



## COVID-19 and Education: Parent Resources

### Choosing an education model:

School districts and charter schools in Minnesota will choose one of three educational models to implement at the start of the 2020-21 school year – in-person, hybrid, or distance. Districts and charter schools are also required to offer distance learning to all families who want it due to medical risks or other safety concerns.

As parents consider their options, the Minnesota Department of Education's list of [frequently asked questions](#) addresses an array of parent concerns about the state's Safe Learning Plan.

The Centers for Disease Control offers a [decision-making tool](#) designed to help parents weigh the risks and benefits of available educational options and make the choice that works for their families.

### Resources for In-Person Learning Model:

**Children's Neurology Foundation** has a [Back to School educational series](#) of videos and blog posts on topics related to going back to school during COVID-19 for children with neurological conditions. Topics include deciding when to send your child back to school, medication management, IEPs, and social distancing for children with special services or aides.

**Nutrition:** Families whose income was negatively impacted by COVID-19 may be newly eligible for free or reduced price school breakfasts and lunches. Income guidelines are [here](#). Applications are available from the child's school.

**Talking to Your Child About COVID-19:** As children return to school, they are likely to hear discussions about the pandemic that may be confusing or frightening to them. This [guide](#) from the National Association of School Psychologists can help you talk to your child in a way that's helpful and reassuring.

**Hygiene:** Help your children to reduce virus transmission by reminding them to avoid touching their face, to wash their hands frequently, cough or sneeze into their elbow, wear a mask where required, and observe social distancing. Model those behaviors yourself.

Under the Safe Learning Plan, the state of Minnesota will provide one cloth face covering for every K-12 student and school staff member. Schools will also receive three disposable face masks for each student and face shields for teachers. This [video](#) discusses ways to teach children to wear a mask.

## Resources for Distance Learning Model:

**Low-cost internet options:** Internet connectivity is an essential need for distance learning. School districts and charter schools are being encouraged, as much as possible, to provide students with technology (such as devices and wireless hotspots) during distance learning or hybrid learning. Alternatively, families in need may qualify for a low-cost internet plan from one of these programs:

- Federal Communications Commission's [Lifeline](#)
- [Xfinity's Internet Essentials](#)
- [Mediacom's Connect2Compete](#)
- [Spectrum's Internet Assist](#)
- [PCs for People](#)

**Refurbished computers** are available at a reduced cost for low-income individuals through these nonprofit organizations:

- [Ability Built Computers](#), Rochester, MN
- [PCs for People](#)

**Nutrition:** Consult with your child's school district to learn how they plan to make school meals available to eligible students participating in distance learning. Families whose income was negatively impacted by COVID-19 may be newly eligible for free or reduced price school breakfasts and lunches. [See income guidelines here](#). Applications are available from the child's school.

**Disability Services:** School districts and charter schools are still responsible for the free appropriate public education (FAPE) of students eligible for special education services. PACER Center has several resources for parents of students with disabilities. Topics include [preparing for distance learning](#), [tips for families](#), [IEP-related services](#), and resolving [IEP-related disputes](#).

Assistive technology may be beneficial in addressing some of the challenges of distance learning. PACER offers [online video assistive technology consultations](#).

**National Center for Learning Disabilities** offers this [resource](#) on improving the experience of children with disabilities in a distance learning environment.

**Resources for Learning at Home:** Materials are available on various federal agencies' websites to use for [lessons at home](#) on an array of topics, including history, the environment, space exploration, and more.

## Hybrid Learning Model:

Because the Hybrid Learning Model combines both In-Person and Distance learning, all of the resources in this document are appropriate for families participating in Hybrid Learning.

**Childcare:** Concerns about childcare may arise regardless of the learning model selected. School districts and charter schools using a hybrid or distance learning model must provide free school-aged care for children of Tier 1 critical workers who are age 12 and under. They may also continue to provide before and after school care and may charge fees. Parents not on the Tier 1 critical workers list can call the Child Care Aware Hotline at 1-888-291-9811 for assistance, or find a map of open providers [here](#).