



Transitioning to home and digital learning FAQ

Since the onset of the Covid-19 outbreak, schools (public and private) have offered a variety of responses from moving to online learning to closing schools completely for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. With schools' plans ever changing, NDSS encourages you to check with your local education agency (LEA) and/or state department of education for most current status of your school.

What can I do to ease this transition?

- Try to create a routine and visual schedule for your family. Encourage students to get up, get dressed, eat, and brush their teeth every morning around the same time every day.
- Designate specific areas for learning while taking into account individuals learning styles-some people need quiet, uninterrupted time to focus and others need auditory input.
- Remember to schedule breaks and play! Keep in mind that all behavior is communication. If your student is not cooperating with learning, it's probably time for a break.
- Try to have a backup plan for an online lesson if bandwidth becomes an issue or you can't re-establish the connection for your online resource.
- Be FLEXIBLE!

Does my child need to be 'learning' the length of a typical school day?

- No! You don't have to work for 8 hours when learning from home! It is recommended that students engage with academics for 15 minutes per year of life¹.
 - For example, a 10-year-old works for 150 minutes per day.

Should I be worried about my child gaining new academic skills during this time?

- NO! The main focus is on maintaining your student(s) current academic abilities and mental wellbeing.

What about related services like speech, physical therapy, and/or occupational therapy?

- Contact teachers and therapists for education guidance, online tips, and support. Your therapist may be able to provide services over video chat methods such as Zoom or Google hangouts.

What if I already have an IEP meeting scheduled but my school is closed?

- If you have an IEP meeting already scheduled, check with your school staff to see if you can teleconference or video call. IEP meetings maybe postponed as long as it is mutually agreed upon by both the school and family.
- For more information, read The Department of Education's "[Supplemental Fact Sheet](#) on Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Schools While Serving Children with Disabilities."

¹Current Homeschool Law. (2019, December 13). Retrieved from <https://responsiblehomeschooling.org/policy-issues/current-policy/>



What about the IEP goals my student is currently working on?

- You can ask to keep the existing IEP goals in place until a future date when you can reconvene. Especially if your renewal date is close, give it a few months or longer. If there is a goal that you worry you have met and need to extend, you may also ask to adjust that goal. Remember, this can all be done through email.

What are schools obligations to provide FAPE for my child during this time?

- The US Department of Education has issued guidance that if a school remains open and/or is providing virtual learning opportunities the general education population, schools must provide FAPE for students with disabilities.
- If a school has closed and is not offering educational services for the general education population then the school is not required under this guidance to provide FAPE. For more information please read the Department of Education's [Fact Sheet](#).
 - The US Department of Education has issued guidance that if a school remains open and is providing educational services to the general education population, schools must be providing services for students with disabilities

What are some of NDSS' favorite online resources?

- Preparing my space for home learning
 - [NJ Coalition for Inclusive Education](#)
- Visual schedules and visual supports:
 - [Using a "Mini-Schedule" or Visual Checklist](#)
 - [Using the Visual Schedule](#)
 - [First → Then Chart](#)
- For academics:
 - [Education.com](#)
 - [Khan Academy](#)
 - [Scholastic](#)
 - [PBS](#)
- Virtual Field Trips
 - [Cincinnati Zoo](#)
 - [San Antonio Zoo](#)
 - [Yellow Stone National Park](#)
 - [Mars](#)
 - [The Louvre](#)
 - [The Great Wall of China](#)
 - [Boston Children's Museum](#)