Increasing Engagement in Distance Teaching and Learning Activities for Students with Disabilities during COVID-related School Closure

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Important reminders during COVID-19

- Do the best you can. That is all you can do!
- Take care of yourself so that you can take care of your family.
- Schools and districts are struggling with the switch to distance education for ALL kids!
- AND your child has a right to educational services and supports.
- Your child may not be able to access what the district is currently offering.
- Your child may need a highly individualized approach to distance learning
Time to write in the chat box!

What is your child’s biggest challenge during distance teaching and learning activities?
Moving toward engagement

- Access
- Attention
- Engagement
Access strategies

» Let your child’s special education teacher know if:
  » You don’t have, or lose access to the internet
  » You need a different/additional device for your child to access distance instruction
  » You need to sit with your child 100% of the time for them to engage in distance teaching and learning activities
  » Distance teaching and learning activities cause your child to have challenging behavior
  » You need more things translated into your first language to better support your child during distance instruction
Attention strategies

- Tell your child’s teacher you want to focus on increasing attention skills as your first goal and plan together on how to do that.
- If your child has accommodations in their IEP to support attention, make sure they are being used during distance teaching.
- Help your child know it is “time for school on the computer” using a transition visual or activity.
- Set up a consistent place and time for distance teaching.
More attention strategies

- Ask your child’s teacher to record the sessions or make other videos that your child can watch multiple times.
- Ensure that your child’s zoom setting is in speaker view NOT gallery view.
- Create a reward program (something simple, stickers or stars) and give lots of rewards for attention.
- Keep sessions short! It is harder to attend to distance teaching than in-person teaching for many children.
- Your child may need 1:1 zoom lessons.
- Your child may need the teacher to “fill the screen” with his or her face.
Engagement strategies

- Talk with your child’s teacher about what things keep your child’s attention (what TV shows, videos, games) so that the teacher can intersperse them within lessons
- Make a plan in advance to address possible challenging behavior (i.e. when should you stop and take a break or switch to something else)
- Have a back-up plan using an online educational game or program for your child
- Use of touchscreen or switch to operate technology
More engagement strategies

- Physical positioning that supports interacting with technology (sitting, lying, side-lying, etc.)
- Educational games (Starfall, etc.)
- Work with your child’s teacher to create PPTs of familiar people, favorite items, activities
- Create PPT of pictures of your child at home and school
- Use music and movement as teaching tools (Go Noodle)
- Connect with other students for instruction or social skills practice
- Use frequent reinforcement for engagement and attention!
Thank you for joining me this evening!