The world is responding to an unprecedented public health crisis, the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). In response to this crisis, Governor Kate Brown has closed schools for students in Oregon from Monday, March 16 through Tuesday, April 28. While this closure presents significant challenges, it is the best way to flatten the curve, slow the rate of transmission, and protect the lives of Oregonians. We understand that the current situation raises some questions and want to assure you that there is an entire community of people who are navigating this with you and seeking to provide you information, resources, and support. You are not alone and we will get through this together. If you have questions about the impact of the school closure due to COVID-19 that are not addressed in this document, please submit them here.

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**Impact on my Child’s Education**

How will my child be able to access instruction?

During closures for schools, districts, and programs due to the COVID-19, where there are no other educational programs or educational services offered to the general student population (or in the case of ECSE, to all students in the program), schools, districts, and programs are not required to provide services to students who experience disability during that period of time, unless such services are specifically required by the student's IFSP or IEP (e.g., Extended School Year services). There are educational resources in the resource document that you can use with your child. Your school district should also be preparing to deliver supplemental education and learning supports to the extent practical.

We encourage parents to think of educational services during this time from two different lenses, with each approach having a different impact on a child’s instruction. These two approaches are: (1) instruction for course participation and (2) supplemental education and learning supports.

*Credit-Earning/Standards-Based Instruction* occurs when the answer to any of the following questions is ‘yes’:

- Are students earning credit towards graduation or grade level promotion?
- Is the school/district working towards required minimum instruction hours?
- Is the student's participation in a course contributing to a course grade?
- Does the instruction focus on teaching new ideas and concepts?
- Is the instruction designed to cover initial instruction on content standards?

By contrast, *Supplemental Education and Learning Supports* occurs when:

- The student cannot earn course credit by completing the work and work is not graded
- The school/district is not counting the time towards required instructional hours
- Student participation is optional, not required
- There is no (or minimal) new content instruction. The focus of the work is on review or maintenance only
- The work is intended to help students maintain or practice existing skills
- The primary focus is on student belonging and connectivity, for their well-being and mental health

Under either approach, it is important to note that services will necessarily be different than the typical educational services schools and programs provide for children. Under both approaches, it is important that students’ rights are maintained.

Special education and related services may be required for your child to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). It is important to note that during this closure, even when a school or district is providing Course Participation, IEP services could look different than in a school setting during normal circumstances. Therefore, if a district or program is providing Credit-Earning/Standards-Based Instruction, they may begin to provide special education services. If a student cannot access the materials being presented for credit, alternate materials to meet the same instructional purpose, or a similar instructional purpose as appropriate for the student per their IEP goals, should be provided. The materials and support must be presented in a language the student can access, however, the specific services required for your child to receive FAPE may be different during this period of school closure due to COVID-19.
However, if a district, school, or program is providing Supplemental Education and Learning Supports, the district, school, or program must ensure that the infant, toddler, or child has access to those supplemental supports. While Supplemental Education and Learning Supports are being provided, no students, whether general or special education, are being specifically instructed towards new learning goals. The focus is on maintenance of existing skills. In this approach, considerations are given for equity and access to the extent feasible with available resources. Accommodations and/or modifications must be considered for students with IEPs to ensure they have access to the Supplemental Education and Learning Supports available to all students. As is the case for all other children, the specific combination of services and supports they receive during this time will be different than when schools are in session. Rather, when providing Supplemental Education and Learning Supports, districts, schools, and programs should focus on ensuring that the materials and supports are accessible.

**Will the school year be extended?**
That determination has not been made at this time.

**How and when will students be able to make up credits?**
ODE is developing guidance for districts related to the requirement for supplemental education and learning supports that should further address next steps in light of the school closure. It is possible that guidance will change as the response to COVID-19 changes.

**Schools have been asked to provide supplemental education. What can I expect in that regard?**
Though ODE is providing guidance for districts, this determination will be a local decision that is individually determined based on each district’s context (e.g., the district may provide virtual instruction for all students, independent non-graded work projects and assignments, resources that families can use together with students, or other forms of supplemental education and learning supports that make sense for the district). Each district will be responsible for determining what that looks like for their individual students.

In general, *Supplemental Education and Learning Supports* occurs when:
- The student cannot earn course credit by completing the work and work is not graded
- The school/district is not counting the time towards required instructional hours
- Student participation is optional, not required
- There is no (or minimal) new content instruction. The focus of the work is on review, maintenance, and remediation only
- The work is intended to help students maintain or practice existing skills
- The primary focus is on student belonging and connectivity, for their well-being and mental health

Once Supplemental Education and Learning Supports are being provided for any student, your child should also be able to access those services. Districts will need to ensure that once supplemental education and learning supports are being provided for any student, appropriate supplemental education and learning supports are also provided for students who experience disability. These supports will most likely not be the same set of supports students received while schools were fully in session, but must continue to provide access to the supports available for all students, in ways that are appropriate and accessible given your child’s disability. The way services are structured could vary from the way they are written in the IEP since supplemental education during school closure is not going to be the same educational services provided in a different setting or format.
Are there any exceptions for our most vulnerable students to remain in school?

This school closure presents additional challenges for parents of students with significant support needs, including those with significant emotional and behavioral support needs. However, at this time, there is no allowance for any classrooms or schools, regardless of type, or the support need of the students, to operate during this closure. While we absolutely understand that the COVID-19 closure creates challenging situations for many families, it is a necessary response to this unprecedented outbreak. It is possible, though likely exceedingly rare, that certain individual students continue to require some form of services during the school closure in order to receive FAPE, but those decisions are made by IFSP/IEP teams on an individual basis.

Parents remain critical partners in their child’s education during this period of time and must be given the opportunity to participate in any meetings regarding the identification, evaluation, IFSP/IEP and educational placement of their child, and the provision of a free appropriate public education to their child. If IFSP/IEP meetings are held, districts and programs may work with parents, families, and service providers to hold IFSP/IEP meetings through alternative means, such as via conference call or a virtual meeting (e.g., Zoom, GoToMeeting, Google Meet, Cisco Webex). In line with current health recommendations, ODE encourages parents to agree to alternative means of participating that enables the implementation of social distancing recommendations, so long as the alternative means remains conducive to meaningful parent participation in the meeting. It is also possible that, due to COVID-19, districts and programs are unable to hold IFSP/IEP meetings at this time. If that is the case, or if a meeting is proposed through alternative means that is not agreeable to the parent, the district should provide Prior Written Notice to the parent documenting the situation. In those cases, if a child should be receiving services at this time and does not, the district or program should hold an IFSP/IEP meeting upon reopening to determine if FAPE was provided and, if it was not, how to remedy the situation. There is no one specific way that these situations must be remedied. Appropriate remedies must be individualized based on the student’s needs, but could include, for example, additional specially designed instruction, extended school year supports, or compensatory services.

Managing Time Away From School

Should I establish a routine for my child during the school closure?

Yes, maintain existing routines as possible, and establish a new, consistent, and predictable routine for your child(ren) for the duration of any school closure. For example, if you typically get up at 6 am to get ready for school, continue to do so. Children thrive with appropriate structure. Even though there is a significant disruption to their typical routine, establishing consistency and predictability will support them as they transition into this significant lifestyle change. Here is a sample daily schedule.

Should I take my child into the community (e.g., a playground, ice cream shop) when they get bored at home?

Doctors are recommending that children do not play at neighborhood playgrounds. Maintaining appropriate social distance is hard for children, especially in unstructured situations like those encountered at playgrounds. It may also be difficult to ensure that playground equipment is not contaminated, which could cause children to face additional risk when they touch the equipment. Additional information is available here.

Is it safe for my child to play outside?

If social distancing rules can be maintained, children can spend time outside. Gatherings of people are not recommended. To the extent possible, when outside, children should not encounter any different
people than they do at other times. The Oregon Health Administration recommends that Oregonians stay “at least three feet, but ideally six feet, from one another … [to] protect themselves from the disease and help slow its spread.”

Maintaining Connection with Others

How can I help my child use technology to communicate with family and friends?
Start simple and stay developmentally appropriate. For toddlers, use a video messaging app with them to connect with loved ones. For older children and teens, they may like to text a friend or use a social media platform for sharing messages and videos. Please take care to ensure your child is safe while interacting online.

Some school districts are providing computers on loan to families who do not otherwise have access to technology used for learning. Check in with your local school district to see if this is a possibility.

Navigating the Situation

How should I talk to my young child about COVID-19?
The University of Michigan published this article on how to talk to your kids about COVID-19. Among the things they recommend are:

1. Use developmentally appropriate, simple and honest language.
2. Offer reasonable reassurance.
3. Follow their lead and validate their feelings.
4. Bring some control and fun where you can.
5. Take time to yourself to address your own feelings.

The CDC has also shared information to help people talk with children about COVID-19. Included in their information are general principles for talking to children and specific factual information about COVID-19.

How can we protect ourselves?
On their FAQ page, the Oregon Health Authority shared information about how people can keep from getting sick with COVID-19.

There are simple steps you can take to protect yourself and your family from COVID-19 as well as influenza and other illnesses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with sick people or animals.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw it away. If you don’t have a tissue, cough into your elbow.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that you frequently touch.
- Avoid non-essential travel to regions listed in CDC travel advisories.
It is also important to keep your body resilient:

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Exercise.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Stay up-to-date on routine vaccines. This includes the flu vaccine. It is not too late to get a flu shot to protect yourself from the flu, which continues to cause illness in Oregon.
- Quit smoking and vaping. Initial research shows that people who smoke may be more likely to develop serious complications from COVID-19. If you’d like to quit, free help is available at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or wwwQUITNOW.net/oregon.

Prevention information is available in multiple languages.

- English
- Español / Spanish
- العربية / Arabic
- 简体中文 / Simplified Chinese
- 繁體中文 / Traditional Chinese
- Русский / Russian
- Af Soomaali / Somali
- Tiếng Việt / Vietnamese

The CDC also has a page on prevention of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) available here. They also have a page that documents symptoms of COVID-19 here.

What if my child gets sick?

This site has a page that describes the steps parents should take if their child gets sick with COVID-19. Among their recommendations, they recommend that parents:

- Do your best to stay calm.
- Talk to a health care provider.
- Keep your child home.
- Keep other people and pets away from your child as much as possible.
- Have your sick child use a different bathroom from others, if possible.
- Wash your hands, clean, and disinfect often.
- Help your child get plenty of rest and drink lots of liquids.
- Watch for signs that your child might need more medical help.

What else do I need to know?

No one group, ethnicity or population in the US is at a higher risk for getting or spreading COVID-19 than others. While people may worry or have concerns about COVID-19, it is important to not let fear lead to social stigma toward friends, neighbors or members of the community or unwarranted paranoia.

What about the most high-need/nursing dependent students?

Since transition from receiving full time 1:1 nursing at school to only at home is a significant transition, schools may need to pay some extra attention in working with families. Families will also be taking on the burden of care for less serious conditions as well.