COVID-19 Webinar Series

STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING AN IEP AT HOME OR IN SCHOOL

JULY 30, 2020, 3PM EST
Guidelines for today:

• You are all on mute, no video. Go wild!
• Use the question box for questions or comments
• You send questions to me, I will ask them anonymously, or put your name in if you say it is OK
• ahalladay@autismsciencefoundation.org
• Bios are on the ASF page “COVID-19 webinar series” under resources
Strategies to Support IEP Goals During COVID19

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Disclosures

The presenters have no disclosures to report.
What just happened?

This all happened so fast:

Schools needed to develop lesson plans, instructional materials, and teaching videos very quickly based on what they had in place.

Children and families needed to transition to online/virtual learning activities.
Were any of us prepared?
COVID-19 Schooling

...without a

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Realities of COVID-19 Schooling at Home

- Supporting child’s school work
- Communication with school
- Employment/work responsibilities
- Other family members
- Cooking, cleaning, shopping, etc.
- Technology needs
- Socializing (or not)
- Physical and mental health (including stress and anxiety)
- Schedules, balancing priorities, respite?
Lessons Learned

At home, do parents work on the same lessons/skills that the children learn in school?

- Most parents aren’t school teachers but ‘life’ teachers
- Majority of parents aren’t trained in PT, OT, SLT, etc.
- School and home environments are different
- Is the child able to generalize the lessons/skills to a different environment?
- Parents may not be able to support the academics
Previously, most of the work was done in your child’s school or during community outings. Now, most of the activities are happening at home.

Parents are not expected to accomplish all that was done at your child’s school.
We’re all different!

- Various individual and family needs, preferences, and demands
- Unique concerns/worries
- Different family structures and environments
- Diverse cultures, experiences, priorities, and perspectives (We see things in different ways.)

So, COVID-19 schooling is different for everyone.
The most important thing to remember is the **PURPOSE** of the goals within an IEP is to work on skills and activities in different environments in order to build independence.

With all of this, what can parents do to support their children’s school activities?
Ultimate Goal

Child Regresses

Child Progresses
- It’s natural to be worried about how this is going to affect your child’s future.
- No one has all of the answers.
- All we can do is the best we can do.
- It shouldn’t put undue burden on your mental health.
- You don’t have to wear all the hats.
COVID-19 schooling can provide opportunities to engage your child in various home activities and generalize the skills taught in school.

Your child may surprise you!

It may take time for your child to connect with the idea that you are now more than a parent.
List each of the IEP goals on a worksheet or in a notebook.

Think about family routines and activities at home and how they might fit under each of your child’s goals (e.g. personal hygiene, household chores, family leisure activities, your child’s interests and hobbies.) If you’re having trouble sorting activities, ask your child’s teacher or therapist for help.

Each day of the week, check off the tasks or activities your child has done. It might be helpful to take a picture of your child working on various activities.

On the back of the sheet, you can write down successes or challenges your child experienced and what supports were needed.

At the end of the week, send a copy of your worksheet to your child’s teacher or therapist. You can include some of your pictures too. Let them know about your child’s progress and difficulties.
A Simple Approach to Help your Child with IEP Goals while Sheltering at Home

With so many COVID-19 restrictions, your child is most likely home with limited community interactions. Many parents and caregivers are stressed, struggling to work on school assignments, activities, and related IEP goals. It is important to remember, one purpose of the goals in your child’s IEP is to help them develop independence. Previously, most of the work was done in the community. Now, most of the activities need to happen at home. Here’s a tip to help you accomplish all that was done at your child’s school. Here’s a way to help your child continue to make progress:

1. Take out your child’s IEP. If you don’t have access to it, ask your child’s school or therapist to provide you with a list of your child’s overall IEP goals.
2. Look at each of the IEP goals on the worksheet provided or in a modified way. Think about family routines and activities at home and how they can be used to work on the goals. For example, you could write down successes or challenges that your child experiences at home. It might be helpful to have a picture of your child working on this goal. Include some of your pictures too. Let them know about your child’s progress.

Here are some helpful tips...

- Be realistic with the activities you select. If they’re too complex or difficult, you may need to break them down into smaller steps to provide some help or guidance.
- Include activities you can do together as part of your daily routine, such as preparing meals and playing games. This will help your child learn the skills needed at home.
- Be flexible with your expectations. There are many ways to do the same thing. Try to complete the same task.
- It’s important to keep your child’s interests in mind. They might not be interested in the activities you choose. Try to find activities that your child enjoys and can work on independently.
- For academic activities, work with your child to create a routine that’s comfortable for them. Ask your child’s teacher or therapist to provide resources to support learning.
- The therapists who provide your child’s related services (e.g., OT, PT, speech therapy) can provide ideas for activities to help your child learn new skills. Perhaps the speech therapist can help your child review a worksheet or the physical therapist can help your child practice skills.

Sample IEP Home Activity Worksheet

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Child’s Name: __________________________</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week of: __________ / __________ / __________</td>
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IEP Goal: Increase independence in functional daily living skills

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<td>Make the bed</td>
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<td>Get dressed</td>
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<td>Follow a schedule</td>
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<td>Sort laundry</td>
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IEP Goal: Increase leisure and recreation skills

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<td>Play golf</td>
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<td>Draw and color</td>
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<td>Work on a puzzle</td>
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<td>Take turns when playing a game</td>
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<td>Read a book</td>
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IEP Goal: Increase vocabulary

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read a book together</td>
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<td>Write and define new words heard in a movie</td>
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<td>Play word guessing game</td>
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<td>Match words with definitions</td>
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Be realistic with the activities you select.

If they’re too complex or difficult, your child may not be successful.
It’s alright for your child to repeat skills already learned.

This helps to maintain the skills.

For new activities, you may need to break them down into smaller parts and to provide some help or guidance.
Be flexible with your expectations. There are many ways to do the same thing.

Your child may find new ways to complete the same task.

Try to maintain a consistent schedule so your child knows what to expect.
Ask your child’s teachers or therapists for tips that worked at school

The therapists who provide your child’s related services (e.g. OT, PT, SLT) can also give support.

Perhaps the speech therapist can help your child review a worksheet or the physical therapist can offer ways to exercise at home.
Include activities you can do together as part of your daily routine, such as preparing a snack, exercising, watering plants, and putting away clothes.
It’s fine for your child’s school activities to work around your schedule.

It’s alright for your child to work on activities during the weekend, if that’s what works for you.
For academic activities, work with your child to create a place with the least amount of distractions.

Your child can help set it up and gather the materials needed. Let this be your child’s own space for daily school-related assignments.

Ask your child’s teacher or case manager to provide resources to support your child’s academic work.
For related services, ask your child’s therapists for fun, appropriate activities that you can do as family while the therapist is watching and making suggestions.
Remote assessments and progress reports...
It’s not the same but it still matters.

It’s a different conversation.

There are still core educational/academic goals

Goals at school, mostly quantitative (data-driven)

At home, mostly qualitative (real life)

There are things we can change and things we can’t
Connect with your child’s teacher/therapists and case manager routinely in ways that work for you

Discuss IEP goals, activities, challenges, supports, goal setting, expectations

Email is an excellent way to keep track of conversations and refer back to activities and recommendations

Ask your child’s teacher or therapists for recommendations for activities which would be appropriate for your child
You can also ask for suggestions for websites that provide suggestions for activities that support skills for:

**Daily Living**

such as [www.toolstogrowot.com](http://www.toolstogrowot.com)

**Play and Recreation**

such as [www.pbs.org/parents](http://www.pbs.org/parents)

**Vocations / Employment**

such as [www.autismspeaks.org/life-skills-and-autism](http://www.autismspeaks.org/life-skills-and-autism) or [www.wikihow.com](http://www.wikihow.com)
“You brushed your teeth without me telling you. Awesome!”
“You worked really hard putting away your toys!”
“You tried so hard taking one bite at a time with your sandwich.”
“Great job taking out your book to do your homework.”

Give small rewards for the effort.
Save the bigger rewards for the big successes.
Don’t forget, we all need breaks.

- Physical activity
- Get outdoors
- Read
- Music
- Do something creative
- Talk to friends or relatives
- Try something new

You may have to set an alarm to remind yourself.
Supportive Tools and Resources
NEW JERSEY
IEP
Reference Guide
Timelines, Templates, and Tips to Guide the IEP Process

Table of Contents

Understanding the special education process can be difficult. This booklet serves as a point of reference to guide you through your child's IEP development and implementation.

1 Common IEP Terminology
2 What is an Individualized Education Plan?
3 What's the Difference? 504 Plans and IEP Plans
4 Components of an IEP
5 IEP S.M.A.R.T. Goals
6 My Child's IEP Initial Evaluation Timeline
7 Special Education Initial IEP Timeline at a Glance
8 My Child's IEP Development Checklist
9 Children's Specialized Hospital Top 5 IEP Tips
10 Sample IEP Letters
11 Request an Initial Evaluation for Special Education Services
12 Request an Explanation for Denial of Special Education Services
13 Request IEP Meeting to Review or Revise My Child's IEP
14 Request My Child's Educational Records
15 Request an Independent Evaluation at the Public's Expense
16 Request an IEP Meeting to Discuss or Modify Placement
17 Helpful IEP Resources
18 My IEP Notes

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FAMILY Special Education ORGANIZER

A useful tool to help coordinate a child’s special education information

Student Name: _______________________
School Year: __________  Grade: ________

School Communication Log

- Date: __________ Topic: ___________________________
  - In person
  - Letter (how was it delivered?): __________
  - Email
  - Phone
- Purpose, outcome, other notes: __________________

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)

Within the IEP, this important statement describes the child's current levels, abilities, and challenges based on the most recent evaluations. The IEP helps to accurately describe the child because it serves to guide the development of the OP goals.

- Describe child's current academic skills
- Describe child's daily living, self-help skills
- Describe child's career readiness
- Describe child's communication skills
- Describe child's fine motor skills

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Ways to Stay Healthy Chatterbox

1. I wash my hands
   - A song I can sing while washing my hands
   - Ways I can meet people
   - Nice to see you
2. Wipe my nose
   - Things I should do after I wipe my nose with a tissue.
   - Ways I can get help if I feel confused or scared
3. Hands off
   - How far should I be from others to avoid getting sick
   - Ways I can clean things to get rid of germs
4. Stay healthy
   - Things I should avoid touching to avoid germs.
   - Ways I can clean things

www.childrens-specialized.org/telehealth-services
Through a partnership with Kohl’s Cares, Children’s Specialized Hospital is improving access to care for children with special health care needs.

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Annual Special Education Organizer (English)
Annual Special Education Organizer (Spanish)
IEP Families Sheltering at Home (English)
IEP Families Sheltering at Home (Spanish)
NJ Parent IEP Reference Guide (English)
NJ Parent IEP Reference Guide (Spanish)
Children's Specialized Hospital is the nation's leading provider of inpatient and outpatient care for children from birth to 21 years of age facing special health challenges – from chronic illnesses and complex physical disabilities like brain and spinal cord injuries, to developmental and behavioral issues like autism and mental health.

At 13 different New Jersey locations, our pediatric specialists partner with families to make our many innovative therapies and medical treatments more personalized and effective so each child can reach their full potential.

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