

Preschool Special Education

Preschool Special Education General Guidance and Recommendations:

This section includes considerations for the provision of early childhood (ages 3-5) special education services during school reopening.

Young children's experiences with both online and in-person learning while following health and safety guidelines will differ from older children. What works for older children may not work for children ages 3–5 years. Please ensure that planned instruction is [developmentally appropriate](#) for this age group.

Please prioritize the following:

- Implementing strategies that support physical distancing for the youngest learners.
- Identifying training and supports needed by early childhood special education staff to provide quality instruction and inclusive early learning services across the continuum of school reopening models and to complete data collection and reporting (e.g., [Child Outcome Summary](#) data).
- Ensuring inclusive access and a continuum of early learning options in the context of changes to early learning programs in response to physical distancing and health and safety requirements due to COVID-19.
- Meeting timelines for Part C to Part B transition requirements, including communicating and collaborating with Part C provider agencies and families, during the reopening of schools.

Some suggested ideas for engaging early learners participating in hybrid and distance learning models include:

- Provide resources/directions with all activities to support families and caregivers during distance learning.
- Make kits with hands-on materials to have families pick up/be delivered (regularly, i.e., weekly, bi-weekly etc.).
- Provide suggestions/examples to families to help them create predictable routines for learning and play based on family schedules.
- Provide recommendations for how many minutes of each activity that families can use to help establish routines.
- Allow families to take pictures of work and submit through app/email during daily/weekly communication.
- Encourage parents to contact school staff regularly regarding challenges experienced during distance learning or in person.
- Emphasize the importance of daily reading with students.



- Model examples of how instruction translates to home settings.
- Provide guidance on how to follow their child's lead and how learning success can look.
- Provide prompts (questions/videos) for families to use during learning activities, play activities and reading that encourage critical thinking. ("Tell me about what you are building." "What are you using to build it?").

Part C to Part B Transitions

New federal guidance has been released about the impact of the pandemic on young children ([Read the Letter to OSERS State and Local Partners](#)). Districts are expected to complete timely evaluations and implement an IEP by the child's third birthday, if he/she is found eligible for special education.

- **New OSEP Transition Clarification: The transition process begins when the LEA is notified that a child is approaching their third birthday and may be eligible for services, NOT at the transition meeting/conference. Each LEA should have procedures in place to ensure that they are receiving and accounting for all the students provided to them by their local Part C program.**

- Transition meetings should happen within the timelines established by state and federal regulations.
- Districts should review existing data from Part C agency providers to assist in decisions regarding eligibility. If the IEP Team believes there is enough current information to complete a comprehensive evaluation and determine Part B eligibility, the district can complete the evaluation and eligibility process using the existing data.
- If face-to-face transition planning meetings and assessments are held, staff should ensure that they are conducted while following health and safety guidelines, including physical distancing.

Programmatic Planning:

Georgia utilizes the Child Outcome Summary Process (COS) to gather data for [Early Childhood Outcomes-Indicator 7](#).

- Teachers, related services providers, and diagnostic team members should complete the Child Outcome Summary training modules to support accurate data collection and interrater reliability. The modules can be assigned to personnel in the Professional Learning Opportunities (PLO) section of the [GaDOE Portal](#).
- [COS Process Professional Development](#) resources are available on the Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) website.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Can preschool special education students participate in any of the GaDOE-identified Alternative Instructional Delivery Models?

Yes, preschool students can be served within any of the [alternative instructional models](#). Additionally, preschool students should not be excluded from participating in instructional models available to school aged students within the district. Districts should consider ways to provide instruction for young children in a developmentally appropriate manner using [recommended practices](#).

How can we support behavioral and social-emotional goals that rely on peer interactions for students participating in hybrid or distance learning?

When peer interactions with classmates are currently not an option, we encourage adult and sibling interactions with preschool special education students.

Some IEP goals are related to classroom routines. How should those goals be addressed for students?

Districts can provide families with suggestions related to routines at home that are important for family life and individual student self-help skills. Families and teachers can collaborate to create items like visual schedules like those used in classrooms to use in the home after the routine has been identified. Some examples of activities could be:

- Wash Hands
- Brush Teeth
- Breakfast
- Read a Book together
- Play with one toy for specified amount of time
- Go outside for a walk

Are teachers, therapists and/or related service providers allowed to provide services at a licensed childcare program?

Yes, teachers, therapists and related service providers are permitted to provide services at a childcare program. If a therapist must visit a child in a licensed childcare program, the therapist must be counted in the group size of 50 persons in a self-contained classroom. The teacher, therapist or related service provider must follow all requirements including initial health check upon arrival, before entering the program. Additionally, the program must ensure that criminal background check rules are followed. If access is not granted, the district should review the Alternative Instructional Delivery models listed in the [restart guidance](#) to adapt instructional models for the students impacted by the facility policy. The district should maintain detailed



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documentation regarding efforts to provide services in the childcare facilities and adjustments made if the facility will not allow providers to enter the building.

Please refer the [Department of Early Care and Learning \(DECAL\)](#) for additional information.

What is the guidance regarding face coverings?

Based on [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) guidance](#), children ages 3-5 are **recommended** to wear masks when they are in a childcare or classroom setting. Children between the age of 3 and 5 should be supervised if they are wearing a mask. No child should wear a mask while napping. If the mask is creating discomfort or resulting in the child touching their face frequently, reconsider whether a mask is appropriate for that child. **Please refer to [CDC](#) for the most updated guidance and the Department of Early Care and Learning for additional guidance.**

Are we expected to have the child's IEP in place by their third birthday as children transition from Part C to Part B services?

Yes, the federal government has not waived or changed this IDEA requirement related to Early Childhood Part C to B Transition-Indicator 12. Subsequently, as children transitioning from Part C to Part B are evaluated and found eligible during this time, it is the expectation that districts complete those activities and start the IEP services on or before the child's third birthday.

Will we complete the OSEP Early Childhood Outcome exit data (Indicator 7) as we normally would for the 2021-2022 school year?

Yes, you will enter the school year exit data at the end of this school year. OSEP has not waived or changed this IDEA requirement related to Early Childhood Outcomes -Indicator 7.

Are there resources to help plan distance learning and overall programmatic planning for young children?

- [National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\) - Family Resources Page](#) This website provides resources, tips, and ideas around child development and early learning domains.
- [Zero to Three - At-Home Activity Guide](#) This list of activities helps support development through play for infants and toddlers. The activities suggested for the toddlers can easily apply or be adapted for preschoolers.
- [Coping with COVID-19](#) Online resources to provide information from NAEYC, the CDC, and other educational organizations. There are multiple resources to support
- [Ready Rosie - Healthy at Home: A Toolkit for Supporting Families Impacted by COVID-19](#) A free toolkit as a resource to support families with information and resources for supporting the children in their care.
- [The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations \(NCPMI\) - Teaching Social Emotional Skills](#) Activities, materials, and tools to help children promote self-regulation or problem solving.



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- [National P3 Center - At-Home Teaching and Learning in PreK-3rd Grade](#) Guidance related to school districts' and elementary schools' supports for at-home learning across the primary grades (PreK-3rd grade).
- [Georgia Early Learning Standards \(GELDS\) Resources](#) Resources to support home learning.
- [Early Learning Distance Learning Resources](#) Links to early learning resources for virtual learning, games, social emotional strategies, and physical activities.
- [Activities to Support Young Learners](#) Links to support young learners at home through game, physical and learning activities.
- [Georgia Pre-K Teacher Resources](#) This site provides general information, virtual learning resources, social emotional tools and family engagement resources.
- [Pop Up Early Learning](#) Lessons to support empathy, language, and literacy.
- [eRead Kids](#) Free eBooks are available through every public library in Georgia.