

School, IDEA and COVID-19

For Ohio families who have children and youth with special needs

2021-2022
School Year

Families who have children and youth with special needs can be prepared for school meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are some helpful tips and resources for safely attending school.

- ✓ Regardless of the COVID-19 pandemic, or how your child receives school instruction, all children and youth with disabilities and/or special health care needs are entitled to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).
- ✓ Families should review and learn about the federal law: [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#).
- ✓ Infants and toddlers with disabilities, and their families, are also entitled to appropriate [IDEA Part C services](#).
- ✓ If you would like to learn more (for free) about being involved in your child's education, please contact either:
 - the [Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities \(OCECD\)](#) or
 - [Ohio Parent Mentors](#). Ohio Parent Mentors help families navigate the local and state special education process so that your child can get the most out of their educational experience. They can also help you learn about your child's [Individualized Education Program \(IEP\)](#).
- ✓ Schools and agencies should have **layered** safety strategies for all children, not just for those with health and safety concerns. These include, helping children and families to get a vaccine when eligible and to wear a mask indoors. However, if your child cannot wear a mask because of their special needs, you might get a doctor's note to excuse mask-wearing. Your child's masking, non-masking, or any health and safety accommodations should be written in the IEP during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ✓ Your child's IEP must be current and reviewed from time to time, **at least once a year**. A parent and/or agency may request additional IEP team meetings at any time. You may need to meet more than once to discuss your child's special education, related services, and goals, especially if you have a concern or questions. **Families are encouraged and allowed to invite anyone with knowledge about the child to the team meetings, including healthcare providers.**

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The following resources are guidance documents from state and federal agencies.

- ✓ U.S. Department of Education: [Return to School Roadmap: Development and Implementation of Individualized Education Programs in the Least Restrictive Environment under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(PDF\)](#)
- ✓ U.S. Department of Education: [Q&A document in response to inquiries concerning implementation of IDEA Part B dispute resolution procedures in the current COVID-19 environment \(PDF\)](#)
- ✓ Review and share with your child's school team this guidance: [COVID-19 Health and Prevention Guidance for Ohio K-12 Schools](#)
- ✓ Ohio Department of Health has new quarantine options to consider, [Mask to Stay/Test to Play Option](#)
- ✓ Ohio Department of Health has quarantine guidelines available, [K-12 Quarantine in Ohio](#)
- ✓ Ohio Department of Education: [Back to School, Resources for Return](#) information and resources to support the academic, social and emotional needs of each Ohio student.
- ✓ [Wrightslaw Special Education Law & Advocacy](#)

Remember: **YOU are a part of your child's team.** You have a vital role in helping your child have a successful school experience. Our hope is that you share these resources and guidelines with your team.

If you need additional support, please contact:

Disability Rights Ohio: 614-466-7264 or 1-800-282-9181, press option 2.

Contact Us:

Ohio Family to Family Health Information Center

www.ohiof2f.org

Phone: 844-644-6323

Email: ohiof2f@cchmc.org