

Fast Facts for IEPs during Virtual Learning



1 You can visit [Maryland Learning Links](#) with questions about your young person with disabilities.

You can find up-to-date videos, tip sheets, important updates, and more about special education in Maryland by visiting the [For Families](#) page of the Maryland Learning Links website. Information is updated regularly by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services (DEI/SES) in partnership with national experts.

2 The IEP stands for Individualized Education Program, not Plan.

The IEP is an individualized program that identifies **everything your young person needs to receive Specially Designed Instruction created just for them**. An effective IEP promotes accelerated progress and positive outcomes based on your child's unique learning needs.

There is a [Family Support Center](#) in every jurisdiction including the Maryland School for the Deaf and the Maryland School for the Blind to assist families in understanding the IEP process, and to provide support, resources and information. There is also a [Family Support Services team](#) at the Maryland State Department of Education.

3 Families are critical members of the IEP team.

You are the expert team member who knows your young person best. Your child's teachers need your input about your child's strengths, unique learning needs, hopes, dreams, social interactions, community experiences, after-school activities, and any other information that you can share in order to create an IEP that best meets your child's needs.

The DEI/SES partners with the [Parents Place of Maryland](#) and the [Maryland Family Network](#) to develop family-friendly resources. You can find them on the [For Families](#) page on [Maryland Learning Links](#).

4 IEPs are implemented during school reopening.

Last spring, the COVID-19 pandemic caused many school buildings to be closed. School systems continue to figure out the safest ways to provide instruction and services to all students. There have been no waivers to IDEA and it is expected that special education and related services will be delivered consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education services to these students.

You can access the latest guidance — both state and federal — around the reopening of schools during COVID-19 on Maryland Learning Links.

5 IEP meetings are happening virtually.

All federal requirements for IEPs must still be followed. You should still get an invitation to your young person's IEP meeting, a copy of their draft IEP, and any additional documents **at least five days before the meeting takes place**. You should also receive **Prior Written Notice** that highlights any changes that were made to your young person's IEP during the meeting. You may be asked to sign that you attended the IEP meeting. For your young person's first IEP, you will be asked to electronically sign the IEP. The IEP goes into effect as soon as possible after the IEP meeting.