



AUTISM ALLIANCE OF MICHIGAN PRESENTS

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Help. Hope. Answers. Today



WE'RE ALL HOMESCHOOLING NOW!

What does this mean for my child's
Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

*Contributed by Heather Eckner, M.A.Ed.
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Over the past couple weeks, we've all heard the word unprecedented more than ever before. And when it comes to education, we truly have never seen anything like this.

The speed at which schools announced closures left educators and parents with about 24 hours to adjust to an entirely new landscape for students.

Now that we've all been home with our kids for the past week, hopefully you are finding ways to establish new daily routines.

If you think about it, classroom teachers spend a great deal of time, energy, and attention at the beginning of every school year to develop community. There are discussions around what students want to do and learn as well as how they want their experiences to be. We need to do the same with our children who are now learning at home.

Give yourself time to adjust to these new rhythms and figure out the schedules and routines that will work for you and your child(ren).

For students with IEPs, this unprecedented time of school closure presents many additional worries and challenges for families. Going from established learning environments, with teams of anywhere from four to a dozen professionals working with a student across the day or week, to the abrupt shift of being home with no direct access is daunting.

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Keeping our focus on doing the things we can without feeling pressure to act as a replacement for entire teams of education professionals is key.

However, all of this is easier said than done.

Federal and state guidance to address the needs of students with IEPs has been on a roller coaster ride over the past week – with almost daily memos and communications being released.

Currently, schools that are providing educational support (e.g., online learning, instructional packets, and enrichment/enhancement activities, among other approaches) to all students are required to consider the additional needs of students with disabilities, including accessibility. Districts must address the unique and individual needs of students with disabilities when utilizing these approaches. (MDE March 23, 2020) ¹

Unfortunately, the abrupt school closure has demonstrated gaps within our support systems and infrastructure for meeting the instructional and related service needs of all students.

While school districts across the State continue working to provide instruction and supports to meet the needs of all students, including those with IEPs, here are a few steps you can take as a parent:

Read over your child's IEP

- Look at the documented goals and decide which ones you can work on at home.

Don't feel like you need to work on every goal every day. Many skills can be built into other tasks of daily living (self-care, meal prep, organizing, communication).

Make a list or chart of the service times listed on your child's IEP

- This information is found under the 'Programs and Services' section of the IEP. It is often listed in a table with minutes per week.

Take the number of minutes (per week) listed for 'minimum' and track the amount of service time your child would have been receiving (at minimum) if still in school.

Keep a log or list of the skills/activities worked at home each week.

- This would include anything relating to IEP goals and objectives as well as programs completed online or otherwise. (Tracking this information may address some students' IEP goals!)

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Reach out to members of your child's school team, or at least their case manager.

- As a collaborative approach, share information regarding your child's needs at home during this time as well as what you are working on from home.

If you have questions, ask your child's school team. Educators care about their students. They want your time at home with your child to be safe and productive.

Distance learning is an evolving situation with many schools working alongside families to find creative and collaborative ways to meet the needs of students with IEPs. For all of us to get through this as best we can, parents and educators must work together to support each other.

For more information on the guidance and communication released related to distance learning for special education students, please visit <http://www.a2ideas.org/news-notes-covid19/>.

Heather Eckner is a non-attorney advocate and founder of [A2IDEAS](#), a nonprofit special education advocacy organization. Heather is a former classroom teacher and the parent of two children who receive special education services and supports. She has direct experience with children on the autism spectrum and is a frequent speaker on topics related to special education and effective advocacy.



¹ [MEMO #COVID-19-019 Clarification on Distance Learning for Special Education Students](#)

Simple Sensory Activities for Your Daily Routine

Candace Peterson MS, OTRL Pediatric Occupational Therapist - Building Bridges Therapy Center

In response to the recent changes to your child's daily routine and environment, they may become dysregulated, seek increased amounts of sensory input, or experience meltdowns and other behaviors. To help them cope with the changes, sensory input can be built into your day with these easily accessible activities:

- ① Carrying or pushing full laundry baskets
- ② Vacuuming/mopping/sweeping
- ③ Pushing/pulling a trash can or recycling bin
- ④ Raking leaves, pushing a wheelbarrow
- ⑤ Loading and unloading the dishwasher
- ⑥ Crawling, climbing, or marching up and down the stairs
- ⑦ Army crawling between rooms or activities
- ⑧ Wall push ups
- ⑨ Animal walks (bear, crab, etc.)
- ⑩ Obstacle courses requiring crawling, balancing, hopping, etc.

Many of the above are "heavy work" activities and provide proprioceptive input. This type of input helps organize the nervous system and regulate the body.





Let's Keep Busy and Have Fun: Leisure Activities for Adolescents and Adults on the Autism Spectrum

Leisure activities are a great way to pass the time. They allow us to entertain ourselves and during this time of social quarantine, provide opportunities for members of the same household to enjoy activities together. Unfortunately, for many individuals with autism, participation in leisure activities can be difficult due to limited skills in this area. This downtime can be a great opportunity to help individuals on the spectrum identify things that interest them and turn those interests into fun leisure activities that they can enjoy independently or with others in the home. Here are a few ideas to help develop or improve leisure skills.

Techniques to Build Leisure Activities

EXPAND on current interests or preferences into other tasks.

INCORPORATE a preferred interest into different activities.

IDENTIFY features of a preferred activity in other activities.

PAIR a preferred activity with another one.



Putting it to Practice

Known Interest	Technique
Train Videos	<p>Expand interest in train videos to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train puzzles • Train shows, documentaries, and movies • Collecting model trains • Reading books about trains • Building train tracks
Three Stooges	<p>Incorporate the Three Stooges into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board and card games: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characters as pawns • Add Three Stooges characters to cards games

cont.





Known Interest	Technique
<p data-bbox="87 226 380 275">Three Stooges</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of the show • Actors in the show • Behind the scene stories • Print pictures from the show and put them in a photo album: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To look at • Talk about what happened in that scene or episode • To act out the scene
<p data-bbox="87 972 422 1020">Flickering Strings</p>	<p data-bbox="821 972 1544 1058">Identify flickering movements in others tasks, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dance with ribbons • Fly a kite • Jump a rope • Play rope games
<p data-bbox="87 1283 293 1331">Jazz Music</p> 	<p data-bbox="821 1283 1192 1331">Pair jazz music with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing a puzzle • Coloring • Going for a walk • Cooking • Reading





Telehealth Doctor's Visit: What to Expect

Due to COVID-19, many doctor's offices have stopped seeing patients in the office. Instead they are providing telehealth visits, leaving patients wondering what exactly a telehealth visit is and what should they expect. A telemedicine appointment is just like a regular appointment. You will sit in front of a computer, smartphone or tablet where you will be able to see yourself and your health care provider on the screen once your session begins. These appointments are also called virtual visits. Your doctor or therapist will ask you questions about your health (such as symptoms you are experiencing or medications you are taking) and work with you to develop a plan of care, providing the same quality of care you would get in a face-to-face visit.

To set up a telehealth appointment, contact your doctor's office to see if they are offering this service. You can also contact your insurance carrier to request a telehealth provider. Telemedicine is new for many of us; so if you have any questions, just ask!

Quick Tips for Telehealth Appointments

Be Prepared by Having:

- Medications Lists
- Pharmacy Name and Phone Number
- Insurance Card
- Credit Card Number

Be Prepared to Address/Answer:

- Concern and questions you have for the visit
- Medical history questions

Tips for a successful visit:

- Find quiet space in the house.
- Make sure your phone or computer is charged; have your chargers close by just in case.
- Plan for at least 15 minutes for the appointment.
- Write down the questions you want answered.





Free Resources

Social Story Resources

COVID-19 Social Narrative Video:

[UM-NSU CARD's Let's Talk About the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Whiteboard Social Narrative Video](#)

[My Schedule will Change There is a new sickness called the Coronavirus. People do not want to get sick. One way that people ca](#)

[My Parents and I Are Working from Home My parents work has asked them to stay home to do their job so they can stay healthy.](#)

Adults on the Autism Spectrum Resources

[How to cope with disrupted personal routines during COVID-19](#)

[Autism Society of Minnesota Guide to Managing Self-Quarantine and Social Distancing](#)

[Working from home: Developing a new routine](#)

Mental Health Resources for Children

Peace Out- Relaxation and Mindfulness Stories for Kids:

<https://www.podcasts.com/peace-out-relaxation-and-mindfulness-stories-for-kids>

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Let's Have Fun!

This week stream:

Broadway Shows for free for 7 days - [BroadwayHD](#)

Cincinnati Zoo - [The Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden](#)

Georgia Aquarium - [Ocean Voyager Webcam](#)

National Parks - [Here's 33 National Park Tours You Can Take Virtually From The Comfort Of Your Home](#)

Museums - [2 Museums From Around the World That You Can Visit Virtually | Travel + Leisure](#)



HAPPY AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

from



AutismAlliance
of Michigan

Help. Hope. Answers. Today

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