



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

## Center for Child Welfare and Education

### *Remote Learning Tips for Students with Disabilities*

All students with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE), even during remote learning. In addition, school districts and teachers are mandated to provide ongoing remote and/or hybrid learning opportunities to their students until the return of in-person instruction in our state's classrooms.

Here are some things to look for in your child's remote learning that will help students with special needs who are participating in remote learning:

- ✚ A daily connection between the student, the school staff and classmates so that the student regularly sees and hears people he or she would normally associate with at school
- ✚ Social bonds reinforced by reviewing who is present on group calls and meetings
- ✚ Opportunities for the student to use a variety of skills such as speaking/listening; use of technology; fine motor skills (e.g., using the keypad to type); letter, number, word, or name recognition; using the phone, texting, videoconferencing, etc.
- ✚ Availability of high- and/or low-tech devices that can be used to establish structure to the daily schedule

December 1, 2020

## Caregivers Can Help with Remote Learning in Different Ways:

- ✚ Set up a school routine at home so your child sees remote learning as school
- ✚ Establish and follow a home routine which includes consistent time to wake up, time to complete before-school routines (getting dressed, eating breakfast, etc.), times for homework completion and bedtime.
- ✚ Designate an area for your child to have as their school area. If possible, let your child decorate the area to make it their own.
- ✚ Make sure your child has all school supplies needed.
- ✚ Make sure the youth and parent know how to sign on to the remote learning platform the school is using. Have school contact information readily available in case you need to reach out to your child's school for any problem with connectivity, attendance matters, etc.
- ✚ Monitor your child's attendance, homework and progress. Make sure someone is there to check on your child for needed assistance or issues.
- ✚ If you can't sit next to your child while they are on a device all day, periodically check in and give encouragement, praise, and nonverbal support. "Catch" them being focused and give acknowledgement.
- ✚ If you can't monitor your child during the day, set up a method of communicating with the teacher(s) to report back to you in a quick email or text when your child has a good day so you can praise the child later.
- ✚ Observe how long your child can focus on Zoom (or whatever form of remote learning the school is using) and provide feedback to the school team. If your child is really not able to focus for the expected length of time, advocate for learning time off-line, or for alternate ways for students to engage.

- ✚ Allow movement and frequent breaks. Your child may focus better with a wiggle cushion, fidget toy, or being able to doodle. Headphones or earbuds may make it easier for them to listen. If they need to turn the video feed off periodically in order to refocus, allow it. Make sure you communicate with the teacher how your child will take breaks and what works for him/her. Also, ask your child's teacher for resources and suggestions.
- ✚ Make sure during breaks your child is engaged in an activity that involves movement – dancing, exercising, going for a short walk, etc.
- ✚ Frequently review your child's IEP goals, accommodations and modifications (if any) with your child's teacher to measure progress toward attainment of goals.
- ✚ Regularly visit your school's website for updates, resources, etc. Staying connected will help you support your child during remote learning.
- ✚ Set up a bedtime routine. Make sure it's around the same time each night.
- ✚ Listen to your child.

*Know you're not alone we're all in this together 😊*

December 1, 2020

## What Do You Do if Remote Learning is not Working?

- ✚ Establishing communication with the teacher is really important. Find a method of communication that works for you and the teacher: Classroom Do Jo, school portal, email, phone, text or google classroom are often used. If you have concerns with any systems used by the teacher, ask them to walk you through the process of connecting with them. Teachers are eager to assist.
- ✚ If there is a technology issue, issues with the Internet or Hot Spots, connect with the teacher first, then the teacher can connect you with the technology resources at the school/district.
- ✚ Let the child's case worker know if technology issues persist. If there are continued issues with remote learning, the parents and caseworkers can contact the Education Advisor in your area for additional support and resources.
- ✚ School districts are also expected to provide students and families with printed learning materials when necessary. Check with your district about the possibilities of receiving such materials or returning to school in person if that is an option.
- ✚ If your child receives related services through special education, such as occupational therapy or speech and language services, there should be a remote plan in place for these services. Some children will receive their IEP services in person or by virtual platform, telephonically or printed materials/resources.
- ✚ If the remote learning plan does not appear to be working for your child, then request an IEP meeting in writing so issues and concerns can be discussed. Your Education Advisor can support you and your Case Worker in this process.



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**Center for Child Welfare  
and Education**

December 1, 2020