

## EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN DIVISION

Good morning,

Following Governor Cooper's declaration of a state of emergency for North Carolina today, the Office of State Human Resources (OSHR) issued guidance to state employees in Raleigh, Durham and Orange Counties. As a result, EC Division staff who work at the NC DPI building are encouraged to work remotely. This may impact your ability to reach our staff by phone, so email contact is encouraged until further notice. Because of the increased activity of Corvid 19, we are also in the process of either canceling and rescheduling, or creating virtual access to PD and meetings that were to be offered through the end of April. The most immediate events will be communicated by the originators of the training/meeting. By the end of this week, I hope to have a complete document of rescheduled or virtual events through the end of April to distribute through this listserv.

Staff have already received several questions regarding services for students with disabilities in the event of school closures. We will regularly update questions and responses as they are received by the Division, throughout the course of this health crisis.

Question #1:

Can LEAs request that medically fragile students stay at home during this state of emergency?

Answer:

No. All parents should make individualized decisions regarding the health and well-being of their child. EC teachers working with students who are medically fragile and students in separate settings should exercise extra precautions when interacting with students. These precautions should include those provided by the CDC and located here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

Question #2:

If our LEA transitions to virtual instruction, how should we handle the delivery of special education and related services?

Answer:

The use of virtual platforms should be considered on a case-by-case basis for the delivery of special education and related services. If this delivery option is not appropriate for an individual, the LEA should begin keeping a log of services that are not provided and the dates on which the service should have been provided. Once the state of emergency has passed, relevant members of the IEP Team should develop a compensatory education plan to address the services owed during the virtual instructional

schedule.

Remember: If schools are closed for all students, compensatory education is not required for those dates. In this case, any required school make-up days will address missed instruction for all students.

Question #3:

Is there a recommendation for how to conduct IEP Team meetings if schools close or restrict visitors?

Answer:

Alternate means of participation in IEP Team meetings is allowable by the federal regulations and state policies. The use of phone or virtual conferences can be used. If alternate means of participation are used, planning efforts should include providing advance copies of proposed documents that the IEP Team will be reviewing so that participants are assured of meaningful engagement. The proposed watermark on documents generated in ECATS provides this flexibility of sharing documents ahead of time while ensuring that team members understand that the draft is a starting point for Team discussions.

Please take precautions and stay safe as we all weather this most unusual event.

With regards,  
Sherry



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