

THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY



Midland Park Public Schools,
Midland Park, New Jersey

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Being there for Each Other During the COVID-19 Crisis

During these unsettling and uncertain times due to the COVID-19 crisis, Midland Park administrators, teachers, child study team members, related service providers, support staff, parents, and students are rising to the challenge of the remote learning world. Please realize our students may be experiencing bumps in their virtual learning road and we are here to support them. Director of Special Services and Child Study Team members are available as resources through telephone conferences, video chats, or email. Collaboration is ongoing and responses are swift. Remember that we have a shared goal: we all want what is in the best interest of your child as stated in the IEP, the guide for your child's educational program. Department emails are listed below and we encourage you to contact us immediately with your questions and concerns.

Department of Special Services

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IEP Evaluations & Re-evaluations During the School Closure

Guidance from the United States Department of Education and the New Jersey Department of Education encourages IEP teams and parents to work collectively to meet the required IEP timelines. Evaluations both initial and re-evaluations will be conducted when school reopens. The Child Study Team has 90 days to complete an initial evaluation (N.J.A.C. 6A; Chapter 14 Special Education 3.4) however, during this period of school closure a timeline for completion will be established when school reopens.

Please be mindful that a re-evaluation does not necessarily require an assessment. The re-evaluation may be waived with parental consent while school remains closed, and a re-evaluation may be revisited at a later date as it may be best to wait until the student is back in school and adjusted to a regular class routine.



Distance Learning Screenshot of students working together during the virtual learning day.

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POSTPONED EVENTS DUE TO SCHOOL CLOSURE:

OT-based Activities for the Home
Transition to College, by Vincent Varrassi
Housing for the Disabled Population, by Paul Aronsohn
(Re-scheduled dates to be announced.)

Preparing for the Individual Education Plan (IEP)

Parents as Team Members

The Child Study Team is encouraging Annual Review IEP Meetings to take place throughout the remainder of the school year. Due to the uncertainty of when we are returning to school, it is strongly recommended to conduct these meetings by video conference or telephone. This will allow children to begin the school year without any uncertainty. Please know Case Managers will be contacting parents to schedule these important discussions. If you observe your child's particular learning preference, his/her need for particular type of strategy to be used in instruction which may be beneficial, or if you have identified a significant weakness requiring remediation, be sure to share this relevant information during the IEP meeting. This will allow the case manager to correctly address it and add it into the accommodations section.

Your participation during the IEP meeting is of the utmost importance. All information is included in the final IEP document. As a result, you will be asked to provide input for the Parent Concerns section. You can share areas of concern or comments on how you feel regarding your child's progress. Since you are witnessing their day-to-day learning utilizing the remote learning platform, your input will be especially helpful.

Components outlined in the IEP are as follows: child's present levels of performance given by the teachers and staff, latest evaluation results, related services (if applicable), goals & objectives, services, transition information if your child is 14 years or older (this includes consideration of post-secondary placements; career readiness, college, or technical school,) graduation requirements, accommodations/modifications, standardized testing, and if there is a need for Extended School Year (ESY).

When old enough, students are encouraged to participate in the development of their own IEP, and this decision is made at the discretion of the parent. At times, the student will be included only for a portion of the meeting and this is completely acceptable. It is important for students to learn to self-advocate, an important life skill which is supported by such participation. For more information on IEP development and the critical role of the parent in his process, please contact Director of Special Services Mrs. Ann Marie Bruder: abruder@mpsnj.org

Parent Resources for the COVID-19 School Closure

Parenting through the Pandemic: Webinars <https://4theparents.idecorp.com>
National PTA Family Resources (Home & Family Resources <https://www.pta.org>
COVID -19 & Special Education; Parent Information Center <http://picnh.org/resources>
Child Mind Institute – Supporting Families during COVID-19
<http://childmind.org/copingduringcovid-19resources>

Lunch and Learn Weekly Schedules:

Tips for Promoting Independence During Remote Learning Sessions

Structuring the Day for Your Child

Trying to Maintain Routine Njcie.org

<https://www.njcie.org/online>