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Special Education and Remote Learning:

What Parents and Caregivers Need to Know About Tracking Your Child's Services and Progress During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Because of COVID-19 school building closures and remote learning, children with disabilities have been getting their services in different ways and many parents are more involved in their child's education than before. The special education and services listed in your child's IEP or 504 Plan must be provided, although they may look different for health and safety. Parents may need to document their child's progress and services to determine whether the IEP needs changed or their child needs compensatory education or recovery services, or extended school year services.

What should I be documenting and tracking?

Document and track as much as you can during any period of building closures or remote or blended learning. But each parent's ability to do this will be different. Do the best you can!

You may want to track:

- Instruction and services provided by school staff
- Instruction and services provided by the parent or caregiver
- Progress made or lost by your child on the curriculum and IEP goals
- Progress made or lost by your child during breaks

How do I know what instruction and services my child should be receiving?

Look at your child's IEP. Section 7 of the IEP provides the best detail on what specially designed instruction, services, and supports your child needs to access a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). It includes details like the amount of time of a service, how often the child receives a service, and who is responsible for providing a service.

Carefully read Section 7 to help determine what your child should be receiving. For example:

- Section 7 includes 15 minutes daily of specially designed instruction on behavior modeling and de-escalation strategies with the child's teacher. On the days your child is learning remotely, does your child have daily 15-minute phone calls or video calls with their teacher to discuss behavior and de-escalation?
- Section 7 includes 40 minutes weekly of occupational therapy with the occupational therapist (OT). Does your child receive at least 40 minutes of service from the school OT? (Note, this time could be split into multiple sessions, like 2 20-minute sessions).

If your child is enrolled in blended learning or attending school in the school building at least part-time, your child may be receiving some of their services in-person. Talk to your child about what they did at school and record what they say. You can also ask the school for copies of their records tracking services.

How should I track instruction and services provided by school staff?

- Track how many minutes of special education and services your child actually receives while learning from home.
 - Include: type of service, who provided the service, the date, the time, and the number of minutes.
- Sample below:

Service	Who Provided	Date	Time	Number of Minutes
OT	Ms. Smith	April 1	2:00 PM	20 minutes
Special instruction on behavior and de-escalation	Mr. Jones	April 3	10:00 AM	15 minutes

There are also other options, like printing your child's Google Classroom calendar or using a paper calendar, journal, or cell phone. Figure out what works for you, but make sure you have all the necessary information.

What if I haven't been tracking all along? Can I catch up?

Yes. If you have not been tracking, look back through your child's remote classroom calendar, your emails, or any other phone records or papers you may have. You can also ask the school for copies of their records tracking services.

How should I track the services I provide?

You can track the services and instruction you provide in the same way that you track the services provided by the school. If you helped your child with their daily assignment for one hour, record that.

Track any additional expenses you had assisting your child. For example, if you pay for a tutor to help with remote learning assignments, keep any receipts.

How do I know what my child's progress should look like?

First, look at your child's IEP. Section 6 contains measurable annual goals for your child. These goals were based on your child's performance when the IEP was written.

The measurable annual goal itself should be specific and measurable. For example, if your child struggles with reading, the goal may be, "After reading a grade-level content area reading assignment, the student will correctly identify the main idea of the paragraph or passage with 90% accuracy 4 of 5 trials." If this is the goal, you should track your child's ability to identify the main idea of a paragraph or passage.

Second, look at your child's progress reports. These progress reports give an update since the IEP was written and can provide a clearer picture of how your child has been progressing over time with all of the changes to their learning.

How should I track my child's progress or lack of progress?

Using the IEP goals and progress reports as a starting point, track your child's progress for each goal on the IEP when learning remotely.

For example, if:

- One of your child's goals is to comply with adult directives with no more than two prompts with 80% accuracy in 5/5 trials, you should record how often your child complies with directives to complete work with no more than two prompts.
- One of your child's goals is to use correct punctuation with 100% accuracy in 4/5 trials, you should record how often your child writes a sentence with correct punctuation.

Keep whatever counting system works for you.

The more frequently you track, the better. Don't worry if you miss a few days or are unable to track every moment of the day. You have a lot going on.

I'm having trouble documenting exactly how my child is doing, what else can I do?

Make a short video to show the IEP team at the next meeting. You may want to make a video of your child doing their work or reading or anything else that has an IEP goal attached to it. It may be hard for you to describe progress or lack of progress. Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words. Use your cell phone. Try to record the date you make the video.

How can I track progress made or lost by my child during previous breaks?

Parents can request their child's education records from the school. Parents should carefully review these records to see if there is evidence that their child previously made or lost progress after other breaks from school. Parents can look at whether classroom reading or math tests, grades, or behavior got worse.

Parents know their children best. What is your point of view on your child's regression after previous breaks?

Where can I get more information?

For more information about what services your child should be getting or what compensatory education, recovery services, or extended school year are, you may also want to look at our other fact sheets:

- *Special Education and Remote Learning: What Parents Need to Know About Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic*
- *Special Education and COVID-19: What Parents and Caregivers Need to Know About Recovery Services, Compensatory Education, and Extended School Year Services During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic*

If you still need help:

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