

Distance Learning and Your Child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP): Consideration of Related Services

Minnesota schools are temporarily moving to a distance learning model for all students until further notice. This presents some unprecedented situations for students with disabilities. With distance learning, related services on your child’s IEP may look different than when provided in the school setting.

Related services are those needed for the student to be able to access and benefit from their special education services. Related services can include, but are not limited to:

- Speech therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Social work/psychology services
- Interpreting services
- Transportation
- Rehabilitation counseling

Special education transportation won’t be needed during this time, but if your child receives the other services noted above, you should plan to have a discussion with the IEP case manager about those related services. Review your child’s current IEP to see what related services are documented.

The IEP team will need to determine how these services will be provided in this new model. Here are some questions you may want to consider:

- How will my child be able to access what are typically “hands-on services” needed during their school day?
- How will my child receive direct occupational or physical therapy services? What will that consist of? Are virtual or online services an option?
- Can a physical or occupational therapist instruct me, as the parent, on interventions I can do to support my child, such as range of motion exercises, sensory techniques, and others?
- What if additional equipment is needed for my child to participate in the services?
- If I don’t know how to use the assistive technology that the school has provided, how will I receive the necessary training?
- We don’t have access for video communication on our computer. How will a speech therapist be able to work with my child?

For additional information, contact PACER Center at (952) 838-9000 or PACER@PACER.org.