



COVID-19: What Does It Mean for Special Education?

For more information, please call 1-800-238-1443 or visit las.org

Is my child's individualized education program (IEP) still effective? Has my child's right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) changed due to COVID-19?

- Your child's IEP is still effective and what he or she should receive from your school has not changed.
- COVID-19 has not removed or reduced your child's right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

What special education and related services does my child have a right to if our schools close due to COVID-19?

- If other students are not receiving services, your school does not have to provide them to students receiving special education services. Once it reopens, your school must make every effort to resume services to your child.
- If other students are receiving services, students receiving special education services must have the same opportunities. This should include the services in your child's IEP. Your child's IEP team should decide if he or she needs added services.
- Added services may be necessary if your child is not doing as well as he or she was doing before your school closed.

What services does my child have a right to if local schools remain open, but my child misses school due to catching COVID-19?

- Your child's IEP team should have a meeting to decide how to meet your child's needs. This may include teaching online or by telephone or could mean extra services.

What services does my child have a right to if his or her public school for children with disabilities closes (while other public schools stay open)?

- Your school should consider teaching online or by phone while following all safety advice.
- You do not need to wait until your child's school reopens to hold an IEP meeting. You should contact your child's teachers to request an IEP meeting and plan for the school year.



Please visit las.org for more information or call 1-800-238-1443 for individual assistance

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What if my child is not allowed to go to school during an outbreak of COVID-19 while the school remains open?

- Your school might not allow your child to go to school in person if he or she has a high risk of complications from COVID-19.
- If your child has to temporarily stay home, distance learning through video or telephone teaching will not change his or her IEP.
- If your child's time away from school is longer, you can request an IEP meeting to discuss any changes or additional supports your child needs.
- Your school should make the decision to limit your child's attendance based on his or her individual needs. Stereotypes about your child's disability should not impact that decision.

Should my child's IEP Team make a distance learning plan in case COVID-19 closes our school in the future?

- Your child's IEP team may consider making a distance learning plan but is not required to. You can meet with the IEP team to discuss this. A distance learning plan might include teaching online or by telephone or services at home or a different location.

What can I be doing during this time to get support and advocate for my child during a school closure?

- Communication is key. You can request an IEP meeting by phone or video conference to discuss alternate services and support.
- If your child seems to be forgetting things or not doing as well as before the school closure, you can write down these changes and make a note of any help you needed to get. This help might include mental health treatment, medication changes, or one on one support.
- If you pay for other services for your child, you can request that the school pay you back.
- You can request at-home services if your child cannot return to school due to his or her health. You should attach a letter from your child's doctor to this request.
- You can request any due process appeals continue through phone or video conference.
- Once your child's school reopens, you can request an IEP meeting to discuss any needed changes to the IEP.

This booklet cannot take the place of legal advice. All cases are different and need individual attention.