

CONTINUOUS EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

• FAMILY TOOLBOX •

During extended school closure, schools may offer opportunities for students to learn from home. While families are not responsible for providing IEP services to their students with disabilities during school closure, there are many ways families can support learning at home. This document provides you, as a family member of a student with a disability, a quick overview of ways you can support your child's learning during school closure.¹

ORGANIZATION

Maintaining a consistent routine is important for helping children feel stable during school closure.

- Set up a daily routine and schedule. Be sure to include time for breaks.
- Use a calendar or day planner to keep track of daily activities. Many children with disabilities, especially younger ones, respond well to a visual schedule that uses pictures to keep track of upcoming activities.
- For students who need more help staying focused, you can use an [online visual countdown timer](#).
- Limit distractions and arrange a quiet space for your child to work.
- Reward your child for time on-task or finishing assignments. Use activities that they enjoy as rewards.

ACCOMMODATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Your child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 plan lists the accommodations that help them succeed at school. During school closure, it is important to know your child's accommodations and practice using them at home.

- Review your child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 plan if you have it at home. If you do not have the IEP or 504 plan at home, email your child's teacher.
- Common accommodations include extra time, small group activities, and frequent breaks. Break tasks or assignments into smaller pieces and have your child take breaks as needed. Breaks can be physical or quiet and relaxing.
- If your child uses assistive technology for schoolwork, help them use it to learn from home. For example, they might use speech to text software, a calculator, or other specific apps.
- Remember that you know your child best. Are there supports they need to help them pay attention? Would it be helpful to have headphones? A fidget toy? Highlighters?
- Students with significant disabilities may have multiple, complex accommodations. Families should assess what is being asked of them; determine their own abilities and resources; advocate for what they need; and, ask for realistic expectations and activities for supporting their children during this time.

LESSON HELP

Some schools are offering schoolwork for students to complete from home during school closure. You can support your child's learning by guiding them through assignments.

- Prepare your child for learning by telling them why the work is important, what they will learn and what activities they will complete.

¹ The information in this document is a summary and does not provide every detail, exception or circumstance. Nothing in this document is intended to state new law or supplant any federal or state laws, regulations or requirements.

- Before the lesson, build background and vocabulary. Look for words or topics that you think might be difficult for your child. Use books, drawings, videos, Google, or other resources to help your child build understanding of these words or topics before starting the assignment.
- Read directions together with your child. Have them repeat back the directions to make sure they understand what to do.
- Work on the first task or problem together. Then, watch your child do the next task on their own to make sure they understand the directions.
- Guide your child through the work as needed. Check back occasionally to make sure they are doing the work correctly.
- If your child needs help, correct mistakes or errors early on and offer ideas that can help them work through the problem. Try not to give the answers or do the work for them.
- Allow your child to work with a friend over the phone or video call.
- Help your child stay engaged in learning by varying the time they spend on reading, writing, moving, watching, listening, and speaking.

SUPPLEMENTAL LEARNING DURING SCHOOL CLOSURE

There are many informal ways to keep your child engaged in learning beyond supporting school assignments. When in doubt, read, read, read! Reading is one of the most important supports to learning overall. There are also a variety of learning games online. Anything that engages your child, stimulates their curiosity and exposes them to new things will be valuable.

- **Unite for Literacy** provides free digital access to picture books, including a variety of fiction and informational, for students to read or the option of a narration.
- Improving Literacy.Org's **toolkit** helps parents, families, schools, and districts understand implementing recommended literacy practices.
- National Institute for Literacy provides this **guide** for parents and families for students in grades K-3.
- **ReadingIQ®** is a digital library for children 2-12 designed by reading experts to improve literacy skills. Visit www.ReadingIQ.com/redeem and use the access code SCHOOL3673.
- **ABCmouse.com® Early Learning Academy** is a comprehensive, research-validated curriculum for children 2-8. Visit www.ABCmouse.com/redeem and use the access code SCHOOL3673.
- Consult your local library for additional resources.

COMMUNICATION

- If you have questions about how to best support your child during school closure, reach out to their teacher.
- When school resumes, families should plan to meet with the IEP team in order to review their child's current performance levels, identify gaps in learning that resulted from school closings, and determine what additional services, if any, will need to be provided.

NO INTERNET AT HOME?

- Comcast is offering free internet to families for 60 days. [View more information on this offer from Comcast.](#)
- Several programs are available to offer tips and resources for families that support early learning through text messages. Message and data rates apply.
- **Bright by Text** provides quality information and trusted resources to families of children prenatal to age eight partnering with LPB. Text: LPB to 274448.
- **Vroom** offers free, easy-to-use learning tips for children 5 and under, delivered daily directly to your phone.
- **Ready4K** is an evidence-based family engagement curriculum delivered via text messages. Text: Ready4th to 70138.

We know this is difficult for everyone! You, as parents and caregivers, are also stretched with your own work burdens. We can only suggest that you do your best but give yourself a break. You can only do what you can. Be good to yourself and take care of your families' health, both physical and emotional.