

## Kentucky Protection and Advocacy's Summer Steps to Prepare for School

Nobody is sure whether students will return to the classroom in the fall, continue distance learning, or do both. The following are 12 steps you can take over the summer to prepare for the next school year, regardless of when and how students return to school!

### Step 1: Request

Email your child's teacher or the principal and request your child's progress data for the 19-20 school year. Email addresses can typically be found on the school's website and should look like this: [firstname.lastname@district.kyschools.us](mailto:firstname.lastname@district.kyschools.us). You may want to request behavior data and attendance record. You should receive data for each goal on the IEP. Related service providers (OT and PT) may have a summary of progress. Don't worry about organizing documents just yet—we will do that later—but you may want to invest in a 3-ring binder and 3-hole punch to prepare for organizational tips coming soon!

If you have any questions, contact Robbin Richie ([robbin.richie@ky.gov](mailto:robbin.richie@ky.gov)) at P&A for assistance.

### Step 2: Relax!

Spend time with your family. Suggested activities: go on a nature walk, get out the water hose, participate in virtual zoo/aquarium exhibits, have a movie night, or plan a day of board games. You may want to **complete the 2020 Census**☺. Whatever is enjoyable to your family, do it now. Find the fun!

### Step 3: Gather

Print all emails/text messages and communication between home and school staff. Find all school related documents, such as copies of your child's IEP, conference summaries, data (IEP progress reports), any reports from outside agencies discussed during ARC (some folks refer to these as "IEP meetings") meetings. The goal for this week is to get everything in one place—next week you will organize everything!

### Step 4: Organize

Get out your binder and hole-punch! Organize documents in any system that works for you. One way is to divide your binder into sections (IEP, Conference Summaries, Meeting notices, Emails, Text messages, IEP progress data, etc.) and then put in chronological order. Place what you have gathered into your binder. It may take a few

tries and some creativity, but the purpose is to find an easy way for you to easily find and be able to reference the documents and data when you need it (like during an ARC meeting).

### **Step 5: Review**

Read your child's IEP cover to cover. Read a second time and make notes on the document. Are all of your child's needs addressed (academic, social, and behavioral)? Know your child's strengths and weaknesses, academic and transition goals, and the supports and services the school must provide. Are the needs your child has, in order to make progress, accurately addressed on the IEP? If not, make a list of ARC discussion points to prepare for the meeting. Make notes about any language you do not understand. Consider the following: Is there an acronym that you do not know what it means? Is it documented that your child has a strength/weakness that you do not believe is accurate? Are the descriptions in the Present Levels of Performance (first pages of the IEP) true about your child's abilities? Are all of the diagnosis listed correctly in the Health/Vision/Motor Ability section? Does this section include a description of his/her fine and gross motor skills? Does the Social/Emotional section accurately describe your child's strengths/weaknesses?

### **Step 6: Review**

Because your child became your student, you may have more insight to actual progress than ever before! Examine each goal and determine if any progress was made during NTI/in school time. Note all areas, where little to no progress was made, be ready to discuss at the ARC meeting. You are looking at progress for a year. Compare data to your child's attendance record. How was an absence from school considered when determining progress?

### **Step 7: Identify**

If your child has 6 goals, write "Goals" at the top of a sheet of paper and number 1-6. Next to each number, write one of the following: made progress, no progress, or regression. Under each goal on the IEP, the Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) should be documented. Was that (or something similar) provided? Look at the page that documents the amount of special education service minutes to be provided for your child. This is typically one of the last pages of the IEP. The top part of the page is for special education and the bottom is for any related services (speech, OT, PT, etc.). Did your child receive the amount of services listed? Make note of what your child missed during NTI and what was provided.

## Step 8: Research

IDEA requires special educators to use research in selecting methods and [strategies](#) to use in their classrooms. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) also suggests parents and educators visit The Evidence Based Intervention Network's [webpage](#) to review instructional resources. Finally, the Kentucky Department of Education has also compiled a list of instructional resources that can be found on its [website](#), which may be helpful to review.

## Step 9: Identify

Reflect on the services delivered to your child during NTI. Make a list of what worked well and what didn't work at all. Support each area listed with the facts and data. For example, was your child more attentive to lessons using technology or was the screen time overwhelming? Did your child have more success when tasks were more project based and could be completed over time? Was there a particular time of the day, where fatigue was a factor? Give examples of how your child proved to be the most successful. Remember, the design/development of an IEP should focus on the needs of the child and not the time/schedule of the adults, who provide the services and supports.

## Step 10: Identify

What does your child need to transition from NTI to returning to school? Will your child need to become familiar with the school building again? Will your child attend a different school and need opportunities to meet new staff? Will he/she need to practice a school routine? Are there sensory needs to returning to the classroom environment? If school closure happens again, what changes are needed for NTI to work well? Identifying what worked and what did not during NTI will need to be discussed during the ARC meeting.

## Step 11: Request

**Send an email to the principal, Cc the director of special education, and request an ARC meeting.** Get a plan together to guide your ARC discussions. Review the results from following these steps. What questions would you like answered? What are the needs for your child to make progress at school and during NTI? The Kentucky Department of Education has created a [guidance document](#) that can be used to understand the IEP process. You may want to use this guidance document and create your own draft of an IEP.

## Step 12: Discuss

**It's ARC day!** Discuss with the ARC your child's progress during NTI, transition needs to return to school, changes in his/her IEP, and the provision of compensatory education. If developed, present your draft of the IEP for the team to consider. Stay on track and follow the guide you worked so hard to develop for this very day. You are the expert on your child. Stay focused on how the school can meet his/her needs. Ask questions for anything you do not clearly understand. Be specific about the instruction/services your child may not have received during the school closure. Participate in the plan development, especially if the district owes your child compensatory education (due to missed instruction or services). **You've got this!!!**