



## **Spotlight on Students with Disabilities During COVID-19 Pandemic**

Serving students with disabilities during remote instruction is one of the most demanding aspects of educating during the Covid-19 pandemic. Schools face logistical challenges and feelings of hopelessness and exhaustion encountered by school staff serving students with disabilities. Rural schools find it especially difficult to provide virtual services to students with disabilities as a large percentage of homes do not have Wi-Fi. This is an issue for both teachers and students.

The National Survey of Public Education's response to Covid-19 indicates that overall, districts reported that when school buildings closed, and instruction became remote, it was hard to utilize the essential needs for IEP plans. Staff explained they were unprepared for the overnight switch to reliance on virtual instruction and therapy. The report provided insight into the perspectives of parents who have been frustrated with a perceived lack of compliance with the IEP for their children with disabilities.

Schools are required to comply with the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004. Schools had to create new strategies for delivering services needed and required to their students with disabilities. Schools implemented programs for specifically designed instruction through new mechanisms such as synchronous small group lessons, sending materials and familiar toys to the homes and created a tiered approach with various qualified staffing to meet the diverse needs of all students.

Others used personal visits including porch training. Some allotted additional time for staff to support students through one-on-one experiences using texting, face-time and phone calls to parents. Even with these innovations, all districts will need more support to serve students with disabilities appropriately and to fully comply with IDEA 2004.

To review the findings and identify additional solutions for this very difficult topic click on the following link:

<https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/COVID-Survey-Spotlight-on-Students-with-Disabilities-FINAL-Oct-2020.pdf>

NATIONAL SURVEY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19  
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