

Special Education Services During COVID-19
Infants and Toddlers
Extended School Year Services
Recovery Planning for July 1 – September 7, 2020

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Kent County Public Schools and the Kent County Infants and Toddlers program provided services to all families through a virtual platform. In light of the current circumstances, IEPs and IFSPs with parental input were amended to provide services. All services were provided virtually to help ensure the health and safety of staff, families, and children. Our children were always our TOP concern during this pandemic.

On June 10, 2020, Governor Hogan and Dr. Salmon, Superintendent of Maryland Public Schools, announced that schools systems may now begin to bring small groups of students and staff into school buildings. School systems were encouraged to prioritize summer instruction for vulnerable populations and furthermore it was announced that all nonpublic schools may reopen to serve students with disabilities. Planning immediately began to determine how KCPS and KCI&T would continue to provide services to our students with disabilities.

On June 17, 2020, lead representatives from Kent County Health Department (KCHD), Kent County Department of Social Services (KCDSS), and Kent County Public Schools (KCPS) met to determine how to service students with disabilities to meet their IEP and IFSP goals and objectives. Through meaningful discussion about the positive case of Covid 19 in Kent County, it was determined that beginning July 1, 2020, KCPS and KCI&T programs could possibly meet face to face when providing services to our children in Kent County. Although this pandemic has not disappeared, current data will continuously be reviewed by the health officer of KCDH and representatives from KCPS and KCDSS to ensure that the health and safety of Kent County citizens and staff are of the utmost priority when providing face to face services.

While multiple home visits can increase the risk of the virus being transmitted between homes and families, there are safety precautions in place to prevent possibly spreading the COVID-19 virus. Therefore, it is still encouraged to provide services virtually when possible. All staff will be provided with Personal Protective Equipment (hand sanitizer, disposable and

individual masks, sanitizing wipes, and gloves). Screening procedures and monitoring of staff is essential during the delivery of instruction to prevent further transmission of the virus.

Prior to any face to face visit, staff will call parents and complete an Evaluation of Personal Risk interview the morning of the visit. Any parent who does not complete this interview will not receive face to face services during this time, instead they will be offered a virtual visit. KCPS and KCI&T program will monitor staff exposure and all staff will complete a COVID-19 questionnaire, along with temperature checks, prior to beginning work or visits that day. Any staff member who does not feel well or becomes ill during their work day will not be permitted to work and will be sent home immediately.

In effort to reduce the spread of the virus, when possible and appropriate, families will be encouraged to accept virtual services. KCPS and KCI&T staff will start each visit with the Evaluation of Personal Risk interview. This allows staff to make appropriate decisions about future face to face services and appropriate delivery models of services for our families.

While some services cannot be provided virtually and require face to face interactions, KCPS and KCI&T programs are encouraged to limit the number of staff in a home. If appropriate, the KCI&T interpreter will conduct all visits through a virtual or telephone service. To protect parents and staff, masks will be required during the delivery of services. Any child over the age of 2 will also be asked to wear a mask. To help families prepare for face to face visits and the importance of teaching children to wear masks, social stories and videos will be shared with families ahead of time. Social distancing (6 feet) will be encouraged as appropriate during visits.

Educational gaps widened and learning opportunities for some of our students with disabilities have been further exposed, causing KCPS to explore recovery efforts to prevent further gap from possibly occurring during this COVID-19 pandemic. Because some children did not benefit from virtual instruction, in person services are needed. For face to face ESY services, the same procedures will be followed as outlined above with proper screening of staff, families, and children.

It is encouraged that all ESY services will be provided in the school setting for students who need face to face instruction. This allows our students to re-establish routines and consistency with working inside their classrooms to prevent further recovery efforts in the fall.

All staff will engage in cleaning procedures between student visits and at the end of the day. This includes using approved cleaning wipes to wipe down all materials, tables, and chairs used. Frequent handwashing is encouraged for students and staff, along with using hand sanitizer. Masks and gloves will be required of students and staff, with changing masks between visits or services. If virtual instruction can be provided, it is encouraged that ESY will continue to provide virtual instruction to those students to help stop and prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

KCPS 2020 summer program is a virtual program for all students. There are no programs this summer inside of any KCPS buildings. To promote a continuation of learning, staff are continuing to work with students on their caseloads in book talks, math interventions, and summer learning packets. These virtual services are in addition to ESY to promote achievement, fairness, and opportunities that may prevent further gaps and/or obstacles for students with disabilities to make adequate progress next school year.

After visits, staff will dispose of gloves and masks in plastic bags. A new mask is required to be put on between each visit. Staff will also use hand sanitizer when they are not able to use soap and water to properly wash their hands between visits. Cleaning wipes will also be provided for staff to wipe down any personal materials (books, pens, calendars, materials) and their cars where they or others frequently touch throughout the day.

At the end of each day, staff will submit all evaluations of personal risk forms to the KCPS Office of Special Education. Any concerns that staff should have about a home visit must be reported immediately to the Supervisor of Special Education. If needed, consultation with the Supervisor of Student Services and/or Human Resources will determine if future visits to the home should occur to protect the health and safety of staff and families.

Due to no extensions in timelines under IDEA, KCPS must meet all IDEA obligations to locate and find children eligible for special education services. When schools were closed, IEP teams were not required to meet during that time. Once schools reopened, KCPS met with families through virtual means to hold IEP meetings. Since the June 10, 2020 relaxation of restrictions, KCPS will begin to assess students face to face. If it was determined that an

assessments had to be completed in person and the parent and IEP team had mutually agreed to extend the timeline, these assessments will be completed immediately after July 1, 2020.

Precautions will be taken by staff and families to help prevent further transmission of the virus among students and staff. All testing will be completed in a school building located closest to the child's home when possible. If transportation is needed to complete this testing, case managers must contact the Special Education Office to arrange these services. All participants must wear masks during the assessments and while in the school building. A plastic shield will also be placed between the assessor and student and social distancing is encouraged as appropriate. After all testing sessions, the examiner will wipe down all materials and areas with approved cleaning wipes. Students will not be allowed to travel the building alone. If a student needs to use the bathroom, the examiner must notify the custodial staff that the student traveled to a different part of the building to ensure that all cleaning procedures are followed.

IEP meetings will still be held virtually, unless parent asks to meet in person. The IEP chair will contact the parent to determine his/her preference. Parents will continue to receive all IEP documents as outlined under IDEA timelines. If parents have questions, these questions are to be directed to the Office of Special Education.

