



WORK UNITED NEWSLETTER

The latest news and updates from your
Work United Resource Coordinators

Returning to School in the COVID-19 Era



While the decision to send children back to school weighs heavily on all parents, families of children with intellectual, physical and developmental disabilities are facing unique challenges and considerations. There are many key considerations for parents and guardians of children with special needs to consider with their team. Here are some suggestions for you to consider during the transition back to school:

- When you meet with your child's school team, include provisions to your child's Section 504, IEP, or other written accommodations plan to address COVID-19. Remember, your child's legal rights have not changed with the pandemic.
- Discuss your child's return to school with your child's pediatrician to determine health and safety barriers, if any, to returning to the school building. Alternatively, discuss if distance learning is an appropriate option for your child. If recommended by your child's pediatrician, access to distance learning should be included in your child's Section 504, IEP, or written accommodations plan.
- If your child has unique medical needs or sensory processing differences that keep them from being able to wear a mask, you should work closely with your pediatrician using a shared decision-making approach regarding return to school. Remember, children who need customized considerations should not be automatically excluded from school.
- In the event your child utilizes distance learning, determine if regular virtual care visits from the school nurse or other school health consultant are appropriate. School nurses should provide community resources to families as needed to meet medication administration and other health care related needs.
- Make plans to keep your child at home if sick or if other students are sick.
- Encourage your child's school to not offer perfect attendance awards.
- Ask your school if you can visit before school starts. If this is not feasible, ask for a virtual tour of the school so that your child can see the changes such as new check in systems, one-way hallways, and other safety measures.
- Work with your school team to develop social stories, which are short descriptions of particular situations and include specific information about what to expect and why.
- Vermont families who receive support through Developmental Disabilities Home and Community Based Services, also known as "The Waiver," for a child or adult with a disability may be eligible for COVID-19 Emergency Supports as outlined on the [DAIL website](#).

The Special Needs Support Center

If you are feeling overwhelmed, please know that you are not alone. To help parents and care providers connect with each other, the Special Needs Support Center (SNSC) has launched a virtual parent peer support group which takes place on Friday's at 3pm. SNSC provides a welcoming, safe and open space for parents to share struggles and triumphs, form relationships, and gain resources.



SNSC also has a long history of supporting families through our Parent Educational Support and Advocacy Program. Our advocates support parents in all aspects of the special education and Section 504 process to promote understanding of the relevant state and federal rules while supporting parents in clarifying their ideas and concerns regarding their child's education.



If you need support navigating back to school safely for your child, please don't hesitate to be in touch. We're here for you!

(603) 448-6311

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Looking for local resources during the COVID 19 Crisis? Want to find ways that you can help others? Looking for the latest UV news?

Visit www.UVStrong.org.



More helpful food resources can be found [here](#)

Thinking about Fuel Assistance? We are too!

Contact your Resource Coordinator today for more information on how you can get help this winter.



Don't forget, congress recently passed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which expands the FMLA. The expanded FMLA allows parents to take time off from work to take care of their kids when their school or daycare has closed because of COVID19. This includes kids with IEPs and 504 plans. But keep in mind that this only applies to employers with fewer than 500 employees. For more information, check out this helpful guide from the [U.S. Department of Labor](#).

MEET YOUR WORK UNITED RESOURCE COORDINATORS



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