

## Developing a Distance Learning Plan: Supporting Students with Significant Support Needs

*This guidance document outlines the steps an IEP team may take to support students with significant support needs when an LEA must transition to a distance learning platform. This document does not replace required IEP paperwork, which must be updated accordingly.*

### Establish Contact with the Family

Initial contact may be done via phone, email or regular U.S. mail. Upon initial contact with the family, the LEA may consider:

- Completing a [Family Support Plan](#) to assist with designing a program that supports the family's needs and readiness to support the student.
- Creating a [Check-In](#) schedule with the student/family to ensure on-going communication regarding the student's needs and progress during distance learning. Check-ins may be done via phone or other virtual platforms (e.g., Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, etc.) and should consider the preference of the family.
- Assisting the student/family in creating a work space within the home for the student to complete schoolwork.
- Considering what level of training the family may need to access applicable virtual platforms.

The LEA should document all contact with student and family (including attempts to contact the family). This may include:

- Keeping record of any family concerns and the LEA's attempt to address those concerns.
- Ensuring all service providers are maintaining accurate service logs.

### Create a Distance Learning Plan with Family Input within an IEP Meeting

For assistance with determining the provision of services during distance learning, please refer to the SELPA's IEP Team Determination and Documentation Form: Analyzing Needs Related to Special Education Services During Distance Learning located on the EDCOE Charter SELPA's COVID-19 [webpage](#). The following steps outline the process an IEP team may follow:

- 1** Review the student's strengths and areas of need and how they may be utilized and/or addressed to maximize educational benefit through to distance learning.
- 2** Consider what elements of general education distance learning the student will be participating in (e.g., morning meetings, social circles, will the student be engaged in group instruction virtually?)
- 3** Review the student's IEP goals and supplementary aids/services/supports to determine if additional supports are needed to maximize the student's access to the distance learning platform.
- 4** Identify goals that can be addressed during Distance Learning and the provision of special education services that will support the student in making progress towards their goals. Goals may be implemented as written, or, require revisions to address their current needs given the change in location. If few or no goals can be implemented via distance learning, please refer to form 1b of the SELPA's IEP Team Determination and Documentation form.

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## Create a Distance Learning Plan with Family Input within an IEP Meeting, *continued*

- 5 Determine how curriculum will be shared with the student and family. Note, an LEA's desire to engage in technology for the purposes of distance learning should not create a barrier for the family. Based on the individualized need of the student and family, teams may need to consider other low-technology and tangible curriculum options (e.g., instructional packets, workbooks, materials, etc.).
- 6 Create a daily schedule that incorporates down-time and activities of daily living in addition to the academic tasks and related services.
  - Schedule regular meeting times for the student to engage in learning with relevant educational staff and service providers (e.g., the general education teacher, the special education teacher, paraeducators SLP, OT, etc.)
- 7 Re-visit the plan for on-going communication/family check-ins. Consider how frequently check-ins will be required to implement the student's daily schedule. It is recommended that the LEA checks in with the family multiple times a week.
- 8 Support student/families with implementation of the curriculum and delivery of instructional materials (e.g., will on-going training need to be provided to the family to access virtual platforms, or will the family require training to implement other instructional materials).
- 9 Monitor progress and engage with the family regularly to adjust the student's distance learning plan, as needed.



For More  
Information...

Additional strategies and tools related to distance learning for students with significant support needs can be accessed [here](https://padlet.com/selpapd/distancelearningforstwithmoresignificantneeds).  
(URL: <https://padlet.com/selpapd/distancelearningforstwithmoresignificantneeds>).

### Helpful Reminders

- Continue to hold IEP meetings within the designated timelines when possible. Although delays may exist for assessments that are required to be completed in-person, triennial IEP meetings should be held on-time and consider whatever information is available so that the IEP can be updated accordingly.
- Schedule IEP meetings with parent preference in mind (e.g., at a time that is convenient for the family, whether a virtual platform will be utilized, what additional supports may be needed to ensure meaningful parent participation).
- Written consent continues to be required for IEPs, therefore the LEA will need to determine whether to utilize electronic signature or U.S. mail.
- Notify parents that the IEP team will convene upon the school's re-opening to determine whether compensatory education is warranted.
- Paraeducator support can be effective through distance learning but should be utilized with caution. Paraeducators can assist with family communication and may provide specialized academic instruction, only under the supervision of the Educational Specialist. To explore options for utilizing paraeducator support, please reach out to the LEA's assigned program specialist.