

>> Good afternoon, welcome to yet another QPI webinar as part of the QPI based resource series, COVID-19 the new normal.

Today you are joining navigating special education during COVID-19.

Tips for families and systems advocates.

We have a few housekeeping items just before we begin.

If you are requesting a training certificate for your attendance at this or other recent QPI webinars, please contact your QPI site lead.

The Youth Law Center cannot be responsible for issuing credit and ensuring that credit will be received.

But we'll provide verification of your attendance.

We're hope you're joining us online by computer or smart mobile device so you can view your screen.

Keep an eye on the chat feature as well as we will be posting helpful online links.

Also know that the Power Point will be provided online at our website.

By the end of the week.

For today's webinar, all attendees are muted and the public chat has been disabled.

If you have a question for the speaker or webinar host please use the question and answer feature by clicking the Q&A button at the bottom of your screen.

We'd also like to mention that we have closed captioning on this webinar today.

Select the feature at the bottom of your screen.

You can view the transcript which shows a lot of information, or you can select subtitle feature which shows a few lines at a time.

It's now my pleasure to introduce Carole Shauffer of the Youth Law Center and share some information about this webinar.

>> Good afternoon, welcome to the eighth in our series of webinars COVID-19 the new normal.

This is part of our quality parenting initiative, QPI, which is an approach to foster care based on the idea that the most important thing we can do for any child to ensure that they have excellent parenting every day.

The idea for this series as well as other materials we have is that it's difficult to provide excellent parenting less you have the information necessary to be an excellent parent and so we see it as our responsibility and pleasure to bring you the latest information, particularly in this crisis.

Today we are very fortunate to have two excellent presenters, Jasmine Miller whom we are very proud because she is our Youth Law Center staff attorney who has been working in the area of special education.

And Cheryl Theis, who is from DREDF, disability rights education defense fund.

She is a parent advocate for education advocate and she is herself a foster parent.

Has a lot of experience in dealing with problems of other people but also has lived the experience and understands what it means.

So without anything further I will turn this over to Jasmine and Cheryl.

Please take advantage of the captioning option.

Sometimes it's not that easy to hear what is going on so even if you don't always use captioning, we find that that is very helpful.

So, Jasmine and Cheryl, thank you.

>> Thanks for the introduction, Carole.

I'm Jasmine attorney it's a pleasure to be presenting to you today.

Just a quick outline of what we'll be talking about today.

We'll go over a few key definitions.

We will talk about the state of the law currently during the pandemic.

We will talk a little bit or lot actually about how you can help your student.

We'll go specifically into topics of evaluation, IEP meetings and returning to school and compensatory education and have break for questions in the middle just so that we can ask questions that are most relevant to things we just talked about.

We'll have additional time for questions at the end.

After we talk about how you can help your student we'll talk about why caregiver participation is important.

Key take-aways then final question and answer session.

Some key definitions, very important definition is special education.

Many folks who don't work in the education field are really surprised hear that special education isn't a place.

Many of us when we went to school, special education was a place, maybe it was a separate classroom or separate school.

But over the past 20-30 years our education system has made great strides towards offer inclusive offerings for children with disability.

Now special education is really more of a mix and match situation.

You might have students who are in a separate classroom for some part of the day, and in general education for part of the day.

So, with that in mind the definition of special education is, specialized instruction, supports, services, and accommodations that are provided to eligible students with disabilities in the least restrictive setting delivered through an IEP.

Or individualized education plan.

Next up is disability.

Disability isn't just one thing or even just two things.

There are 13 different eligibility categories under the special education law and each of those categories can encompass a lot of different kinds much needs.

Some of the things that are included would be learning disabilities, visual or hearing impairments, mental health needs, developmental disabilities and of course there are others.

Part of the reason that it's so important that special education be individualized is that there are so many different kinds of disabilities.

So, old idea that you would just put every child who has some sort of disability into one room together and that would work out really well is obviously wrong.

Because of the fact that there are so many different kinds of needs that students might have.

Next up is parent.

Special education law talks a lot about parents, but what they mean by that word is, the person who holds education rights for a child.

Or the person who is authorized to make education decisions for a child.

That is called the education rights holder.

That could be a biological parent, it could be a foster parent, guardian, or someone appointed by the court.

Whoever that person is, they must be involved in the special education process.

They sign documents and give consent for services.

If you're not sure who your student's education rights holder is you can ask the case worker, also check out the Faq sheet of the Lincoln the screen.

Going to be able over in the chat box.

As well.

That has a fact sheet that gives information a bout education right holders.

Last term is school district.

The school district is the local agency that is legally responsible for your student's education.

Depending on where your student goes to school this might not be what you think of as a school district.

It could include a charter school, it could include a nonpublic school which are special education schools that districts pay to send students to.

It could be a school that is run by a county office of education, for instance, a court school or alternative school.

As a note, students who are in group homes are usually in a nonpublic school setting or in county office of education school.

We just wanted to mention this, because some people aren't aware that charter schools or court schools are different types of schools that we think of as traditional public schools are required to provide special education services.

We're almost done with definitions.

On the slide we're talking about the individualized education plan.

The IEP or individualized education plan is main special education tool, the centerpiece of special education services.

It's a legal agreement between the school and the parent, which is developed as a team.

It's not something that the school just comings up with and offers to a parent.

Even though sometimes that is what it feels like.

What IEP is supposed to outline how education will be individualized for students who have a disability.

This will include a educational goal as well as services to achieve the goals.

Next is the 504 plan.

We wanted to mention that some students with disabilities have a 504 instead of IEP.

The main thing that you need to know is that that 504 plan is also a legal document.

It has protections.

The OE is the highest level of support and services, the 504 also provides supports and services but not as much.

A student might have a 504 plan and if it doesn't work might move up to an IEP.

Another common reason that someone might have a 504 plan but not an IEP would be if they have a disability that impacts daily life but doesn't specifically impact performance.

That might be something like if you have a particular kind of medical condition or a wheelchair user you might need plans to make sure that you can access your environment, to make sure you can go on field trips and things like that.

But the way that you're being taught doesn't need to be modified because you are using a wheelchair.

Then we have distance and contingency learning plan.

We'll talk more about this later.

But it's a temporary plan to support student learning during the COVID-19 emergency.

It could be part of an IEP or it could be something that the school district does more informally.

At the bottom you'll notice that we mention if you're unsure, if your student has IEP or 504 plan or if you need help understand can what it does.

You can find your local parent training and information center at that link.

Those people will be able to give you a little bit more information and help you navigate the document that you have or figure out how to get the documents that you don't currently have.

What does the law say about special education.

It says a lot, but for today focus on these four points.

Just so you know the individuals with disabilities education act or the IDEA is the federal law that governs special education.

So the four points that we're going to focus on are that students with disabilities are entitled to a free and appropriate public education, also referred to as FAPE.

If you go to an IEP meeting you might hear a lot of people talking about FAPE.

Just as note educators and lawyers both love acronyms, when people use terms that you're not familiar with, it's totally fine to ask for clarification.

Especially with special education people are always throwing around IEP, 504, FAPE.

Next, schools are responsible for identifying and evaluating students with disabilities who live in their district.

Public schools are also responsible for providing services to children to help them meet their educational goals.

And parents are education rights holders must be involved in decision making.

I want to note here that even if you are not a student education rights holder you can be involved in an IEP meeting.

Oftentimes students will invite both their parent maybe their grandma or someone else who is in their life who offers a lot of support or who lives in the home with them.

Education rights holder can bring people with them basically whoever they want can come with them to the IEP meeting.

Foster parents could attend, child welfare case worker could come, sometimes student's attorney might attend an IEP meeting, just know that you can -- it can be broader than just having the person who is education rights holder, it's a team.

You're entitled to invite who you think is important to be part of that team for your students.

At the bottom here we're noting that regional centers in California are responsible for providing services to children who are aged 0-3.

Students with disabilities age 0-3 get services through regional centers.

Schools are responsible from age 3 to graduation or until age 22.

If you have a student with a disability around high school, a lot of times you'll start having conversations about whether or not that student needs to stay in the school environment past when they would typically graduate.

Just so you no know depending on your student's needs there may be services available after they leave high school environment.

Colleges often learning supports for students with learning disabilities.

There are county mental health, regional center provide support to certain kinds of developmental disabilities.

Again if you have a youth who is 16 or older their IEP is required to include a discussion of transition to life after high school.

So often there's a person called a transition specialist who can help you navigate all of that.

It can be complicated.

Remember that foster is eligible for support.

Coordinate between child welfare and the school to make sure the student is getting everything to transition into adult life.

What does the law say about special education right now?

The legal position here is actually not that complicated for once.

Schools are still responsible for providing students with appropriate public education.

Still responsible for identifying and students and responsible for involving education rights holders in decision making.

But, schools can do these things differently than they did before.

That might include video conferencing, shift to distance learning which I'm sure all of you are aware of.

Using things like electronic signatures instead of signing things on paper.

But there's still fundamentally responsible for providing services.

If you have a school district that is telling you, we don't have to give any special education services right now because of distance learning, that is wrong.

That is not correct.

That's not what the law says.

There have been just a couple of changes in the special education law so far.

So in California, they passed SB 117.

That was an emergency measure that included a lot of different kinds of things to help support schools as they transition to distance learning.

The change there is that the law used to say that schools had to respond to requests for evaluation in 15 days and records request in five days.

Now there aren't so specific deadlines.

The law still says that schools are supposed to respond to these requests expeditiously or basically quickly and they're supposed to be responsive, supposed to be communicating about it.

We're in a little bit of a grey area where they are still required to respond to these requests.

But it's not clear how fast they have to do it.

They're given a little bit of wiggle room there.

The other thing that's happened hasn't actually happened yet.

It's a proposed change to the IDEA which is that federal law that we were talking about earlier.

Secretary DeVos made a recommendation that we might consider extending timeline for early intervention services.

That is that 0-3 age group.

If that change goes through a toddler's IDEA part B evaluation could be delayed past their third birthday and they could continue to receive early intervention services until the evaluation is able to be completed.

This hasn't yet been approved by congress.

We don't have a ton of information about how that is going to play out.

The big picture thing is that whether or not this is good for your student may depend on the quality of services they are receiving currently.

So if you have a student who is in that age group who is receiving services and all going really well, this change is probably going to be good for you because it means that you don't have to change anything, things just continue the way they were.

If you are not really receiving services and you're supposed to, you're having issues with it then you might want to go ahead and ask for that evaluation so that you can get services from the school district instead of the regional center.

But again this hasn't actually gone into affect yet.

Something to keep an eye out for.

There will be information about it when it comes up probably on California department of Ed website.

Just keep your eyes peeled.

There may be some further changes that happen with the IDEA, we don't know.

It's happened on federal level as people are passing different relief packages.

These are the only things that have changed.

I'll pass over to Cheryl.

>> Thank you, Jasmine.

So we're giving you lots of information and we want to remind you we're going to take your questions so don't panic.

Information is power.

Just learning some of these acronyms and understanding the broad landscape of how special education works is going to benefit you and your child so much.

I just want to remind you of a few points that I want you to keep in mind as we go through this.

The first is that everything we're talking about today relates to disability rights as civil rights.

And education rights as civil rights.

We use this word equity, which basically says are all students receiving equal access to education right now.

What we can't have school saying all of our schools in honors English class who don't need accommodations and supports because of disability we can serve them, that's fine.

They can log in to Zoom and use it.

So, gee, these other students who needs assistive communication device, they can't do it right now because we can't figure it out.

Equity means that we have access to anyone, we have access to everyone.

The second thing I want to remind you of, I know as former foster parent and kinship care provider that this is so, so true is that every family is different.

One size fits all doesn't work.

I'm talking to families all the time in my work right now and some of them are saying go well, distance learning is disaster my child can't log in, they don't hatch the attention span, equipment, it's a mess.

Others are saying this is the best thing ever for my child.

They're really benefitting from this.

In fact might be good strategy for them long term.

So whether it's how many children you have at home, how much equipment you have, other things we'll discuss just remember that one size doesn't fit all.

And your job as the parent here, we say parent, again we're saying the person who is the caregiver and has education rights, your job is to pass on these concerns to the school district so that whatever services are provided are still individualized.

Because as Jasmine said, that still legal requirement that they be individualized.

To the unique needs of the child.

Then we wanted to remind you, too, first of all thank you all, because as busy as you are, you've taken the time in the middle of the day to attend this presentation.

And that already tells us so much about how much you care about the work you are doing and what a difference it makes.

We just wanted to remind you those of you, too, who are professionals, that these are very vulnerable populations of kids.

There's already some special protections depending on the state you're in.

Also at the federal level for children with disabilities in terms much education.

But during this emergency we want to make sure that these children who have this double vulnerability in terms of having both a disability and outcome for children with disabilities unfortunately are still the lowest of any other group.

And children in foster care who we know struggle educationally in part because of things they can't control like being moved constantly, or having been through difficult early experiences and losses and so on.

That those students get what they need.

We just wanted to remind you of that as we move forward.

Some other things to think about as we go ahead, go to the next slide, please.

Is to think about ways to help your student.

I think Jasmine you were going to cover this slide, right?

Why don't you take it from here.

>> Great.

Just some three big points before we get into all of the nitty-gritty.

First thing is that you really want to be asking questions.

You want to talk to teachers and providers that are the front line people who are interacting with your student.

You want to ask how things are going, ask if you're having minor scheduling issues you want to shift something by 30 minutes.

If you want positive to make sure they're sharing with the right e-mail address to keep track of what your youth is doing for school.

Those are all things you should absolutely be communicating with teachers and providers about.

Teachers want to hear from you right now.

One of the biggest challenges that I've heard from a lot of teachers that I know is that they're really having a hard time staying in contact with their students and families.

They are worried particularly for the students and families that they know are most vulnerable because they want to be there and want to be helping.

Don't feel like you're taking up too much time if you're just reaching out to say, hey, how are things going and checking in with them.

They want that kind of communication at this time.

It's also important to talk to administrators, sometimes people are afraid to talk to administrators because they're worried that they're going around the teacher, that they're going to get them in trouble or something like that.

But the way to put special education system is set up makes it pretty hard for teachers to sort of go the extra mile for students or give support that they would like to give if there isn't a parent pushing for it with an administrator.

Small issues, you might not need to have administrator involved if you're just trying to figure out, I want to move by 15 minutes or something like that, no.

But if you are asking for materials, asking for tech access, if you need help with captioning, if you want extra speech software for your young person.

If you are asking for collaboration time with a teacher or provider or big modification to schedule, you should go ahead contact the administrator and teacher at the same time.

It's important to find your point person so you want to find that person who is authorized to make changes and authorized services for your young person.

Depending on what school district you're in that might be a different person.

That might be the head of the department of the school, that might be the principal might be the director of special education for the district.

If you're not sure, just go ahead contact the folks who are on the IEP team.

That will be listed -- list of people who come into your IEP meetings is going to be on your IEP document and you can go ahead and contact those people.

You can also just ask your teacher or your child's case manager to give you the contact info so you can start having those conversations together.

The other thing want to do is propose solutions.

Sometimes it can feel like, okay, the I'm just here to listen and do whatever it is they say is the right thing to do.

That is not really the case, especially not now.

Pandemic forcing people to be flexible.

Bureaucratic systems like schools sometimes have a hard time being flexible.

They may not be thinking about brainstorming creative solutions to problems.

No one has ever done this before.

No one has done widespread distance education.

No one has all the answers right now.

You are probably about as likely to have the answer as the people who are on the school side.

So your ideas are always helpful but they're especially helpful now.

You have valuable information to contribute.

You're the one who knows whether or not your student is having a hard time focusing on the computer, whether student can actually use the computer.

Whether your student is feeling stressed or anxious.

You also know things that are relevant to scheduling.

You know when you're available to meet with teachers.

You know how much time you're able to dedicate towards facilitating learning for your young person.

All this is very valuable info.

Nothing is normal.

There for anything is possible.

Last point just to focus on your student's individual needs.

Again individualization is a really big buzz word that we're talking about a lot in this presentation.

Don't focus on replicating everything about school at home.

Instead ask what does my student need to learn right now and how can my student meet their goals.

A lot of schools are freaking outright now, they're having to do things they're not used to doing.

You are also having to do things you're not used to doing.

Some schools are handling it better than others, some are overwhelmed.

If your approach is, your ask I want everything to be exactly the same as it was before they may shut down say, well nothing is.

We can't do anything.

If you go to the school you say my student is struggling with A, B and C.

How can we work together to support my student.

The school much less likely to feel overwhelmed.

School also can't avoid that question by just saying, well nothing is the same.

You're focusing the conversation on what is really important.

Lastly, remind your district that your student is a foster student.

Schools who have special responsibility to foster youth and it's a group that they have to track out pretty carefully.

Just want to remind them.

It's also vulnerable population that administrators and teachers care about there can be some real consequences if they don't get the attention that they need.

>> I think we want to go back one, right?

So, when you think about how you're going to communicate what your child needs for school or what the barriers are, what problems you're having.

It's really important to remember that special education is a very bureaucratic, as Jasmine said, schools are bureaucracy, special education is even a greater bureaucracy in my experience.

Butting thing in writing really matters.

You might have a conversation about what I'm about to say with the teacher who says that's a great idea we should approach the special education director about it.

It's generally best to put that in writing because it documents it.

Also because the situation for our kids is changing a lot and it will follow them wherever they go if it's in writing.

Where as if it was a conversation no one else may ever ever know you had that conversation.

Here are some things to think about as you're trying to get your child access to education every day.

Again we know this is a super challenging time.

First, what is your current access to Internet and technology and materials for learning.

Do you have what you need?

Does your student know how to use the materials and as Jasmine said it's not enough to just say, no worries, we signed you up for special Internet tool here is your chrome book, good luck with that.

If you have ever used it, I don't know about everybody else but I'm not exactly young any more.

And I don't always know the latest and greatest in technology and lot of the young really excited teachers and specialists will assume that I do.

I often have to say, excuse me, what does that mean.

How do I log in.

How do I do that?

If you need that help, ask for it.

Think about your student's ability to focus.

For example, one of the things that a really individualized for students is when they're most alert.

When they're most ready to learn.

We're trying to juggle the use of our teachers who are home with their children and related service providers like speech therapist and mental health clinicians, if it's not working for your student we might need to think about recording lessons and only you can report that information to the school.

Only you can say, your having this Zoom class at 8:00 a.m. it's not working for my child right now.

They can't sleep they're not able to focus.

The student's behavior, special medical needs, self regulation challenges.

When I say self regulation, ability to calm yourself down when you're upset to manage your frustration.

Maybe in their IEP before they had a lot of hands-on support, aide support, counseling, if your child may need something like that at home you may not know exactly what that would look like but you should say, I see that these challenges have increased or continue, they're impacting my child's participation in terms of how they can benefit from what you're offering I need help, can we collaborate.

Again think about your own work schedule and availability to help your students.

Many have more than one at home pulling on us, talking, some of us have smaller physical spaces than others, we don't have distraction-free home office where we can just, I deliberately set my computer up where I work which is in my living room because I know that is what a lot of us are doing right now.

We're just trying to carve out a little corner somewhere where kids can work.

Then again what is your need for consultation and training in addition to your child Zooming in, if they used to have a special education class every day, where the teacher went over the lesson, we called it preloading or front loading information.

Here is what is going to be covered today, here are the terms that you need to know.

Maybe you need that now.

Don't be afraid to ask for it.

Then finally we don't want you to forget about taking care of yourself and your own needs.

If you need an interpreter at a meeting, if you need documents translated, if you have a disability that is impacting your ability to supervise and provide for the child, raise those concerns.

Again, we may not have all the answers, but if the question doesn't at least get put on the table, nobody is going to know that it's a problem.

Next slide.

Take it away, Jasmine, I think this is you.

>> Thank you.

Evaluation.

We're getting into again the nitty-gritty a little bit of specific kind of things that you can help your child sort of how this is working right now.

Like we said earlier, schools are still required to perform evaluations.

There are different kinds of evaluations.

There's an initial evaluation which would be if you're not sure if a child has a disability or you suspect they might you want to get them evaluated see if they're eligible for IEP.

There are also annual evaluations, once a child -- once child becomes eligible you might be doing smaller evaluations yearly.

Then also a triennial evaluation.

That is every three years a student is completely reevaluated like all of the tests are done in all of the domains.

Schools are still responsible for identifying students with disabilities who may need special education or other services for accommodations.

When you're asking for an evaluation you're not asking for a favor, you're asking them to do something that they are legally required to do.

One other thing I wanted to note here is that you can't assume that all students with disabilities or mental health needs or autism were properly identified when they were young.

It's not uncommon for an older youth who has been described as quote, unquote, difficult or, unmotivated to have undiagnosed disability.

So, if you are student who has undiagnosed disability that you are not getting support you need you may become lessen gauged in school either by -- maybe not doing work or maybe just not attending any more.

Leads to disciplinary consequences, once a child has been labeled as someone who acts out or misbehaves it can be difficult to get a school to look at the underlying cause.

So I just wanted to mention this because as we talked about earlier, many foster youth do move between schools recently between placements recently, if you notice something about your young person the way that they're learning in their attention span, in their behavior, emotional regulation you should not assume that in previous placements or previous schools that they were properly evaluated.

They may not have been evaluated and may have flown under the radar this whole time.

Don't hesitate to refer an older child for evaluation.

Schools do miss things sometimes.

>> Jasmine I'm just going to pop in add to that because it's such an important point that when you request evaluations, some times a school's response, well this child is so new to us that we want to give it some time.

When it comes to children in foster care, time is our enemy in many cases.

Not accepting no for an answer say, no, I think there's some reasons why this makes a lot of sense, this child moved through a lot of different placements in school.

We're not going to wait.

It's important.

I'm sorry, can ahead.

>> As we mentioned before, relevant to just right now in California the timelines for brand new initial evaluations have changed.

However, if you had an evaluation that was already going on when the school closure happened, timeline is same for that.

They still have to keep going on that.

They still have to get it done within the 60 days from the parent consent.

Annual and triennial evaluations are still on the same schedule as they were before.

Just to note about those sorts ever evaluation, the exception would be if there are particular kinds of evaluations that can't be performed remotely.

Those can be postponed with parent agreement.

Just for knows of you who maybe haven't been through a whole IEP evaluation before, there are many different parts of an IEP evaluation.

Two different things depending on what basic facts the issue is for your student with learning.

Oftentimes it will include academics testing, behavior observation, mental health, occupational therapy which is things like a pencil grip or hand-eye coordination, balance.

Most of the stuff can be done remotely.

Really the only thing that I heard of is that very difficult to do remotely is you can't go in to a classroom and observe how a student interacts with the other students in that classroom, because we don't have classes.

But pretty much everything else can be done in some way, shape or form remotely.

So if you're not sure if part of an evaluation can be done remotely you want to be talking to the professional who is fully responsible for doing that part of the evaluation.

Because assistant principal or case manager or whoever may have their own opinion, they may think you can't do occupational therapy remotely because it requires them to be in the same room.

But occupational therapist might have a different opinion or different ideas how to do that.

One thing that's really important to remind schools even though some of the traditional timelines aren't in place any more, is that they really do need to be doing what they can remotely.

It actually for their benefit.

If they put off everything until when school starts again, they're going to be completely overwhelmed.

Because they're going to need to evaluate every student they would have evaluated over the past three or four months.

All of the new students who are showing up who potentially need evaluations, all the kindergartners, 3-K, they are not going to have a timeline extension.

They will have to do it all within 60 days.

It's actually better for them if you can jog them out of that sort-term survival mode into thinking a little bit more long term about moving forward and doing what they can remotely because it's better for you.

Better for the student.

Bet are for them in the long term.

IEP meetings.

These are the meetings that you can call with members of the IEP team to discuss what is going on with special education for your student.

Parents and educational rights holders can still ask for IEP meetings now.

IEP neatings can be conducted via phone, conducted video conference.

If you need to sign something at the IEP meeting you can get those signatures via mail or electronic signature.

All of that is still in place currently.

Again, services can be provided differently during closures, but students with disabilities are still entitled to individualization and an appropriate plan.

IEP meetings can be great way to help document problems and brainstorm ways to solve them.

IEP meetings are not an opportunity for the district to sigh, we can't provide anything now so we want to you find this document that says that we can't provide anything now and you're okay with that.

This leads into a question that I think a lot of people have been running into.

Which is, does my child need a distance learning IEP.

Or an IEP that is specifically talks how services will be provided during distance learning.

Some schools and families are convening these special IEP meetings to talk about how to provide services during school

closures.

Schools are not required to have these IEP meetings to discuss distance learning but you have a right to call an IEP if you think it's necessary.

There are some reasons that you might want to call one.

If the services that your student needs to succeed via distance learning are super different you're going to need to get the whole group together to talk and brainstorm and think of what to do anyway.

Might as well do that formally in an IEP meeting.

If you have had issues getting services, you try to contact your teacher, providers, no one is responding to you.

School isn't make -- is making a lot of promises but not keeping any of the promises.

You want to have IEP meeting so that you can pull everyone together and hold everyone accountable the IEP is a legal process where there are accountability measures if people are not showing up or responding.

The other reason you might want to distance learning IEP if your student is moving.

They are not thinking because everyone -- everyone is staying in the same school.

That's not true.

Particularly for foster youth if your student is moving between schools you do need to have an IEP meeting.

The reason that you might want to be cautious about a distance learning IEP is that this as I said in the previous slide, some school districts are trying to use this as an opportunity to get families to waive their special education rights.

Say well, everything is hard right now.

We don't have to provide anything.

Sign this document that says that we don't have to do that.

That is not appropriate.

We don't want that.

If you're in the situation where someone mailed you a document said, this is young person's distance learning IEP and you should sign it it says how we're going to be providing services right now, you should think twice before you sign that and look at it really carefully and also they should be happening in a meeting, they shouldn't be mailing you distance learning IEP.

Just remember that an IEP is a formal legal agreement.

That can be really great, because it means that what is in the IEP is enforceable if the district doesn't provide it, then you can go to a higher authority and say, the district didn't do what it was supposed to do you can enforce that.

On the flip side it's a formal legal agreement.

If you sign something that says, I waive all of my rights, there are ways to challenge that but becomes lot harder once you signed the document that says, I'm fine with whatever the district says.

If you do decide to have a distance learning IEP, make sure that you put in writing that you are consenting to the plan temporarily.

There's some recommended language on the slide I'm not going to read it all.

But basically a way that you could write on the IEP to say, I want this to be a temporary thing as soon as tool starts back we're going back to the normal IEP and I'm not waiving my rights.

Now we're in our first Q&A block.

>> Great.

We just have couple of questions.

I would sum them up.

It's great to say we have a right to something.

But what -- does that really mean anything?

So, for example, if you have requested a test and the school agreed to do testing, by which I mean assessment.

But they stopped and said, we're not going to do any further testing because we're doing distance learning and we are going to start again when school is in session again.

It sound to me from what you said that that is not accurate.

Is it accurate and what should they do about it.

What should the parent do about it.

>> I'll let Jasmine.

>> I'll start with the accuracy then Cheryl you can pop in with some thoughts about like next steps that would be great.

That's not accurate.

If you had an ongoing evaluation, you were in the middle of the evaluation they started doing testing the normal timeline that runs for assessment is still running.

That means that they have 60 calendar days from the time when you consented to the evaluations to complete that evaluation.

>> Does it mean -- when you say if it's still running if I requested it, does that start the clock running or the first assessment?

>> It's when you consented to it, when the clock starts on that.

Now parents and districts can agree to extend things.

So if you had a conversation with them or you signed something that said, yes, it's fine.

We'll wait for forever.

Or whenever we think is right then that becomes a little bit harder to navigate.

But the general rule is that assessments have to be completed in the same timeline as they would have been normally.

I will note there was a lot of confusion about this initially when they first made the rule change.

Some school districts thought the rule was that they got to hit pause on everything.

Most of them hopefully know now that that is not the rule but sounds like this particular school district may not realize that.

>> I would add to that because I think -- Carole, thank you, because you summarized it very well.

There's a second part to that question.

Which is, okay, everything Jasmine just said is completely true and they still didn't do it.

And that's why in the second part of this presentation we're going to talk about this thing called compensatory education.

First of all there still are things parents can do even during the pandemic, courts are still open, hearings can still happen.

There are things you can do when district is not doing what it's supposed to be doing.

But there's also going to be a lot of these situations when schools do start to reopen where we're going to have to work together to make the needs of our foster youth a particularly vulnerable population.

Have to make their needs aware to the district in terms of how their failure to do what they were legally required to do actually hurt the students.

We're going to talk more about that in the second part of the presentation.

>> Just in terms much immediate problem solving.

We can't give legal advice to people who are not our clients.

But generally speaking you can communicate with the district and let them know that you know what the rule is.

Then if they don't respond to that you can reach out to one of the parent resource centers to have them talk through your options with you.

They might be able to help with writing a formal letter or prefer refer to you a legal provider if that is necessary.

There are legal providers who do pro bono work, free work to help students with disabilities, particularly foster youth or juvenile justice involved youth navigate special education system if the district is refusing to meet its obligation.

>> I think examples are helpful for me.

Give you the example of a situation like this.

You have a foster youth.

You're caring for.

You see their mental health needs were very significant before this even happened.

So you've already asked them, maybe has an IEP but I see they might need more mental health support in order to be successful at school.

Maybe the district agreed to do that and you signed consent, sent it back in writing.

Which is when district starts timeline when they got it back.

Then all hell broke loose with the pandemic.

What do you do then?

I think in this situation what many parents are telling us is, now my students need are even greater because they aren't getting the counseling that they were getting before.

We're seeing this is having a bigger impact on post traumatic stress disorder, on anxiety, pressure, not socializing.

You documenting that, here is why I'm concerned.

Here is what I'm seeing.

I live with this child.

I know this child.

There's been an impact so important because lot of the resolutions are going to depend on whether there's actual data or evidence that support how the child was harmed by these failures of the school district.

>> The second question is related.

Very similar.

Except that the IEP has been -- all the tests are not yet complete.

The student is getting some teacher time.

Something that possibly the -- they are not responding at all to the parent.

About why nothing is happening, about when anything is going to happen.

So suggestions about this.

When you just aren't getting -- we'll do it later.

Second one is, nobody responds.

In this case the assistant principal tall.

Should they go to the next level of the principal.

Should they go to the advocacy community that you suggested.

What would you do if you were in this situation?

>> I'll start and let Jasmine.

Faced with that choice of doing nothing and doing something, I say do something.

Document your concerns.

Communication is the name of the game here.

When go radio silent, a lot of us have been incredibly understanding about the fact first few weeks of this were just unknown territory.

And everybody was trying to figure it out.

Everybody was at home.

People were sick.

There was lots going on.

Now we're coming out the other side of that.

There's no reason for someone not to respond to a communication.

If they don't you have to do what Jasmine talked about at the beginning.

You have to go up the chain of command and get to the right person.

And sometimes we always want people to try to resolve things at the local level with school first, district second.

If that doesn't work you can call your parent training information center.

You can reach out for legal assistance and understand how to get the attention of the special education administrator or even superintendent for the districts about the fact that you're being essentially silenced.

Your trying to use your rights under very important law.

You're not being heard or responded to in any way.

Jasmine, what do you want to add?

>> I would just echo that.

I think that you could try contacting directly the director of special ed for the district.

There's also the special education local plan area.

That's a layer above the school district they work with multiple school districts to try to make sure that special education services are available to everyone.

>> A lot of times there's a bad actor at a particular school, there is people above that who actually do want the system to work.

Both because they care and because they know that it makes them reliable.

Makes them reliable if they don't do the basic things that they are required to do in a law that is very clear like finishing assessments within 60 calendar days.

That is potentially an option going there and seeing if you can get attention.

Then I think going to the advocacy community.

Either order depending where you are and where you're feeling and what your capacity is.

I think would be appropriate.

>> To make up for this can you call an IEP meeting in the summer months, for example?

Since we haven't --

>> IEP meetings typically do not happen over the summer because the sort of timelines for calling meetings.

Are usually pulled for summer breaks.

That means we're supposed to do something within 15 days, you asked five days before school closed that you wait over summer then respond after that break.

One thing I will say here is that everything is very important, not clear when school is going to reopen.

Governor has put some money in the May revision budget to allow schools to offer some programming over the summer.

It's not really clear what districts are going to do with that.

Or every district going to do that.

There's this idea floating out there that students may be receiving some sort of services over the summer.

Students who are the top of that list are special education students.

I think it's -- with special ed stuff there's all stuff that is legally required, right?

Then there's stuff that people do because they want to work together and because they care about a student.

Even if it's not legally required, but they respond to you within two weeks or et cetera.

They can still meet with you.

If they care about your student.

If you have a compelling reason that you need to meet over the summer, those are all things that they can do.

Maybe not able to sue them for not doing it if that makes sense.

>> Yeah, that was -- very much what I was going to say.

I took a call yesterday from a parent with exactly this issue.

It was simply this.

This may apply to some of you.

Their child has an IEP that includes four weeks of what's called extended school year.

So because of that child's disability, they really need help in the summer, too.

A lot of students with disabilities, not all of them.

Again if you don't know what is in your child's IEP, call your patient training information center or e-mail us we have link in the resources for to you find out who that is in every state and territory in the United States.

Then understand what is in the IEP.

In this parent's case she knew that her son was supposed to have this four weeks of half a day every day of summer school.

She already sees that he can't benefit from distance learning.

So she said I understand that distance learning plan is going to be used for the summer services, too.

That means my student is not going to be able to benefit.

We had exactly the conversation Jasmine just discussed.

Which is, there aren't really 30 days left, which is you are -- they're supposed to respond hold a meeting within 30 days from the time that a parent requests a meeting.

You can do that any time just to check in with your team.

As Jasmine pointed out typically any break for more than five days, especially summers, the timeline stops.

We talked about how she could write a compelling letter about what she's dealing with, how much she is struggling, how she's trying to work from home herself.

Really make individualized -- also her own unique situation as parent right now because we've all become teachers.

I have a 14-year-old here, it's not easy.

In that case, she just reached out as human being to the special ed director say, normally timeline wouldn't be in play, extended school year is going to start on June 15th my child is going to be blocked from participating because we haven't solved this problem, can we please meet.

The director was very responsive.

I think it's time for us to really -- we always like to say at DREDF be hard on the issues and soft on the people.

People are dealing with a lot right now.

Issues are the issues.

These children are particularly vulnerable if you're going to go the extra mile for anybody how about these kids.

>> Speaking of time.

We're not going to have time to complete if we do any more questions.

I have one quick one which is -- does this apply to children who are in private school?

>> The exception -- I don't have the information to know whether or not the student is in a nonpublic school.

If your student is in a nonpublic school which is like a special certified, it's not the same as private school even though it's nonpublic and nonpublic would be the same thing.

If your child is in nonpublic school where tuition is being paid for by the school district or by whoever.

That is special ed placement all of the stuff applies.

But like a parochial school like if at religious school, an independent school, those schools are not required to abide by

the IDEA.

>> Let's continue, because it's already -- 12:56.

I have allowed this to go too long.

Let's continue.

It was very interesting, though.

>> Services.

I think this is a bit that a lot of you are probably really struggling with right now.

Students are still entitled to receive the services they need in order to have a free and appropriate public education and work towards their IEP goals.

When you're talking about what services your child needs with the school district and what the teacher or whoever it is that you're discussing with this, you want to focus on goals.

This may seem counterintuitive because your instincts, school's instincts will be to look at the service minutes that they give to your child normally.

And to say, okay, we're just going to do that but it's going to be on video.

That is probably not going to result in equal benefit to your student.

Because most students don't have the attention span to sit for eight hours a day in front of a computer and watch someone talk to them.

Special education services are always supposed to be individualized but in practice schools sometimes rely on a menu of options, your young person as autism that means they get social skills for this many minutes this is what we do for someone who has this kind of disability.

We don't have the menu any more.

Everything is off the menu.

You want to focus on the specific services that are going to help your child meet their goals.

Again, if your child has a math goal where they need to be learning how to do a particular kind of, for instance, long division.

You want to think, okay, is there some sort of app service or like a game that they can help them do that for ten minutes a day.

Could they do consultation time with the teacher.

Do they work really well independently would they prefer to have packet that they practice then talk to the teacher for 15 minutes afterwards.

Or would they prefer to have the teacher work with them step by step through the problem.

These are all individualized things that could be different for your student, but you want to focus on what is going to help your child meet a goal not on replicating the exact kind of service they had.

Flexibility is key.

Schools are allowed to provide services in the home or in nontraditional environments, for instance like a park.

I think as our state starts to open up a little bit more and smaller gatherings start to be permitted.

That might be an appealing solution.

For some families to either meet in the home or somewhere outside the home out of doors where the risk of transmission is lower.

Schools can provide collaboration and coaching services to families.

It doesn't only have to be that the teacher and student meet and they teach and learn together.

It can be that the teacher provides the parent with some information to help the parent facilitate reading or phonics or things like that.

It can be more than just teacher services.

Providers may be able to meet outside of school hours.

Some providers might prefer to meet later in the day if they also have a student who is in school that they're trying to work with.

So it's always better to ask than to just assume it's not possible because some providers may have more flexibility now than they did before.

This is a grid of services and support.

It's not comprehensive.

There are a lot of different things that you can do that might not be in here.

We wanted to give you something that helps you sort of think about what the possibilities might be.

So you can mix and match between remote and in-person or in-person socially distanced type services.

Then also mix and match between one and one instruction, a caregiver teacher collaboration which could include foster parents.

Group instruction or prerecorded not simultaneous instruction.

Cheryl, did you want to talk a little bit about this?

>> See what I said about technology?

No, I just wanted to second what you said which is first we talk about what the student's needs are, what their challenges are, never forget also mention what your student's strengths are because we always want to have our youth focus on their strengths not just what they can't do.

For example, if the student does really well in relationships because that's what works for them then there's new provider providing some distance like telemedicine support for counseling.

Then what you might want to say is turn around the challenge and say, strength of this child is that they really benefit and do well in in-person meetings is there a way to do some introductory sections for telemedicine before you start treating them.

Is there way to have them meet even just -- that existence in some way you start with the need.

You think about the student's strengths then you think about what might work.

Jasmine said it beautifully at the beginning of this presentation.

This is about if all bets are off.

In some ways the power is proposing a solution here is that if it makes sense logistically, that's great.

I do want to make sure that I say, because I know we have so many kinship care providers, many of us are not super young, super young.

For lot of us, issues about exposures ourselves or family members who might be more vulnerable is something you should feel free to raise.

The school may start to partially reopen.

You may say I'm not willing to participate in this activity because I'm worried that I have other medically fragile kids here in my compare.

Or I of a medical vulnerabilities where I'm caring for myself for my parent and so on.

Don't forget to raise those things.

>> So returning to school.

At some point it will happen but no one knows exactly when.

Like I mentioned earlier, it could happen over the summer in some way, shape or form.

It could be that we go back to school and then we decide not to go back to school depending on what happens.

No one really knows what can happen.

What is going to happen and because of that, you don't want to wait.

You don't want to wait to ask for things until it's all settled.

The school district may be in a little bit of place where they're like, okay, we want to wait until everything makes sense and is normal again.

But we don't know when that is.

You don't have to wait for school to open to ask for things that your child needs.

One thing I wanted to mention with regard to legal framework of all of this, is that the legal framework is really a baseline.

Schools can do more than what -- baseline they may not always be happy to do it.

But it's not that you can -- law says that you can only have a meeting during the school year.

The law says, if you ask for a meeting during the school year they have to respond to you within 30 days.

But doesn't say, it is not lawful to have meeting over the summer.

Think of that as a baseline and not as sort of the ceiling of what you might be entitled to.

Like I said earlier it's better for everyone if school continues to meet their special education obligations during this time because they're going to be overwhelmed.

If they put everything off until when schools are open.

I do want to note that it's possible that some of the law around this might change as this goes on further and further.

I would be surprised, for instance, if the state of California said that actually you don't have to do initial evaluations for like a year.

That would be a very long time.

SB117 was emergency.

The excuse that it's hard to implement distance learning doesn't work as well when we're in month 12 of distance

learning as it did in week two or three.

There might be changes in what happens there.

Schools will get better at figuring out how to provide services.

Another concern for schools also for families is just regression, which is word we use to refer to when students had a higher level of skills and functioning then they lost some of the skills because of inability to engage with their education.

That could be academic skills, it could also be behavior, mental health, practical skills or communication.

Then we also want to talk a little bit about compensatory education which will have its own couple much slides.

Cheryl had this wonderful tip which is that you can request in writing an IEP meeting the week before schools reopen to provide the team with your input or data about progress for problems that have happened and to create a school reintegration plan.

I don't know if you wanted to add anything.

>> Just to say it's not necessarily -- I could have worded it better.

Not request the week before you can request it now, you can say in preparation in schools reopening one of the things that Carole reminded us of yesterday when we were planning for this presentation, is that because these are highly mobile children, anything that you do now that could follow that child is such a service to them.

The IEP follows them everywhere they go to every state, to every new district.

This is a child who struggles a lot with transition for whom reintegrating back to school may be hard.

So I want to ask for meeting that we can schedule now for week before schools reopen, whatever that looks like.

So that we can put our heads together to think about maybe come back an hour a day at first.

Maybe need to be first one served, different services right away maybe keep them at home a little longer because they need things to be settled and clear have all their daily schedule and everything very, very outlined before they go back.

Don't hesitate to do that.

It's a reasonable request.

>> So compensatory education.

Cheryl mentioned this a little while back.

The concept of compensatory education is that when a school fails to provide a student with a free and appropriate public education, it can make up for that lack of education or that mistake by providing compensatory services.

The purpose of that compensatory education is to place student in the position they would have been if the school had provided appropriate educational services.

Ever since the school closures and distance learning happened there's been lot of talk within education community and advocacy community about compensatory education for special ed students.

School districts are largely aware that they're going to be some expectations about compensatory education services when students return to school due to the disruption caused by the pandemic.

But there's not a lot of clarity at this point about what exactly that is going to look like.

Because it hasn't happened yet.

Everyone is still kind of operating on the trend to roll out distance education framework.

You shouldn't assume that a school district is going to be really proactive about offering compensatory education.

Some might be more pro-active than others.

You shouldn't assume that they're going to call a meeting say, well, these are all the things that we're going to give you because of school closure.

As we mentioned before, if you have difficulty around this, you ask for services, you can contact your parent training and information center to understand your options or seek legal advice.

I did want to note that schools -- there is some talk that schools might come up with some sort of formula that they will use to calculate what they're going to do as compensatory education.

If that is what they wanted to do as starting point that's fine, but really compensatory education is supposed to be individualized.

If after all of this school says we're going to give you this many hours of math, this many hours of reading and social skills you've noticed that actually your child is doing okay with math and reading but they need lot of extra help in social skills.

You can ask for something different than what they offer.

Just be aware that some places might say, okay, these are the offers that we're making to everyone.

That there is still room to negotiate within those offers.

Relatedly, again, services are supposed to be individualized.

It's not based on replacing services minute for minute for lot of students that he may not actually want that because if we're talking about multiple months of missed school, trying to figure out the time to redo all of that.

Might end up being a burden on a student who is now trying to go to after-school services for two hours to get additional education.

That might not be it can be provided outside of normal school hours over break.

When school services are provided over the summer break, sometimes those are referred to as extended school year services or ESY.

You can use flexible and creative solutions to meet student needs.

For instance I had a client who comp ed claim, so what the district ended up doing was actually paying for couple of weeks for him to go to summer camp it wasn't like a special ed summer camp, an opportunity for him to interact with same age and younger peers, practice social skills, in an environment that he really loved.

He loved going to summer camp.

His favorite thing in the world.

The school district was like, okay, we should have given a little more social skills instruction during the year, we didn't.

What we'll do is have what this child to have this experience that they really want that will also help them towards meeting their goal of improving their social skills.

In terms of how you can get these services, you want to call an IEP to discuss it.

Education rights has right to audio record an IEP.

This might be good meeting to record in case you need help from a lawyer or parent advocate later on.

You want to provide documentation which Cheryl will talk about on the next slide.

You want to focus again on goals like we said throughout this presentation, focus on the goals instead of focusing in on service minutes.

Again, you want to be one to propose solutions.

The parent in the case I was talking about before knew her son really loves that camp, loves going to it, got a lot out of it.

Seemed like it was really helping him with social skills.

She proposed why don't we do this.

District was like, okay, we can do that.

You have that information about your child and what they like to do.

What makes them happy and what also helps them learn and grow.

You can propose solutions you are more likely to get something good out of it.

Also relieves the stress burden on the school.

The school again is overwhelmed trying to think about how to do this, they're not in a place to be thinking, okay, this is what Johnny really loves to do.

They don't have the brain space to be doing that.

We'd like them to, but they don't necessarily have the space to be doing that.

If you can do that, that actually helps them.

>> Very quickly, what can all of you out there dealing with all these things at once do to help advocate for these extra services for foster youth once school reopened.

First of all you can notice, you can monitor what is happening now, knowing again -- no one but caregiver, when I talk about a caregiver I'm talking about the bio parent doing visits if that is the situation.

The current foster parent, kinship care provider, all of the above these are people who know the child well.

Also for youth over at least 16 if not sooner you can ask them, get their input and buy in.

If you see the child losing skills, not making progress, again we call the regression.

Then you want to notice it.

Then you want to document it.

So special education as we've said repeatedly, very bureaucratic system.

If it wasn't put in writing you can assume no one ever heard of it.

Especially if a child moves schools, forget it.

If it's documented in writing it's going to follow that child.

Put your concerns in writing.

And share them.

I just wanted to give you couple of quick examples.

So, one is having twice as many meltdowns when he's asked to do academic work now that he's home resulting in him

not participating in any of his learning at school.

Every time it's time to come to the computer behavior that was improving has stopped improving because he's not getting services.

He's losing access to his education.

Or without a person to support in terms of machine tall health around post traumatic stress disorder, Mary is having more panic attacks can't do her work.

She has fallen apart in terms of her ability to focus because of her mental health needs not being met.

She's going to get more and more mind.

Kenya is struggling with reading but was improving with extra help at school maybe with a special class now she's not getting that or getting once a week, really not reading any more.

I think she's reading at a lower level than she was before she started.

That is where you come in.

Because no one is going to know that.

Only you have that information.

Even if you consider doing Zoom classes still do not have time to check win each individual child.

Other thing to mention often ways to get same kind of information about what your education concerns are to the courts and to the child welfare workers and social workers who need to have it, too.

They often become allies in getting these services and they may want to be involved in some of this.

So you can use in California you have caregiver's affidavit but whatever to get this information, documented for court purposes as well.

>> I'll just add that nothing moves school district like really angry juvenile court judge.

>> Amen to that.

>> We've covered I think most of this content.

Returning to school, just try to document to the best of your ability what is going on.

If you can't do daily log, that's fine.

We know that you guys are really busy.

But if you can keep some sort of notes somewhere about what's going on with school that can be really helpful later on when we're talking about compensatory ed services and thinking about what it is that your child needs to be successful.

Once the school reopens you and your IEP team should absolutely have a meeting or maybe before that if you can get them to agree to it like Cheryl said the week before school opens.

You want to discuss your child's present level of performance, when we were talking about special ed goals, talking about a baseline, talk about the goal where we want the child to finish and present level which is where a child is on their path in between.

You want to discuss your child's goals.

One thing I wanted to quickly note is that sometimes the goals that are written in a child's IEP aren't particularly great goals.

So usually the academic goals are okay.

They make some sort of sense.

They have some sort of -- we want Kenya to be at 80% for 80th percentile in her class for reading that is more measurable.

But a lot of times behavior goals can be very sort of nebulous, unclear, just things like we want Johnny to be on his Beth behavior three out of five days a week.

As Cheryl said, young person's IEP follows them from school to school.

If you're able to advocate to have goals that actually makes sense so something more like, when Johnny gets aggravated in class he would use these three strategies to help him calm down 50% of the time.

That is a specific goal that actually has action items that doesn't just rely on Johnny to act better.

If you can get things like that into an IEP that can be really helpful in the long term for a young person as they move from place to place.

Last thing you want to discuss services, what your child needs to bridge the gap between their present levels and their goal.

These services might be different.

Might need more services or different services than what your child was receiving school prior to the closure.

>> I would just add one more thing if you run into a barrier where the school says, we don't do that.

No, we can't do that.

Oh, I never heard of that.

The best strategy we can give you to use is to simply say, could you put in writing your legal reasons why you can't do that, please?

Then you can contact people like Jasmine and myself and find out what to do next because you have in writing what they think their legally defensible reasons for saying no are.

Some are saying know because they don't know how to do it.

Why caregiver participation is important we leave this last couple of slides and this is really what you want you to take away.

First of all, we've said it over and over again.

You know these kids.

Everybody in special education land knows that this law, the IDEA was built on the presumption that every single child has a parent advocating for them.

Lot of our kids don't.

You may be the first person in a long time whose gotten to know this child enough don't lose opportunity these kids need it so much.

It makes a difference.

Parental input helps teens focus on strengths not challenges.

You shouldn't go into a meeting, when our youth come into meetings, we do like to go into work meeting tell you things that you don't do well.

Also know that being present in attending, just because you were invited is not the same thing as knowing you are expected to meaningfully participate.

That you get a vote, that you have the right to have input or say I don't think that could work for my child.

Here is why.

Again it doesn't mean you're driving the process, you're not the decision maker only but you certainly have a lot more power than I think a lot of us start out in this system understand that we have.

Including don't sign thing you don't understand.

Get help when you need it so that your child becomes someone who is made very real to the district in terms of who they are as individual.

You as an individual are seen as someone who isn't just going to sign on the dotted line without understanding.

We know that kids do better when schools and homes are working together to support their learning.

Next slide.

Then as Jasmine said this earlier can't emphasize enough.

When you help the school understand that something is not working for your child you're not just helping that child, you're helping the teacher.

The teacher may say I don't have enough hands.

I'd like to keep this child in general education but he really needs some help getting himself focused and started on work.

Gee, do you think an -- now the teacher can say, yes, in front of everyone.

A great idea.

Teacher may not advocate for that inside the system because it's hard and resources are scarce.

Now you put them on the spot, most cases they respond in a more positive way.

Also helping social workers, children attorneys and few fewer caregivers.

Because just like children you may be caring for today or future caregivers, also mean children being reunified.

When they come back with IEP that meets their needs, we actually preserve home placement.

I really can't emphasize that enough.

We often hear, problems at home blow up school placements because kids move around.

The opposite is true.

When parents are being called for discipline issues, kids aren't making progress won't go to school, parents are being reported to the student attendance review board.

It blows up children's placement.

It's a wonderful gift to give a child in terms of preserving their placement and improving their educational opportunities, too.

Then finally we couldn't leave without saying that in addition to everything else you're doing, we also want you to know there's opportunities for you to be involved at the systems level.

It may be that you say, gee, no one in our school district ever does X, Y and Z or are concerned about what's happening around these kinds of issues at this charter school.

Every single school is required to be part of or school district or charter school to be part of community advisory committee for special education.

That is a really important group that often gets almost no attention at all.

And that is that you -- as parent, special education teachers, professionals can be speech therapists school administrators who work together.

Often it's groups, here in California called special education and local plan area.

Different states do it differently.

Whole group of people at variety of levels of the system who come together to talk about how can we improve the system.

So please reach out to parent training information center or to your school district or charter school to find out, what is going on with the special education CAC how can I get involved there?

The key take-aways.

We've talked a lot.

We talked 'out equity, I don't think we need to talk about it any more.

All means all.

Public schools must continue to provide free and appropriate public education, FAPE.

Learn the term because when you start using it people start to think, gosh, this person understands the law a little bit.

Makes a difference.

But they can do it differently right now.

Educators and parents should work together to find ways to meet student's needs flexibly through extent possible.

It's really difficult term because what does it mean?

But it also opens up possibilities.

Because you can say, here is way that it could be possible.

If online materials aren't working for your child, you can ask school to provide a different kind of access.

So equally effective alternative access to the curriculum, that's a mouthful coming out of the federal guidance, all it means is that for your child getting the materials for sensory work and some packets that help them work on their goals and consultation to the parent how to deliver it.

Get mailed or dropped off on your porch, that's fine, too.

Then don't forget, your input, your participation and your agreement if you hold education rights is still required.

If you get a blanket notice, Jasmine said this at the beginning, that says, here is what we're going to do for all students with disabilities in our district right now, please sign.

Be careful before you sign.

We're never going to tell you what you should or shouldn't but are going to tell you that a lot of problems come up, especially for foster children in youth because somebody thinks that they're just supposed to be agreeable and sign the document without raising questions because they think somehow they are being difficult about that.

It's not being difficult to advocate for these children or any child.

But for these kids in particular your advocacy really matters.

We've included some resources here.

If we have questions about anything, you can reach out to us.

I think we're running out of time.

>> We are past time.

I do want to ask one quick very specific question.

Then all the rest of the questions we will answer in FAQs which will be available with the summary of the webcast online at QPI for kids.

Just quickly, during this -- when schools are closed, during this period, where do you send all these requests for IEPs or evaluation, does it go to the school district, the school address, just really quickly if you know, if not we'll put it into the FAQ.

Is there a general rule?

>> It will vary from district to district.

Some district offices are completely closed and they're sending messages saying like, just do everything e-mail.

What you have to do is fax or mail it via snail mail.

I think the best way to do it is to do e-mail.

You can just e-mail a bunch of people like if you're not sure or try one person they didn't respond you can just e-mail bunch.

Anybody who has special education in their job title.

E-mail all of them, administrative assistants, sometimes they're checking their e-mail.

You can also try calling if places are answering their phones.

Lot of places are checking voicemail.

You can try that as well.

But I think, the blanket e-mail.

Also if you send blanket e-mail they will send you auto response that says what they want you to actually do.

>> Yes.

To that I would add that you can put in your e-mail, if I don't have hear from you within the next two or three business days, I'll follow up with a registered letter or you can just make yourself note to follow up so that if it falls into the e-mail black hole you don't get a response, don't just wait.

Do something different.

>> Okay.

Thank you very much.

I thank you to people who stayed on which is almost everybody.

Even though it went a little long with huge amount of information.

That I think we all appreciate.

The slides will be available, a summary will be available and you'll be able to listen to the webcast again with captioning on QPI for kids' website.

You'll be getting a notice saying that you attended, if that's something that you need.

Otherwise everybody stay safe.

Stay well.

I cannot thank Jasmine and Cheryl enough for all of this incredibly valuable information.

We'll be sharing the questions with them they will helping to get the answers.

I guess I should say that these questions are really interesting and really sensitive which is why I didn't want to try to answer them so quickly.

But I do want to get to them.

Thank you everyone.

Very much.

>> All right.

Thank you so much Carole and Jasmine and Cheryl.

We appreciate everybody's attendance for the QPI webinar.

I'm going to leave the webinar line open for a few minutes in case you would like to grab the online links resources off of the webinar chat.

Thanks a lot, everyone.

Have a great day.