Ensuring FAPE for Students with Disabilities During COVID-19:
Adapting Individualized Education to the Virtual Context

Key Questions To Consider

These key questions articulate high-level prompts to consider during planning. The questions are organized by disability type and grade level.

Autism Spectrum Disorder
Deaf-Blindness
Deaf/Hearing Impairment
Emotional Disturbance
Intellectual Disability
Multiple Disabilities
Orthopedic Impairment
Other Health Impairment
Specific Learning Disability
Speech-language Impairment
Traumatic Brain Injury
Visual Impairment

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

For an elementary school student with autism, consider:

- In what ways can we maintain school routines in the virtual setting and/or build and reinforce new home routines for virtual learning engagement? How will the student's family need to be involved to ensure these routines are successful?
- How will we maximize the impact of a paraprofessional's support in the virtual setting using the chat features, breakout rooms, visual cues, assignment commenting, or other strategies?
- What strategies will we use to prevent social isolation of the student and provide opportunities for authentic conversations and peer connections?

For a high school student with autism, consider:

- What kind of explicit skill instruction is needed to increase the student's independence in applying coping or self-regulation strategies in a new learning environment?
- How can we incorporate opportunities for choice in the student's schedule and academic assignments?

- How will the use of video conferencing engage or distract the student? Would pre-recorded videos be preferred or beneficial to the student?
- What strategies will we use to prevent social isolation and provide opportunities for authentic conversations and peer connections?
- How will the student access transition services and on-site experiences while at home?

DEAF-BLINDNESS

For a middle school student who is deaf-blind, consider:

- How can we ensure all staff are trained to communicate clearly with Josef?
- What assistive technology is required to facilitate communication and access to core content?
- When can we include structured opportunities for social interactions with peers in the student's schedule? Is there an opportunity to develop a mentorship relationship with a non-disabled peer or with a fellow student who is deafblind?
- Is an in-person setting necessary to provide FAPE? If so, what possibilities exist to provide this service safely for the student and service providers?

DEAF/HEARING IMPAIRMENT

For an elementary student with a hearing impairment, consider:

- What is the primary mode of communication the student is using and/or developing? How can this mode be utilized to provide access to the general education setting?
- How will the virtual setting maximize the student's access to core content? What skills will the student need to learn to navigate accessibility features or advocate for their use when needed?
- Through what modes can we create opportunities for the student to engage with their peers for both academic and social purposes?

For a high school student with a hearing impairment, consider:

- How can we leverage technology to provide a more conducive environment in which the student can learn?
- How can we collaborate as a teaching team to ensure that the student has access to all accommodations needed across all virtual courses (synchronous and asynchronous)?
- Through what modes can we create opportunities for the student to engage with their peers for both academic and social purposes?

EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE

For a younger middle school student with an emotional disturbance, consider:

- Will the student demonstrate the same behavioral needs in the home setting? If so, what supports will be needed? If not, how can we use this time to reinforce positive behaviors?
- How will the virtual setting alter the impact of social skills modeling and practice? How can we adjust the environment to ensure the authentic practice of these skills?
- How could we incorporate opportunities for the student to self-assess progress toward social-emotional goals?

For an older middle school student with an emotional disturbance, consider:

- Will the student's ability to engage in virtual instruction and regulate their emotions and behavior present differently in the virtual setting than in the typical in-person setting? What additional

support will be needed as a result?
- How can we incorporate opportunities for the student to self-assess progress toward social-emotional goals?
- How will we create a safe space for the student to access needed counseling and other emotional supports through virtual means? Will consistent routines and regularly planned interactions with peers or trusted adults support this effort?

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

For an elementary school student with an intellectual disability, consider:

- What modes of asynchronous learning will be most impactful for the student (i.e. analog worksheets, task boxes, task analyses of home activities, digital platform, choice menus)?
- What accommodations will be necessary to extend the student's ability to attend within a synchronous virtual class setting?
- How will we equip the child's family to support their child during virtual learning?
- In what ways can we ensure access and connection with the student's peers?

For a middle school student with an intellectual disability, consider:

- How can we provide modified materials with which the student can access the general education classroom content and community via a virtual classroom?
- What modes of asynchronous learning will most promote student independence (i.e. virtual whiteboard, digital flashcards, task boxes, online academic platforms, choice boards)?
- What instructional materials (i.e. concrete materials, visual schedule) need to be sent home? How often will new materials need to be sent home?
- In what ways do we need to equip the student's family to create supportive learning spaces, schedules, and positive reinforcement?

MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

For an elementary student with multiple disabilities, consider:

- What instructional materials and assistive technology will be needed at home to extend the student's ability to attend within a synchronous virtual class setting?
- What modes of asynchronous learning will be most impactful for the student (i.e. digital flashcards, task boxes, online learning platforms, choice menus)?
- How will we equip the child's family to support them during virtual learning? In what areas does this need to go beyond training only on the technology platforms?
- In what ways can we ensure access and authentic connection with the student's peers?

For a high school student with multiple disabilities receiving homebound instruction, consider:

- Will service maintain effectiveness if delivered via video? What equipment and materials will need to be sent home to allow equal access to curriculum and instruction?
- What level of adult support is needed to facilitate virtual service?
- Is there a way to deliver services in the home per CDC protocols and with family agreement?
- How can we ensure that the student has opportunities to interact with peers?

ORTHOPEDIC IMPAIRMENT

For an elementary student with an orthopedic impairment, consider:

- How can assistive technology be implemented at home to support a student whose fine motor skills may be a barrier to accessing typical technology devices?
- What methods of therapy will be most effective in providing opportunities for the student to meet goals and navigate a non-school environment? In what ways can the student's family support growth between therapy sessions?
- How can we leverage the virtual space to provide inclusive, meaningful peer interactions?

For a high school student with an orthopedic impairment, consider:

- What accommodations and modifications could be provided at home so that the student can access the curriculum and instruction independently? (i.e. assistive technology, slant board, specialized seating)
- What methods of therapy will be most effective in providing opportunities for the student to meet goals and navigate a non-school environment? In what ways can the student's family support growth between therapy sessions?
- What skills do related therapists need to focus on in order to prepare the student for post-graduation goals related to education and employment?

OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENT

For an elementary school student with a health impairment, consider:

- What strategies worked in the classroom that can be utilized within the virtual setting or built into asynchronous assignments? How can we collaborate to incorporate these supports?
- How can we collaborate with the student's family to create supportive learning spaces and times?
- How can we provide opportunities for students to connect with their peers?
- How will we track attendance and engagement? Further, how (and who) will we respond when data shows a lack of engagement or task completion?

For a high school student with a health impairment, consider:

- What strategies worked in the classroom that can be utilized within the virtual setting or built into asynchronous assignments? How can general and special education teachers collaborate to incorporate these supports?
- How can we support the student to set up a productive learning space, manage their time to attend classes, and complete assignments?
- What strategies will we use to increase buy-in from the student for virtual learning?
- What pre-vocational skills will need to be explicitly taught in preparation for the student's transition to post-secondary pathways?

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY

For an elementary school student with a specific learning disability, consider:

- What impact does the specific learning disability have on the student's ability to access grade-level content in all subject areas?
- When will we collaborate as special and general education teachers to implement accommodations and strategies into both synchronous lessons and asynchronous materials to increase the student's access?
- How will we establish and maintain investment, persistence, and task completion from the student with virtual, asynchronous assignments?
- What opportunities can we provide for students to engage with peers outside of academic groups?

How can we facilitate social interactions for student interest groups?

For a high school student with a specific learning disability, consider:

- What foundational literacy and/or math skill gaps exist and will require explicit skill instruction? Can this instruction be provided synchronously in small groups or asynchronously utilizing a digital platform?
- In what ways will these gaps present as a barrier to core content access? What accommodations are appropriate to mitigate these barriers?
- Will disability-related needs (i.e. anxiety or executive functioning needs) present differently in the virtual setting than the typical in-person setting? What additional support will be needed as a result?

SPEECH-LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT

For an elementary school student with a speech-language language impairment, consider:

- How will language therapy be delivered? Will it occur during individual or group sessions?
- How can SLP and general education teachers collaborate to implement visuals and other tools into both synchronous lessons and asynchronous materials to increase the student's comprehension?
- What opportunities will be provided to engage with peers outside of academic groups? How can we facilitate organic social interactions between students to promote language practice?
- In what ways can the student's interests be incorporated into structured or unstructured work tasks to promote engagement and spontaneous language use?

For a middle school student with a speech-language impairment, consider:

- How will speech therapy be delivered? How will the use of a virtual platform impact the delivery of this service?
- What technical support or reinforcement strategy will the student need to increase regular attendance to therapy sessions?
- How can we increase the amount of authentic practice of speech skills via virtual and analog means?
- In what ways can we increase the amount of authentic feedback we provide the student on their speech skills via virtual and analog means?

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

For an elementary school student with a traumatic brain injury, consider:

- Which skill gaps may present as a barrier to core content access in the virtual setting? What accommodations are appropriate to mitigate these barriers?
- How can the student's strengths and interests be incorporated into work tasks to promote engagement, task completion, and spontaneous language use?
- What specific instruction is needed and/or what support can be targeted to fade as the student prepares for a transition to middle school?
- How can we promote authentic and meaningful peer interactions for students who receive core content instruction in a special education setting separate from their general education peers?

For a high school student with a traumatic brain injury, consider:

- How will needs related to the student's brain injury present differently in the virtual setting than the typical in-person setting? What additional support will be needed as a result?
- What hands-on learning experiences can be provided in the home learning environment?

- How can we ensure the student has access to transition activities and services in order to be prepared for their post-secondary plans?

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

For an elementary student with a visual impairment, consider:

- How can we ensure equipment and materials (i.e. Screen reader, braille translation software and equipment, electronic braille writer) are sent home to allow equal access to the curriculum and instruction?
- How can we collaborate as a teaching team to ensure that the student has access to all accommodations needed across all virtual courses (synchronous and asynchronous work)?
- How can we ensure the parents, special education teacher, aide, and general education teachers are adequately trained on implementing the supplementary aids in the home environment?

For a middle school student with a visual impairment, consider:

- How can we ensure equipment and materials (i.e. Screen reader, braille printer, braille translation software and equipment, electronic braille writer, large monitor, large print materials) are sent home to allow equal access to the curriculum and instruction?
- How can we ensure the parents, special education teachers, and general education teachers are adequately trained on implementing the supplementary aids?
- How will orientation and mobility therapies continue via virtual means so that the student feels ready to return to school when the building reopens?