

Louisiana Believes

Continuous Education for Students with Disabilities
Direct Services

April 2020

Agenda + Logistics

- I. Overview
- II. Continuous Education for Students with Disabilities: Direct Services
 - Identify Resources
 - Develop an Approach
 - Implement Services
- III. Resources to Support Families and Caregivers
- IV. Additional Resources
- V. Closeout

If you are experiencing audio difficulties, please make sure that your speakers are on and that your volume is at a suitable level.

Given the number of participants, this call will be in the “listen only” mode. Please type questions into the chat box as we go along.

Dial in by phone: 408-638-0968

Meeting ID: 956 2686 8943



Resources to Support Continuous Learning for Students with Disabilities

Resources to Support Special Education in a Continuous Learning Environment

In March, the Department released a suite of resources to support school systems in providing special education in a continuous learning environment. The resources are located on the Department's [COVID-19 web page](#) and the [Students with Disabilities web page](#).



Documents on this page are being continuously updated. If you've opened a document more than once, please clear your history/cache and refresh the page to view the most up-to-date version.

ACADEMIC SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	SPECIAL EDUCATION TIMELINES AND DOCUMENTATION
Continuous Education for Students with Disabilities: Accessibility of Instructional Materials PDF	Family Toolbox: Ways to Support Students with Disabilities During School Closures PDF PDF
Continuous Education for Students with Disabilities: Accommodations PDF	Timelines and Documentation During Extended School Closures for Students with Disabilities PDF

Continuous Learning for Students with Disabilities: Direct Services

Providing special education and related services during school closure is essential to improving outcomes for children. Special education teachers and related service providers should provide special education and related services to students with disabilities, including early childhood special education (ECSE) services, to the extent possible.

The [Continuous Learning for Students with Disabilities: Direct Services](#) guide builds on the [Continuous Learning Guidance and Tools](#) and [Guidance for Early Learning at Home](#) to support school systems in adapting direct services to continuous learning environments.

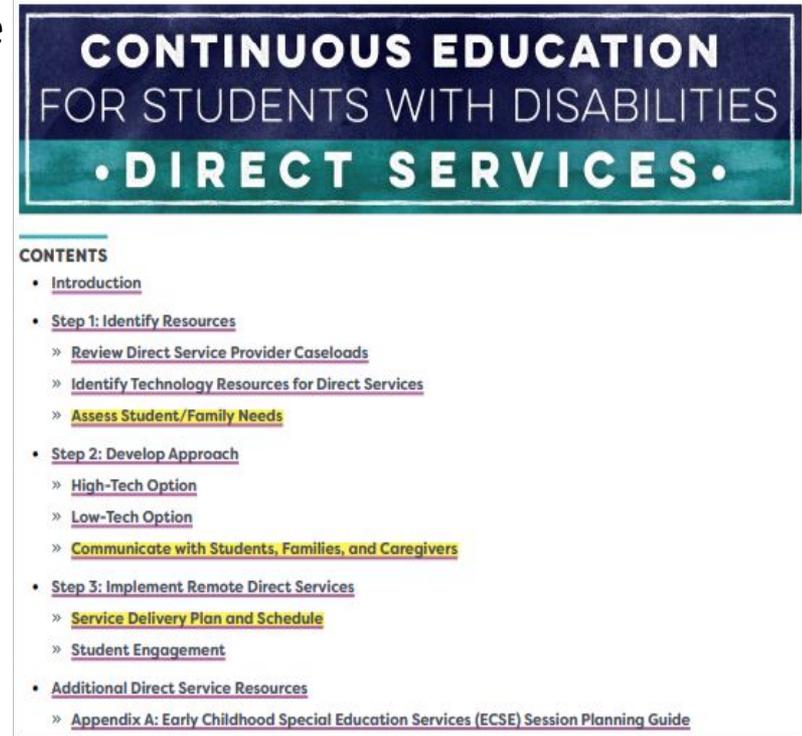
Continuous Learning for Students with Disabilities: Direct Services

The Direct Services guide helps school systems create and educators implement plans for continuous learning that address the delivery of direct services for students with disabilities.

The guide provides a three-step process to:

- identify resources,
- develop an approach, and
- implement remote direct services.

The guide includes concrete resources and other tools to guide continuous learning plans and service delivery.



Step 1: Identify Resources

Direct Services

Step 1: Identify Resources

To ensure direct services continue during continuous learning, the Direct Services guide assists school systems through identifying resources by completing the actions outlined:

- Review direct service provider caseloads
- Identify technology resources available to continue direct services
- Assess student and family needs

STEP 1: IDENTIFY RESOURCES

REVIEW DIRECT SERVICE PROVIDER CASELOADS

- Review current caseloads for each direct service provider to determine any adjustments, if necessary. Pull SER reports (e.g. Report of Services) and other logs to review.
- Review students, including IEP goals and services, for adaptability to continuous learning. **ECSE services**, speech and language therapy, occupation therapy, and counseling/social work and psychology services have established high-tech delivery models for continuous learning **for students with disabilities ages 3 to 21 years**.
- Determine if alternate methods of instruction or IEP modifications are necessary to deliver continuous learning, and document any adjustments.

IDENTIFY TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES FOR DIRECT SERVICES

- Consider **non-public** platforms like **Apple FaceTime**, **Facebook Video Chat**, **Zoom**, **Duo**, **Enable My Child**, **Skype**, and **Marco Polo**. These platforms can require passwords, meeting IDs, or a planned time to connect.²
- Consider features needed to deliver direct services such as webcams, screenshare, and interactive features (e.g. on screen drawing, keyboard control sharing).

ASSESS STUDENT/FAMILY NEEDS

- Understand student and family responses to the **Continuous Learning Survey** questions, including device and internet access.
- Understand **HIPPA flexibilities** for direct service providers and **student privacy** during the COVID-19 extended school closure.
- Understand important confidentiality requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) relevant to direct service providers.
- Notify parents of the potential for inadvertent disclosures of personally identifiable information during continuous learning, and obtain parental consent prior to student participation in small group instruction for students with disabilities.

Continuous Learning for Students with Disabilities: Small Group Instruction Privacy Guidance

The [Small Group Instruction for Students with Disabilities: Privacy Guidance](#) builds on the Direct Services guide to support special education teachers and related service providers in reducing accidental exposure of personally identifiable information while implementing small group instruction to students with disabilities through distance learning.

The guide provides a three-step process to:

- understand privacy laws,
- understand platform security features, and
- implement best practices while conducting small group instructional sessions.



Virtual Small Group Instruction for Students with Disabilities: Privacy Guidance

Introduction

School systems are responding to the extended school closure by providing special education and related services in new, novel ways. Virtual small group classrooms is a promising service delivery model that allows service providers to continue direct services while school facilities are closed. School systems and service providers should take certain considerations into account.

Delivery of special education and related services through a virtual small group classroom does not allow educators to control who is viewing a lesson. Similar to having parents visit a classroom in a school building, parents observing instruction in a virtual classroom are not, generally, accessing confidential information. To best ensure service providers continue to protect student information during small group instruction, educators must understand important confidentiality requirements of the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#), the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) and the Department's [Student Privacy](#) guidance.

Step 1: Understand Privacy and Confidentiality Laws Applicable to Virtual Small Group Instruction for Students with Disabilities

Direct service providers must continue to protect student privacy in the context of providing virtual small group instruction as they consider the disclosure of personally identifiable information (PII) from student education records to individuals who may not already have access to that information.¹



Step 2: Develop an Approach

Direct Services

Step 2: Develop an Approach

The service delivery approach developed may not be the same for every direct service or every student. The approach can be high-tech or low-tech.

Low-tech materials can be used in connection to high-tech service delivery. These materials may include:

- tangible manipulatives,
- print materials, and
- available household materials.

ECSE hybrid-services may include distant technology facilitated by a direct service provider who models intervention support.

STEP 2: DEVELOP APPROACH

Once school systems understand caseloads, technology resources, and student and family needs, school systems need to decide on a delivery approach for direct service providers. This approach can be high-tech, low-tech, or a hybrid. It may not be the same for every direct service or every student.

HIGH-TECH OPTION

Determine if a high-tech or hybrid approach is appropriate based on

- Student and staff device and internet access,
- Adaptability of direct services to alternate methods of delivery through high-tech platforms, and
- Student IEP goals, need, age, and developmental level.

Direct service providers should evaluate the direct services based on each student's IEP, and determine the elements that are adaptable to high-tech continuous learning platforms. Direct service providers should consider the different models or structures of service delivery through videoconferencing:

- **Student Interactive:** Direct services are conducted with interactive audio and video connection in real time to create an in-person experience similar to that achieved in a traditional in-person special education or therapy session.
- **Capture-and-share:** Images, videos, therapy activities, and special education activities are captured and shared between the student and therapist.
- **Hybrid:** A combination of interactive follow up to capture-and-share methods whenever possible.

Document the IEP services that were provided via remote service delivery so that data can be used to determine the need for compensatory services when school resumes.

² Public facing video communication applications that broadcast live or anyone can access should not be used. Ex: Facebook Live, Twitch, TikTok.

Step 2: Develop an Approach High-Tech Option

Direct service providers should evaluate the direct services based on each student's needs and determine the elements that are adaptable to high-tech continuous learning platforms.

Determine if a high-tech or hybrid approach is appropriate based on:

- student and staff device and internet access,
- adaptability of direct services to alternate methods of delivery through high-tech platforms, and
- student IEP goals, need, age, and developmental level.

Consider the different models or structures of service delivery through high-tech platforms:

- student interactive,
- capture-and-share, and
- hybrid.

Step 2: Develop an Approach High-Tech Option

The [Small Group Instruction for Students with Disabilities: Privacy Guidance](#) builds on the Direct Services guide and includes best practice recommendations for delivering small group instruction using a high-tech delivery model to students with disabilities. Recommendations include actions to assist direct service providers in planning and delivering secure virtual instruction.

Step 3: Implement Best Practices Recommendations

Professional organizations for service providers have developed best practice recommendations for delivering virtual small group instruction to students with disabilities. These recommendations include actions to assist educators in planning and delivering secure virtual instruction. Direct service providers should:

- Use platform security features that meet privacy and security requirements
- Control appearance of students' names (use only first name or a nickname)
- Manage group size
- Use a room free from background noise, other family members and pets, if possible
- Consider including a statement/disclaimer at the start of each lesson
- Develop guidelines (no recording the lesson, no photographs, no screenshots, use only first names, control the chat box, manage student conversation, etc.)
- Develop a system for storage, security, and maintenance of recorded instructional video sessions where students were present
- Use a headset with a mic, when possible
- Mute the audio and video of students, as instructional objectives allow
- Refrain from discussing educational services listed in an IEP
- Identify people in the room at both sites
- Ensure that information for joining the session is shared securely
- Avoid publicly posting links or login information for your virtual sessions
- Remove private files from your desktop to reduce risk of accidental screen sharing

Step 2: Develop an Approach Low-Tech Option

Direct service providers should determine if low-tech options are appropriate based on student need and availability of resources.

Low-tech direct service options, paired with manipulatives sent by school systems, or readily available household materials, can include:

- Print Materials
- Skill Building Activities
- Curriculum-Based Activities
- Home-Based Activities

Direct service providers may also combine hi-tech and low-tech approaches to best address student needs and progress toward IEP goals.

Communicate with Students, Families, and Caregivers

Whether implementing a high-tech, low-tech or hybrid approach, school systems should develop, with families, a strong communication plan:

- Identify the most appropriate platforms to provide services
- Establish a plan to answer questions and provide feedback
- Provide technology support, especially to young children and students with significant cognitive disabilities, who are novice technology device users

Ensure parents know that if students struggle or become frustrated they can pause the activity, if necessary, and take a break. Young children often demonstrate increased engagement when activities are child-led and reflect their interests. Following a child's lead when they redirect to another activity could have a positive effect on the learning outcome.

Step 3: Implement Remote Direct Services

Step 3: Implement Remote Direct Services Service Delivery Schedule

To support the implementation of direct services remotely the Continuous Learning for Students with Disabilities: Direct Services guide provides additional resources to assist school systems in:

- establishing a service delivery schedule, including a sample for school system use,
- creating a service delivery lesson plan, including an ECSE example for direct service providers to use or modify, and
- providing strategies to support student engagement during direct service delivery.

STEP 3: IMPLEMENT REMOTE DIRECT SERVICES

SERVICE DELIVERY SCHEDULE

School systems should first establish a plan for training direct services providers on remote service delivery approaches. Once direct service providers are trained, service delivery plans and weekly schedules can be determined.

Before creating a remote service delivery schedule, providers should contact the family of each student in their caseload to:

- Review IEP goals, determine the best way(s) to provide student support,
- Schedule remote service delivery times and session content
- Establish a data collection system for continued progress monitoring
- Answer any questions

Early childhood special education service providers should determine a service delivery plan including session content. Direct service providers can use the example in [Appendix A](#) to prepare and deliver a session.

Direct service providers should determine a weekly schedule for direct services to ensure a consistent learning environment for students, families, and direct service providers during the extended school closure. After contacting families, direct service providers can create and follow a schedule like the example below:

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office Hours for families and students to reach out for assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office Hours for families and students to reach out for assistance • List of therapy time/student(s)/ approach • Example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 9:00-9:20 • Student 1: FaceTime » 9:30-10:00 • Student 2: Google Meet » 10:05-10:20 • Student 3: Phone Consult with parent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete therapy documentation, participate in IEP meetings as needed, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete therapy documentation, participate in IEP meetings as needed, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office Hours for families and students to reach out for assistance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call parents to review schedule and revise therapy time if needed • Create and send newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review progress to determine student needs and course of therapy for next week. • Consult with colleagues • Answer emails/ respond to parents • Design low-tech activities to share with families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of therapy time/student(s)/ approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of therapy time/student(s)/ approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review progress to determine student needs and course of therapy for next week. • Consult with colleagues • Answer emails/ respond to parents • Design low-tech activities to share with families
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for therapy sessions for the week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete therapy documentation, participate in IEP meetings as needed, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office Hours for families and students to reach out for assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office Hours for families and students to reach out for assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete therapy documentation, participate in IEP meetings as needed, etc.

Step 3: Implementation

Service Delivery Plan

Service providers should determine a service delivery plan including session content. Early childhood special education and direct service providers can use the ECSE Session Planning Guide example to:

- Assess families understanding and familiarity
- Communicate environmental considerations
- Prepare materials
- Review IEP goals
- Model activities
- Ask follow-up questions
- Identify modifications
- Schedule the next session

PROVIDING EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES (ECSE) PLANNING GUIDE		
Prior to the Session		
Assess understanding and familiarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with the family or caregiver to gauge their familiarity of direct services and what to expect during a session. If the family is unfamiliar with the process, provide information to engage interest and work together to establish an approach that feels manageable. 	
Communicate environmental considerations to families or caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a checklist to help families or caregivers prepare for the session including the following steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Prepare your environment to limit noise and distractions. » Ensure your child is ready for the session (i.e. provide ample time for meals and diaper changes prior to the start of the session). » Check the internet connection prior to the start of the session and make sure the camera/speakers are turned on. » Review all materials that will be used during the session to prepare ahead of time and reach out to your direct service provider with questions. » Prepare any questions you may have for the service provider. 	
Prepare materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider everyday household materials that the family will need to collect prior to the visit. • Consider specific materials and manipulatives that the service provider can deliver to the family prior to the visit.* • Plan for ways to embed session activities into daily routines (i.e. eating a meal, brushing teeth, getting ready for nap). 	
Beginning of the Session	During the Session	Close of the Session
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review IEP goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » If this is the first visit, review the child's IEP goal and desired behaviors to observe or look-for throughout the session. » If this is not the first visit, review specific goals that were targeted during the last visit and identify desired goals for the current session. » If the parent or caregiver is present, ask if there are questions or concerns before the session activity begins. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare to model the activity for the child. If the parent or caregiver is participating, structure to engage both the child and parent or caregiver. • If the parent or caregiver is participating, encourage them to repeat the activity with the child, if appropriate. • Provide positive feedback and reinforcement on how the activity is being implemented. • Closely monitor the child's engagement. • Follow the child's lead. If the child loses interest, offer another activity or material to re-engage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassure parents or caregivers that early childhood special education services can support their child's development. • Ask follow-up questions to gauge comfort during the session in order to plan for the next session. • Identify modifications to meet the needs of the child and parent or caregiver. • Schedule the next session and identify any support that is needed in between sessions.

Step 3: Implementation

Student Engagement

Remote delivery of direct services and therapy is a new method of learning for many students. Some students might need help to focus, attend, and stay motivated when they are not in the same room with their instructor or peers.

Direct service providers can provide additional support to students and families during service delivery through:

- sharing [social stories](#) and visual [strategies](#) to help children adjust to changes in routine and
- using [visual routines](#) to increase structure.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Remote delivery of direct services and therapy is a new method of learning for many students. Some students might need help to focus, attend, and stay motivated when they are not in the same room with their instructor or peers. To keep students engaged, direct service providers should:

- Start with a fun game or activity just like during in-person direct service sessions.
- Work toward goals using some of the student's favorite websites, apps, games, books, digital books, music, or stories.
- Incorporate students' favorite in-person direct service activities.

Some students might benefit from assistance during direct service delivery, such as logging into technology and staying at the computer or phone. Direct service providers should clearly understand and communicate when assistance is needed so the provider can deliver the service. [Document](#) modifications, delays, or adjustments to service delivery during continuous learning.

Direct service providers can provide additional support to students and families during service delivery through:

- [Sharing social stories and visual strategies to help students adjust to changes in routine](#)
- [Using visual routines to increase structure](#)
- Instruction or tips on how the student can be supported to practice activities between sessions
- Supplemental activities that target direct service skills and IEP goals, starting with skills that the student has already mastered
- A list of apps to support goals in the IEP
- Weekly consultations

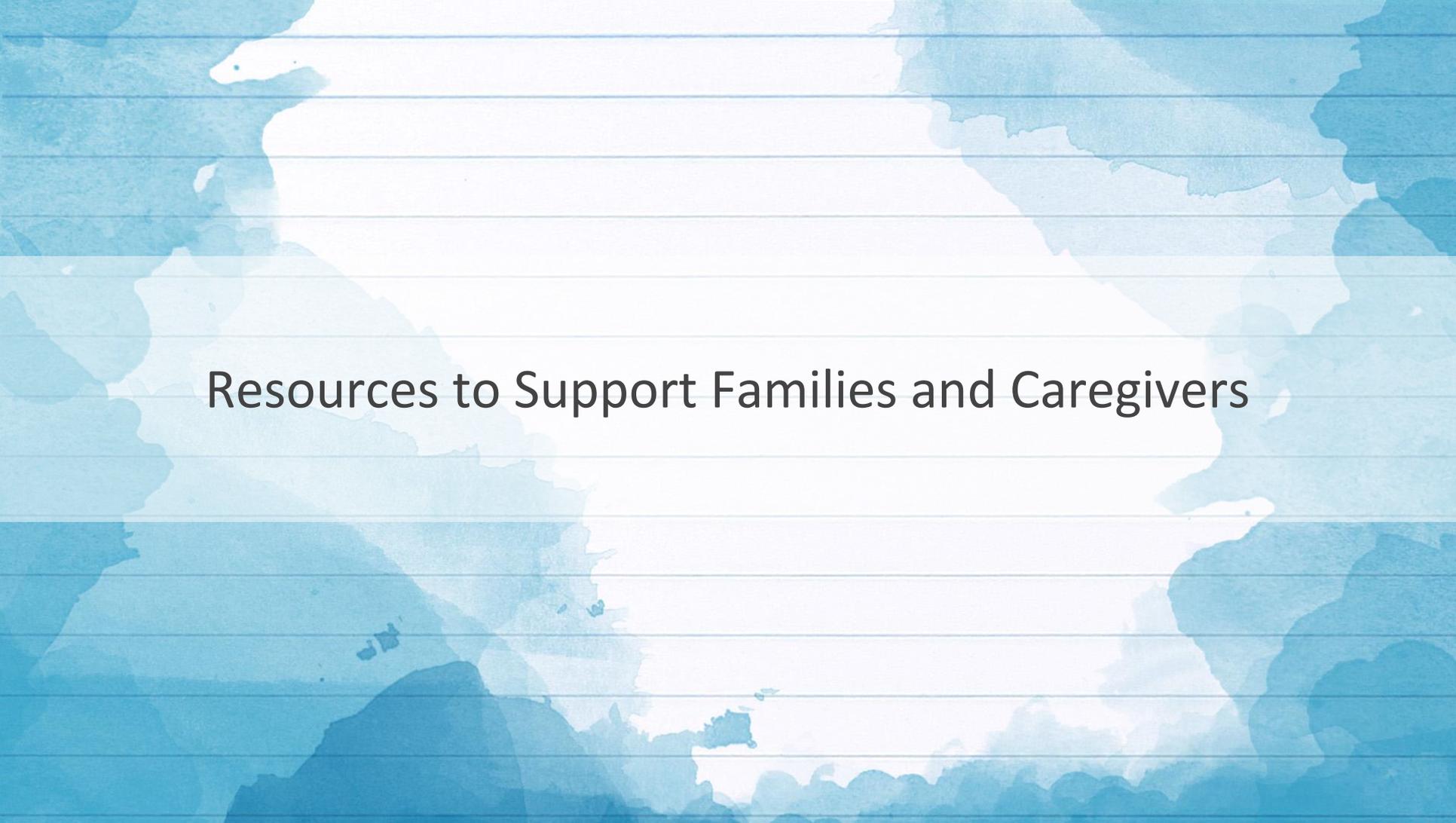
Additional Direct Services Resources

For training and additional guidance in implementing remote delivery of direct services or a list of vetted organizations that provide direct services remotely, review Louisiana's [Partnerships for Success Guide](#).

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) has created a hub of [EC tele-therapy and distance learning resources](#) for service providers and families.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) released

- [Resources for Teaching Remotely](#) for special education teachers and direct service providers
- [Teaching Exceptional Children](#) articles on telepractice
- [Webinars](#) on remote direct service delivery topics



Resources to Support Families and Caregivers

Family Toolbox: Ways to Support Students with Disabilities During Extended School Closure

There are many ways families can support students with disabilities with continuous education during extended school closure. The [Family Toolbox](#) provides strategies and resources for families in the following areas:

- Organization
- Accommodation and Accessibility
- Lesson Help
- Supplemental Learning
- Communication
- Non-Internet Resources

CONTINUOUS EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

• FAMILY TOOLBOX •

During extended school closure, schools may offer opportunities for students to learn from home. While families are not responsible for providing IEP services to their students with disabilities during school closure, there are many ways families can support learning at home. This document provides you, as a family member of a student with a disability, a quick overview of ways you can support your child's learning during school closure.¹

ORGANIZATION

Maintaining a consistent routine is important for helping children feel stable during school closure.

- Set up a daily routine and schedule. Be sure to include time for breaks.
- Use a calendar or day planner to keep track of daily activities. Many children with disabilities, especially younger ones, respond well to a visual schedule that uses pictures to keep track of upcoming activities.
- For students who need more help staying focused, you can use an [online visual countdown timer](#).
- Limit distractions and arrange a quiet space for your child to work.
- Reward your child for time on-task or finishing assignments. Use activities that they enjoy as rewards.

ACCOMMODATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Your child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 plan lists the accommodations that help them succeed at school. During school closure, it is important to know your child's accommodations and practice using them at home.

- Review your child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 plan if you have it at home. If you do not have the IEP or 504 plan at home, email your child's teacher.
- Common accommodations include extra time, small group activities, and frequent breaks. Break tasks or assignments into smaller pieces and have your child take breaks as needed. Breaks can be physical or quiet and relaxing.
- If your child uses assistive technology for schoolwork, help them use it to learn from home. For example, they might use speech to text software, a calculator, or other specific apps.
- Remember that you know your child best. Are there supports they need to help them pay attention? Would it be helpful to have headphones? A fidget toy? Highlighters?
- Students with significant disabilities may have multiple, complex accommodations. Families should assess what is being asked of them; determine their own abilities and resources; advocate for what they need; and ask for realistic expectations and activities for supporting their children during this time.

LESSON HELP

Some schools are offering schoolwork for students to complete from home during school closure. You can support your child's learning by guiding them through assignments.

- Prepare your child for learning by telling them why the work is important, what they will learn and what activities they will complete.

1 The information in this document is a summary and does not provide every detail, exception or circumstance. Nothing in this document is intended to state new law or supplant any federal or state laws, regulations or requirements.

CONTINUOUS EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: FAMILY TOOLBOX MARCH 2020 1



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Guidance to Support Early Learning at Home

The [Guidance for Early Learning at Home](#) provides families with a step-by-step process for creating a productive daily schedule, including tips and sample schedules, along with age-appropriate, play-based learning activities to enhance that schedule.

The guidance document includes lists of academic resources for all children, including students with disabilities and English learners.



Be Informed. Be Involved.

Guidance for Early Learning at Home

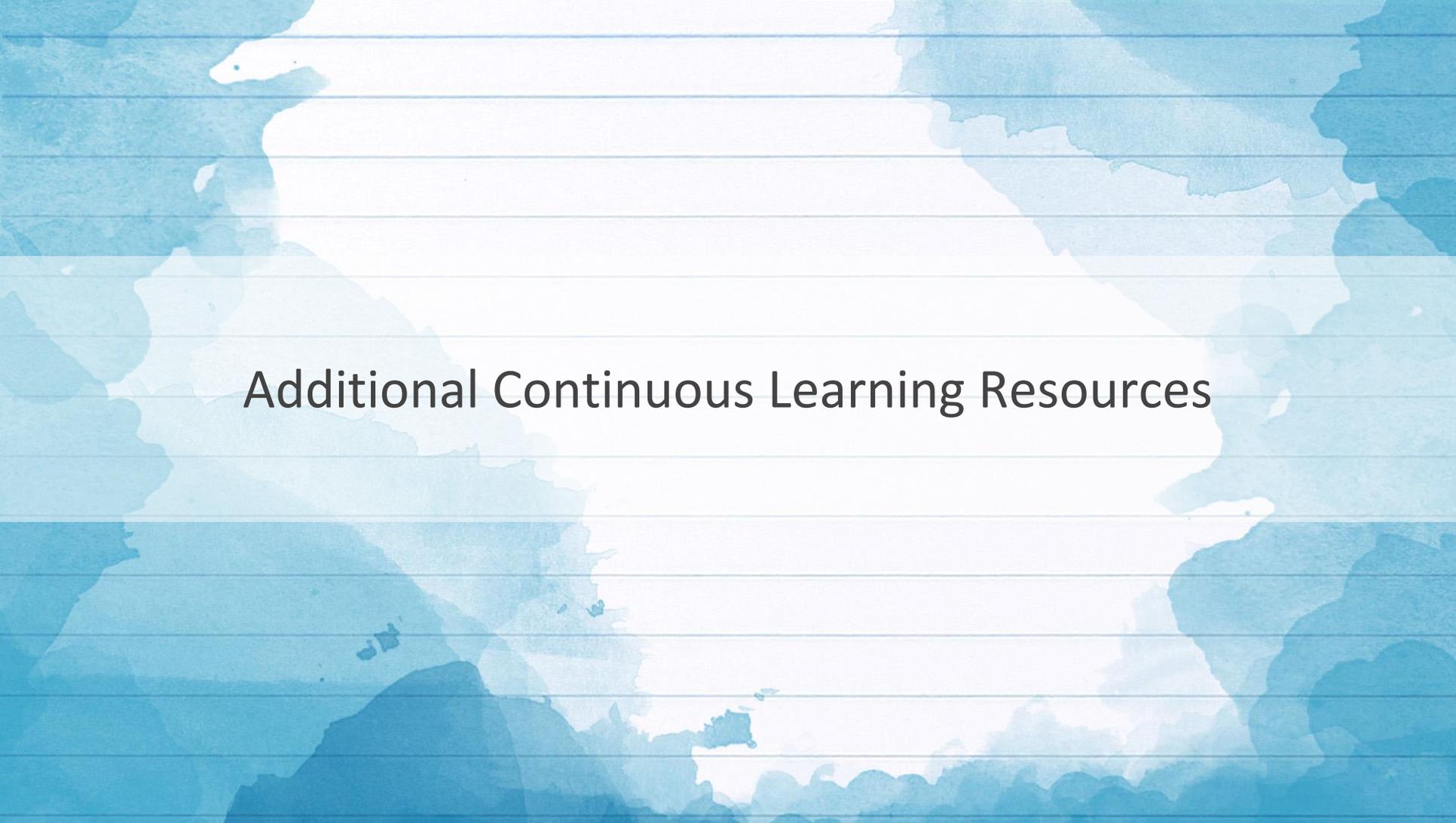
Parents and families play an important role in shaping the way children view learning. Continued learning and academic and social emotional growth are critical components of children's well-being. The LDOE aims to [provide guidance](#) specifically focused on early childhood since we know this is a unique developmental period that requires differentiated support. This guidance is for anyone supporting young learners at home: families, teachers, directors, and other caregivers.

As families support their children through continuous learning, it is helpful to remember a few key principles from child development that apply to children in early care and learning.

- **Build and Maintain Routine and Structure**
Consistent routines and structures offer comfort and security for children by helping them take ownership of their experiences, which in turn leads to gains in their learning and development.
- **Focus on Relationships and Social-Emotional Development**
Relationships are particularly important to children in early childhood. Children flourish when they feel supported, safe, and have close emotional attachments to adults who are important in their lives. These are stressful times for everyone, so creating ways to provide your child with calm, reassuring interactions is important.
- **Find Authentic Opportunities for Meaningful Learning**
Young children learn best through meaningful play and participation in everyday routines. Your child has opportunities for deep and meaningful learning through everyday, authentic experiences.
- **Emphasize Active, Experiential Learning**
Children in this age range learn best when they are active and engaged. Physical activity is essential for children's concentration, learning, and interactions with others.

This toolkit will help you have a better understanding of how to support your child's development and learning. It will also provide practical activities you can use throughout the day to work with your child at home. These activities are only suggestions should you not have other resources available from your school system.

Please refer to the [Privacy and Security Guide](#) when making decisions regarding continuous learning.



Additional Continuous Learning Resources

Continuous Learning for Students with Disabilities

The tools to support school systems in planning for continuous learning include:

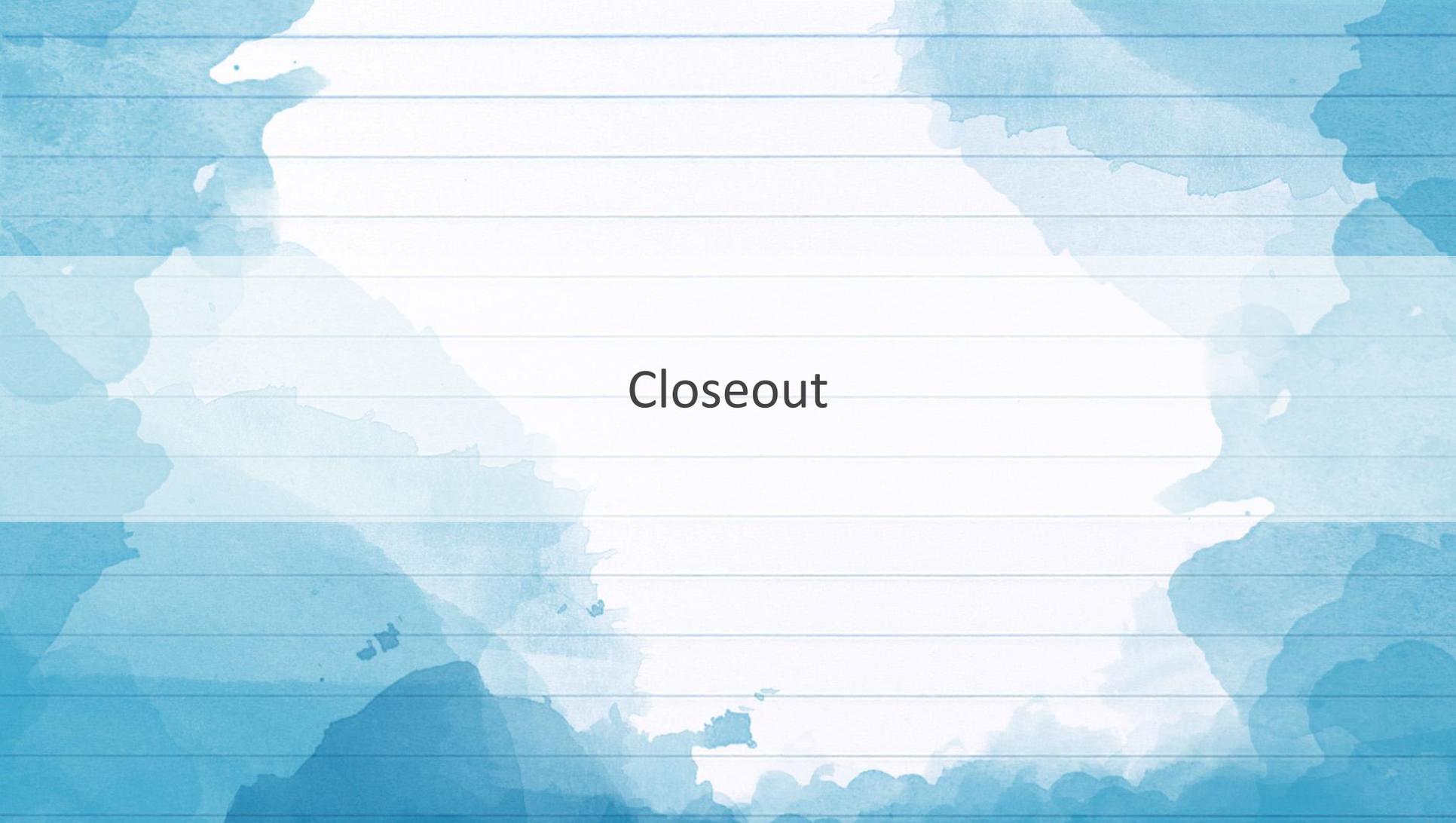
- [Louisiana Continuous Education Toolkit: Guidance and Tools](#)
- [Louisiana Continuous Education Toolkit: Academic Resources](#)
- [Louisiana Continuous Education Toolkit: Staffing](#)

Each of these resources includes specific guidance for students with disabilities.

Additionally, the Department has developed stand-alone special education documents on [Accessibility of Instructional Materials](#), [Accommodations](#), and [Staffing Guidance](#).



- [Louisiana Continuous Education Toolkit - Staffing PDF](#)
- [Louisiana Continuous Education Toolkit - Guidance and Tools PDF](#)
- [Louisiana Continuous Education Toolkit - Academic Resources PDF](#)
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- [IDEA Timelines and Documentation During Extended School Closures PDF](#)



Closeout