

As we all hunker down and nearly every school in our state closes in an attempt to lessen the impact of COVID-19, we wanted to get some information out relevant to special education concerns of families with disabilities in Indiana:

1. Will special education and related services continue if my child's school is closed due to COVID-19?

If your child's school is closed *with no class in session* through e-learning or expanded learning opportunities, special education and related services are not required to be provided during the time of closure; however, once class is back in session, the school "must make every effort" to provide special education and related services and compensatory education may be considered by the case conference committee.

If your child's school is closed *with class in session* through e-learning or expanded learning opportunities, students with disabilities must have equal access to the same learning opportunities and be provided, "to the greatest extent possible," the special education and related services in their IEP.

For more on what the U.S. department of Education has to say about the providing Free Appropriate Public Education during COVID-19 see <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/idea-files/q-and-a-providing-services-to-children-with-disabilities-during-the-coronavirus-disease-2019-outbreak/>

2. Will we still have our case conference? What about our educational evaluation?

If class is in session through e-learning or expanded learning opportunities, case conferences and educational evaluations are expected to continue according to the normal timelines. Case conferences may convene virtually over phone or videoconference during a school closure. If you have questions, comments, or concerns regarding your child's IEP during COVID-19, a case conference committee meeting, even if held virtually, can be a great place to connect and collaborate.

For more from Indiana Department of Education on how COVID-19 affects timelines and case conferences see <https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/news/march-13-covid-191-jmccomms-edits.pdf>.

3. I'm taking on more educational responsibility for my child than I'm used to. Who can help me with educational questions?

While there are a lot of well-intentioned and clever ideas circulating on the internet offering educational support to families, please start with an educator who already knows your child if at all possible. If class is in session during a school closure, consider contacting the teacher of record with your questions. Start with someone who knows your child and knows their IEP.

We will be compiling (and carefully vetting) online educational resources on an ongoing basis on our coronavirus response page: <http://insource.org/resources/coronavirus-outbreak-information/>.

I hope that an solid understanding of how COVID-19 school closures affects (or does not affect) your child's special education equips you to accelerate toward better outcomes. As we practice "social distancing" during COVID-19, may we continue to find ways to connect and collaborate for the benefits students with disabilities.