

# Special Education and COVID-19 School Closures:

What Parents & Caregivers Need to Know About Learning & Services Now

## My child has an IEP or 504 Plan: Should the school provide services while closed?

**Yes.** A school making learning available to general education students, **must** make the same learning available to students with disabilities. The special education and services listed in your child's IEP or 504 Plan **must be provided** as much as possible.

## What about online learning?

If a school is making online learning available to general education students, **must** make a **good faith effort** to make sure students with disabilities have a computer and internet access.



## What services should I expect or request under my child's IEP or 504 Plan?

Your child's school should work with you to identify your child's needs and how best to meet them during the closure. Examples to think about are:

- » Regular one-on-one or small group lessons with the teacher or intervention specialist by phone or video
- » Phone or video support for you
- » Regular phone or video appointments with your child's counselor, speech therapist, physical therapist, or occupational therapist
- » Extra work to do at home from your child's counselor or therapists
- » Changes to the kind of work your child is doing at home, such as:
  - Shorter assignments
  - Different content in assignments
  - Extra assignments
- » Changes to the instructions for work your child is doing at home, such as:
  - More time to complete assignments
  - Breaking up assignments
  - How to ask for help to complete assignments
- » Tools or assistive technology for your child to use at home, such as:
  - A laptop
  - A tablet
  - A hotspot or jet pack for internet access

## What if my child isn't getting enough help to keep up?

- » **Ask** for an IEP Team meeting by phone or video, in an email or letter.
- » Ask for the supports and services in your child's IEP to be provided by phone or video
- » **Apply** for legal help by calling Legal Aid Line at (888) 534-1432 or [www.legalaidline.org](http://www.legalaidline.org).
- » Ask for compensatory education. **Compensatory education is future services** for a student to make up for a school not providing needed services currently or in the past. It should be specific to your child's needs.

## What can I do now to be sure my child receives compensatory education when school re-opens?

- » Make all requests for special education and services during the closure **in writing**.
- » **Keep** a copy for yourself.
- » Use a calendar to track your requests and any answers from the school.
- » Note how you received the answer. For example: phone; email; letter.
- » **Track** how many minutes of special education and related services (for example: speech therapy or occupational therapy) your child actually receives.
- » Make a Chart like the Sample below:

Service	Who Provided	Date	Time	Number of Minutes
OT	Mrs. Jones	April 1	3 p.m.	30
Special Instruction	Mrs. Smith	April 5	11 a.m.	30

- » Request status or progress reports for your child through March 13, 2020.
- » Compare your child's performance at home or upon their return to school.

## Does the IEP or 504 Team have to meet now to change my child's placement to home learning?

**No.** The IEP Team does not have to meet during the closure to change the IEP to at-home or home instruction.

## What if the team meets and changes my child's placement to at-home learning?

Make sure the IEP says in writing the change is **only temporary** during the COVID-19 related school closure.

## If you have concerns about your child's education during or after the COVID closure, contact Legal Aid Line to apply for free legal help:

CALL  
LEGAL AID LINE  
APPLY ONLINE



TOLL-FREE  
(888) 534-1432



ONLINE  
[www.LegalAidLine.org](http://www.LegalAidLine.org)