WEEKLY CHAT

SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN THE PANDEMIC

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MAC' is grateful for
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Schools must provide special education services remotely to all students with disabilities--based on child’s unique IEP needs.
Special education instruction & services

Instruction and Services

• Virtual, On-line, and/or Telephonic
• Full class, small group instruction, or 1:1
• Parent consultation sessions,
• Related services such as occupational therapy, speech therapy, ABA, counseling

Resources and Supports

• Strategies, assignments, projects and packets
  • With needed accommodations
• Direct, regular, ongoing communication between school and family

• Addressing current IEP goals and services

• Provide accommodations needed for materials
REMOTE LEARNING PLAN

The remote learning plan should include:

• Daily Schedule for child’s instruction and services

• List of educators providing services

• Schedule for regular communication with family and student

• Assignments, projects, and packets for your child (with accommodations)
WHAT IF MY CHILD DOESN’T HAVE A REMOTE LEARNING PLAN

• E-mail the principal or team leader (click here for sample email)

• E-mail the special ed director or superintendent

• File a complaint  {Click here to file}

• Contact MAC’s Helpline at 617-357-8431 ext. 3224 or click here
WHAT IF MY CHILD’S REMOTE LEARNING PLAN IS INADEQUATE

- E-mail teacher, Team leader or principal
- Important to explain your concerns
  --Be specific about the impact on your child (struggles, losing skills, etc.)
- E-mail the special ed director or superintendent
- File a complaint {To file a complaint} or request mediation {click here}
- Contact MAC’s Helpline Helpline at 617-357-8431 ext. 3224 or click here
IEP MEETINGS DURING PANDEMIC

• IEP meetings should be happening now (by video or phone)

• Parents must agree to remote IEP meeting

• Schools should collaborate with parents to schedule team meetings
Timelines for Annual Team meetings

- Timelines are still in effect

- District can request to extend timeline
  - If parents agree, provide written notice and new date
  - If parents disagree: complaint, mediation, BSEA
EVALUATIONS AND RE-EVALUATIONS DURING PANDEMIC

- State recommends that district conduct assessments remotely

- Districts may use professional judgment determining whether assessment can be conducted remotely
  --Must be *individualized decision* based on student’s circumstances

- Districts should consider other student data related to suspected disability
• Timelines still in effect

• Parents can choose to postpone evaluation until schools re-open

• Parents can agree to extend timelines if district can’t conduct remote testing

• If parents disagree: complaint, mediation, BSEA
• District can develop a partial IEP if some assessments conducted /available

• Conduct additional evaluations through extended evaluation process
NO BLANKET POLICIES ALLOWED

- District can not make blanket policies precluding Team meeting or evaluations

- School district can not require parent to waive procedural rights in order to have a Team meeting or to agree to extend timelines
• **NEW:** Children who turn 3 between March 15-August 31 can continue to receive EI services starting sometime in June

• Special ed timelines still in effect: Referral, assessment, and services start by age 3 if eligible

• IEP Team should still review existing EI assessments, IFSP to determine eligibility
• Districts must communicate in parent’s primary language

• Interpreters and translations provided if needed
EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR (ESY)

• State plans to announce next week if schools open for summer

• Health and safety will remain top priority

• ESY might include remote services and limited in-person services
State plans to announce guidance in mid-June for Fall re-opening

Parents can identify concerns to help ensure a smooth transition

As districts announce plans, identify accommodations and services needed to meet your child’s needs
Compensatory Services

• Will be evaluated case by case

• Best to get as many services as possible now.
What you can do now

• Tell district what you are most concerned about for your child

• Advocate if needed

• Keep track of what school is doing/how child is doing
RESOURCES

• Helpline: (617) 357-8431 or massadvocates.org/helpline

• massadvocates.org/covid19

• Blank COVID-19 Resources Remote Learning Plan & Sample Remote Learning Plan from DESE massadvocates.org/newcovidresources

• Q&A on Special Education and Covid 19

• Previous Chats: massadvocates.org/events

• Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram: @MassAdvocates

• Additional questions & topic suggestions Contact communications@massadvocates.org
RESOURCES

DESE'S Family Resources Toolbox: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1L63twjZ52GAK-GqY3YQDgWxxvdV-ThKC/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1L63twjZ52GAK-GqY3YQDgWxxvdV-ThKC/view)

DESE Special Education Corona Virus website: [http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/sped.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/sped.html)

Program Resolution at DESE: [To file a complaint](#)

Bureau of Special Education Appeals Mediation: [click here](#)

Bureau of Special Education Appeals Hearing: [Click here](#)

DESE Timelines Technical Assistance Advisory: [Click here](#)

Updated DESE Q&A: [Click here](#)