



Parent Advocacy Network

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

In this fact sheet:

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

{and more}

SPAN

Parent Advocacy Network

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SPAN FACT SHEET

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

Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Your Child with a Disability/Special Healthcare Needs

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

What are the health risks of COVID-19?

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

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

Family Voices has information specific to children with special health care needs. There is a monthly newsletter and other resources that are found here <https://familyvoices.org/coronavirus/>.

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

What supports and services are available for families?

NJ's network of county Special Child Health Services Case Management Units can provide critical support to families of children with disabilities and special healthcare needs, including information on health, mental health, education, and other services for their child(ren). Find out more at www.nj.gov/health/fhs/specialneeds/case-management/for-parents/.

If you have a child with challenging behavior or developmental disabilities, NJ's Children's System of Care can provide you with support. Find out more at www.performcarenj.org/families/resources/index.aspx.

How does school closure affect your child's IEP?

Many families are concerned about their child's education and related services during this time. The NJ Department of Education has guidance and supplemental information on requirements for public health-related school closures, including new approval for tele-related services, at www.nj.gov/education/topics/index.shtml.

For mediation/due process updates, see www.state.nj.us/oal/. The U.S. Department of Education has a wealth of information at www.ed.gov/coronavirus, including a factsheet on the civil rights of students with disabilities, a Q&A about the requirement to provide services to students with disabilities, and information on protecting private education and health information of students.

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

Social stories may help children understand the pandemic. Some examples are [My Story About Pandemics and Coronavirus](#) by Carol Gray and [What is the Coronavirus?](#) by Amanda Mc Guinness.

Children need calmly delivered, factual, age-appropriate information with concrete instruction about positive preventive measures. The National Association of School Psychologists has [Talking to Children About COVID-19 | A Parent Resource](#) available in multiple languages. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has factsheets on coping with stress, taking care of your behavioral health, and talking with children, at <https://store.samhsa.gov/>.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has information on how families can protect themselves, what they need to know, and how to talk with children without raising anxiety at www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/2019-Novel-Coronavirus.aspx.

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

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

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

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

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

What resources are available for young adults?

The NJ Department of Human Services' Division on Developmental Disabilities (DDD) is providing regular updates on services as well as FAQs (frequently asked questions) at

www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/resources/coronavirus.html. Please note that DDD is expanding flexibility in the provision of services at this time. For more information, families can contact their Support Coordinator.

What economic resources are available?

NJ Time to Care has information on the new benefits at www.njtimetocare.com/ESL. The NJ Department of Labor has a fact sheet with scenarios on paid sick leave, paid family leave, and enhanced unemployment insurance at www.nj.gov/labor/assets/PDFs/COVID-19%20SCENARIOS.pdf, and in Spanish at www.nj.gov/labor/assets/PDFs/COVID-19%20SCENARIOS_SPANISH.pdf.

For the most current news:

SPAN has a COVID-19 Information Page that is regularly updated. This also includes a link to a chart with health, education, and other resources for family support. Please check out <https://spanadvocacy.org/home/spans-covid-19-information-page/>.



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Support for Paid Family Leave

Federal regulations on the new emergency paid **Family Medical Leave** can be found at www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/index.htm

New Jersey regulations governing **Family Leave Insurance** can be found at www.nj.gov/labor/forms_pdfs/tdi/fli_regs.pdf and the expansion at www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/A4000/3975_R3.HTM.

Support for Extended, Enhanced Unemployment Benefits

Find information on applying for extended, enhanced **unemployment benefits** under federal and state law at

<https://myunemployment.nj.gov/labor/myunemployment/covidFAQ.shtml>.

Support for Paid Sick Leave

NJ's **Earned Sick Leave Law** covers public health emergencies – employees can use Earned Sick leave if their workplace or child's school or childcare is closed due to an epidemic, or if a public health authority determines the need for a quarantine. For more information, see [Earned Sick Leave Benefits and the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): What You Should Know](#). See also

www.nj.gov/labor/assets/PDFs/FamiliesFirstCoronaResAct.pdf. NJ Paid Sick Leave regulations can be found at https://nj.gov/labor/wagehour/lawregs/nj_state_wage_and_hour_laws_and_regulations.html#11D1.

For information on new emergency **Federal Paid Sick Leave**, go to www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/posters/FFCRA_Poster_WH1422_Non-Federal.pdf.



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