

Top 10 Tips to Remember

1. **Assume that everyone is doing their best** under unimaginable circumstances, and that this is no one's fault.
2. Districts and families are going to need to **work together** to provide whatever instruction, materials or interventions they possibly can. Some activities are not possible due to safety concerns.
3. Once schools are open again, teams will assess if there has been any regression or loss of skills, then they can make adjustments, and develop plans with Extended School Year and/or Compensatory Education, as needed.
4. School Districts are going to try to make adjustments that are necessary for each student receiving special education services.
 - a. Call or email your child's teacher to discuss how your child can receive the services in their Individual Education Program (IEP).
 - b. The services that your child receives should not be a unilateral decision by the school district. You have the right to communicate with members of your child's IEP team about your child's needs, even if a formal IEP team meeting is not held.
 - c. The IEP meeting may be over the phone or through a virtual meeting (Zoom, Skype, etc.) or another way/time that is mutually agreeable.
5. Districts and families are being asked to be **flexible, creative, and reasonable**. Try something different—it might work. ***Do not forget to presume competence!***
6. Think about what your child needs most and **advocate** for it. Be open to services delivered in different ways, or less frequently.
7. Families need to be **honest and direct** with the school team. If you are asked to do something at home that you cannot, please say so. "I'm sorry. I cannot do that at this time." If you are being asked to provide something at home that you do not have and cannot obtain, say so. "I do not have, and cannot purchase, pencils (or a printer, paper, a laptop, etc.)". The school may need to provide materials and support, or alter the proposed plan.
8. If the school district makes changes to the IEP or Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP), it should state that the proposal is for "interim services" for the period when school buildings are closed due to the pandemic and that once buildings are open, the previous IEP returns as the primary plan for services.
9. **This is all rapidly changing**. It is always possible that further changes and/or restrictions and/or guidance will change the plans.
10. Remember that at the end of the day, education may not necessarily be the most important issue in your home or for your child. Take care of your family's physical, mental, and emotional needs. **Focus on education when and if there is time.**

