

ATTACHMENT 7:

COVID-19 resources and guidance for 504 school based coordinators (SBC)

COVID-19 Plan of Action for 504 case managers

Updated 8/3/2020

Please hold **504 Plan** meetings for the following students:

- * All students whose 504 Plans (annual) are due, by the annual due date
- * Students who are newly 504 qualified, within 30 calendar days of their eligibility
- * Students whose current 504 Plan cannot be implemented, as written, within the distance (virtual) learning environment

Please hold **504 Reevaluation** meetings for the following students:

- * All students whose 504 Reevaluations (three-year) are due, by the triennial due date;
- * Students whose impairment/limitations have significantly changed since that last time they were evaluated (even if their reevaluation due date is not coming up this year)

Logistics for Virtual Meetings

1. Each school has been assigned one teleconference line that is dedicated for special education and Section 504 meetings. Please work with your school administration for the specific expectations regarding reserving this line. In addition, other options for virtual meetings include Blackboard Collaborate Ultra or Google Meet.

2. As you schedule meetings, you will need to ensure the following:

- a. You have done your best to determine a mutually-agreeable time to meet with the parent(s) and school staff;
- b. You have access to the dedicated teleconference line (or appropriate alternative) for the meeting;
- c. You have identified necessary staff to participate in the meeting, and have determined a time that will work with their – and your - current distance learning responsibilities and schedules;
- d. Don't forget that you may need to work your schedule around the availability of an interpreter, if applicable. (Please scroll down to the bottom of this guidance document for specific information about utilizing language services interpreters. Direction regarding virtual meetings is highlighted).

3. Please take advantage of the **email feature on the SEA-STARS Team tab**. When the meeting has been scheduled, please send an email out to the entire team, including the parent(s) (and student, if appropriate), and attach the following documents to the email:

- a. Appropriate 504 meeting notice (Plan or Reevaluation) (finalized pdf)
- b. 504 procedural safeguards (available in the process documents list)
- c. The student's most recent 504 Reevaluation and/or Plan document, so that everyone has a starting place for discussion
- d. Include in your email message a reminder that 504 information is available on the public site at <https://www.fcps.edu/academics/academic-overview/special-education-instruction/special-education-procedural-support/Section-504-information>. 504 forms (including translated versions) are available at <https://www.fcps.edu/academics/academic-overview/special-education-instruction/special-education-procedural-support-12>.
- e. Also include in your email message that you would be happy to send a copy of the draft 504 Plan or Reevaluation to the parent via email at the conclusion of the meeting, to allow them to review the draft (along with the rest of the school team) prior to finalizing it.

4. As with in-person meetings, it is often useful to copy and paste information from the current Reevaluation and/or Plan onto a Word document in advance of the meeting, to allow easier editing for the current 504 documentation.

5. When your team has validated (but not yet finalized) the current 504 Plan or Reevaluation paperwork, consider using the **Print Preview** feature. Save a copy of the "print preview" version to email to the entire team, including the parent(s) and student, if appropriate, before you finalize the draft. (Again, please make use of the email feature on the SEA-STARS Team tab.) Make sure that if you choose to email the "print preview" version to the parent, you have identified in the email that this is a DRAFT and you are asking that the parent and school team review and alert you to any proofing or substantive errors. We are not required to obtain parent consent (unless you are soliciting permission for formal assessment), but this procedure will help the team ensure that the Plan and/or Reevaluation document(s) accurately reflect the meeting conversation, and do not include information that is confusing or incomplete.

6. If the team does recommend formal assessments, the parent may provide an electronic signature, email or text their consent/lack of consent.

7. When you are ready to finalize the document, make sure that:

- a. The participants listed on the document are accurate, as you will not be printing out the document for participants to sign;
- b. The meeting date on the document is correct.

8. Once the document is finalized, you will email a copy of the finalized document to parent(s), and alert teachers that the finalized document is available for view in SIS.
9. Please remember to close out your case so that everything is visible in Historical Documents.

Kathy Murphy
Section 504 Specialist
8/3/2020

FCPS Language Services Telephonic/Virtual Interpretations

FCPS Language Services provides telephonic/virtual interpretations through FCPS interpreters. Teachers or staff members must contact interpreters to request the service. This is not a language hotline. List of available languages by Language Services: Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, Dari, Farsi, French, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Mongolian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Somali, Spanish, Swedish, Tagalog, Tamil/Telegu, Turkish, Twi, Urdu and Vietnamese.

The Office of Language Services has a list of interpreters who can be a part of a 3-way conference call or virtual meeting (via Google Meet or Blackboard Collaborate). For a list of interpreters, contact LS_Oral_Interpretation@fcps.edu and for questions, contact the Language Services Specialist, Katie Han at kjhan@fcps.edu.

For a 3-way telephonic interpretation, the following protocol must be followed:

- From any smartphone, the teacher/staff member would call an interpreter from the LS list who speaks the appropriate language.
- After contact has been made with an interpreter, the teacher would then use the “add a call” and “merge call” features of the smartphone to establish a 3-way phone call with the family.
- When the 3-way conference call has been established, the teacher would take the lead in the conversation and the interpreter would only interpret what is being said by both parties. (Interpreters are not allowed to add to, or edit, any part of the conversation nor provide their own opinions.)

For a virtual meeting, the appropriate meeting link should be sent to the interpreters for them to access.

- At the conclusion of the call/meeting, the teacher/staff member must email LS_Oral_Interpretation@fcps.edu to obtain a job number and provide the following information in order for the interpreter to receive compensation*:
 - o Requester’s Name & School:
 - o Name of interpreter used:
 - o Language:
 - o Date of phone conference/meeting:
 - o Start time:
 - o End time:
 - o Did the interpreter prearrange this meeting with the parent prior to the meeting? Yes or No

*There is no need to send this information if a 3-way call has not been established. Leaving a voicemail does not qualify as a 3-way conversation. Note: School staff should never ask interpreters to call a list of families to deliver a one-way message. The telephonic interpretation service is only available for 3-way conference calls.

SECTION 504: COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

Updated FAQs as of 8/3/2020

Q: How do I access tech support for SEA-STARs?

A: The DSS Support Team is providing remote support via email. Technical questions may be submitted via email to DSSSupportTeam@fcps.edu.

Q: Does the WIDA Access Accommodations document need to be completed for English Learner students' 504 Plans at this time?

A: Yes. You should coordinate with the ESOL teacher directly to discuss potential WIDA accommodations, and then share out the proposed draft of the WIDA Access Accommodations document with the team and parents ahead of the meeting, to allow for the most streamlined approach to completing your meeting.

Q: What are the allowable virtual meeting platforms for Section 504 meetings?

A: You may use your school's dedicated teleconference (bridge) line, Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, or Google Meet. Current guidance allows for the use of the video feature on either BBCU or Google Meet. Staff may also record meetings using either of these platforms.

Q: Where can I find information that has been communicated to families of students with disabilities?

A: A regular communication with Special Services tips, news and information continues to be sent to families of students with disabilities. This communication may be found at: <https://www.fcps.edu/node/40870>.

Q: Where might I find additional strategies and tools to adjust accommodations to address a student's distance learning needs?

A: The Department of Special Services has created an Accommodations Toolbox that is very helpful and user-friendly: <https://www.fcps.edu/sites/default/files/media/forms/AccommodationsToolbox.pdf>. These tools are helpful for students with and without disabilities.

Q: In reviewing students' 504 Plans, we are discovering that there are certain accommodations/services that are still relevant and needed, but may need to be adjusted to fit the virtual learning space. How do schools handle this?

A: In some cases, school staff members may have to consult with families and students to ensure that there is general understanding around what can and cannot be implemented directly by FCPS staff during distance learning. There may need to be greater levels of consultation and collaboration between home and school, at least initially, to move forward with the Plans for students. However, if there is a wide gap between supports that were provided to the student during in-person instruction, and what is being provided virtually, teams are advised to schedule a 504 Plan meeting to determine appropriate accommodations and services for the student.

Q: How will we obtain parent and staff participant signatures on documents?

A: For meetings that are being held virtually, 504 Plan and Reevaluation participant signatures will not be required. Case managers should take special care to ensure that the meeting participants are identified correctly within SEA-STARs.

Q: What are the expectations for outlining appropriate accommodations/services on a student's 504 Plan?

A: It is suggested that the knowledgeable committee should discuss relevant accommodations, supports and/or services that the student requires based on how their impairment(s) substantially limits one or more major life activity. It will be necessary for each committee to address how supports will be implemented in a virtual and in an in-person environment, since there is a high likelihood that many students may shift from an all-virtual to a hybrid or completely in-person learning environment during the current school year.

Q: Are there Section 504 accommodations/services that will not be able to be implemented in a virtual (distance) learning environment?



















A: It depends. Each student with a disability is an individual, and their 504 Plan was developed to meet their unique needs. Case managers should review their students' 504 Plans, and reach out to staff and parents right away if there are any concerns that accommodations or services may not be able to be met, as written, within a virtual learning environment. If there is a possibility that any portion of a student's 504 Plan may not be able to be implemented within the current distance learning setting, 504 case managers are advised to schedule a 504 Plan meeting to address any needed modifications. This is especially true for all students who are receiving a related service or other special education service or class via their 504 Plan. Please remember that FCPS continues to have an obligation to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to every child with a 504 Plan.

Q: How is FCPS handling local screening committee (LSC) referrals during the COVID-19 pandemic?

A: FCPS continues to have a Child Find responsibility, even during this unprecedented situation. If an individual suspects a student of having a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), and/or under Section 504, that individual should contact the school principal, student's teacher or counselor, or other staff member to make a verbal or written referral. These referrals should be forwarded immediately to the school's LSC chair, so that LSC meetings may be scheduled in a timely manner.

Accommodation: Frequent Breaks

The Accommodation focus below is on providing frequent breaks for your student. Frequent breaks provide a time to cool down or have time away from a stressful situation or task. A short break can help students return to a task ready to focus and complete the work. Below are some activities that can be used to provide a break for your student. Be sure to have a timer available (kitchen timer, timer on phone or watch) to limit the break time. Provide your student the opportunity to make a choice. Cover choices that are not an option at that time and make sure you have the items needed available to use when the student makes the break choice.

<p>Write about your favorite activity or a topic of your choice</p> 	<p>Play with your favorite squishy toy/item (i.e. Playdough, stress/tennis balls)</p> 	<p>Go or look outside your window/door and tell what you see</p> 
<p>Turn on your favorite song and dance around</p> 	<p>Snack on something healthy</p> 	<p>Take 5 deep breaths</p> 
<p>Take turns telling a silly joke to your sibling(s) or parent(s)</p> 	<p>Read a book</p> 	<p>Draw or color a picture of your favorite animal</p> 
<p>Play a board game or make up your own game like Simon Says or I Spy</p> 	<p>Movement: walk like you're on ice, a giant and have to step over houses, a mouse quietly through the house, make yourself as big, as small, and reach as high as you can</p> 	<p>Watch your favorite cartoon or TV show/ video</p> 
<p>Create a scavenger hunt</p> 	<p>Use chalk to draw pictures on paper or outside on the driveway or sidewalk</p> 	<p>Blow bubbles and try to catch them</p> 
<p>Jump</p> 	<p>Identify shapes in the room or outside</p> 	<p>Play with your favorite toy</p> 


Individualized Education Plan (IEP) accommodations provide support in general education and/or special education settings. Please be sure to reference the accommodations which are documented on your child's current IEP. Students may continue to use the resources from school to access instruction, if provided. The chart below is an accommodation toolbox which includes strategies and resources on how a student may be able to access accommodations at home. Additional information and resources for accommodations are available in the Blackboard Distant Learning Plan folders.


If you have questions or concerns please contact the student's case manager or Due Process Helpline- dpehelp@fcps.edu 571-423-4470.

Accommodations	Description	Strategies/Resources for Home Access
Accessible Text	Electronic Text (Braille/Electronic Text/Large Print) provided through AIM.	<p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Ally (user login and password required) • Bookshare (user login and password required) • AIM-VA (user login and password required) • myON (user login and password required) • Tumblebooks (available to all students) • PebbleGo (available to all students) • Tar Heel Reader (available to all students)
Alternate Means of Response <i>Dry Erase Board</i>	This may be used in place of scratch paper.	<p>Create your own dry erase board! Paper can be used. -Insert white paper into a picture frame. Use dry erase markers. -If you have a touch screen device check out this resource:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Padlet includes a draw feature • Wixie for elementary students (use student login) • G Suite Jamboard (use student login)
Alternate Means of Response <i>Additional Writing Implements</i>	Tools such as: highlighters, markers, colored pens and/or colored pencils used to support learning.	<p>Use available highlighters, markers, colored pens, and/or colored pencils to support assignment. Many programs come with built-in highlighters.</p>

Accommodations	Description	Strategies/Resources for Home Access
Alternate Means of Response <i>Student indicates a response (Verbally, Pointing or Otherwise)</i>	This allows a student an alternate means of response to answer a question.	Allow the student to say and/or point to the answer while someone else writes down or indicates the student's response.
Alternate Means of Response <i>Audio Recording of Student Response</i>	This is used to record a student's oral response.	Below are available online tools that may be used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audacity - free audio software online • Google Voice Typing Tool Tutorial - Speech to text • Windows Speech Recognition - Speech to text
Alternate Means of Response <i>(Word prediction software, word processor speech to text functionality, and/or Braille)</i>	This is used to support the student with alternate ways to respond.	Below are common online tools that may be used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows Predictive Text • Google Voice Typing Tool Tutorial - Speech to text • Windows Speech Recognition - Speech to text
Amplification or Noise-Dampening Equipment	Assistive listening devices such as an FM system, audio trainer, whisper phone, or sound field help to increase volume.	Work in a quiet space with the volume turned up.
Assignment Notebook	Provides students with organization skills.	Google Calendar (use student login) Google Keep (use student login) Calendars that Work Use student agenda Use a wipe off schedule - create a schedule, put in a plastic frame, use an erasable marker to check off tasks as completed
Assistive Technology Support ATS	Services provided by assistive technology services to support instruction.	ATS

Accommodations	Description	Strategies/Resources for Home Access
Augmentative Communication Device	This is used to aid with communication.	See Communication Board/Choice Cards.
Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)	Behavior plan developed by the school team and parent.	Continue to use strategies outlined in the student's Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). See behavior folder.
Bilingual Dictionary	This is a specialized dictionary used to translate words or phrases from one language to another.	Online Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual Dictionary • Bilingual Glossaries • Use Google Translator (translates single words)
Calculator <i>Calculator or Arithmetic Table</i>	This is used to aid with math calculations.	Could access calculator through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone • Computer • Basic function online calculator • Desmos 4-Function • Desmos Scientific • Graphing Calculator
Clearly Defined Limits/Expectations	This provides the student with clear direction and understanding of expectations.	Give the student clear directions, first you will complete 5 math problems then you can have break Provide student with a schedule of tasks. Review the schedule with the student. Self-check Behavior Checklist Creator
Communication Board <i>Choice Cards</i>	This is used to indicate student response	Ideas to help with home student response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use actual items as choices for students

Accommodations	Description	Strategies/Resources for Home Access
Dictation	The student speaks aloud and the response is written down by someone else.	<p>A student can respond aloud and you may write/type the answer.</p> <p>Online Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google Voice Typing Tool Tutorial - Speech to text Windows Speech Recognition - Speech to text
English Dictionary	This is a book or electronic resource that lists words of a language and gives the meaning.	<p>Free online resource:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://www.merriam-webster.com/
Flexible Schedule <i>Extended Time</i>	This provides additional time to the student to complete the given assignment(s).	If the student demonstrates fatigue, frustration, restlessness during an assignment a break may be needed.
Flexible Schedule <i>Frequent Breaks</i>	This provides the student with time for breaks within instruction and completing assignments.	<p>Set a timer to assist with giving student frequent breaks</p> <p>Online timers</p>
Highlighted Text Materials	This provides highlighted text to support student learning.	<p>Use any available highlighters, markers, colored pens, and/or colored pencils to support assignment.</p> <p>If using Google or Word, go to Tools and click on the highlighter tool and use it to highlight the text.</p>
Increase Size of Answer Document	This provides the student with increased font size.	<p>If using Google, use the zoom feature by clicking on the three dots on the right upper corner. Located next to your google name icon.</p> <div data-bbox="1193 420 1274 777">  </div> <p>If using Windows, hit the Windows Key and the + or - Keys. Magnifier tool in Windows Ease of Access</p>

Accommodations	Description	Strategies/Resources for Home Access
Large Print	This is available to students who have a documented visual impairment.	<p>If using Google you can use the zoom feature by clicking on the three dots on the right upper corner to make the print appear larger.</p>  <p>If using Windows you can hit the Windows Key and the + or - Keys to make the print appear larger.</p> <p>How to use zoom on an iPad directions Magnifier tool in Windows Ease of Access</p>
Math Aids <i>Access to colored shapes, number lines, and fraction circles.</i>	These materials are used to help a student with math.	<p>Below are common online tools that may be used:</p> <p>Addition Chart Subtraction Chart Multiplication Chart Division Chart Fractions Visual Resource Printable Graph Paper Hundreds Chart Mathematical equations in Google Docs & Tutorial Google Sheet math templates Graphic organizers for math Wixie for elementary students - (use student login)</p>
Positive Reinforcement	An action immediately following a behavior that increases how often or how much of that behavior we see in the future.	<p>Online Resources: Generic At Home Token Board</p>
Presentation of Material/Assign	This explains the directions for complete understanding.	You may read and explain the directions to the student so that they have a clear understanding.

Accommodations	Description	Strategies/Resources for Home Access
Interpret Translate Directions		
Presentation of Material/Assign Provide A Copy of Directions	A written copy of the directions is provided for an assignment.	You may read and explain the directions to the student so that they have a clear understanding. If the directions are shared aloud, then you may write the directions.
Presentation of Material/Assign Provide Specific Verbal Prompts	Helps to keep a student on task. Suggested prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Please continue with your test." • "Keep working." • "Keep going." • "Focus." • "Stay focused." 	Refer to prompts indicated on the IEP accommodation page. You may also use the provided samples as needed.
Presentation of Material/Assign Reduced Language Level/Reading Level/Plain English	This simplifies the language of the text.	Online resource that helps to simplify difficult text. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewordify.com • https://www.simplish.org/ • About Text Compactor
Read Aloud Read Back Student Response	The teacher reads back to the student their written response.	Read your student's written work aloud Screen Readers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft Word Read Aloud Tool • Windows Speak Tool • Natural Reader
Read Aloud Read Entire Assignment/Assessment to Student	This allows opportunity for material to be read to a student.	A person at home may read the assignment/assessment. Some online resources provide read aloud components. Screen Readers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft Word Read Aloud Tool

Accommodations	Description	Strategies/Resources for Home Access
Read Aloud Read to Student Upon Request or Demand	A student may ask for assistance with reading a word or text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows Speak Tool • Natural Reader <p>A person at home may read the assignment/assessment. Some online resources provide read aloud components.</p> <p>Commonly available Screen Readers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft Word Read Aloud Tool • Windows Speak Tool • Natural Reader
Shortened Assignment	The student will have less tasks to complete for an assignment.	Contact your student's case manager if you have any questions or concerns.
Spelling Aids Spell Checker/Aid	This aids students with spelling.	Using Google or Word select Tools and then spelling grammar. Windows Predictive Text
Use Recording Device for Prewriting	A student records thoughts for brainstorming when writing.	Commonly available Online Tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Voice Typing Tool Tutorial - Speech to text • Windows Speech Recognition - Speech to text • Audacity - free audio software online
Visual Aids <i>Place Keeper</i>	Allows a student to see one word, sentence, or line of print at a time. Additionally, can support a student with maintaining their place when reading text.	Use a bookmark or a piece of paper to help keep their place while reading.
Visual Aids <i>Magnification</i>	Magnification for students with a visual impairment include magnifying glass, screen magnifier, electronic magnification devices such as a closed-circuit television (CCTV), a large	Student may continue to use the tools and/or strategies provided at school to access instruction. If using Google you can use the zoom feature by clicking on

Accommodations	Description	Strategies/Resources for Home Access
	monitor, interactive or electronic whiteboard, or LCD projector which projects the assessment onto a large screen	<p>the three dots on the right upper corner.</p> <p>If using Windows you can hit the Windows Key and the + or - Keys.</p> <p>Magnifier tool in Windows Ease of Access</p>
Visual Aids <i>Color Overlays</i>	Colored overlays, one type of tinted filter, are plastic reading sheets tinted with color and placed over text.	Continue to use your student's color overlay when reading, if provided.
Visual Aids <i>Graphic Organizer</i>	A visual and graphic display that depicts the relationships between facts, terms, and or ideas within a learning task. Also used to help support prewriting tasks.	<p>Commonly available online resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Docs Tables to Text Tutorial • Mind mapping & Tutorial • Wise Mapping & Tutorial • Word Map or Venn Diagram

Confidentiality Notice for the use of Blackboard Collaborate and Google Meet as online platforms used by Fairfax County Public Schools for Distance Learning

Dear FCPS Parent or Guardian,

In order to best meet the needs of our students with disabilities during this school closure, our special education teachers and related service providers are using Blackboard Collaborate and/or Google Meet as online platforms to offer instruction and support.

As we transition to a Distance Learning Model, many of our special education teachers and related service providers will be using these online platforms to:

- Facilitate the creation of classes,
- Organize information for students, and
- Implement small group and/or individual learning sessions.

Although FCPS staff will maintain appropriate levels of security during online sessions, please note that when a student participates in a Blackboard Collaborate or Google Meet virtual session, their first and last names will be visible to all other students attending that session.

With live video feed, FCPS staff are also unable to control who else may be in the same room in the home as the child participating in a virtual environment.

If you are not comfortable with your child participating in a Blackboard Collaborate or Google Meet session, please reach out to your child's special education case manager or related service provider to review other instructional options.

Fairfax County Public Schools expects that all families review and implement the following guidelines and expectations to ensure that the confidentiality rights of all students are protected when live video sessions are used.

1. Parent or Guardian shall make every effort to ensure that no one other than the student scheduled to participate can see or hear the live virtual session.
2. No recordings will be made by the parent, guardian, or student of virtual live sessions.
3. If parental or other third-party involvement in a virtual live session is necessary to enable a student to participate, the individual assisting the student shall not re-disclose any personally identifiable information about any student participating.
4. When participating in a group session, please be mindful of the educational environment and eliminate distractions that may divert the students' attention away from learning.

Low-Tech Accommodations Toolbox

The chart below includes strategies for how a student can access accommodations at home without the use of technology. The complete **Accommodations Toolbox** is available online and includes links to online resources. The Accommodations Toolbox is located on the FCPS Internet page <https://www.fcps.edu/news/coronavirus-update-academics-distance>; select the grade level, then select Special Education: Additional Supports. Individualized education program (IEP) and 504 Plan accommodations provide support in general education and/or special education settings. Please be sure to reference the accommodations which are documented on your child's current IEP or 504 Plan. As available, students can continue to use the resources from school to access instruction.

Accommodations	Description	Strategies/Resources For Home Access
Alternate Means of Response Dry Erase Board/Additional Writing Implements/Student Indicates Response (Verbally Pointing or Otherwise)	This allows a student an alternate means of response to answer a question.	Create your own dry erase board using paper or insert white paper into a picture frame (use dry erase markers); Use available highlighters, markers, colored pens, and/or colored pencils to support assignment. Allow the student to say and/or point to the answer while someone else writes down or indicates the student's response.
Amplification or Noise-Dampening Equipment	Assistive listening devices such as an FM system, audio trainer, whisper phone, or sound field help to increase volume.	Work in a quiet space.
Assignment Notebook	Provides students with organization skills.	Use a student agenda; Create a student schedule; Create a wipe off schedule, put schedule in a plastic frame, use an erasable marker to check off tasks completed; Create a family schedule on paper.
Behavior Intervention Plan(BIP)	Behavior plan developed by the school team and parent.	Continue to use strategies outlined in the student's Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).

Low-Tech Accommodations Toolbox

Accommodations	Description	Strategies/Resources For Home Access
Calculator Calculator or Arithmetic Table	This is used to aid with math calculations (+, -, x, & division)	Access calculator through phone or handheld calculator.
Clearly Defined Limits/Expectations	This provides the student with clear direction and understanding of expectations.	Give the student clear directions, for example, first you will complete 5 math problems then have a break. Provide the student with a schedule of tasks and review the schedule with the student.
English Dictionary	This is a book resource that lists words of a language and gives the meaning.	Use a dictionary if available.
Flexible Schedule Extended Time/Frequent Breaks	This provides additional time to the student to complete a given assignment(s) or for breaks within instruction.	If the student demonstrates fatigue, frustration, restlessness during an assignment a break may be needed. Set a timer to assist with giving students frequent breaks
Highlighted Text Materials	This provides highlighted text to support student learning.	Use any available highlighters, markers, colored pens, and/or colored pencils to support assignment.
Math Aids <i>Access to colored shapes, number lines, and fraction circles.</i>	These materials are used to help a student with math.	Use of common household objects (buttons, beans, macaroni, pennies, etc.) can be used to support understanding of numbers and number operations.
Positive Reinforcement	An action immediately following a behavior that increases how often or how much of that behavior we see in the future.	Use frequent praise. Offer a choice activity if a student follows behavior/task.

Low-Tech Accommodations Toolbox

Accommodations	Description	Strategies/Resources For Home Access
Presentation of Material/Assignment Interpret Translate Directions/Assignment/Provide Specific Verbal Prompts	This explains the directions for complete understanding. Suggested prompts to keep student on task: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Keep working.” • “Keep going.” • “Focus.” • “Stay focused.” 	You may read and explain the directions to the student so that they have a clear understanding. Refer to prompts indicated on the IEP accommodation (or 504 Plan test accommodation) page. You may also use the provided samples as needed.
Read Aloud Read Back Student Response/ Read Entire Assignment/Read to Student upon Request	This allows read aloud of the student’s written response, material to a student, or word or text upon request from a student.	Read your student’s written work aloud. A person at home may read the assignment.
Shortened Assignment	The student will have fewer tasks to complete for an assignment.	Contact your student’s case manager if you have any questions or concerns.
Visual Aids Place Keeper	Allows a student to see one word, sentence, or line of print at a time. Additionally, can support a student with maintaining their place when reading text.	Use a bookmark or a piece of paper to help keep their place while reading

School-Based Social Emotional Learning and Wellness Resources During Distance Learning

School Counselors, School Psychologists, and School Social Workers are available to support students, families and staff during distance learning. They are supporting students, families and staff in many of the same ways as they did prior to distance learning, but it may look different now.



Here is what schools are doing to continue social emotional learning and mental wellness:

- *Instructional activities* addressing social and emotional skills and mental wellness topics are embedded in instruction to include school counseling and Health & PE lessons/activities.
- *Consultation for teachers* is provided to support students' social, emotional, and mental health needs in an instructional setting.
- *Individualized student and family support* is available at all school levels to address social emotional learning, mental wellness, and access to basic needs.
- *Mental Wellness Consultation:* Parents may schedule a 30-minute phone consultation with a school psychologist or school social worker, for either themselves or their middle or high school student. This is an opportunity for parents to receive guidance on how to support their student's emotional well-being. For more information, click the following link: [Mental Wellness Consultation](#)

To learn more about these activities, please contact your student's school counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker.

Here is more information on what you can do to support your student at home:

- The FCPS Learning from Home: Support for Families webpage is updated frequently and has many helpful links: [FCPS Learning from Home: Support for Families](#)
- The FCPS COVID-19 Website contains valuable information regarding how to talk with your child about the Coronavirus, managing stress, healthy coping, community and emergency mental health resources. For more information, click the following link: [COVID-19 Mental Health & Community Resources website](#)
- Online training simulations are available to help you learn and recognize signs of distress, manage conversations, and connect your student/family to support services. For more information, click the following link: [Kognito](#)
- Video clips of FCPS students sharing their thoughts and tips on coping with Coronavirus. To view these videos, please click the following link: [Student Voice: Coronavirus](#)
- Our Healthy Minds Blog will also be updated with entries throughout the closure: [Healthy Minds Blog](#)
- In case of an emergency or for immediate assistance, please click on the following link: [Mental Health Resources and Emergency Services Information](#)

April 27, 2020

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) will be providing a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updates, information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during the school closure.

FCPS understands the concerns of parents with respect to providing FAPE for students with disabilities when instruction is provided to all students. What constitutes FAPE will necessarily look different in light of the current pandemic and the closure of schools for all our students, and parents can be assured that FCPS will make educational opportunities available to all students, including students with disabilities.

We will be doing our best to provide FAPE within the constraints of distance learning. Regardless of the challenges we face, we will strive to support all our learners within the distance format. FCPS staff are here to work with parents and to make the best out of this unprecedented situation.

If parents have specific concerns about special education services during the school closure, there are multiple resources to reach out to for assistance and support (see information below for details):

- Your child's teacher
- Your child's school principal
- Your school's Procedural Support Liaison
- FCPS Special Education Ombudsman (ombudsman@fcps.edu)

Confidentiality Notice

The Department of Special Services has developed a Confidentiality Notice for parents/guardians related to the use of Blackboard Collaborate and Google Meet as online platforms used by Fairfax County Public Schools for distance learning. This notice includes information related to the disclosure of a student's personally identifiable information and guidelines and expectations to ensure that the confidentiality rights of all students are protected when live video sessions are used. [View the Confidentiality Notice.](#)

Mental Health and Wellness

Parents may schedule a 30-minute mental wellness consultation with a school psychologist or school social worker for support or guidance during this unprecedented and challenging time. The consultations are also available to connect parents and students with available community resources. Parent consultations are available for all grade levels and student consultations are only available for students in middle or high school. Information about scheduling a consultation is located on our [Coronavirus Update – Mental Health and Community Resources](#) page.

Special Education Instruction

For children ages 2-8: Check out the Learn and Grow section of [PBS Parent Resources](#) for resources and games which cover a variety of topics, by age, such as: emotions and self-awareness, social skills, literacy, math, science, and arts.

Supporting Behavior

Looking for information on how to build a new routine for your child during distance learning? Check out this [Build New Routines Strategy Packet](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

My student's case manager emailed me a document, but I cannot open it. How can I see it?

Please be sure you have the most recent free Adobe Reader loaded on your personal device (PC, laptop, tablet, or phone) and then try again. Adobe Reader can be downloaded at <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>. Another alternative can be to access the PDF using the Internet Explorer web browser.

Who do I contact if I have questions and/or concerns regarding my child's IEP, reevaluation/eligibility, 504 or other special education process to assist in my child's education during distance learning?

Parent(s) or guardian(s) should contact their child's case manager or school administrator at their child's school. If parent(s) or guardian(s) need further assistance, please reach out to the:

- [Procedural Support Liaison \(PSL\)](#) assigned to their school

- Office of Due Process and Eligibility
- Office of Special Education Instruction
- Section 504 Information
- Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education, Dawn Clements at ombudsman@fcps.edu
- Parent Resource Center at prc@fcps.edu or 703-204-3941

Department of Special Services

May 4, 2020

Special Education Instruction

Are you looking for ways to support your child during this time of uncertainty? Check out the FCPS [Elementary School](#), [Middle School](#), and [High School](#) special education resources which cover a variety of topics for families of students with disabilities such as: reading/ language arts, mathematics, communication, behavior, executive functioning, accommodations, adapted PE, physical and occupational therapy, hearing services, and vision services.

Helpful Distance Learning Resources for Parents

- [Coronavirus: A Parent's Perspective](#)
- [A Parent's Guide to Virtual Learning](#)
- [Ways to Help Your Child \(Academic Skill Building\)](#)
- [New Learning from Home Website for Parents](#)
- [FAQs for Parents](#)

Managing Meltdowns

Does your child have difficulty calming themselves down? Check out our [Calming Strategy activity](#) that can be used to introduce and teach calming strategies as part of self-regulation.

School and Community Resources

Individual social emotional support is available at all school levels to address social emotional learning, mental wellness, and access to basic needs. To learn more about these activities and supports, please contact your child's school counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker. Community resources can be accessed through the following links:

- [Help for mental health, substance abuse and developmental disabilities](#)

- [Support for medical and financial benefits, domestic violence and Department of Family Services](#)
- [Coordinated Services Planning](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the next steps being offered if I do not wish to sign the TLP?

Answer: The Virginia Department of Education advised school divisions to develop a plan that meets its own individual needs during the time of the emergency school closure. Like other large school divisions in Virginia, FCPS developed the temporary learning plan model to identify what goals, accommodations and services could be provided to students during this time of closure. The TLP is not an IEP and it is not a waiver of rights under IDEA. Your child's IEP will be implemented when we resume school. A parent may elect to not provide a signature on the TLP. If you do not sign the TLP, school staff will collaborate with you to resolve your concern. This may include having an administrator, department chair/ lead teacher, and or procedural support liaison (PSL) participate in the conversation. If necessary, an IEP meeting with relevant members of the team can be scheduled. If you choose not to sign the TLP, the outlined service(s) will still be offered and will be delivered, unless you choose to opt out of instruction.

Language Supports

Parent Information Phone Lines

Parent Information Phone Lines are available in eight languages to support families with information whose first language is not English.

- Amharic (አማርኛ): [571-423-4957](#)
- Arabic (العربية): [571-423-4952](#)
- Chinese (中文): [571-423-4953](#)
- Farsi (فارسی): [571-423-4954](#)
- Korean (한국어): [571-423-4951](#)

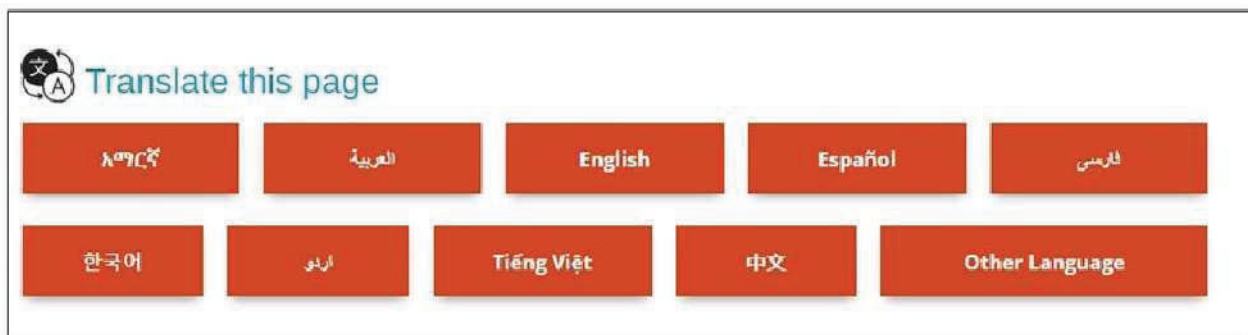
- Spanish (**español**): [571-423-4950](tel:571-423-4950)
- Urdu (**اردو**): [571-423-4955](tel:571-423-4955)
- Vietnamese (**Tiếng Việt**): [571-423-4956](tel:571-423-4956)

Translation Information

Information posted on the FCPS public website allows the user to select their preferred language, which then generates translated text on the web page. In the top left-hand corner, you will see an icon allowing the user to indicate their preferred language.



On some webpages, users may also see an area allowing them to select their preferred language.



Contact Information

If parent(s) or guardian(s) need further assistance, please reach out to the:

- [Procedural Support Liaison \(PSL\) assigned to their school](#)
- [Office of Due Process and Eligibility](#)
- [Office of Special Education Instruction](#)
- [Section 504 Information](#)
- Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education, Dawn Clements at ombudsman@fcps.edu
- Parent Resource Center at prc@fcps.edu or [703-204-3941](tel:703-204-3941)

May 11, 2020

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) will be providing a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information and tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Accommodating your Child's Learning Style

Does your child have executive functioning challenges? Is it difficult for your child to begin work, stay focused on tasks, manage time, or follow through on assignments or projects? Check out these great [executive functioning strategies](#).

Early Childhood Special Education

Early childhood special education teachers will be supporting distance learning through play activities. Some fun ideas:

- Help your child find five objects in your house that are blue. Ask your child what they found.
- Fill a container with 1- 2 inches of water and see which objects in your home sink or float.
- Play musical chairs – when the music stops, everyone finds a chair to sit in.
- Gather a few objects in your home and lay them out in front of your child. Ask your child to cover their eyes and remove an object. Ask them what's missing.

Prompting to Independence

Are you finding that you must prompt your child through everything? Are they waiting for you to do everything for them? Check out the [Promoting Independence tip sheet](#). Teaching independent skills improves quality of life, teaches constructive use of free time, and develops age appropriate interests.

Behavior Intervention Services

Looking for information on avoiding power struggles by minimizing distractions? Check out this [video to help your child be successful with instruction in the home environment](#).

Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Support

The Student Safety and Wellness Office offers virtual alcohol and other drug prevention support to all students through pyramid substance abuse specialists. Unfortunately, substance use and addiction don't stop for a pandemic. If you need support for your child or if you are trying to have conversations about addiction, drugs, and alcohol and need material, please feel free to reach out to the assigned Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist for your child's school or call [571-423-4270](#).

Helpful Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug (ATOD) Resources:

- [FCPS ATOD Resources](#)
- [How Smoking, Vaping and Drug Use Might Increase Risks from Covid-19](#)
- [Substance Abuse Community Resources](#)

Frequently Asked Question and Answer

Why are parents of special education students being asked to sign confidentiality agreements?

There are two separate notices for parents to consider.

1. The first notice does not require consent:
FCPS developed a Confidentiality Notice for parents/guardians related to the use of Blackboard Collaborate and Google Meet as online platforms used by Fairfax County Public Schools for distance learning. This notification includes information related to the disclosure of a student's personally identifiable information and guidelines and expectations to ensure that the confidentiality rights of all students are protected when live video sessions are used. Parents are not being asked to sign the Confidentiality Notice.
2. The second notice requires consent from parents:
Parents are asked to sign consent for some related services because of licensing requirements for teletherapy. When a physical therapist,

occupational therapist, speech-language pathologist, or school social worker works in a real-time, multimedia format, parental consent must be obtained for services to occur in this manner in accordance with applicable law and/or licensing. This includes video interaction with students/families and also special education meetings such as IEP, Re-evaluation, and Eligibility meetings.

Contact Information

If parent(s) or guardian(s) need further assistance, please reach out to the:

- [Procedural Support Liaison \(PSL\) assigned to their school](#)
- [Office of Due Process and Eligibility](#)
- [Office of Special Education Instruction](#)
- [Section 504 Information](#)
- Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education, Dawn Clements
at ombudsman@fcps.edu
- Parent Resource Center at prc@fcps.edu or [703-204-3941](tel:703-204-3941)

May 18, 2020

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) will be providing you with a regular electronic newsletter to provide updated information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Behavior Intervention Services

Offering Choices Reduces Frustration

Check out this [quick tip video on offering choices](#). This is especially useful for students who are having difficulty with challenging or non-preferred work. Building in choice, when possible, allows students to feel motivated. The strategies in this quick tip are best used:

- When transitioning to difficult tasks
- When transitioning to non-preferred tasks
- After presenting challenging or non-preferred tasks to reduce frustration

Parent Video Training

Presenting Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) video parent training for parents of students with Autism and other developmental disabilities! The ABA team has developed a [series of videos for parent training](#). The series starts with Developing Schedules and Routines within the home environment. The next part of the series will include “Walk with Me” strategies for taking walks outside and teaching your child to walk beside you.

Virtual Extended School Year (ESY) Services

FCPS will provide class-based Extended School Year (ESY) services virtually from June 29-July 24 to students, grades PreK thru 12, whose IEP team determines that the student qualifies for ESY in order for the student to receive benefits from his or her educational program during the regular school year. The IEP team must decide whether the benefits the child gained during the regular school year, prior to the COVID-19 shutdown, will be significantly jeopardized if the student does not receive ESY services.

Instruction will be provided through the distance learning model with synchronous sessions with students, learning materials available online, and packets sent through the mail to students. Specific information will be shared with families and school teams this week. Information will be shared on the [FCPS Extended School Year webpage](#) when it is available.

Suicide Prevention Training for Adults

Fairfax County provides free online suicide prevention training to educators, parents, and other adults working with youth through the [Kognito At-Risk training modules](#). The training allows you to enter a virtual environment and assume the role of an adult interacting with a young person. The interactive portion of the training allows you to choose actions and responses in order to receive real-time feedback on how well you are doing to engage the student in conversation and take appropriate actions. The one-hour training teaches adults how to differentiate between “normal” and “at-risk” behavior, as well as how to provide appropriate support and access resources within the community or on an emergency basis.

Visit Fairfax County’s website at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/>, enter “Kognito” in the search box, and scroll down to the bottom of the page to create an account to get started. Or, visit Kognito’s website at <https://fairfax.kognito.com/>.

Third Quarter Special Education Progress Reports

Due to the mandated COVID-19 school closures, special education services and data collection for third quarter progress reports ended on March 12, 2020. Based on the shortened timeframe for instruction, student progress may have been impacted. Teachers will use data collected prior to March 12, 2020, to complete IEP progress reports for third quarter. IEP Progress Reports will be emailed to parents no later than Friday, **May 22, 2020**. For students whose parents do not have an email address listed with FCPS, the FCPS Department of Special Services will send the progress reports via US mail. Special education students will not receive an IEP progress report for 4th quarter.

Contact Information

If parent(s) or guardian(s) need further assistance, please reach out to the:

- Procedural Support Liaison (PSL) assigned to their school
- Office of Due Process and Eligibility
- Office of Special Education Instruction
- Section 504 Information
- Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education, Dawn Clements
at ombudsman@fcps.edu
- Parent Resource Center at prc@fcps.edu or [703-204-3941](tel:703-204-3941)

May 26, 2020

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) will be providing you with a regular electronic newsletter to provide updated information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Special Education Instruction

Are you feeling like you are having to do everything for your son or daughter? Want to build independence at home? Check out this [video on building independence](#). This short video will outline how to be successful at teaching independence by prompting and fading your assistance over time.

Teaching social-emotional skills to young children is very important. [Resources to support families to help preschool age children identify and express their emotions](#) have been provided by the Center on the Social-Emotional Foundations for Early Learning.

Successful Strategies for Students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Children with ADHD continue to need structure and support during distance learning. How can a parent or caregiver help provide the support their child needs when learning at home? Check out [several strategies recommended by experts from Child Mind Institute](#).

Maintaining Wellness and Self-Care

During this time parents are balancing work, children being home and other stressors. It is more important than ever to implement strategies to cope with stress. Utilizing effective coping strategies supports your own mental health, but also models those skills for your child. Prioritizing your own well-being can benefit the whole family. Check out these resources on self-care:

- [Coping with Stress](#) from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention

- [Coping With the Coronavirus Crisis: Taking Care of Yourself](#) from the Child Mind Institute

Behavior Intervention Services

A good strategy for routines and activities that may seem difficult or are not preferred, is to break them down into smaller steps. Accomplishing each step will help your child or teen feel more successful as they work towards something that may be challenging. This helps to reduce frustration and increase motivation! Check out this [quick video on how to avoid upset or frustration](#) as students continue with digital learning this week. Consider breaking down tasks this week to decrease frustration or burn out and increase feelings of accomplishment!

Frequently Asked Questions

How will special education stakeholders be included in FCPS return to learn process?

The Superintendent has implemented a Reopening of School Task Force to develop possible scenarios to address the needs of all FCPS students, including those with disabilities. The group includes parent, teacher and administrator representatives. The initial plan will be shared with the School Board in June.

Contact Information

If parent(s) or guardian(s) need further assistance, please reach out to the:

- [Procedural Support Liaison \(PSL\) assigned to their school](#)
- [Office of Due Process and Eligibility](#)
- [Office of Special Education Instruction](#)
- [Section 504 Information](#)
- Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education, Dawn Clements at ombudsman@fcps.edu
- Parent Resource Center at prc@fcps.edu or [703-204-3941](tel:703-204-3941)

June 1, 2020

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) will be providing you with a regular electronic newsletter to provide updated information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Three to Succeed!

The [Fairfax County Youth Survey](#), which is administered to all 6, 8, 10, and 12 graders provides a wealth of information about a variety of topics related to our youth that influence their physical and mental well-being. Data from this survey suggests that the more assets young people have, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of risky behaviors or show mental health symptoms. It only takes three assets to make a significant difference! Everyone plays a role in ensuring that children are thriving in Fairfax County. Parents can provide their children with the following assets; be available to help, know where your children are, involve your children in family decision-making, show respect for all family members, and communicate a clear disapproval of drug and alcohol use. [Learn more about building assets in your child.](#)

Special Education Instruction

- With all the talk about literacy skills for younger children, parents of older students may be wondering about adolescent literacy. Visit [AdLit.org](#) for helpful information on students in grades 4-12, including a [great article on the needs of struggling adolescent readers](#).
- [Bedtime Math](#) has engaging, research-proven after-school math activities for families to use.

Parent Self-Care

At this point in the school year, you may be having trouble figuring out how to continue to support your child's learning needs along with other family, work and personal responsibilities. That's understandable! However, you are on the home stretch. Check out the article "[Feeling Overwhelmed with Parenting](#)

Demands" for key steps and strategies you can use right away to decrease your stress level and feelings of being overwhelmed by parenting duties.

Frequently Asked Question

My child has required extended school year (ESY) services in past years, however, the IEP team has not yet discussed ESY for summer 2020. What should I do?

This summer, ESY class-based services will be provided virtually to students **June 29-July 24**. The instruction will be provided through the distance learning model with synchronous sessions with students, learning materials available online, and packets sent through the mail to students. Contact your child's case manager and request an IEP meeting to review data and discuss whether the student requires ESY for summer 2020.

Contact Information

If parent(s) or guardian(s) need further assistance, please reach out to the:

- [Procedural Support Liaison \(PSL\) assigned to their school](#)
- [Office of Due Process and Eligibility](#)
- [Office of Special Education Instruction](#)
- [Section 504 Information](#)
- Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education, Dawn Clements at ombudsman@fcps.edu
- Parent Resource Center at prc@fcps.edu or [703-204-3941](tel:703-204-3941)

June 8, 2020

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) will be providing you with a regular electronic newsletter to provide updated information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Read With Your Child

My Hero is You is a book written for children around the world affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This book is intended to be read to children aged 6-11 years, by a parent, caregiver or teacher. The feedback of more than 1700 children, parents, caregivers and teachers from around the world about how they were coping with the COVID-19 outbreak was considered during the development process (© 2020 World Health Organization). [View translated versions of the book.](#)

Supporting Your Child During Stressful Times

Race and equity issues continue to be at the forefront of the news and social media. Your child and family may be experiencing anger, fear, sadness and/or a variety of other emotions over the killing of another person of color. Parents may be struggling with how to protect their children from viewing violence while also discussing systematic racism in America. Feelings of uncertainty are particularly heightened for communities and families struggling to understand and cope with hate-based violence, and discriminatory or threatening actions or speech.

Parents can access this article "[Supporting Vulnerable Students in Stressful Times: Tips for Parents](#)" to review ways to understand the effect of stressors and trauma; promote a sense of safety for your child, and influence how your child reacts to the stress associated with this current climate. Also, you can reach out to your child's counselor, school psychologist and/or school social worker for further support for your child.

Special Education Instruction

- Your child's brain grows fastest from birth to age 5. [Vroom](#) is a free app that can be downloaded to provide you with daily activities and tips to support your child's development.
- Does your child get angry very quickly? Do they have no "wait" time? Think about teaching your child a calming strategy. Calming strategies help students learn to stop, wait, and think prior to a tantrum. Check out our [Beginning Self-Regulation Activity](#). This will help parents in teaching calming strategies in a systematic way so that students learn on their own to regulate their emotions.

Frequent Asked Questions

I believe my student has a disability and the school told me there is a "Summer Clinic." What is that and how can I get my child tested over the summer?

FCPS has a requirement to conduct Child Find all year to identify children who may have a disability and who may be entitled to special education services. The Summer Clinic program is implemented at two schools over the summer and staff collaborate with school-based staff to complete evaluations, or Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) to meet regulations. This year's Summer Clinic will be conducted virtually and runs from June 22, 2020 to August 7, 2020. For more information about summer clinic, please contact your child's school administrator or email dpehelp@fcps.edu.

Contact Information

If parent(s) or guardian(s) need further assistance, please reach out to the:

- [Procedural Support Liaison \(PSL\) assigned by school](#)
- [Office of Due Process and Eligibility](#)
- [Office of Special Education Instruction](#)
- [Section 504 Information](#)
- Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education, Dawn Clements at ombudsman@fcps.edu
- Parent Resource Center at prc@fcps.edu or [703-204-3941](tel:703-204-3941)

July 6, 2020

Dear FCPS Families,

FCPS has been working quickly to plan for the various options for educational programming that are available to families as we anticipate the reopening of schools this fall. During these unprecedented times we are continually looking to maximize efforts to engage and support students receiving special education services.

From March 2020 through the end of the 2019-20 school year, schools were ordered closed by Governor Northam. FCPS offered Temporary Learning Plans (TLPs) to students who would normally receive special education services through the end of the 2019-20 school year in order to assist them in accessing the additional learning opportunities that were available to FCPS students.

During the 2020-21 school year, all students will receive at least some of their education virtually, but we are anticipating FCPS schools will be open. We will not be offering TLPs as we open in the fall since we are reopening schools. Consequently, once school staff return to work, they will be reaching out to you to schedule an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting or seek your input on an IEP addendum for your child. School staff will need to discuss special education services, including related services, for your child for the upcoming school year based on whether you've chosen in-school instruction with social distancing or full-time online instruction for your child this fall.

Once students are back in school, IEP team members will review individual student data to determine needed interventions or supplemental instruction based on IEP goals since last school year. FCPS staff is currently reviewing various options to support COVID recovery education and remediation for all students, to include specific strategies and programs for students with disabilities. Staff is exploring the possibility of providing additional in-school learning opportunities during the school week for any student in need of additional supports.

The Virginia Department of Education has advised school divisions that it will be providing additional guidance in the weeks to come regarding the reopening of schools this fall. Once that guidance is published and additional

information is gathered related to in-school attendance and classroom space, we will be able to provide more details to you regarding what the return to school will look like for your child.

I want to assure you that FCPS is currently consulting with the Fairfax County Health Department for guidance on protocols should a student or staff member become ill with COVID-19, cleaning procedures, health screening protocols, and the necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to ensure a safe environment for students and staff. All staff who are specifically assigned to individual students with significant needs will be trained/retrained on safely managing personal care duties and maintaining staff personal safety.

We know there are many unanswered questions and we are working to gather information as quickly as possible. The Department of Special Services will return to sending a regular newsletter to families of students with disabilities beginning the week of July 13 in addition to updating the special education frequently asked questions document on the FCPS special education webpage. Additional information about the Return to School Plan is located here: <https://www.fcps.edu/returntoschool/return-school-questions-and-answers>. As we continue to move through this unprecedented time, we appreciate the continued collaboration to support the educational programming for your child.

Sincerely,

Teresa Johnson
Assistant Superintendent
Department of Special Services

July 16, 2020

Dear Families,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) is providing a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your child as you prepare for the return to school.

Fostering Resilience in Your Child

Resiliency is the capacity to overcome adversity by responding in healthy and productive ways to successfully meet life's challenges. When we foster resilience, children are able to bounce back from stress, trauma, and even daily challenges. Teaching these skills helps children to be braver, more curious, and better able to problem solve and cope. [Learn more about building resilience in your child.](#)

Supporting Your Child's Safety and Wellness

Many children with special needs, including children and young adults on the autism spectrum, will require explicit instruction about how they and their loved ones may remain safe and healthy during the pandemic. The Autism Society of America has developed a COVID-19 toolkit that includes social stories about how to wear a mask, what "social distancing" means, and ways for kids to play and participate in activities safely. [Learn more about these resources.](#) [View additional helpful resources on mask wearing, handwashing, and ways to adjust to change.](#)

Summer Learning Fun

Neighborhood and Community Services Connects is a virtual platform for 1st through 12th graders of all abilities and their parents. It is designed to emulate the experience of visiting a Community or Teen Center. The platform features original programming such as self-directed activities and videos led by staff members, as well as on-demand resources for youth and parents in five categories: adapted virtual learning, culture, academics, health and wellness, and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEAM). New content is added every Monday. [View the NCS Connects resource.](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

How will 504 plans be implemented in the online and in-person options?

It is expected that 504 Plans are to be implemented, as written, for students in both the in-person and virtual learning options. If a student's current 504 Plan needs to be modified for any reason, including the need to further refine accommodations/services to address the virtual learning environment, a 504 Plan meeting will need to be held to document any needed changes. In most cases, the child's school counselor also serves as their 504 case manager. Parents may contact their child's counselor to address any concerns or questions regarding 504 Plan/services. If parents wish to discuss concerns prior to the return of counselors in August, they are encouraged to contact the school principal. Additionally, the FCPS Section 504 specialist, Kathy Murphy (kamurphy@fcps.edu), is available to consult with families and staff.

What are the plans for Early Childhood Special Education and Preschool Autism Classrooms (PAC)?

During the school year, teachers will provide intensive small group and large group instruction to address IEP goals and curriculum during face-to-face learning. Teachers will reach out to parents for coaching sessions to address natural learning opportunities in the home. Additionally, other asynchronous activities will be provided for students to access. During online learning, teachers will instruct students in both large and small groups virtually to address IEP goals and curriculum. Both synchronous and asynchronous learning will be provided along with weekly coaching sessions for parents.

Will special education teachers and related service providers be instructing my child in a small group or will it be individualized?

Special education teachers and related service providers will be providing instruction in groups and one-on-one as appropriate for students' goals and scheduling. For students who receive related services who selected the in-person option for instruction, the service will be scheduled as part of one of their days in school. The service may be provided individually or as part of a small group. Appropriate PPE and social distancing will be observed. In some cases, in-person services may be supplemented by virtual services during asynchronous instruction days.

How will common accommodations such as movement breaks, fidgets, flexible seating, etc. be administered in online and in-person options?

If a student requires an accommodation such as a fidget or movement cushion in person, those will be provided to the student and not shared between students. If those same accommodations are required in the home environment, we will be sending those required supplies home as well.

Contact Information

If parent(s) or guardian(s) need further assistance, please reach out to the:

- [Procedural Support Liaison \(PSL\) assigned by school](#)
- [Office of Due Process and Eligibility](#)
- [Office of Intervention and Prevention](#)
- [Office of Special Education Instruction](#)
- [Section 504 Information](#)
- Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education, Dawn Clements at ombudsman@fcps.edu
- Parent Resource Center at prc@fcps.edu or [703-204-3941](tel:703-204-3941)

July 30, 2020

Dear Families,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) is providing a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your child as you prepare for the return to school.

Healthy Minds

Healthy Minds is a blog for parents, educators, and community-based providers who are interested in supporting student mental health and wellness. As a part of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, the FCPS Office of Intervention and Prevention Services develops posts with timely information for all. Recent topics have included; Social Emotional Learning, Countering Stigma and Racism, and Building Resilience to Handle Challenging Times. Healthy Minds includes tips and strategies for increasing wellness and resiliency, as well as fostering success at home, at school and in the community. New content is posted weekly. [Visit the Healthy Minds Blog](#)

Summer Learning Fun

Summer Reading Program (Fairfax County Library) - The library helps make reading fun by providing tools, access and incentives during its [Summer Reading Adventure](#). The Summer Reading Adventure runs June 12 through August 14 and invites all children and teens—birth through high school—to read for fun over the summer. The theme in 2020 is “Imagine Your Story!” This summer the program will be virtual.

The Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE's) Assistive Technology Network has developed resources targeted to parents with companion information for teachers. All materials are free and may be shared with educators or families. Resources include:

- [Assistive Technology Quick Tips Introductory Video](#)
- [Five Quick Tips for Families on Using Assistive Technology to Support Instruction](#)

Tools for Creating an Active Home

The [Online Physical Education Network \(OPEN\)](#) has many resources and ideas for physical activity while at home. Families can find games and calendars to use, and there are also ways for teachers and parents to partner together to provide opportunities for physical movement and social and emotional learning.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How will my child, who receives adapted physical education, access that service when school opens virtually in the fall?

A: Adapted physical education teachers will consult and collaborate with health and physical education teachers to modify activities/lessons to meet student needs and problem solve around challenges that may occur across learning environments. Additionally, they will develop instructional activities and strategies that support student success in an online environment. Questions can be directed to the student's adapted physical education teacher.

Q: Will there be online social skills groups? How will social/emotional IEP goals be addressed in the online format?

A: School Counselors, School Psychologists, and School Social Workers have been providing services and support in asynchronous and synchronous formats. Often these are in collaboration with teachers and other clinical staff. Clinicians will need to assess online time as students reenter school. Social emotional and mental health resources will be available to support students this fall. Schools may use morning meetings/ check-ins, intervention blocks, or advisory periods to provide instruction on social emotional topics using new and existing curriculum. FCPS instructional staff will have required professional development that focuses on understanding mental wellness and appropriate tools to support students. Clinical and counseling staff will provide mental health support and resources, including group counseling and consultation for students and families as needed as well as individual counseling with students and related consultation with families and staff.

IEP goals in this area are considered areas of instruction and led by the special education teacher. The clinicians and general education teachers support the goals as part of the student's educational team. These goals will

be addressed in a manner similar to academic goals and as they would be during in person instruction.

Contact Information

If parent(s) or guardian(s) need further assistance, please reach out to the:

- [Procedural Support Liaison \(PSL\) assigned by school](#)
- [Office of Due Process and Eligibility](#)
- [Office of Intervention and Prevention](#)
- [Office of Special Education Instruction](#)
- [Section 504 Information](#)
- Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education, Dawn Clements
at ombudsman@fcps.edu
- Parent Resource Center at prc@fcps.edu or [703-204-3941](tel:703-204-3941)

August 14, 2020

Dear Families,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) is providing a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your child as you prepare for the return to school.

Social Emotional Learning

You may have been hearing a lot about Social Emotional Learning or SEL and providing SEL instruction lately. What is it and why is it important? The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines SEL as “how children and adults learn to understand and manage emotions, set goals, show empathy for others, establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” Although SEL has been around for years, it is gaining momentum since it provides numerous benefits to students. SEL will be a major focus for our staff and students this school year. [Learn more about SEL at home.](#)

Family Guide to At-Home Learning

The CEEDAR (Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform) Center at the University of Florida has developed a guide with practical strategies that work for helping students of all ages who may be struggling with an at-home learning task. Families may find these strategies useful when helping children complete various reading, math, and/or behavioral tasks at home. [View the Family Guide to At-Home Learning.](#)

Building Independence at Home

Are you looking to help your child do more things on their own? Want to know how to teach this? Check out Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

Distance Videos on Response Forms: Building on Independence on the [ABA Website](#).

Simplify Home Life

Simplifying a child's daily life is one of the best ways to restore a sense of balance in parenting. By simplifying their toys and environment, their schedules, and the sense of rhythm and regularity in the home, you allow them the grace to be a child. You allow your connection and your values to gain purpose, to rise above the noise of acceleration and excess, the drive for "the next big thing" to do, have, or attain. Simplifying acknowledges how a child comes to understand the world -- through play and interaction, not through adult concerns and information. The pressure is off when childhood is no longer seen as an "enrichment opportunity" but instead as an unfolding experience - an ecology - with its own pace and natural systems." *(excerpted from Simplicity Parenting: Using the Extraordinary Power of Less to Raise Calmer, Happier, and More Secure Kids, p.165, Kim John Payne with Lisa M. Ross)*

Frequently Asked Questions

What will my child's weekly schedule look like?

Students will receive virtual instruction 5 days per week. The week will include 4 days of live, face-to-face online instruction with teachers Tuesday through Friday. Mondays will be used for independent learning with some students identified for teacher-directed specialized instruction/intervention.

At the elementary level, students will receive real-time, interactive instruction Tuesday through Friday. The elementary day will also consist of additional small group instruction, intervention supports, and independent learning activities assigned to students.

Middle and high school students will follow an A/B block schedule.

Teachers will have planning time on Mondays and will provide intervention supports for selected students that we hope can be provided in-person.

Individual schools will communicate with parents regarding schedules and other information to prepare for online learning.

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- [Office of Special Education Instruction](#)
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August 27, 2020

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) publishes a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Return to School – Supports for Students with Disabilities

Check out the [FCPS web page for information on distance learning supports for students with disabilities](#). This page covers a wide range of topics including information for parents of students grades PreK-12 accessing instruction in school-based programs as well as information around nontraditional school programs, public day and career center programs, homebound and home-based instruction, and multi-agency services. Special education procedural information including virtual IEP information for parents is also included. Lastly, the website includes a list of contacts organized by topic, a link to the special education Roles and Responsibilities, and the special education Return to School FAQs.

Summer Reading

There are many online resources with eBooks for you and your children to read as we finish up summer. Many students used MyOn during the year and it is still available for you and your children to use during the summer (this resource requires log-on information) at www.myon.com. This program and many more are available on the [FCPS Library Resources website](#). If you don't remember your password for MyOn or the other resources which are available, you can contact the librarian at your child's school.

Virtual Attendance

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) requires all schools to take attendance during virtual learning this school year. FCPS must take

attendance Mondays through Fridays, unless there is a student holiday on a Monday. Students aged 5-18 must attend school every day school is in session, unless they are excused from school. To support this, parents must report absences to school each time the student may be absent.

If my child has a chronic illness, and may require a long-term absence, what should I do?

Contact the school office with that information. The office staff person will ensure that the information is provided to appropriate personnel, such as a public health nurse, administrator, school counselor, or social worker for follow up with you. Keep the front office updated on any changes to your student's medical status. The school team may develop a plan which includes alternatives to the normal schedule, as your student's needs require.

Frequently Asked Question

Q: As a parent of a child with special needs, I am anxious about school beginning online this fall. What can I do to help my family adjust and thrive?

A: We all want what is best for our children. But during times of greater challenge and stress, it is important not to forget that we must take good care of ourselves in order to be fully present and able to take care of our children. One of the silver linings of this time is that it is causing us to adjust our thinking and our routines. Consider what is truly essential, and what can be set aside (at least temporarily). What gives you and your family feelings of joy and peace?

For practical tips that will help you embrace self-care while also supporting your child's needs, take a look at the following article by a health psychologist, [Self-Care Tips for Parents and Caregivers from a Health Psychologist](#).

Virtual Individualized Education Program Information Documents

There are three Virtual Individualized Education Program (IEP) information documents (Early Childhood, Elementary, and Middle and High) available to parents of students with disabilities on the [Return to School-Supports for Students with Disabilities site](#). The purpose of these documents is to provide information for parents of students with disabilities on the process of amending a student's IEP or holding an annual or initial IEP meeting during the virtual start to school. Many student IEPs may be able to be implemented as already written and others may need amendment. You may access these documents on the [Return to School-Supports for Students with Disabilities site](#).

JLARC's K-12 Special Education Study and Parent Survey

Through December 2020, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC), at <http://jlarc.virginia.gov/>, the non-partisan research and oversight agency of the Virginia state legislature, is conducting a study of Virginia's K-12 special education services. In addition to other topics, the study team is reviewing Virginia's special education identification and eligibility determination processes, inclusion of students with disabilities in academic and extracurricular experiences, individualized education program (IEP) development and implementation, and the state's special education dispute resolution services, such as due process hearings and state complaint services.

As part of this research, the JLARC researchers are seeking input from many different stakeholders, including parents of K-12 students with disabilities, special education teachers, representatives of local special education advisory committees, division-level special education administrators, state-level special education administrators, and special education staff in other states, and national experts.

To ensure that JLARC researchers are able to obtain input from parents of K-12 students with disabilities across the state—who are key stakeholders for the study—they have developed an online survey. The survey is designed for parents, foster parents, and legal guardians of students who have received K-12 special education services at any time over the past three years.

The survey will be available through Wednesday, September 9, 2020.

In English:

To complete the survey, please use the following

link: <http://survey.jlarc.virginia.gov/Survey.aspx?s=d045c54ad7de4326a05ac43eb4079634>

If you have questions, please contact JLARC staff at SpecialEdSurvey@jlarc.virginia.gov.

En Español:

La encuesta de JLARC para los padres de los alumnos en Virginia que reciben los servicios de educación especial está disponible en español.

Para acceder a más información y completar la encuesta,

visite <http://survey.jlarc.virginia.gov/Survey.aspx?s=3f72909b2fd04ae3b3c58b37d78b58d9>

Para preguntas acerca de la encuesta, por favor comuníquese con SpecialEdSurvey@jlarc.virginia.gov.

If you would prefer to access the survey from the JLARC's website, you can follow this link: <http://jlarc.virginia.gov/parent-survey.asp>

Contact Information

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- [Office of Due Process and Eligibility](#)

- [Office of Intervention and Prevention](#)
- [Office of Special Education Instruction](#)
- [Section 504 Information](#)
- Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education, Dawn Clements
at ombudsman@fcps.edu
- Parent Resource Center at prc@fcps.edu or [703-204-3941](tel:703-204-3941)

September 10, 2020

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) publishes a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Technology Resources for Families

(Reprint from [August 31, 2020 News You Choose](#))

Technology Support for Families

Access videos and resources to help your student in the virtual learning environment on the [Technology Support for Families webpage](#).

New Virtual Learning Tech Tips Videos

New videos have been posted on the virtual learning playlist. They include tips on signing in, locating assignments, and submitting assignments in Google Classroom, as well as how to use Blackboard Collaborate Ultra (BBCU). Go to the [Virtual Learning - Tech Tips playlist](#).

Information Regarding Community Work Experience (CWE) during the Covid 19 Pandemic

Many of our secondary students with individualized education programs (IEPs) are enrolled in career development instruction, which includes classes such as Work Awareness and Transition (WAT) and Education for Employment for the Office (EFEO) as well as Davis and Pulley Career Centers and the Secondary Transition to Employment Programs (STEP). The 100% virtual start to the school year will also extend to our students' community-based work experiences until reassessments of work availability and conditions are made prior to the end of the first quarter. This decision is based primarily on the health and safety of our students, their families, and FCPS staff, as well as the ability of our employer partners to provide student access to work sites throughout Fairfax County.

Last school year, 1,105 students enrolled in these programs and classes, completed work experiences at 398 employer work sites. Even in cases

where a few employers are willing to receive students this fall, continuity and student equity across programs is extremely important. We will continue to work toward the eventual return to work sites. In the meantime, the teachers in these programs have been given work-readiness and transition curricula and work-based learning resources to support virtual instruction, and staff training is on-going.

Considerations for Setting up a Functional Workspace at Home

Establishing a designated workspace when learning from home may help support participation in school-based activities. When selecting a location and set-up, you may want to consider the following:

How is your child sitting?

Seating plays an important role in supporting students' body position during a desk or tabletop task. Consider the following:

- If the chair being used is too big, consider using a footrest or a heavy box under feet or placing a pillow behind his/her back to provide adequate support
- If the chair is too low, consider having your child sit on a booster seat or chair cushion so they can comfortably rest their arms on the table when engaging in a task such as writing
- Consider placing the laptop/monitor on a stack of books at eye level when not typing or using the touch pad
- Consider flexible seating options for other learning activities, such as prone (lying on his/her belly), standing, or lying on his/her back with a pillow under knees
- Consider integrating movement and stretching breaks between seated activities

What can they see and hear?

Visual and auditory distractions may make it more difficult for a student to pay attention and concentrate on learning activities. Consider the following:

- Turning off electronic devices that are not being used for learning (i.e. tv)

- Try positioning a desk or table to reduce visual distractions; if working at a kitchen table, consider choosing a seat at the table that reduces distractions
- Consider using a tri-fold cardboard divider to create a “cubby”; this can also be created from an empty cardboard box
- If possible, remove distracting items from the workspace during worktime (i.e. toys)
- Consider using the 20/20/20 rule to help reduce eye strain: Every twenty minutes, look 20 ft away, for 20 seconds
- Consider lighting sources such as natural light and task lighting (i.e. gooseneck lamp); blinds or curtains may help reduce glare when using a computer
- Consider using headphones at times to reduce distraction from voices or noise in the home or focus on a teacher’s voice during synchronous learning

Can he/she easily find the materials needed for learning?

Organizing materials and supplies and choosing a location that is easy for your child to access can help support his/her participation in learning activities. Consider the following:

- Place materials/supplies on a small bookshelf or in plastic drawers next to or nearby the work area; consider labeling locations/bins with words or pictures so your child can find and return materials to a consistent place
- If using a kitchen table for learning activities, consider placing materials in a box or basket that can be brought to the table each day and put away when learning activities are finished
- If using containers to organize supplies, consider if your child is able to open and close containers easily (i.e. plastic bags, zipper pouches, pencil boxes)

Additional resources on setting up a functional workspace at home:

- [American Occupational Therapy Association \(AOTA\) Back-to-School Guide](#)
- [AOTA Home Office Ergonomic Tips](#)

Behavior Support and Resources

Encouraging Positive Behaviors At Home Series presented by Behavior Intervention Services and hosted by Parent Resource Center provides parent training opportunities monthly across a variety of topics in behavior strategies for home. [Visit the Parent Resource Center Page for more information](#) or [register for the *Encouraging Positive Behaviors At Home Series*](#).

September is Suicide Prevention Month

We can all help to prevent suicide. Youth who are contemplating suicide frequently give warning signs. Do not be afraid to ask about suicidal thoughts. Never take warning signs lightly. Warning signs may include; suicidal threats, giving away prized possessions, increased risk taking, increased drug and/or alcohol use and a preoccupation with death or dying. When talking to your child about suicide, remain calm, ask directly about suicide, provide constant supervision, remove any means of self-harm from the home, and provide reassurance that there is help. If you are concerned about your child, seek help from school or community mental health resources and provide constant supervision to your child. School counselors, psychologists and social workers are available to provide support at every Fairfax County Public School.

Additional resources on suicide prevention:

- [How We Can All Prevent Suicide](#)
- [Preventing Youth Suicide](#)

Frequently Asked Question:

Q: My child has a 504 Plan. With schools opening virtually, how will the Plan be followed and monitored?

A: If you have questions about your child's 504 Plan, please reach out to the school counselor to discuss Plan implementation during virtual learning. In many cases, 504 Plans as currently written may be effectively put into place and adapted to online learning. School staff will be reviewing your child's Plan and should be in touch with you during the first days and weeks of school to ensure that your child's needs are being met.

Contact Information

If parent(s) or guardian(s) need further assistance, please reach out to the:

- [Procedural Support Liaison \(PSL\) assigned by school](#)
- [Office of Due Process and Eligibility](#)
- [Office of Intervention and Prevention](#)
- [Office of Special Education Instruction](#)
- [Section 504 Information](#)
- Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education, Dawn Clements at ombudsman@fcps.edu
- Parent Resource Center at prc@fcps.edu or [703-204-3941](tel:703-204-3941)

September 24, 2020

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) publishes a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Supporting Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic

[Tips and Tricks to Support Your Child's Learning at Home](#)

Topics include a wide range of topics including getting students ready to learn at home and tips for supporting students with reading and math. These resources are from the IRIS Center at Vanderbilt University.

Behavior Support for Virtual Learning

[Quick Tip on Routines](#)

Virtual Learning is well under way! We know that staying on top of foundational structures is key to success for students and families during virtual learning. To learn more about strategies for virtual learning at home, check out this quick tip video on routines.

Social and Emotional Support

Many parents are concerned about their child's social and emotional well-being during the pandemic. Children and young adults may be facing a variety of challenges at this time, including changes in routine, adjusting to virtual learning, and possibly experiencing trauma or feelings of insecurity.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed a clearinghouse of resources for parents to help them address their children's mental wellness during the pandemic: [COVID-19 Parental Resource Kit: Ensuring Children and Young People's Social, Emotional, and Mental Well-being](#).

Who to Go to with Questions

As we embark on distance learning, students and caregivers will have questions and issues that arise that they have not experienced before. The table below provides some of the most common types of issues or questions that may be anticipated and indicates who to contact for help. Email is the best way to reach staff during distance learning. <https://www.fcps.edu/return-school/supports-students-disabilities>

For questions about

Contact

Specific course, assignment, or learning resource

Teacher

Supports or accommodations

Special education case manager or 504
School Based Coordinator

Supports or accommodations for English learners

ESOL teacher

Problem with an FCPS-issued laptop

Teacher will submit support ticket for
student

Personal or social emotional concern

School Psychologist or School Social
Worker

Other issue related to distance learning

Principal or assistant principal

Help to resolve concerns, problems, complaints,
and other student-related issues

Office of the Family and Student
Ombudsman (ombudsman@fcps.edu)

Special education procedural questions, assistance
with IEPs, due process or other dispute resolution
processes, assistance with complaints for students
with disabilities or students with 504 plans

[Office of Special Education Procedural
Support](#) (includes Multi-Agency Services,
Due Process & Eligibility (DPE)

Special education instructional supports, behavior
intervention, related services, assistive technology,
and career and transition services

[Office of Special Education Instruction](#)

Healthy Minds Podcast

If you're looking for tips and strategies to support your child's mental health and wellness from home, check out the new [Healthy Minds Podcast](#). Guests include school psychologists, school

social workers and others from our community who support the well-being of students across the county. Each week you will hear from guests, and hopefully, take away information that will help you support your children, friends, and even yourself in maintaining wellness. You can listen to the [Healthy Minds Podcast](#) using your favorite podcast app on your phone or by visiting <https://www.fcps.edu/blog/healthy-minds-podcast>.

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October 8, 2020

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) publishes a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Updated Webpage for DHH (Deaf/Hard of Hearing)

Virtual Learning Tool Supports

Technology support videos available in American Sign Language (ASL), Cued Speech, and Spanish from FCPS Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) Services.

Audiology Services

Audiology Services offers distance learning tips and device support for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Domestic Violence Awareness Month has been observed nationally in October, bringing light to the issue of domestic violence and its impact on victims, survivors and families. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, one in three women and one in four men have been victims of physical violence by a partner within their lifetime. If you or someone you know is in an unhealthy relationship, there is help. You can support a friend or family member being abused in many ways. Learn how at the [Fairfax County Domestic and Sexual Violence Services 24-Hour Hotline 703-360-7273](#). If you are in need of help for your child, you can also contact the counselor, social worker or psychologist at your school.

Return-To-Learn Tips for Special Education Parents

Discuss and plan the changes in your child's daily routine that will happen once in person school starts. You can even begin practicing your new schedule, focusing on morning and evening routines, and begin implementing them now well in advance of the first day. Consider having your child practice wearing a face mask for extended periods of time to become more comfortable and familiar with long term usage.

Parent FAQs

FCPS is so grateful to parents and caregivers who have been providing tremendous support to their children during this challenging time. While the school year has been in full swing for several weeks now, you may continue to have questions about distance learning, assessment,

technology, or a host of other school-related topics. [Find answers to FCPS parents' frequently asked questions.](#)

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Return-To-Learn Tips for Special Education Parents

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October 22, 2020

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) publishes a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) Update

For students in grades 3-11 who are being instructed in the Aligned Standards of Learning (ASOL), the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) will occur for the 2020-2021 school year. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) recognizes the current educational situation and is aware some students may be accessing instruction through an online format. Therefore, VDOE will be providing flexibility in collecting evidence for VAAP for the 2020-2021 school year.

Preparing for School Routines: Priming

Priming is a strategy to help students preview situations before they occur and helps events become more predictable. Priming can occur at home or in the classroom. Some students, who need routine and predictability, are more successful when they are prepared for what's coming. It is most effective when it is built in as a part of the student's routine. Priming supports the behavioral and academic success of students. Positive reinforcement can be incorporated into school and home routines when the student is successful with priming.

Priming helps to:

1. Promote student success.
2. Become familiar with the materials/expectations.
3. Provide predictability about the information or activity to help reduce frustration.

Elementary Priming Tools

- Visual Routines
- Checklists
- Social Scripts

Secondary Priming Tools

- Checklists
- Agendas
- Student Schedule
- Written routines

“COVID Fatigue”

Given the level of uncertainty and the many changes we have had to adjust to over the past several months, you may be feeling symptoms of “COVID Fatigue.” COVID fatigue can include feelings of low mood, exhaustion, and increasing tendencies to engage in risky or unhealthy behaviors. You may feel burned out or depleted. If you or your loved ones are experiencing these sorts of feelings, there are ways to cope:

- Recharge using mindfulness practices
- Prioritize movement and physical activity
- Accept that life will continue to be challenging for some time
- Engage in activities that are satisfying and meaningful to you

[View additional tips on coping during the pandemic.](#)

FCPS Wellness Conference

The FCPS 7th Annual Mental Health and Wellness Conference was virtual this year. The conference featured multiple keynote speakers from across the country who addressed social emotional learning and resiliency. FCPS continued the partnerships with Kaiser Permanente, INOVA, and Our Minds Matter. INOVA hosted the Act on Addiction Summit. Our Minds Matter hosted two sessions for students. They provided great strategies for self-care and

mindfulness. All virtual sessions were recorded and are available on the [YouTube Playlist for the 2020 FCPS Mental Health and Wellness Conference](#).

November 5, 2020

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) publishes a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Behavior Intervention Services

We know how valuable predictability can be for our students, especially as families start to prepare for students to return to in-person learning. Check out this quick tip video that highlights a few strategies to help students get comfortable with wearing a mask and social distancing: [Preparing for Returning to In-Person Tips for Parents/Guardians](#)

Having Conversations About Current Events

Discussing current events provides opportunities for learning as well as challenges to the well-being of students, staff, and our community. Having conversations with your child about the things that they may see on the news or hear their friends discuss is important and valuable. Start by asking what your child already knows about a specific topic and follow their lead. It is also beneficial to share with your child that you are available to answer questions. If you don't have all of the answers that is okay. Discussion topics are a personal decision and their age and development should be taken into account. Tell the truth about a topic, but share only as much as they need to know. There are also times that it is important to limit what they read and watch. As a parent you can set limits so that they are not constantly exposed to information that may be inaccurate or bothersome. Be sure to watch for stress related to things going on in their environment, especially looking for changes in their behavior, excessive worrying, or fear of being around others. If you are concerned about your child, remember that you can reach out to your

child's school counselor, psychologist or social worker. These resources can be located on the school website.

Emotional Literacy: Using Feeling Faces

The [Feeling Faces Visual Cards](#) can be used to assist children in learning emotional literacy. Understanding their feelings and the feelings of others is an important skill that young children must learn. These visuals can be used in a variety of ways to support children's emotional literacy and vocabulary.

Balancing Your Child's Needs

As a parent with a special-needs child, you may be feeling additional pressures to ensure that you are providing appropriate support for learning in the home.

As you strive to assist your child, the following tips may come in handy:

- If there is another adult in the home who can assist with supporting your child during distance learning, set a schedule for each of you so that you are able to shift gears at certain times, to allow you time to address other responsibilities, as well.
- It is likely that you or another adult will not always be immediately available to observe your child throughout the synchronous online instruction. Instead, plan on checking in when you can, and let your child know when you see that they are paying attention and engaged in their work.
- Partner with your child's teacher. Ask for feedback on their day-to-day learning, and make sure that you follow up by praising your child for their efforts.

For more ideas about how to take care of yourself and also support your child's learning while at home, take a look at the article "[How Parents Can](#)

[Support Children With Special Needs During Distance Learning](#)". This article was written by a parent who is also a school psychologist.

November 9, 2020

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) publishes a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

On November 16, the following students are scheduled to return to in-person, cohort learning as part of Group 5:

- Early Head Start (infants and toddlers), PreK (three and four year old students), Kindergarten
- Students with Intensive Support Needs who meet the following criteria
 - 50% or more of the student's core content courses (i.e. core math, core English/language arts, core history/social science and core science classes) provided in special education settings;
 - Instructionally, student functions multiple grades below current grade level and 50% or more of instruction is modified;
 - AND the student meets one or more of the following:
 - Comprehensive needs across academic areas
 - Student has a primary disability of intellectual disabilities, learning disability, Autism, or multiple disabilities
 - Reading and writing scores below the 10th percentile on standardized assessments compared to same-aged peers
 - Deficits in adaptive skills, social communication, and restrictive and repetitive behaviors
 - Difficulty with working memory
 - Difficulty with receptive and/or expressive language
 - Has additional adult supervision throughout the school day in all areas of the building
- Vision Program at Robinson Secondary School and Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing (DHH) Programs at Canterbury Woods Elementary School,

Frost Middle School, and Woodson High School (students with 50 percent or more of core content areas in special education settings)

On November 30, the following students are scheduled to return to in-person, cohort learning as part of Group 6:

- Grades 1-2
- Davis & Pulley Career Centers – Students who are part of the class of 2021 and students who have experienced significant challenges accessing virtual instruction

November 19, 2020

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) publishes a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Holiday Planning During a Pandemic

As Thanksgiving approaches, you may be worried about how to safely celebrate with family and friends. Holiday preparations and celebrations will likely look and feel different this year, especially for our children. Talk with your child ahead of time about their expectations. Reassure your child that it is okay to feel sad, disappointed, or even angry about changes in plans or traditions. Take this opportunity to develop new ways to celebrate by brainstorming ideas together, asking your child for their opinions, and researching online for additional inspiration. With a little extra planning, communication and collaboration, you can help make this year's holiday celebrations fun and special for you and your loved ones.

Feeling That Fall Fatigue?

Behavior Intervention Services has a [quick tip video to help overcome fall fatigue and increase student engagement and stamina](#). Incorporate these strategies into virtual learning at home to help students stay focused on their tasks and goals.

Assistive Technology Training Opportunities

During the 2020-2021 school year, Assistive Technology Services (ATS) will be offering training sessions focused on the use of high-end Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices. Participants will learn program basics and maintenance of the devices. These sessions are open to both staff and parents of students using the specific devices. To register, contact the ATS Resource Teacher who supports your school. November sessions will include the following topics:

- November 16, 2:30-3:30 **Words for Life App** - Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session
- November 23, 2:30-3:30 **Proloquo2Go App** - Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session

Building Coping Skills as a Family

A coping skill is something that helps a person deal with unpleasant feelings such as stress. Learning to cope is a very important skill that takes a lot of practice. Parents and guardians can help children build coping skills. Brainstorm as a family a toolbox of coping skills, so when someone in the family needs to access a “tool” to cope, a list is readily available. What works for one person, may not work for everyone, so it is important to try different coping skills to find what works for each member of the family. Take time to talk about which strategies were helpful or which strategy everyone might try next time a strategy is needed. Some examples of coping skills include exercise, keeping a gratitude journal, talking with positive people in your life such as friends, family and teachers, deep breathing, listening to or playing music, or engaging in a hobby that you enjoy. [View more coping strategy ideas](#).

2019-2020 Parent Involvement Survey (Reminder)

Each school year the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is required to report to the U.S. Department of Education the "Percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities."

Your participation in this survey will help VDOE collect additional information to identify training needs related to the special education processes. The VDOE will use the results of this survey to improve parental involvement in the special education process and improve outcomes for all students within the Commonwealth. It is important to note that your responses are recorded anonymously and cannot be personally linked to your child. Parents who have more than one child receiving special education services should submit one survey for each child receiving services.

When completing this survey you will answer questions designed to cause you to reflect upon your experiences during the 2019-2020 school year.

English Version ---- [English Version of 2019-2020 Indicator 8 Parent Survey](#)

Spanish Version --- [Spanish Version of 2019-2020 Indicator 8 Parent Survey](#)

To gather the 2019-2020 School Year data, the Indicator 8 Parent Survey will be collected through December 18, 2020.

Students with Intensive Support Needs

Additional information has been included in the second bullet below to help clarify the criteria for Students with Intensive Support Needs to return to in-person, cohort learning as part of Group 5:

- 50% or more of the student's core content courses (i.e. core math, core English/language arts, core history/social science and core science classes) provided in special education settings;
- Instructionally, student functions multiple grades below current grade level and 50% or more of instruction is modified to bridge the gap between the student's baseline knowledge and course standard with the expectation that the student will subsequently meet the standard;
- AND the student meets one or more of the following:
 - Comprehensive needs across academic areas
 - Student has a primary disability of intellectual disabilities, learning disability, Autism, or multiple disabilities
 - Reading and writing scores below the 10th percentile on standardized assessments compared to same-aged peers
 - Deficits in adaptive skills, social communication, and restrictive and repetitive behaviors
 - Difficulty with working memory
 - Difficulty with receptive and/or expressive language
 - Has additional adult supervision throughout the school day in all areas of the building

Principals have been directed to invite students who meet the criteria to return to in-person instruction as part of Group 5. Please reach out to your school principal if you have questions regarding the criteria described above and whether your child meets this criterion.

Additional information is available on the FCPS public website links below.

[Group 5: Intensive Support Needs Student Criteria](#)

[Accommodations and Modifications](#)

December 10, 2020

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) publishes a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Assistive Technology Training Opportunities

During the 2020-2021 school year, Assistive Technology Services (ATS) will be offering training sessions focused on the use of high-end Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices. Participants will learn program basics and maintenance of the devices. These sessions are open to both staff and parents of students using the specific devices. To register, contact the ATS Resource Teacher who supports your school. The next session will be offered on December 14.

- December 14, 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. **Words for Life App** - Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session

Supporting Your Child's Engagement When Learning Online

Helping your child navigate their learning, and supporting their “ownership” of that learning, has never been more challenging than it is at this time.

Whether or not your child has diagnosed attention issues, it is likely that you are observing your child or teen have difficulty at times staying attentive and motivated when their instruction is all virtual.

The following podcast features an interview with a psychologist who shares how parents can best focus on their children's needs to set them up for success. While the interview addresses the typical needs of children with ADHD, the guidance shared is applicable to many children with learning challenges.

[Guidance for Uncertain Times: Tips for Creating an ADHD-Friendly Home, Maggie Sibley, PhD](#)

The Benefits of Practicing Gratitude

Practicing gratitude can have a positive impact on our emotions and personal wellness. It can also improve our relationships with friends and family, especially during times of stress. Try to make time for daily gratitude practices as a family. Start a gratitude jar; encourage everyone to write down things that they are thankful for and place it in the jar. Read the entries as a family,

allowing for reflection. Practice giving to others. This can include donations, but it can also include serving or appreciating others. Consider making cards for the elderly or first responders. Your child can also help someone in the family. During dinner or before bed, take turns sharing something that each person is thankful for. Check out [more ideas for practicing gratitude as a family](#).

Contact Information

If parent(s) or guardian(s) need further assistance, please reach out to the:

- [Procedural Support Liaison \(PSL\) assigned by school](#)
- [Office of Due Process and Eligibility](#)
- [Office of Intervention and Prevention](#)
- [Office of Special Education Instruction](#)
- [Section 504 Information](#)
- Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education, Dawn Clements at ombudsman@fcps.edu
- Parent Resource Center at prc@fcps.edu or [703-204-3941](tel:703-204-3941)

December 17, 2020

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) publishes a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Schedules and Calendars

The holiday season brings a big break in routine taking a child with special needs out of their comfort zone. Try and compensate by:

1. Relying heavily on visuals. This will help your child understand what is going to be happening.
2. Count down the number of days when school is about to start back up again. This gives your child an awareness that there will be a change in schedules.
3. A daily calendar can be very helpful during the winter break, especially to help your child anticipate any parties or family gatherings that you may be going to.

It is understandable that the family routine changes during the holidays. Bedtimes are later, naps may not be on schedule and there is no set schedule. Make sure you start getting back into your daily routine a few days before school starts so that the adjustment in January is a little easier.

Wellness During the Holidays

The holidays can be a time of joy and happiness for some. Others may experience feelings that are less pleasant. It is important to maintain personal wellness during this time.

- Start by taking the time to unplug. Develop a list of activities for the family that don't involve the computer, phone or television.
- Make it a priority to move. Although it is cold, find time to get outside and enjoy some fresh air.
- Try to keep routines and structures in place, with some flexibility. By maintaining a routine, the transition back to learning won't be as difficult.
- Stay connected to loved ones. Holiday gatherings may look different this year, but we can still connect through cards, phone calls and virtual platforms.
- Finally, seek professional help for you or your child if needed. While schools are not in session, contact your doctor for referrals or contact the Fairfax County Community Services Board (CSB). [Learn more about mental health services offered through the CSB.](#)

If you or someone you care about is experiencing a mental health crisis take action:

- Text NEEDHELP to 85511 for the CrisisLink hotline or call them at [703-527-4077](tel:703-527-4077)
- Chat online with a specialist at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/>
- Call an emergency mental health center at [703-573-5679](tel:703-573-5679) (Merrifield Center), [703-536-2000](tel:703-536-2000) (Dominion Hospital) or [703-289-7560](tel:703-289-7560) INOVA Emergency Services
- Go to the nearest emergency room at your local hospital
- Call 911

Behavior Intervention Services

When moments get stressful and our frustration kicks in, one of the best things we can do is take a deep breath. This is something we can model for and practice with our children at home both proactively and during situations where stress gets the best of us.

Try the following breathing strategies over the next few weeks during break to see which one becomes a family fave:

- Hot Chocolate Breathing (Smell the Hot Chocolate, Blow on it to cool off)
- Breathe In for a Count of 4, Breathe Out for a Count of 4
- Flower/Candle (Smell the Flower, Blow Out the Candle)
- 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 (Look around you and notice
 - 5 things you can see
 - 4 things you can touch or feel

- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 think you can taste

Restraint & Seclusion

Fairfax County Public Schools has proposed a new policy governing the use of physical restraint and seclusion in public schools to begin January 1, 2020. The proposed policy will phase out the use of seclusion in our schools by August 2022. The proposal includes training for staff to include use of positive behavior interventions and supports and timely notification of parents of incidents.

The FCPS School Board will be voting on the proposed division policy regarding the use of Physical Restraint and Seclusion on December 17, 2020. You may [access the draft by going to Board Docs](#) and the School Board meetings are live streamed on the website and Channel 99 at <https://www.fcps.edu/tv/ch99>.

Contact Information

If parent(s) or guardian(s) need further assistance, please reach out to the:

- [Procedural Support Liaison \(PSL\) assigned by school](#)
- [Office of Due Process and Eligibility](#)
- [Office of Intervention and Prevention](#)
- [Office of Special Education Instruction](#)
- [Section 504 Information](#)
- Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education, Dawn Clements at ombudsman@fcps.edu
- Parent Resource Center at prc@fcps.edu or [703-204-3941](tel:703-204-3941)

January 19, 2021

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) publishes a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

All Student Groups Paused for In-Person Instruction

Current community transmission of COVID-19 in Fairfax County remains high. After discussing the plan with the School Board and hearing from many parents and staff, **FCPS will continue to pause the plan to bring students and staff back into school buildings.** Dr. Brabrand will provide an interim update to the School Board on January 21 and a comprehensive update on the Return to School plan to the School Board on Tuesday, February 2.

COVID-19 Vaccine Update

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and Fairfax County Health Department (FCHD) have provided guidance for vaccine distribution. FCPS will be partnering with FCHD and the Inova Health System to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to ALL FCPS employees as a part of the 1b group of other essential workers. [View more information on vaccine distribution.](#)

Managing Your Emotions and Adjusting Expectations of your Child (and Yourself)

As a parent of a child with special learning or emotional/behavioral needs, are you wondering how you will continue to cope during this phase of distance learning? Are you running out of steam? Do you find yourself short on patience and easily frustrated with your child or with school-related demands?

You're not alone – and your feelings are normal. Despite the many pressures on parents these days, there are proven ways to lower your family's stress levels. [Check out this reassuring article that provides timely tips and guidance.](#)

Supporting Children During Times of Uncertainty

Feelings of uncertainty may be particularly heightened given shifting timelines for the return to school and other current events. When children don't have control over things occurring in their environment, it is important to provide positive support in other ways. Our children are watching our response to stressors and often mimic our actions. [View more information on supporting your child during stressful times.](#)

Assistive Technology Training Opportunities

During the 2020-2021 school year, Assistive Technology Services (ATS) will be offering training sessions focused on the use of high-end Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices. Participants will learn program basics and maintenance of the devices. These sessions are open to both staff and parents of students using the specific devices. To register, contact the ATS Resource Teacher who supports your school. December sessions will include the following topics:

- January 25, 2:30-3:30 - **Eye Gaze Tips and Tricks**
Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session- this session is for those who are working with students currently using eye gaze as their access method to communicate.
- January 25, 2:30-3:30 - **PRC Accent Devices**
Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session
- February 1, 1:00-2:00 - **Touch Chat**
Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session
- February 1, 2:30-3:30 - **Proloquo2Go App**
Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session

January 28, 2021

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) publishes a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Routines Help Children Get Ready for School

Brushing teeth before bed; a nightly story to unwind. Routines are often a touchstone in a child's day. Recently researchers found that regular family routines, started as early as 14 months, predicted a child's readiness for kindergarten. Read more or watch a video in English or Spanish at: <https://positiveparentingnews.org/news-reports/routines-school-readiness>.

Behavior Intervention Services

As we wrap up January, we want to collectively check-in on our goal progress. One of the most essential ways to keep moving forward on goals is to check-in and celebrate any small victories or steps towards the finish line! Consider creating a list of steps towards the next goal for your child and make sure to identify how you can celebrate together. Some examples of goals might be:

- Homework Completion
- Using Words to Express Themselves
- Completing a Chore
- Following Directions
- Asking for Help
- Attending All School Sessions
- Staying Calm
- Offering to Help

For a list of ideas on ways to celebrate accomplishing steps towards a goal, check out this list:

- Play Music
- Chant an Affirmation of Success

- Dance Party
- Go for a Walk and Spot Something Beautiful
- Play a Game Together
- Make a Fun Recipe
- Create a New Game

Assistive Technology Training Opportunities

During the 2020-2021 school year, Assistive Technology Services (ATS) will be offering training sessions focused on the use of high-end Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices. Participants will learn program basics and maintenance of the devices. These sessions are open to both staff and parents of students using the specific devices. To register, contact the ATS Resource Teacher who supports your school. Sessions will include the following topics:

- February 1, 1:00-2:00 p.m. - **Touch Chat**
Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session
- February 1, 2:30-3:30 p.m. - **Proloquo2Go App**
Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session
- February 8, 2:30-3:30 p.m. - **Words for Life**
Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session

And additional sessions especially for staff members:

- February 1, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. - **I Didn't Know Microsoft Could Do That! Microsoft Writing Tools**
Join us to explore FREE strategies and resources to support students with writing difficulties in the virtual environment. Learn how to implement accessibility tools within Microsoft 365. Explore how to use the Speak Tool, Dictate, Immersive Reader, Outline View, Tables-to-Text and the Send-to-PowerPoint to complete research and the steps of the writing process. Discover how easy it is to transfer documents between Microsoft 365, Google G-Suite and Google Classroom. These tools are available to help support all students of all ages who struggle with writing. Register through MyPDE.
- February 8, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. - **Google Keep: The Secret of Making Executive Function Easy at any age!** Come discover how to use Google Keep to easily support your students' executive function. Using this inclusive technology tool, we will learn how to create checklists, graphic organizers, reminders and more using Google Keep! With Google Keep notes, you can share information with just one person or many and the creative opportunities are endless! Register through MyPDE.

Contact Information

If parent(s) or guardian(s) need further assistance, please reach out to the:

- [Procedural Support Liaison \(PSL\) assigned by school](#)
- [Office of Due Process and Eligibility](#)
- [Office of Intervention and Prevention](#)
- [Office of Special Education Instruction](#)
- [Section 504 Information](#)
- Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education, Dawn Clements at ombudsman@fcps.edu
- Parent Resource Center at prc@fcps.edu or [703-204-3941](tel:703-204-3941)

February 25, 2021

Dear Parents, The Department of Special Services (DSS) publishes a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Important Survey Coming Soon

On March 1, FCPS instructional staff and parents of students with disabilities will receive an invitation via email from the FCPS Office of the Auditor General to complete an independent, third-party survey on FCPS's special education services provided to students with disabilities. All responses are confidential and will be used to generate recommendations for the School Board. Your voice counts, so please share your thoughts once you receive the survey.

Did you know FCPS has an Ombudsman?

The Office of the Ombudsman provides an independent, confidential resource for students, families, employees, and community members, offering informal help to resolve concerns, problems, complaints, and other student-related issues.

The staff of the Office of the Ombudsman will listen, review, and provide resources for information and referral; serve as a neutral advocate for fairness, equity, inclusion, and consistency; and foster positive working relationships.

The Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education serves as a resource, providing information and support to parents and students regarding special education services. It is the hope that through providing transparency and understanding to families, children with special needs will receive all the services and supports required to equitably access public education.

For more information visit: <https://www.fcps.edu/departments/ombudsman> or contact us at: 571 423 4014 or ombudsman@fcps.edu.

Especially For Families

During the 2020-2021 school year, Assistive Technology Services (ATS) will be offering training sessions focused on the use of high-end Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices. Participants will learn program basics and maintenance of the devices. These sessions are open to both staff and parents of students using the specific devices. To register, contact the ATS Resource Teacher who supports your school. December sessions will include the following topics:

- March 1, 2:30-3:30 - **Proloquo2Go App**
Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session
- March 8, 2:30-3:30 - **Words for Life**
Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session
- March 15, 2:30-3:30 - **PRC Training**
Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session

Behavior Intervention Services

Looking for some inspiration to get refocused on routines and out of negative cycles? Check out our quick tip videos for Parents and Guardians on supporting Executive Functioning (EF) and Avoiding Power Struggles.

- [EF Metacognitive Strategies](#)
- [EF Cognitive Flexibility and Shifting Strategies Quick Tips](#)
- [EF Self Regulation Strategies](#)
- [EF Goal Directed Attention and Focus Strategies](#)
- [EL Goal Directed Persistence Strategies](#)
- [EF Working Memory Strategies](#)
- [Avoiding Power Struggles by Minimizing Distractions](#)
- [Avoiding Power Struggles Increasing Independent Tasks](#)
- [Avoiding Power Struggles, Offering Choices](#)
- [Procedures for Independently Navigating Tasks](#)

If you missed our training in collaboration with the Parent Resource Center on Following Directions, held 2/18, you can get the recording here: [BIS Series #6 Teaching Your Child to Follow Directions](#).

Our next training is: Effectively Communicate with Your Student - at Home Edition offered 10-11:30am & 6:30-8pm on 3/18/21. [Register for this training](#).

Save the Date: FCPS Special Education Conference Set for April 17, 2021

FCPS will hold its 16th Annual Special Education Conference on Saturday, April 17, 2021, VIRTUALLY. Registration will begin in March. A student strand will be held for youth ages 14-22. FCPS educators, administrators, and pre-service teachers can earn recertification points for attending the conference. Exhibit Hall and Inclusive Schools resources will be shared.

[Visit the Special Education Conference webpage for more information.](#)

Special Education Parent Handbook

The newly updated [Special Education Parent Handbook](#) is available online! This manual provides a wealth of information regarding many topics of interest to parents and caregivers of students with disabilities, including Child Find, local screening, evaluations and eligibility for special education and Section 504 services, procedural safeguards/rights, key contacts and resources, and much more.

In addition, a limited number of printed handbooks will be available soon. If you would like to be placed on a waiting list for a hard copy, please email the Parent Resource Center at prc@fcps.edu or call the PRC at [703-204-3941](tel:703-204-3941). When printed copies are ready, PRC staff will work with families to provide a touchless pick-up at the Dunn Loring Center, or alternatively, can forward a copy to the child's school for parent pick-up.

Restraint and Seclusion Policy

The Fairfax County School Board has approved a [new policy on Restraint and Seclusion](#).

The policy includes strategies that incorporate positive behavioral interventions and support consistent with the student's rights to be treated with dignity and to be free from abuse, including alternatives to physical restraint and seclusion. Continued use of positive behavioral interventions and support strategies will be used to reduce and prevent the need for the use of physical restraint and seclusion. If behaviors need intervention to keep students and staff safe, the policy dictates that the least restrictive intervention will be used.

Seclusion is prohibited in all FCPS schools with the exception of Burke School, Key Center, and Kilmer Center effective January 1, 2021. Only personnel who have completed advanced training will be permitted to engage in seclusion.

Contact Information

If parent(s) or guardian(s) need further assistance, please reach out to the:

- [Procedural Support Liaison \(PSL\) assigned by school](#)
- [Office of Due Process and Eligibility](#)

- [Office of Intervention and Prevention](#)
- [Office of Special Education Instruction](#)
- [Section 504 Information](#)
- Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education, Dawn Clements at ombudsman@fcps.edu
- Parent Resource Center at prc@fcps.edu or [703-204-3941](tel:703-204-3941)

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

March 29, 2021

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) publishes a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Especially for Families

During the 2020-2021 school year, Assistive Technology Services (ATS) will be offering training sessions focused on the use of high-end Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices. Participants will learn program basics and maintenance of the devices. These sessions are open to both staff and parents of students using the specific devices. To register, contact the ATS Resource Teacher who supports your school. April sessions will include the following topics:

April 12, 2:30-3:30 **Words for Life**- Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session

April 19, 2:30-3:30 **PRC Training**- Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session

April 26, 2:30-3:30 **Proloquo2Go Training**- Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session

**FCPS Special Education Conference to Be Held April 17,
Registration Now Open!**

FCPS will hold its 16th Annual Special Education Conference on Saturday, April 17, 2021, VIRTUALLY. Registration is now available online. The conference will include a combination of synchronous (live) and asynchronous (recorded) sessions supporting the conference's theme: *The Time for Inclusion is Now*. A student strand will be held for youth ages 14-22. FCPS educators, administrators, and pre-service teachers will earn five recertification points for attending the entire conference.

[Visit the Special Education Conference Webpage for More Information and to Register](#)

Family Peer Support Partners

PRS Inc. has launched a new program to help Fairfax families with youth with behavioral health challenges. Family Peer Support Partners (FPSPs) are trained parents and caregivers who use their personal experience to offer support for parents and caregivers of youth diagnosed with mental health or substance use disorders. Family Peer Support Partners can help families: identify and use their strengths; encourage and support family to achieve desired outcomes; advocate for child's needs in a proactive manner; connect with effective family supports, services, and treatment options; provide support; empower families; and understand resources and recommendations. To learn more about this service, families should visit <https://prsinc.org/family-peer-supports>. Thanks to a partnership with PRS and Healthy Minds Fairfax, there is no fee to families who reside in Fairfax County for these services.

Maintaining School Stamina

As we continue to phase into in-person learning, we know this change in routine can get chaotic and tiring even for students who are remaining virtual. During this time, we have some tips for parents and guardians in keeping up that spring school stamina.

- **Take Frequent Breaks:** Build into your daily schedule some time to move as a family or to reset and shift focus.
- **Build a Buffer:** Add extra time to routines, like getting out the door in the morning, taking off masks or putting away items at the end of the day, and getting ready for the next activity.

- Communicate, Communicate, Communicate: Provide warnings of any changes, prime students on what new routines might look like, and check-in to gauge how everyone is feeling.
- Balance and Ease into Things: Give each other some extra time to move to the next task or thought and allow for moments of flexibility. We are all trying our best and this is a new process to learn and navigate!

If you missed our most recent offering with the Parent Resource Center-don't worry! A recording of this Training on Encouraging Positive Behaviors at Home Series: Effectively Communicating with Your Child can be viewed by clicking the link: <https://bit.ly/2XiBVlx> (scroll to "Previous Workshops & Webinars on YouTube").

Contact Information

If parent(s) or guardian(s) need further assistance, please reach out to the:

Procedural Support Liaison (PSL) assigned by school

Office of Due Process and Eligibility

Office of Intervention and Prevention

Office of Special Education Instruction

Section 504 Information

Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education, Dawn Clements at mbudsman@fcps.edu.

Parent Resource Center at prc@fcps.edu or 703-204-3941.

April 27, 2021

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) publishes a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Especially for Families

During the 2020-2021 school year, Assistive Technology Services (ATS) will be offering training sessions focused on the use of high-end Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices. Participants will learn program basics and maintenance of the devices. These sessions are open to both staff and parents of students using the specific devices. To register, contact the ATS Resource Teacher who supports your school. May sessions will include the following topics:

- May 3, 2:30-3:30 **Words for Life**
Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session
- May 10, 2:30-3:30 **PRC Training**
Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session
- May 17, 2:30-3:30 **Proloquo2Go Training**
Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session
- May 24, 2:30-3:30 **Words for Life**
Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session

COVID-19 Recovery Services

Special education COVID recovery services may be considered for any student with a disability whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team or Section 504 Committee determines there remains a significant educational impact due to the COVID-19 school closure and the virtual learning this school year. Recovery services are designed to address learning gaps and are determined by IEP Teams or 504 Committees. Not all students with disabilities will require COVID recovery services.

COVID recovery services are based on whether or not the student continued making progress in the general education curriculum, or alternative course of

study, specified in their IEP/504 Plan or toward meeting their IEP goals, and/or if any significant regression occurred during the period of school closure. IEP Teams and 504 Committees will use a variety of data sources including individual student progress data, teacher assessments, and parent input when considering COVID recovery services. If the IEP Team or 504 Committee decides a student requires recovery services, the team will determine the amount and type of recovery service that is required to address the individual student's needs.

Additional information regarding FCPS' Summer Recovery Academy is available via the following link: <https://www.fcps.edu/academics/academic-overview/special-education-instruction/procedural-support/summer-recovery>

If you think that your child may require COVID recovery services, please contact your child's IEP/504 case manager to further discuss and schedule a meeting for the IEP team or 504 committee to consider the need for recovery services.

April is the Month of the Military Child

In April we celebrate the important role that military children play in the armed forces community. Throughout the month of April, schools are engaging in a variety of activities to recognize military-connected youth and their families. FCPS thanks and recognizes children from military families for the sacrifices they make living the military lifestyle. This year, April 21st has been designated "Purple Up! For Military Kids." On this day, everyone is encouraged to wear purple in recognition of the strength and sacrifices of military-connected youth. Purple symbolizes all branches of the military, as it is the combination of Army green, Coast Guard blue, Air Force blue, Marine red, and Navy blue. Learn more about the Month of the Military Child here: <https://www.dodea.edu/dodeaCelebrates/Military-Child-Month.cfm>

May 6, 2021

Dear Parents,

The Department of Special Services (DSS) publishes a regular electronic newsletter to provide you with updated DSS information, tips and ideas to support you and your family during Distance Learning.

Especially for Families

During the 2020-2021 school year, Assistive Technology Services (ATS) will be offering training sessions focused on the use of high-end Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices. Participants will learn program basics and maintenance of the devices. These sessions are open to both staff and parents of students using the specific devices. To register, contact the ATS Resource Teacher who supports your school. May sessions will include the following topics:

- May 17, 2:30-3:30 **Proloquo2Go Training**
Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session
- May 24, 2:30-3:30 **Words for Life**
Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Session

Self-Care for Caregivers

You've probably heard the phrase, "it's a marathon, not a sprint." This saying is a good summary of what parents face as they raise their children; and it is an especially good reminder for parents of children with special needs.

This has been a year like no other and you should pat yourself on the back for everything you have done to support your child. Now, it's time to take a step back and take care of YOU.

Check out the following article: [**20 Things Every Parent of Kids with Special Needs Should Hear.**](#) Please take these ideas and reminders to heart – you are your child's champion, and to "stay strong", you need to treat yourself well! Finding ways to do that, and to find joy in your relationship with your child, will give you the fuel you need to handle the challenges that come your way.

SIBSHOPS: An Exciting, Virtual Workshop for Brothers and Sisters of Children with Special Needs

The Sibshop workshops are for children in grades 2-6 enrolled in Fairfax County Public Schools who have siblings with special needs to:

- Meet other siblings in a relaxed, virtual setting.
- Celebrate the many contributions made by brothers and sisters of children with special needs.
- Share sibling experiences and receive peer support.
- Play games and have fun!

Presented by FCPS School Social Work Services

Saturday, May 15, 2021

Two timeslots are available: 10 a.m. or 1 p.m. Sessions run 1-1.5 hours

[Register your child for a Sibshop](#)

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[View additional information regarding FCPS' Summer Recovery Academy](#)

If you think that your child may require COVID recovery services, please contact your child's IEP/504 case manager to further discuss and schedule a meeting for the IEP team or 504 committee to consider the need for recovery services.

COVID-19 Vaccines Now Available to Students (16 years of age and older)

Many of our teachers and staff have had the added protection of COVID-19 vaccines this year. Now, students 16 years of age and older have access to COVID-19 vaccines, too. It's one more layer of protection to help stop the spread and limit disruption of schools, activities, sports, and other memorable events like graduation. Studies show COVID-19 vaccines are very effective at

keeping you from getting COVID-19 or from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19. Additional benefits of getting the vaccine include gathering indoors with small groups of other fully vaccinated people without wearing a mask and vaccinated individuals do not need to stay away from others (quarantine) or get tested (unless they have symptoms) when exposed to someone with COVID-19. [Learn more about getting your teen the COVID-19 vaccine.](#)

Virtual Programming for SY 2021-2022

FCPS will be establishing a Virtual Program for SY 21-22 with limited student enrollment due to Health/Medical needs. You may access information regarding our Virtual Programs at [https://www.fcps.edu/registration/virtual-program-school-year-2021-22.](https://www.fcps.edu/registration/virtual-program-school-year-2021-22)

Families will be required to submit a [COVID-19 Health Eligibility Form](#) that includes the healthcare provider's documentation of the student's health/medical diagnosis that requires accommodations for learning in a virtual environment and complete an application process. More information on our Virtual Program Enrollment process is available at [https://www.fcps.edu/registration/virtual-program-school-year-2021-22/enrollment.](https://www.fcps.edu/registration/virtual-program-school-year-2021-22/enrollment)

Contact Information

If parent(s) or guardian(s) need further assistance, please reach out to the:

- [Procedural Support Liaison \(PSL\) assigned by school](#)
- [Office of Due Process and Eligibility](#)
- [Office of Intervention and Prevention](#)
- [Office of Special Education Instruction](#)
- [Section 504 Information](#)
- **Assistant Ombudsman for Special Education**, Dawn Clements at ombudsman@fcps.edu
- **Parent Resource Center** at prc@fcps.edu or [703-204-3941](tel:703-204-3941)