April 8, 2020

Dear 3-K and Pre-K Program and Borough Leaders,

During this period of school closure, preschool students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) will continue receiving their services to the greatest extent feasible. For students recommended for SCIS, special class, Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT), or related services, your program must make every effort to continue to provide instruction from the same special education teacher(s) and/or teacher team(s) and classroom paraprofessional(s) that usually teach them.

See below for information on (1) Remote Learning Plans, (2) Related Services, (3) Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT), (4) Early Intervention Services, (5) Supports for Preschool Students with Disabilities in Regional Enrichment Centers (RECs), and (6) Additional Resources. Note that information is changing rapidly, and any subsequent guidance will supersede the information in this notice.

(1) Remote Learning Plans

Programs must ensure that a “Special Education Remote Learning Plan” is developed for all students with IEPs who are in SCIS or special classes in your program by their special education teacher or other school-based staff currently working with the student, and that each child’s plan is shared and discussed with their family. The Special Education Remote Learning Plan form must be completed for each student with an IEP in a special class or SCIS class in the program. You can access IEPs remotely through SESIS. If you cannot access students’ IEPs in SESIS, you can request students’ IEPs by emailing specialedprek@schools.nyc.gov.

This linked form is used to document the services that are being delivered remotely to the student. This form should be completed by the student’s special education teacher.

- If you previously completed the Special Education Remote Learning Plan for your students, and the services that are actually being delivered match that form, there is no need to do anything else at this time.
- If the services actually being delivered differ from what was recorded on the original form, use this form to update the information.
- If you did not complete the Special Education Remote Learning Plan for your students, use this form to document the services being provided and any student needs related to assistive technology and instructional tools.

Every student should have a Remote Learning Plan in place and provided to the student’s parent by April 15.

Instructions for completing the updated form for staff who did NOT already complete the Special Education Remote Learning Plan for their students:

A Special Education Remote Learning Plan must be completed for each student with an IEP. Before completing this updated form, the responsible school staff should:

- refer to the student’s IEP to consider the student’s current recommendations and areas of need during the school closure; and
consult with each of the student’s Occupational Therapy (OT), Physical Therapy (PT), Speech and Counseling providers to reflect appropriate tele-therapy related services for which the parent has provided consent and are actually being provided.

The completed Special Education Remote Learning Plan should be:

- completed and finalized and sent to the CPSE electronically
- provided to the parent electronically (e.g., by emailing a PDF of the plan or screenshot to the parent’s phone).

If not previously done, the family should be contacted by telephone to discuss the following topics:

- The special education and related services that are being provided remotely during the school closure.
- If the student requires assistive technology and/or additional classroom tools, confirm whether the family has the needed materials at home. If the student requires Assistive Technology and does not already have them in their home, please email CATTeam@schools.nyc.gov for guidance.
- If related services providers have determined that the student can benefit from tele-therapy, and the family has not yet consented orally to services, that services cannot be provided until the parent has provided consent.

The telephone call and any attempted contacts should be documented and saved.

Parents have the right to refuse for their child to participate in services delivered through tele-therapy. If parents exercise that right to refuse certain services, document their refusal, save it, and send it electronically to the CPSE.

(2) Related Services

Related service providers employed by the DOE and in contracted agencies have been instructed to review all mandates on their caseload to determine how best to deliver appropriate services to students during this time. If the speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy or non-public school counseling provider determines that tele-therapy services are appropriate, they will share the information with the teacher/school. Tele-therapy is provided by licensed professionals and uses video conferencing to provide therapy to children and their families. Counselors in public schools provide remote counseling which does not require parental consent or follow the guidelines for tele-therapy.

As providers review student mandates, they will make initial contact with each student’s parent and obtain consent for tele-therapy by completing an online survey form. The form will generate a confirming email, which the provider will upload to the student’s record in SESIS. In order to maintain continuity, the provider currently working with the student should provide services wherever possible. Any change in preschool assignment must be transmitted to the CPSE Administrator in accordance with established procedures.

For any student where the provider determines that it is not appropriate to provide remote tele-therapy services, the provider must conduct a weekly consultation tele-therapy consultation check-in session with the family and/or student. This check-in will serve as an opportunity to connect with the student/family and provide suggestions in support of student function during this time.

Providers and early childhood program staff should collaborate to coordinate related services and remote instruction as much as possible.

- Providers and program staff must collaborate to develop a schedule for tele-therapy. They will use the current schedule as a starting point for this exercise, grouping where feasible in accordance with the IEP recommendation.
 Teachers should gather progress reports and other anecdotal information related to the student’s progress from all related service providers to gain a general knowledge of the child’s progress, as well as any significant considerations from each related service area.

For support, program staff can reach out to their preschool related service supervisors.

If you are working with a family who needs a remote learning device, the DOE has devices available to lend families. Priority will be given to students most in need, and students in upper grades. Completing a survey does not guarantee the provision of a device. Families who wish to request a device should fill out this Remote Learning Device Request form. The DOE will follow up with families who complete the survey pending device availability. This may take some time as the DOE works through all survey responses. Please encourage families to complete the survey so that we can have an accurate sense of the need. If a family does not know their child’s OSIS number needed to complete the form, they should enter their child’s date of birth and then the number 0. For example, for a child born on January 1, 2016, the family should enter “010120160”.

(3) Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT)

In-person SEIT is suspended from Wednesday, March 18, until further notice. During this suspension of in-person service, preschoolers should receive their SEIT services remotely, to the extent feasible.

SEIT providers must meet the following requirements:

- Secure a remote learning platform to provide remote SEIT service. The DOE recommends the use of Microsoft Teams. Google Calendar and Google Hangouts may also be used to schedule and deliver SEIT remotely. The platform must have both a visual and an audio component, and both components must be used in every session with the student.
- The provider must follow the IEP SEIT recommendation.
- The provider should call the parent to arrange a schedule for SEIT services, explain the technology required, and determine if the family currently has the device and internet needed for the child to participate in remote SEIT services. If the family does not have the technology required for the child to participate in remote SEIT, the provider should email specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov.
- If the provider is unable to reach the parent after multiple attempts, the provider should notify the child’s CPSE via email.
- The provider should try to ensure to the extent possible that the child is in a space that is quiet and free from distractions (e.g., noises, other conversations, and other people besides the parent or other authorized adult and student).
- The parent or another adult authorized by the parent must be present during the session.
- If a family chooses to suspend a student’s participation in remote SEIT, the SEIT provider shall notify the CPSE Administrator in writing within three (3) business days.

(4) Remote Early Intervention Services

Children with disabilities age birth to three are eligible for Early Intervention (EI) services provided by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). Please consult the NYC Department of Health Early Intervention website for the latest updates on Early Intervention services.

(5) Supports for Preschool Students with Disabilities in Remote Enrichment Centers

Students with disabilities have access to the Remote Enrichment Centers (RECs). During this time, students will be following the remote learning plan outlined by their home school. The enrichment center staff is expected to supervise, provide enrichment activities and help maintain a safe and supportive environment.

When possible, students with disabilities will be assigned to teachers and paraprofessionals with Special Education expertise. REC staff should support preschool students with remote learning as much as possible:

- Preschool students whose IEPs recommend Special Class or SCIS should follow their remote learning plan, if they have one, to the extent possible
- Children who are receiving remote related services and/or SEIT should be supported to have these remote sessions in the RECs
Refer to the [DOE InfoHub](#) for more information about supporting children with disabilities in RECs.

If REC staff do not believe they have the resources they need to serve a preschool student with an IEP, reach out to [earlychildhoodpolicy@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:earlychildhoodpolicy@schools.nyc.gov).

(6) Resources and Contacts

- You can find resources for remote learning for children with disabilities [here](#).
- You can find this [Learn at Home activity packet](#) with suggested activities and guidance for families and caregivers of young children.
- Find suggestions in [this linked document](#) for how your early childhood teachers can support remote learning for our youngest students while school buildings are closed.
- The Committees on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) are working remotely. You can find updated contact information [here](#).
- If you have questions about any of the information in this document, or if you are working with a child with significant needs that cannot be served by remote learning, contact [specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov).

Thank you for reading this guidance closely, and stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

NYCDOE Division of Early Childhood Education and Special Education Office