

## Should I consider Compensatory Education for my child when in-person learning returns?

We often talk about the importance of documentation supporting your concerns when preparing for your child's next IEP. It is especially important during the sudden COVID 19 remote learning education that your child has been involved in since mid-March to the end of the 2019-20 school year. During this time, if you talked with a teacher, whether special education or general education, following up with an email that covered the date and method of connection (phone call, text, or email) and details of the discussion, including any outcomes that may have been agreed to, is very important, especially when considering a request for compensatory education. You would request compensatory education if your child lost skills during remote learning.

Compensatory education is education that seeks to "make-up" missed sessions in special education minutes, speech therapy, occupational therapy, or physical therapy times, during remote learning, which has resulted in loss of skills. The minutes your child should have received and may have missed during remote learning is documented on the IEP in the Service Delivery grid near the end of the IEP document.

You should document:

- dates of service received and/or missed.
- Dates the special education teacher contacted you and the discussion.
- Frequency of contact.
- Did other providers contact you (speech, OT, PT, nursing) and frequency?
- How long was the contact?
- Did the general education teacher contact you?
- Were accommodations applied to general education?
- What accommodations were documented for general and special education?
- Was general education work for your child modified appropriately?
- How much time was it necessary for you to provide to support your child?
- How much instructional time did you have to provide?
- If your child was entitled to services that were not being provided, did you ask for those services?
- If you asked, what was the answer?
- Was there a change in your child's program?
- If so, what was the change?
- Did you agree to the change?

So many questions and things to document and consider when discussing the possibility of compensatory education. Do your best to compile this information. Start now to put this information into a journal so it is available when IEP time comes about or sooner, if in-person learning starts with the beginning of the new school year. Copies of emails can be used, as well.

At the beginning of the school year, be sure to ask that they evaluate your child's current functioning to determine if skills are lost. It is unlikely that regression will not have occurred, we want to know how much. You can ask to have a meeting to discuss making up lost time that is important to your child's success. If you have supporting documentation of what service should have occurred but did not and with their assessment of current functioning that show loss of skills, you should have a basic foundation for your child's entitlement to some compensatory education. Loss of skills will be major.

If your child was entitled to some services that were not provided and did not regress, it would be unlikely that compensatory education will be a part of his/her plan moving forward. Please remember, loss of skills is the biggest component when looking at compensatory education.

Document, document, document!