



Parent Advocacy Network

*Empowering families, professionals,
and others interested in the well-being
and education of children and youth*

In this fact sheet:

- *What are the health risks of COVID-19?*
- *How does the Coronavirus and school closure affect your child's IEP?*
- *What are some of the supports and services available for parents and caretakers?*
- *What are some ways to reduce my child's anxiety?*
- *What resources are available for adults with disabilities?*

{and more}

SPAN

Parent Advocacy Network

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SPAN FACT SHEET

Although the global pandemic affects us all, individuals with special needs are severely impacted by the challenges caused by the Coronavirus.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Your Child with a Disability

The Coronavirus can affect your child's health, education, and increase stress on families.

What are the health risks of COVID-19?

Children with disabilities are at a high risk for complications from the Coronavirus. Specific details are provided by The NJ Department of Health. There is a 24-hour hotline at (800) 222-1222 or (800) 962-1253 if using an out of state phone line. NJ specific information is regularly updated at <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a website with extensive information. There is information regarding who is at risk, what do if someone is ill, how to prevent the spread of germs, and even disinfecting found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html>.

Family Voices has information specific to children with special health care needs. A monthly newsletter and other resources can be found at <https://familyvoices.org/coronavirus/>.

Lastly, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has information for families in **multiple languages** including Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese, found at www.epa.gov/lep.

How does the Coronavirus and school closure affect your child's IEP?

Many families are concerned about their child's education and related services during this time. The NJ Department of Education has guidance and supplemental information on requirements for public health related school closures found at <https://www.nj.gov/education/topics/index.shtml>

For mediation/due process updates, see <https://www.state.nj.us/oal/>

The Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA) has issued the following [Statement on Student Rights under IDEA during COVID-19](#).

The U.S. Department of Education has a wealth of information including:

- A factsheet on the civil rights of students
- Preventing discrimination
- Q & A about providing services to students with disabilities
- Protecting private education and health information of students

These can be found at <https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus>.

What are some ways to reduce my child's anxiety?

Children may have difficulty understanding the pandemic. There are social stories, which may be helpful to children with disabilities. Some examples are [My Story About Pandemics and Coronavirus](#) by Carol Gray and [What is the Coronavirus?](#) by Amanda Mc Guinness.

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What supports and services are available for parents & caretakers?

Children need calmly delivered, factual information that is age appropriate, with concrete instruction about positive preventive measures. The National Association of School Psychologists has [Talking to Children About COVID-19 | A Parent Resource](#) available in multiple languages. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has factsheets:

- Coping with Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks
- Taking Care of Your Behavioral Health
- Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation During an Infectious Disease
- Talking With Children: Tips for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers During Infectious Disease Outbreaks

These are found at <https://store.samhsa.gov/>.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has information on how families can protect themselves, what they need to know about the Coronavirus, and how to talk with children without raising anxiety at

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/2019-Novel-Coronavirus.aspx>.

Understood.org has family friendly language regarding at home learning, explaining the Coronavirus to children, disability issues, and fun activities at home found at <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/coronavirus-latest-updates>.

Psychology today has an article on explaining the pandemic to children with developmental disabilities at

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/neuroscience-in-translation/202003/how-explain-global-health-crisis-children-autism>.

Many schools are providing links to online learning. In addition, Scholastic has free online learning at

<https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html>.

What resources are available for young adults with disabilities?

There are many resources for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The NJ Department of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) is providing regular updates on services as well as FAQs (frequently asked questions) at

<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/resources/coronavirus.html>.

Please note that DDD is expanding flexibility in the provision of services at this time. For more information, families can contact their Support Coordinator.

For the most current news:

SPAN has a COVID-19 Information Page that will be regularly updated. This also includes a link to a chart with health, education, and other resources for family support. Please check out

<https://spanadvocacy.org/home/spans-covid-19-information-page/>.

Support for Working Families

There are many options to help support working families during the pandemic. The NJ Department of Labor's **Earned Sick Leave Law** covers public health emergencies – employees can use Earned Sick leave if their workplace or child's school or daycare is closed due to an epidemic, or if a public health authority determines the need for a quarantine. For more information, see [Earned Sick Leave Benefits and the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): What You Should Know](#)

For information on Federal Sick Leave:

https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/posters/FFCRA_Poster_WH1422_Non-Federal.pdf

For information on NJ Earned Sick Days:

<http://www.njtimetocare.com/ESL>

Learn more:

Federal regulations governing the Family Medical Leave Act can be found at

<https://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/index.htm>

New Jersey State regulations governing Family Leave Insurance can be found at

https://www.nj.gov/labor/forms_pdfs/tdi/fli_regs.pdf and the expansion at https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/A4000/3975_R3.HTM.

New Jersey State regulations governing Paid Sick Days can be found at

https://nj.gov/labor/wagehour/lawregs/nj_state_wage_and_hour_laws_and_regulations.html#11D1.



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