

MAC is proud to help lead advocacy efforts to ensure that children with disabilities are not left behind during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Included below is a brief summary of the most up to date highlights.
We will share more details soon!

MAC's Message to Families: We're here to help.

With your children with disabilities out of school, we know you need information fast about your rights in the current crisis. We also know this must be an incredibly unsettling time as many of you are coping with significant daily stressors and may be worried about being able to meet your family's basic needs, while also caring for your children with disabilities at home. You may be worried about how you can keep your children safe, make sure they don't lose important skills, and keep them engaged throughout the day and learning as much as possible.

MAC is here for you. If you are having trouble getting enough support for your child, call MAC's Helpline at 617-357-8431 ext. 3224.

Things are changing quickly but here's what we know right now:

What kind of special education services do school districts need to provide?

You may have heard that schools do not have to provide any special education services. This is NOT true.

School districts are now being told that they have to provide as many IEP services as possible to your children during the COVID-19 crisis, while protecting the health and safety of families and teachers. Sadly due to the situation, in many cases children won't receive the same level of service they had when they were in the school building. Schools may not be able to provide all services but here's what they have to do right away:

- Give you resources to find online, on TV, or on your smartphone (apps)
- Send you packets of assignments, strategies, and projects;
- Set up regular phone call or email check-ins with you to help you plan around your child's behavior and learning needs.

Also, as soon as possible, once they have the technology and staff up and running, schools have to do things like:

- Set up times to teach or provide therapy sessions, either one-on-one or in a group, via phone or video conferencing. For example, some teachers are helping children practice reading over the phone. Other schools are doing speech therapy sessions using "Zoom";

- Post online lessons;
- IEP parent training or consult sessions, by phone or video conference;
- Other creative ways to provide your child with instruction and services.

Schools **must make sure your children have the accommodations they need** to be able to use general education and special education resources. This means things like worksheets with large print or fewer items per page, or use of speech-to-text and other assistive technology.

Many of you are worried that your children will regress and may need **compensatory services** when they go back to school. Compensatory and additional services will be important for many children when schools re-open. It is important to get as many services as possible **now** for your child, so your child needs less compensatory services later. We will be posting more information on this as we learn more.

These resources, support, and services will be very important because we now know that schools will now be closed until at least **May 4th**. Sadly we know that during this crisis period when schools are closed, children with disabilities will not get all of the services and teaching that they need.

As always as parents, you have a big role in making sure your kids' most critical needs are met during this time. And MAC is here to support you.

The **new state guidance** on what schools have to provide to students with disabilities can be found, [here](#).

What can parents do now?

- Contact your school district and ask how they will start to provide your child with necessary services while schools are closed. Let them know what you are most concerned about for your child.
- Go to your school district's website for information about what they are doing for children at home.
- If you are having trouble getting enough support for your child, call MAC's Helpline at 617-357-8431 ext. 3224.
- Stay connected to MAC. We will share more information, details, and guidance soon.

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