

ADVOCACY SKILLS FOR REMOTE LEARNING

TIPS FOR PROBLEM SOLVING DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES



1. Understand the system you are working with.

- Know which system you are working with. Public school? Charter school? Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE)?
- Identify your points of contact, e.g. teacher, service provider, or parent coordinator.
- Research how the system typically operates, keeping in mind that during school closures timelines, delivery methods will be affected. For this information, refer to the NYCDOE's:
 - Family Guide to Special Education Services: <https://bit.ly/2KgEhSd>
 - Standard Operating Procedures Manual: <https://bit.ly/39pPY2U>

2. Know your rights and responsibilities.

- Students are entitled to special education services during remote learning.
- Stay in communication with the school, especially by email. There may be forms to sign, services to schedule, or information they need from you.

3. Understand your child's disability.

- Be prepared to clearly explain your child's disability and needs.
- Be aware of what services your child receives and how often. To find this out, review the most recent Individualized Education Program (IEP) or contact the IEP team.

4. Practice good organization.

- Keep a log of services missed and services delivered.
- Save all records and correspondence during remote learning and keep it organized in one place, e.g. in a binder or a file on your computer.
- Put as much communication in writing as possible, so there is a record.
- Keep a communication log, including the date, who you communicated with, and what was discussed or written. Keep track of unsuccessful attempts to contact as well.

5. Practice clear and effective communication.

- Check your email, phone, and mail frequently. Make sure the school or system has your updated contact information. During school closures, it will likely be harder to reach school staff by phone. Email may be the best option.
- Include your name, date, and contact information in every email or letter you send. Include the student's name, date of birth, and student I.D. number.
- Speak and write clearly. Explain your child's needs (rather than what you want).

6. Know how to resolve disagreements.

- Communicate first with the teachers, service providers, or school administration.
- Contact specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov if issues are not resolved.
- Learn about dispute resolution options in case the problem continues. See the NYCDOE's Family Guide to Special Education Services linked in tip #1.
- Contact INCLUDEnyc's Help Line at 212-677-4660.