

Virtual Learning and Accommodations Guide



The 2020-2021 school year is starting amid a great deal of uncertainty. As instruction begins in-person, online, and with hybrid formats, teachers, families and caregivers, students and instructional teams may need to reconsider the accommodations and supports that students receive.

The [Virginia Department of Education](#) (VDOE) along with the [Assistive Technology Network](#) has adapted this resource from the Indiana Department of Education that lists common daily accommodations for students in brick and mortar learning environments and provides examples of how these accommodations can be applied during virtual instruction.

It is most beneficial to provide familiar support to students during this time rather than introducing something new. If students have been using a support in the classroom, and it can be replicated in the home environment, this is the recommended practice. If not, alternative methods to support student learning must be determined. In any case, teachers can use the [Universal Design for Learning Framework](#) when designing their instruction to maximize engagement and response options for all of their students regardless of location.

When considering potential changes to accommodations, the [SETT Framework](#) can provide guidance to teams in identifying supports based on the **S**tudent, **E**nvironment, **T**ask, and **T**ools that are required. Teams are encouraged to utilize this process given that the environment, tasks, and tools will change when engaging in virtual learning,

The VDOE also offers resources to help IEP teams facilitate the discussion around the need for accommodations. The [Assistive Technology Considerations Guide](#) provides documentation and key questions for IEP teams to ask when considering the need for AT. Additionally, the [Assistive Technology Resource Guide](#) provides common AT solutions based on the areas of need demonstrated by the student. [AIM-VA](#) provides accessible instructional materials to eligible Virginia students, K-12 with an IEP, who are unable to access traditional print.

Within this document, accommodations are organized into four categories:

- Presentation—how students receive information,
- Responding—how students show what they know,
- Setting—how the environment is made accessible for instruction and assessment, and
- Scheduling—how time demands and schedules may be adjusted.

Please note that the examples provided do not represent all possible accommodations and may not be appropriate for all students. The identification of any products, private vendors, or links to websites in this document is only for the purpose of providing examples and information and does not constitute the VDOE's endorsement of these products. Selection of products and implementation of practices should be based on individual student needs and local regulations and policies. If additional guidance is needed on how to provide accommodations remotely, please contact the Virginia Department of Education: Office of Special Education Instructional Services via email at spedinstruction@doe.virginia.gov, or your regional [Training and Technical Assistance Center \(TTAC\)](#).

Staying connected with students, families, and caregivers is one of the best ways to provide support. In addition to the accommodations listed below, consider connecting with students, families, and caregivers on a regular basis. Connect virtually or by phone to check-in, provide words of encouragement, offer feedback on assignments and to share the strategies used in the classroom. Frequent communication can help determine if the support provided is sufficient or if additional supports are needed.

The VDOE would like to thank the [Indiana Department of Education](#), [The Indiana IEP Resource Center](#), and the [PATINS Project](#) for their work in the initial development of this resource.

Presentation Accommodations

Daily Accommodations	Remote Accommodations
<p>The student needs directions and content read aloud.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Families and caregivers can read aloud directions and content. ● Teachers can call the student or offer a virtual session to read directions and content. ● Teachers can record themselves reading the directions and content, and provide the recording to the student. ● Teachers can obtain electronic books from AIM-VA to share with families. ● Provide families and caregivers and students text-to-speech options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Operating System (Window, ChromeOS, etc.) accessibility features ○ EPIC! ○ Bookshare ○ Snap and Read or Read & Write ○ PrizmoGo and Claro Scap Pen Apps ○ Natural Reader ○ Google Docs ○ Microsoft Immersive Reader – Chrome Extension or as built in feature to Microsoft Word in Windows computers ○ Switch access to computer paired with Tarheel Reader.
<p>The student needs directions clarified.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide live or closed-captioned pre-recorded video instructions to the student, using tools such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Screencastify ○ Khan Academy ○ YouTube ○ Recorded PowerPoint. ● Provide “How-To” Guides with or without visual image supports. ● Provide quality examples demonstrating what success and mastery look like <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support families and caregivers in using video modeling to teach new tasks.
<p>The student needs assignments broken down into parts or steps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide a schedule to students to complete parts of the assignment with specified due dates. ● Help families and caregivers learn to develop and use short activity schedules. ● Check-in with the student to confirm completion or have the student submit each “part” of the assignment. ● Provide Get Ready, Do, Done chart. ● Provide checklists of all required components, using tools such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Google Keep ○ One Note ○ Notes App ○ Bulleting in Google Docs or Word. ● Utilize task analysis for learning job skills and provide visual checklists and/or video modeling.

<p>The student requires use of manipulatives for mathematics instruction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide manipulatives that were used in the classroom environment or help families and caregivers utilize household items as manipulatives. ● Provide virtual manipulatives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Preschool- Use programs like Boardmaker, LessonPix, and PowerPoint to create interactive virtual manipulatives. ○ Elementary - Math Learning Center Apps. ○ Elementary and Secondary - National Library of Virtual Manipulatives.
<p>The student utilizes visual supports.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide digital copies of visuals used within the classroom. ● Provide information sheets and/or video tutorials on how visual supports are utilized within the classroom. ● Provide documents that can be edited to meet needs at home. ● Help families and caregivers learn to create and use simple visual supports at home. Put them on a keyring so they are easy to find and organize.

Presentation Accommodations (continued)	
Daily Accommodations	Remote Accommodations
<p>The student is provided a copy of notes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide PowerPoint with notes prior to lesson. ● Provide outline of important concepts. ● Use Microsoft Translator to provide a transcript of lectures. ● Provide guided notes for the student to complete. ● Provide a copy of a peer’s notes if available.
<p>The student needs support to visually track text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Low-Tech Options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide ruler, notecard or line guide to track text. ● Tech Options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Operating System Accessibility Features ○ Microsoft Immersive Reader ○ Visor – Chrome Extension ○ Liner- Chrome Extension
<p>The student benefits from visual cues on assignments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Color code, bold and/or highlight documents. ● Use Liner- Chrome Extension. ● Use icons or emojis. ● Tag content according to a key. ● Pre-organize content. ● Provide an erasable highlighter or reusable highlighting tape to the student.
<p>The student requires color contrast for visual accessibility.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure families and caregivers know the best color contrast for the student. ● Provide access to software that offers color contrast features. ● Provide customized files as needed. ● Ensure the student has access to preferred colored overlay film. ● Utilize “page color” features in Microsoft Immersive Reader (Chrome extension and Windows built in feature) and operating system accessibility features.

The student is provided access to large print copies of the text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide access to textbooks at home. ● Provide technology to magnify materials at home. ● Provide enlarged files, digital or paper, as needed. ● Teachers can obtain books from AIM-VA to share with students.
The student is provided access to braille copies of the text.	<p>Student provided access to braille copies of the text from AIM-VA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide access to textbooks at home. ● Provide access to digital braille display or similar technology. ● Provide embossed or digital files, as needed.
The student is provided access to an interpreter for sign language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide visual content when appropriate. ● Provide closed captioning if appropriate (e.g., video captioning, Google Slides). ● Provide an interpreter virtually if appropriate. ● Set up virtual conferencing so interpreters can be seen.

Response Accommodations	
Daily Accommodations	Remote Accommodations
The student uses graphic organizers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide copies of commonly used graphic organizers and instructions, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ReadWriteThink ○ Ditch That Textbook ○ Google Drawing/Lucid Chart ○ bubble.us. ● Share low tech options like Post-It notes with families and caregivers. ● Provide an electronic means of filling in graphic organizers (e.g. Google slides, Microsoft Word, SnapType app).
The student utilizes an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide access to the device in the home environment (AAC at Home). ● Create interactive communication boards for use during virtual instruction. ● Include video tutorials and model the use of AAC. ● Provide static copies of boards currently being used (could also be utilized if the AAC device breaks.).
The student is provided access to a scribe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Families and caregivers can scribe for the student. ● Teachers can call the student or offer a virtual session to scribe for the student. ● The student can complete assignments via speech to text, using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Google Docs ○ Microsoft Word. ● The student can provide an oral presentation, using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Microsoft PowerPoint Recording with narration. ○ Submit Video <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Flipgrid ▪ Screencastify ▪ Screen-Cast-O-Matic.

The student utilizes word prediction software.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inform families and caregivers on the use of Co-Writer, WordQ, Read and Write, or other built-in word prediction software and how to enable it on devices. ● Provide written or video directions if needed.
The student utilizes dictionaries to support learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mail or deliver dictionaries used in the school setting if needed. ● Provide online dictionaries. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elementary Options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Math Dictionary for Kids ▪ Little Explorers Enchanted Learning ▪ Merriam-Webster – Word Central ○ Secondary Options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Merriam Webster – Visual Dictionary ▪ Visuwords ▪ Visual Thesaurus ● Provide options for using built-in dictionaries and glossaries. ● Provide instructions on how to access bilingual settings if needed.

Response Accommodations (continued)	
Daily Accommodations	Remote Accommodations
The student uses a calculator for classwork, homework assignments and assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide access to an appropriate calculator. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DESMOS Online Calculator (Virginia Version) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Graphing ▪ Scientific ▪ 4 Function ○ If unable to access DESMOS or a handheld calculator is needed, consider mailing or delivering an appropriate calculator to the student.
The student is provided a hundreds chart or multiplication table on mathematics class work, homework, and assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide a paper copy of the hundreds chart or multiplication table or create a flexitable to use at home. ● Provide access to a virtual hundreds chart or a virtual multiplication table.
The student requires adapted access to computer or tablet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide switch interface with switch, enlarged keyboard, and/or adapted mouse. ● Provide instructions to families and caregivers on creation of a “mouse house” to support access to a standard computer mouse. ● Provide instructions on using tape to help locate tablet activation buttons. ● Provide training to families and caregivers in device accessibility features.
The student requires adapted school tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with families and caregivers to identify household items that can be used for a slant board (e.g. large notebook, cut box top). ● Work with families and caregivers to identify household items that could assist in gripping pencils (e.g. hair curler, masking tape, rubber bands). ● Provide similar pencil grips and adapted tools used by the student in school.

Setting Accommodations	
Daily Accommodations	Remote Accommodations
The student requires preferential seating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share ideas with families and caregivers about the environment needed for their child to learn best.
The student requires flexible seating options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide seating options at home if appropriate (e.g., ball, standing desk, adjustable seating). ● Inform families and caregivers of the recommended seating option for their child. ● Explore adaptive options available in the home environment.
The student works best in a small group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide instruction to the student individually or in a small group with peers via the phone or virtually (Zoom, FaceTime, Google Hangouts, etc.). ● Consider using breakout rooms in platforms like Zoom.
The student requires behavioral support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Help families and caregivers set up a positive and supportive learning environment at home (consider lighting, noise, visual distractions). ● Assist families and caregivers in utilizing positive behavior interventions and supports at home, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emphasize the importance of clear rules and expectations (make them visual). ○ Provide positive support by maintaining relationships via phone calls, mailed letters, emails or video calls. ○ Encourage or provide opportunities for choice. ○ Encourage or provide opportunities for movement. ● Replicate or modify current behavioral supports at home (token boards, social stories, reflection binder, check-in / check-out, daily behavior form, behavior contracts, etc.).
The student requires adapted positioning throughout the day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide families and caregivers with suggestions on supportive seating at the home. ● If safe and feasible, transport equipment from the school to the home and train family and caregivers on proper positioning. ● Provide video and/or instructional handouts for reference.
The student is provided access to fidgets to aid in attention and focus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Help families and caregivers understand the benefit of fidgets. ● Talk with families and caregivers to identify appropriate household items that can be used as fidgets.
The student is provided access to adapted utensils for eating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talk with families and caregivers about what worked in the school. ● Support families and caregivers in locating utensils with bendable handles and or built up handles. ● Provide families and caregivers with ideas for using household items to aid in feeding (e.g. shelf liner to prevent slippage).

Scheduling Accommodations	
Daily Accommodations	Remote Accommodations
The student utilizes a written or visual schedule.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide or co-create with families and caregivers written or visual schedules modified based on current needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider appropriate times for activities based on preferred and non-preferred activities, amount of time for various tasks, include breaks as needed, etc. ○ Create first-then schedules if needed, especially for young children. ○ Create object/picture/written schedules if needed. ● Provide information sheets and/or video tutorials on how written and/or visual schedules are utilized within the classroom and how that can be applied at home.
The student is provided with extra time to complete assignments/activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assist families and caregivers in determining appropriate time allocations for tasks. ● Check time settings within Learning Management Systems (LMS) to ensure appropriate time is allotted for assignments and assessments. ● In various applications, disable and/or adjust time settings to meet student needs or offer alternative assignments meeting the same learning objectives with appropriate time restrictions. ● Use timers when needed.
The student needs additional breaks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide or co-create with families and caregivers written or visual schedules including appropriate time allocations for work and breaks. ● Indicate appropriate activities for break times. ● Use timers if needed for breaks.