



2020 -2021 Special Services Supplemental Guide: Virtual Instruction Guidebook for Families

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Purpose

Special Services Supplemental Guide to the SOMSD Virtual Instruction Guideline for Families

This companion guide is to be used as a supplemental guide to the published SOMSD Virtual Instruction Guideline for Families (August 28, 2020). This supplemental guide will provide information specific to Special Services.

SOMSD's greatest assets are its students, staff, and community.

Although we have shifted our instructional model to an all-virtual learning to begin the school year, our top priority continues to be assuring the safety of all students and staff who will ultimately begin walking through our doors again. As we continue to work to prepare to reopen SOMSD schools for hybrid in-person academic instruction, establishing clear expectations for the transition from at-home learning is critical. The new protocols and procedures that were shared from our [August 8, Restart & Recovery Plan](#) for Reopening schools will still be in place when schools reopen and will:

- adhere to local, state and federal instructional guidelines;
- adhere to local, state, federal and CDC safety guidelines;
- be implemented consistently, for the good of all; and
- be sensible, responsive and ongoing.

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Virtual Special Education Programs

Students with IEP's will have their IEP's implemented to the greatest extent possible. The below special education programs are programs specifically indicated in IEP's.

Inclusion

Students with an Inclusion program indicated on their IEP's will receive their instruction by both a general education and a special education teacher. Students may be pulled into virtual small groups by either teacher to work on skill acquisition and/or IEP goals.

Examples of virtual supports:

- Participate in whole class live instruction
- Live supplemental small group instruction
- 1:1 check in with students/families as consistently

Resource Room Programs

Students with a resource room program indicated on their IEP's will receive their primary instruction by a special education teacher for the classes in which their IEP indicates Resource.

Examples of virtual supports:

- Live Instruction
- Small Group instruction (if applicable)
- Limit Live Instruction to 20-30 min at a time
- "Live-independent-live-independent" cycle
- Weekly 1:1 Check-Ins with families

Self-Contained Programs

Students with a self-contained program indicated on their IEP's will receive their primary instruction by a special education teacher for their academic subjects (in accordance with their IEP's).

Examples of virtual supports:

- Live small group instruction for core subjects
- Morning Meeting
- "live-independent/break-live-independent/break" cycle
- movement/snack breaks
- weekly 1:1 check-in with student/families
- limit live interaction to 20-30 minutes at a time
- live discrete trials (ABA)
- Implementation of N2Y and Healthy Relationships

Related Services

Related Services will be provided virtually. In specific instances where IEP goals require in-person OT and PT that cannot be met virtually, services will be provided in person at one central school location. The applicable therapists will reach out to parents to discuss service delivery models and scheduling. Related services will be virtually provided individually and in virtual groups, as determined by IEPs.

Paraprofessionals

If students have a paraprofessional indicated in their IEP (shared or individual) and/or there is a classroom paraprofessional, they will be supported virtually by the paraprofessional. Some examples of virtual paraprofessionals include (but are not limited to): supporting whole-class lessons, conducting discrete trials, providing supplementary supports, data collection, and executive functioning supports. The paraprofessionals will be trained in Canvas and the Tools of The Mind (preschool learning management system) platforms, to further support students, families, and teachers.

Speech

Speech services will continue to be provided virtually. Speech therapy will be provided individual and/or in groups in accordance with IEP mandates.

Physical Therapy/Occupational Therapy

In specific instances where IEP goals require in-person OT and PT that cannot be met virtually, services will be provided in person at one central school location. The applicable therapists will reach out to parents to discuss service delivery models and scheduling. Related services will be virtually provided individually and in virtual groups, as determined by IEPs.

Evidenced Based Reading (EBR)

If EBR is indicated in a student's IEP, they will receive this supplementary support virtually. The EBR teacher will communicate directly with families regarding scheduling.

Counseling

If school-based counseling is indicated in a student's IEP, they will receive this supplementary support virtually. School-based counseling may be provided individually and/or in groups, in accordance with IEP's.

Progress Monitoring

Special Education teachers and related service therapists are responsible for completing progress reporting specific to IEP goals. These reports will be provided to parents/guardians in accordance with IEP's, at the same frequency as school report cards.

- **Progress Monitoring Reports:** Individual progress monitoring reports can be found in the PowerSchool parent portal upon completion.

Preschool/Elementary

Marking Period end dates
MP 1 December 2-December 4
MP 2 March 10- March 12
MP 3 June 23

Middle/High School

Marking Period end dates
MP 1 November 25
MP 2 February 9
MP 3 April 20
MP 4 June 23

CST Services: Evaluations and Meetings

Throughout the spring, CST meetings continued to be completed virtually, and parents/guardians participated via phone and also Google Meet. This will continue throughout the pandemic. This summer, we began testing students in person, this will continue as well.

CST Case Managers will send an introductory email to families no later than September 3rd.

Child Study Team Evaluations will continue to be conducted in-person as much as possible. Safety precautions and parental acknowledgement of the safety procedures will be sent to parents prior to evaluations taking place. Here is the CST Testing Protocol form that must be completed, which acknowledges COVID precautions in place: [CST Testing Acknowledgement](#)

Child Study Team Meetings will continue to be held virtually. School Counselors, Social Workers, and Child Study Team members will conduct virtual meetings with students and parents as necessary. Any questions or concerns regarding meeting participation should be directed to your child's case manager. Upon return to normal operations, meetings will be held to consider if there is a loss/regression of skills as a result of the COVID school closures, which may lead to compensatory or make-up services.

CST Referrals from parents/guardians should continue to be sent to referrals@somsd.k12.nj.us for processing. Once received, the Child Study Team will schedule a meeting to review the concerns and determine next steps.

504 Plans- Virtual Supports

504 Plans will be implemented to the greatest extent possible. 504 plans are written and case managed by a school building administrator. Any questions or concerns with the implementation of a student's 504 plan should be addressed with the building administrator assigned.

Examples of Virtual Accommodations:

- Students can write on PDF through the use of the mouse, text box, etc.
- Students can answer questions via audio/video
- Individualized assignments
- Provide notes to specific students only
- Breakout rooms for student collaboration.
- Teachers can respond to assignments and give grading feedback through audio or video.
- Creation of student groupings

Examples of Alignment of 504 supports with virtual

Preferential Seating- Students learn in front of a computer and the family chooses the learning environment.

Visual support- Videos may be replayed multiple times allowing the student to take notes and work at his/her own pace.

Hearing impaired: Headsets can be utilized. Talk-to-text can be used with some courses.

Intervention & Referral Services

The MTSS system alongside Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) will continue to be utilized by staff and families to support students. Meetings will continue being held virtually to discuss any I&RS concerns that teachers or families have. Resources for behavior and emotional well-being will be provided by the Social Workers and Guidance Counselors, and academic resources will be provided by teachers and specialists on the team.

Intervention & Referral Services

A child may be referred to I&RS if s/he is experiencing academic, emotional, and/or behavior difficulties. Students may be referred for determination of eligibility for special education services or for a speech/language evaluation by instructional staff, school administration, parents/guardians, and/or state agencies including the Department of Education and agencies concerned with the welfare of students. N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.3(a)3.

Social-Emotional Supports

Overview

SOMSD recognizes the importance of providing wraparound services to address the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of students with interventions both inside and outside of the school environment. SOMSD will utilize social work interns to provide executive functioning support to K-12 students in need. The Preschool Intervention Referral Team (PIRT) Specialist and Community Outreach Liaison will continue to support all preschool families. SOMSD will also be providing a directory of mental health resources for students and families to access, and this will be housed on our district website. There will also be expert speakers conducting web-based workshops for students and families to address some of the challenges faced by students and families during this time of remote/hybrid learning.

Examples of Supports

- Student Supports
 - Offer virtual social work and counselor led class meetings/restorative circles to help students process all of the changes related to the pandemic
 - Creation of a voluntary, online buddy/mentor program
 - Executive functioning supports to assist with virtual learning
 - Individual and group counseling for students
 - Virtual Student forums to process and discuss events
- Family Supports
 - Creation of a call-line
 - Expert speakers for parent workshops
 - District Mental Health page for resources
- Staff Supports
 - Providing scripts for teachers to use in a number of eventualities- welcome back, sudden reclosing, etc.
 - Providing scripts and/or suggested answers for difficult questions students might ask about the current pandemic
- In addition to providing push-in virtual supports, our social work interns will also be facilitating the SOMSD Care Line (973-762-5600 ext. 1850), where they will be offering brief consultations and/or referrals for other services to anyone in need. There is also a series of events centered around supporting students and families during this pandemic, and details can be found on our website.
- For additional information on SOMSD Mental Health Resources please visit:
<http://bit.ly/SOMSDMHResource>

SOMSD Pre-School Program

Overview

Preschool curriculum (Tools of the Mind) has created a web-based portal that enables children in Tools programs to engage virtually in core Tools daily activities aligned with in-school curriculum rollout, so they maintain the learning in the classroom when at home.

Preschool: School to Home Connection

The Tools of the Mind portals includes options for a teacher/family messaging system, familiar PreK learning activities, Parent Center with offline learning activities & guidance for supporting children's learning at home to improve child outcomes. Early literacy apps have been redesigned to integrate home data into the teacher's analytics dashboard so teachers can track, see and hear at home learning, & provide individualized scaffolding to children at home via messages on the apps. Teachers will post the focus for instruction for the upcoming week by Friday at 4:00. This will allow families to plan their week accordingly.

2020-2021 Preschool Sites:

Montrose Early Childhood Center

Bonita Samuels, Principal bsamuels@somsd.k12.nj.us

Applecore Early Learning Center

Stacy Brutus, Director smckenzie@applecorelearningecc.com

Britney Moore, Assistant Director bmoore@applecorelearningecc.com

Le Petite Academy

Pauline Lacey-Woode, Director placey@somsd.k12.nj.us

KinderGan

Frumie Bogomilsky, Director kindergan@maplewoodjewishcenter.org

Zadies of the Oranges

Winifred Smith, Director winifred.smith@zadiesoto.com

FAQS

1. Can I still refer my child to be evaluated by the Child Study Team during virtual learning?

Yes. Please send an email to referrals@somsd.k12.nj.us and a member of the Child Study Team will contact you to discuss your concerns.

2. My child was in the process of being evaluated by the Child Study Team, will the evaluation continue?

Yes. The Child Study Team will continue to schedule and complete in-person evaluations. These evaluations will most often be on a 1:1 basis, and will have the proper COVID precautions in place for the safety of the students and the evaluators.

3. I referred my child to the Child Study Team and all evaluations have been completed during the summer, but the eligibility/IEP meeting has not been held. What are the next steps?

The Child Study Team will be contacting families to schedule all pending eligibility/IEP meetings upon our return.

4. My child attends an Out of District school, which plan should they follow?

Each OOD school has presented their own re-opening plan. Please consult directly with the OOD School and/or your child's case manager with any questions or concerns.

5. Who should I contact if I have a question about my child's IEP or 504 plan?

In both instances, your child's case manager would be the best point of contact. If your child has an IEP, it will be the Child Study Team case manager. If your child has a 504 plan, it will be a building administrator of the school in which your child attends.

6. Will my preschool student use Canvas?

Preschool students will use the Tools of the Mind web portal, which is developmentally appropriate and allows for increased home to school connections.

7. If my child is struggling with any aspect of virtual learning, who should I contact?

Your first point of contact should be your child's teacher, and your next point of contact should be your child's case manager. They can assist you and direct you to the correct person if they are unable to.

8. My child's annual IEP meeting would take place in the fall. Will that still be the case? Will it be done by Zoom or a similar method?

Yes. IEP meetings will be held by the anniversary date. All meetings will be virtual (i.e. google meets, WebEx, and etc.) at this time. The Child Study Team will contact you to schedule the meeting before it is due.