

Online vs. In-School Learning

What to Consider for Children with Special Education and/or Healthcare Needs

Parents and guardians may be faced with the difficult decision of choosing the best and safest learning environment for their child with special education and/or special healthcare needs. Due to COVID-19, there has been a change in school delivery models. It is important to know that, as of July 25, 2020, there are no changes to your child's rights under IDEA.

We encourage schools and families to work together to ensure a child's progress. Schools should be able to deliver and measure all services and accommodations as indicated in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). We encourage families to contact their school building or district (as some buildings will not be open to regular business during summer break) to request a conversation with their IEP team to discuss concerns and how to best serve your child at this time.

Keep in mind that this is an ongoing process and you may need to review this sheet periodically and reassess what is best for your child.

If you are interested in Ohio Department of Education guidance in relation to COVID-19, [click here](#).

If you are interested in federal educational guidance in relation to COVID-19, [click here](#).

If you are interested in a Q&A document of federal education guidance, [click here](#).

These decisions are very personal and there is a lot for you to consider. We encourage you to answer the questions in order to weigh whether online or in-classroom learning is appropriate for your child. It is not intended to give you a quantifiable answer. Instead, it should offer information and guidance to learn more.

Section 1: Online Learning

Is Online Learning Appropriate for Your Child?	Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
Can you create a designated learning space in your home? <i>Find some good tips here and here.</i>				
Do you have flexibility in your work schedule to stop when support for your child is needed?				

Is Online Learning Appropriate for Your Child?	Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
Are you or others in your home leaving to go to work?				
Are you or others in your home working from home?				
Are you able to work from home while your child is not in school?				
Do you have a copy of your child's most recent IEP/504 and evaluation report? <i>You may contact your Special Education Services Office or your child's school to obtain a copy.</i>				
Does your child's IEP or Evaluation Team Report (ETR) support that online digital learning will work for their learning style and ability? <i>Evidence of this may be found in Section 3 or the "Profile" of the IEP, or throughout the ETR. If not, consider contacting your most recent IEP team and teachers to ask for input. Often teachers are not available until the first week of school.</i>				
If you are accessing any of the Ohio Scholarships (Autism or Jon Peterson) do you fully understand how online learning impacts your rights and changes in your child's educational plan? <i>When you access either Ohio scholarship, you give up FAPE (free appropriate public education). If you feel the school's COVID-19 learning model and your child's support plan are not appropriate, you have no rights to ask for alternatives. If you leave the school you need to re-apply to access it at scholarship provider. Learn more here and here.</i>				
Did your child do well in the spring with online learning? <i>The U.S. Board of Education set an expectation that teams continue to collect data of progress, challenges, and successes during this time. These can be observations at home or by school staff who supported your student remotely. U.S. Board of Education Document here.</i>				
Do you know who to contact to call an IEP meeting prior to the start of school? <i>You can typically contact your school office 2 weeks before school to ask when the intervention specialist/psychologist can be reached. If they cannot be reached, contact your district Special Education Office.</i>				
Are there changes to the IEP that need to be considered if you choose online learning? <i>Evidence of this may be found in Section 3 or the Profile portion of the IEP. A measure of your child's current levels of performance, strengths, challenges and ways to best support them should be found there.</i>				

Is Online Learning Appropriate for Your Child?	Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
<p>Do you have access to the resources and supplies you need for online learning (screen readers, hi/low tables, reading software, adapted lesson plans, printed and electronic formats)? <i>Your child's IEP team should supply all supports needed to access learning and show competency.</i></p>				
<p>Are you able to oversee your child's online learning and completion of assignments (i.e. keep log sheets to track progress or regression)? <i>Troubleshoot with your child's IEP team to create an appropriate communication and intervention plan.</i></p>				
<p>Do you feel comfortable explaining or re-presenting lessons? <i>If the Student Profile or accommodations section includes "reteaching" as a support, discuss this with the IEP team as a needed support for online learning.</i></p>				
<p>If your child received Medicaid services prior to COVID-19, have you discussed with your IEP team ways they can work with Medicaid to assist with support for IEP goals and learning at home?</p>				
<p>Do you feel comfortable managing your child's behavior, including logging your child's daily/weekly progress or regression? <i>If the Student Profile identifies a behavior, or there is a behavior plan as part of your child's IEP, discuss with the IEP team specific supports for online learning. U.S. Board of Education Document here or there are additional tips here.</i></p>				
<p>Can you implement a behavior plan at home? <i>There may be community supports available to assist you with this through your County Board or other DD support agencies. Find contact information for your County Board here.</i></p>				
<p>Can you adjust a behavior plan for new behaviors? <i>If there is a behavior plan as part of your child's IEP, discuss with your IEP team what supports may be needed during online learning. U.S. Board of Education Document here or there are additional tips here.</i></p>				
<p>Do you have others to support your child's online learning (other parents, family, partner, siblings, retired teacher, previous 1:1 aid)? <i>Learn how Charting the LifeCourse Integrated Supports star can help you brainstorm about building a vision of others who can help you.</i></p>				

Is Online Learning Appropriate for Your Child?	Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
<p>Can you use the strengths of others in your household or close family and friends' strengths to manage school online? <i>Learn how Charting the LifeCourse Integrated Supports star can help you brainstorm about building a vision of others who can support you.</i></p>				
<p>Do you have access to the necessary technology (computer, printer, Wi-Fi, appropriate bandwidth, etc)? <i>If the answer is no, contact your IEP team to discuss the school district providing these supports. Also, request an Assistive Technology Evaluation for your student, to determine appropriate technology.</i></p>				
<p>Are you or someone else in the house comfortable with technology (video meeting platforms, school communication/support interface)? <i>Parent and teacher training is part of IEP supports. If you need assistance like this, contact your IEP team. Learn more here.</i></p>				
<p>Can you use technology to create an additional school support community (online friend group, study sessions, material review)?</p>				
<p>Are you able to access school or community-based therapies? <i>Your health provider may be able to refer you to therapies in your community. This could include OT, PT, Speech, counseling, etc. as many are currently offered through Telehealth. These can always be used in conjunction with school based therapies offered in your child's IEP.</i></p>				
<p>Can you access community or school based mental health support for you and/or your child? <i>If the Student Profile identifies mental health challenges, or new behaviors indicate that challenges are developing, this can be discussed with the IEP team to determine what supports may be offered or accessed during online learning. Resources here (help your child succeed), here (health and well-being) and here (helping families cope).</i></p>				
<p>Do you have someone to supervise your child's learning while you are at work? <i>Learn how Charting the LifeCourse Integrated Supports star can help you brainstorm about building a vision of others who can help you.</i></p>				

Section 2: In-School Learning

Is Returning to In-School Learning Appropriate for Your Child?	Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
<p>Have you discussed returning to school with your child's medical providers to help in your decision making process? <i>If your child has any medical needs you may want to consider reaching out to your child's medical provider.</i></p>				
<p>Has a medical professional recommended your child not be in a school building at this time due to special health care needs? <i>If your doctor makes a medical recommendation about your child being in a classroom, ask them to provide an explanation for that recommendation in writing.</i></p>				
<p>Does your child have the ability to maintain appropriate guidelines at school: able to socially distance, wear a mask, understand and able to be compliant with healthcare guidelines, monitor unsanitary behaviors/tics (like spitting, hands on face), manage a split weekly schedule, etc.? <i>Evidence of this may be found in Section 3 or the "Profile" of the IEP, or throughout the ETR. If not, consider contacting your most recent IEP team and teachers to ask for input. Often teachers are not available until the first week of school.</i></p>				
<p>Do you have access to masks? <i>If you plan to participate in in-school learning and do not have access to masks, contact your IEP team to insure they can be provided to you.</i></p>				
<p>Do you have access to appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment) to disinfect your child's materials as they as they travel to and from school?</p>				
<p>Have you contacted the rest of your IEP team to develop a clear plan, specific to your child? <i>Virtual meetings are available. School and district offices open sometime after August 1st. If you are not able to reach your team, contact the district Special Education Office. IEP meeting guidance during COVID-19, State of Ohio guidance and federal guidance.</i></p>				

Is Returning to In-School Learning Appropriate for Your Child?

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A

Do you feel confident to contact your IEP team to develop a plan to transition into school if necessary? *Virtual meetings are available. School and district offices open sometime after August 1st. If you are not able to reach your team, contact the district Special Education Office. IEP meeting guidance during COVID-19, [State of Ohio guidance](#) and [federal guidance](#).*

Have you shared with the rest of your IEP team concerns or possible hurdles to any new school routines, or expectations mandated by the school (based on previous experience or evidence in evaluations or data)? *Virtual meetings are available. School and district offices open sometime after August 1st. If you are not able to reach your team, contact the district Special Education Office. IEP meeting guidance during COVID-19, [State of Ohio guidance](#) and [federal guidance](#).*

Have you shared with the rest of the IEP team, any new behaviors that have developed in spring and summer? *Forward a written behavior summary to your team. Include triggers and frequency of the behavior, if possible. Request a meeting with the IEP team to determine what supports may be offered. U.S. Board of Education Document [here](#), helpful tips [here](#).*

Will additional supports or accommodations need to be discussed by the IEP/504 team (no mask, movement/sensory diet, social stories, cool off space) for your child to manage changes (difference in staff/teachers, schedule, routine)? *If the Student Profile identifies challenges that may be experienced with proposed changes in the school day, and calls for additional supports, this can be discussed with the IEP team.*

Is Returning to In-School Learning Appropriate for Your Child?

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A

Does the IEP team need to discuss a behavior plan for your child to manage the changes at school?
Developing a behavior plan may need to wait until your student is at school and the team is able to see how they respond to the new environment. In the meantime, you can provide a summary of concerns and solutions to the team as a means of support and request they share observation reports (as RTI data).

Does your school team have procedures in place to manage your child's IEP services and supports appropriately, as they are written, given the proposed changes to school policies, routines, and schedules?
Guidance from Ohio Department of Education identified this as one of the key elements to ensure that a child is provided FAPE, page 2 of [this document](#).

Do you know what transportation changes will look like with the mandated school changes?
These should be available on your district website or through your district Special Education Office.

If transportation is addressed in your child's IEP, do you need to discuss possible changes to current supports with your IEP team?
Transportation is addressed in Section 8 of the IEP document. If you feel it needs to change, it requires an IEP team discussion and agreement.

Will your child have breakfast or lunch if they don't go to school?
Some school districts are creating opportunities for this in other community spaces, like recreation centers, etc. Check your district website.

Will your child potentially lose natural supports (neighbors at bus, carpools, peer support in the classroom) because of school changes and new schedules?
Learn how [Charting the LifeCourse Integrated Supports star](#) can help you brainstorm about building a vision of others who can help you.

Is Returning to In-School Learning Appropriate for Your Child?

Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A

Will your child lose after-school care or extracurricular activities typically provided by the school? *Learn how [Charting the LifeCourse Integrated Supports star](#) can help you brainstorm about building a vision of others who can help you.*

Will your child lose community support provided in schools (like tutors, parent volunteers, student teachers, etc.)?

Do you know how to manage materials your child brings home from school to prevent infection? *When children return from school they should immediately wash/sanitize their hands, remove clothes/shoes and place them in the laundry or wipe down with a disinfectant. Consider bathing or showering daily.*

If you have already submitted a decision for your child and on completion of this document you have concern of things that were not considered or discussed, contact your IEP team.

If you have any questions or would like additional support, please contact the UCCEDD Family Support Team, ddbpfamilysupport@cchmc.org