Invention Log:** Inventors must record the journey of the invention process in a log or diary. Every time inventors work on their invention, they should document their process, challenges, failures, and triumphs. Logbooks can be handwritten or typed. Although the logbook has questions to answer, the inventor should add other pages as necessary, even scrap paper with drawings and feedback from other people. (In the case of a virtual event, handwritten logs can be uploaded into an online system as PDFs via an app.)

 **Research:** Inventors should be sure their invention is new and original, or an improvement on something that already exists. Inventors may use the USPTO website to search patents and/or type in keywords that describe your invention into search engines/shopping sites. Working with experts is also a great way to enhance your project. Young inventors may need help with research and finding experts. Parents can help young inventors make sense of the research.

 **Visual display:** Inventors should create a slide presentation highlighting their invention process and other important aspects of their invention. The slides can be a PowerPoint presentation or Google slides, or another online presentation platform. Be creative and highlight the most important aspects of your invention!

- o Name, grade, school, town
- o The name of your invention
- o The purpose of the invention or the problem it solves
- o How the invention works
- o How the invention was made
- o How the invention is used
- o Supporting data and charts/graphs
- o Testimonials from users
- o Pictures of your invention process
- o Scientific and/or engineering principles used
- o Any other information about the invention that will help explain it, what it does or why it's good.

 **Video presentation to judges:** Our inventors will be expected to present their inventions in a short video to judges. They might even have an opportunity to present to judges at their schools. Inventors should write out their script and practice their presentation often, when it is time.

We are excited to have your child invent us!