

COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus FAQ for Illinois Families



Dear Illinois Families,

A coalition of non-profit organizations created this COVID-19 FAQ to get you relevant and timely information about: what COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) is, why schools have closed, what to do to keep your family safe and healthy, and what you can do to help to save lives and stop the spread of the virus. Also, we've added tips on how to talk to your kids about the virus as well as how to stay informed. Please visit ISBE's COVID-19 website for the most up-to-date COVID-19 information: <https://www.isbe.net/COVID19>. If you have additional questions and concerns during this time, please contact your school and district first. If you are unable to reach your school or district, you may email your questions or concerns to ISBE's COVID-19 email: COVID19@isbe.net.

To view the shorter summary of this resource go here: <https://partnersforeachandeverychild.org/wp-content/uploads/COVID-SUMMARY.pdf> and the one-page "Where to Get Help" here: <https://partnersforeachandeverychild.org/wp-content/uploads/COVID-Flyer.pdf>.

In Solidarity,

ACT Now Illinois, Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI), Illinois PTA, and the Opportunity Institute

FAQ SECTIONS

I. The Basics of COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)*	3
• General; School Closures; Avoiding Misinformation; Key Resources	
II. Access to Resources During School Closures	6
• Meals; Childcare; Homework and Distance Learning; Key Resources	
III. Implicated State Education Policies	10
• Grades and Graduation; Scholarships; School Accountability and Testing; Special Education; Attendance; Key Resources	
IV. Parents/Caregivers Work-Related Concerns	14
• Immigration; Housing and Utilities; Economic Assistance and Unemployment; Healthcare; Key Resources	
V. State Contact Information	17
VI. Additional Resources – Supporting Your Children at Home	17
• Emerson Collective; Learning Heroes; Education Post; National PTA	

****THIS CONTENT WILL BE UPDATED AS NEW INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE****



I. The Basics of COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)

General

Q. What is the virus and how is it spread?

A. The Novel Coronavirus, or COVID-19, is transmitted person-to-person through close contact or through respiratory droplets. Although washing hands frequently and not touching our face keeps the virus from entering your body, the overall recommendation is to keep 6 feet of distance from anyone with any symptoms of a cold or flu. In areas where cases are actively being identified, the recommendation is to support slowing community spread by practicing social distancing and quarantine in your home to ensure that your family is not contributing to the community spread unknowingly.

Q. How do I know if I'm at a higher risk?

A. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at higher risk for more serious complications from COVID-19. Based upon available information to date from the CDC, those most at risk include

- People 65 years and older
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- People of any age with the following underlying medical conditions, particularly those that are not well controlled
 - Chronic lung disease or asthma
 - Congestive heart failure or coronary artery disease
 - Diabetes
 - Neurologic conditions that weaken ability to cough
 - Weakened immune system
 - Chemotherapy or radiation for cancer (currently or in recent past)
 - Sickle cell anemia
 - Chronic kidney disease requiring dialysis
 - Cirrhosis of the liver
 - Lack of spleen or a spleen that doesn't function correctly
 - Extreme obesity (body mass index [BMI] ≥ 40)
- People who are pregnant

Q. If I want to be tested for COVID-19 but have not been able to what should I do?

A. Currently, there is a shortage of COVID-19 tests and the decision to test is determined by healthcare providers for a limited group of residents that show symptoms. If you have attempted to get tested and have been denied a test, self-quarantine from family and friends. Monitor symptoms such as fever, respiratory challenges and any other symptoms. In the event that breathing becomes difficult, call your healthcare provider or 911 BEFORE going to Emergency Room.

School Closures

Q. Why are we closing schools?

A. According to the CDC, "There is a role for school closure in response to school-based cases of COVID-19 for decontamination and contact tracing (few days of closure), in response to

[Top ↑](#)

significant absenteeism of staff and students (short to medium length, i.e. 2-4 weeks of closure), or as part of a larger community mitigation strategy for jurisdictions with substantial community spread* (medium to long length, i.e. 4-8 weeks or more of closure).” The Governor of Illinois has mandated that public and private schools be closed statewide to further safeguard Illinois from the spread of the virus. As of March 29, 2020, President Trump extended federal social distancing guidelines to April 30, 2020. Illinois schools will be closed through the end of the 2019-20 school year and students will finish the year with remote learning.

Q. How does the state justify closing schools?

A. Between March 17-30, 2020, Illinois considers the COVID-19 pandemic to qualify as an “Act of God” under the law. While the state encourages school districts to provide distance learning opportunities during this time, these Act of God Days are not formal instructional days and do not need to be made up at the end of the school year.

Beginning March 31, and continuing until in-person instruction can resume, school days impacted by COVID-19 school closures will be considered “Remote Learning Days.” Remote Learning Days are counted as instructional days. ISBE’s Remote Learning Recommendations for districts, schools, teachers, students and parents can be found here: www.isbe.net/Documents/RL-Recommendations-3-27-20.pdf

Q. What is the timeline for schools closing?

A. Under Illinois Governor JB Pritzker’s mandatory stay at home orders, necessary measures to slow the spread of this deadly and highly contagious pandemic, in-person instruction will continue to be suspended through the end of the 2019-20 school year, in order to help keep our communities safe. As of March 31, 2020, schools and students have transitioned to Remote Learning Days that will be counted as Instructional Days. Future decisions regarding statewide school closures will be made in consultation with public health officials. This order applies to all Illinois public and nonpublic schools, including parochial and charter schools. The statewide mandated school closure also extends to any early childhood program for children ages birth through five located in public schools or in private schools. Districts, early education programs, licensed and license-exempt homes are not allowed to provide childcare due to concerns with the rapid spread of COVID-19. Applications are now being accepted for childcare facilities and others to apply to serve as Emergency Child Care Sites for the children of critical emergency (essential) workers.

Avoiding Misinformation

Q. I am worried about getting incorrect information. What are some of the key FACTS about COVID-19?

A. The CDC has provided a list of key facts below:

- Fact 1: Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity.
- Fact 2: For most people, the immediate risk of becoming seriously ill from the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to be low.
- Fact 3: Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people.
- Fact 4: There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy.
- Fact 5: You can help stop COVID-19 by knowing the signs and symptoms

[Top ↑](#)

The full list of the CDC's key facts is available here: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/share-facts.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Fshare-facts.html

Q. What are some of the major MYTHS surrounding COVID-19 that I should know about?

A. Some of the myths about COVID-19 include:

- The COVID-19 virus cannot be transmitted in areas with hot and humid climates
- Cold weather and snow can kill the new coronavirus
- Taking a hot bath prevents the new coronavirus disease
- The new coronavirus can be transmitted through mosquito bites
- Hand dryers are effective in killing the new coronavirus
- Ultraviolet disinfection lamps should be used to kill the new coronavirus
- Thermal scanners can detect all people who are infected, including those not yet sick with fever
- Spraying alcohol or chlorine all over your body can kill the new coronavirus
- Vaccines against pneumonia protect you against the new coronavirus
- Regularly rinsing your nose with saline can help prevent infection with the new coronavirus
- Eating garlic can help prevent infection with the new coronavirus
- The new coronavirus affects older people only
- Antibiotics are effective in preventing and treating the new coronavirus
- There are specific medicines to prevent or treat the new coronavirus

The World Health Organization (WHO) has compiled a list of “myth busters” and related graphics here: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>

Key Resources

General

- CDC FAQ: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#basics>
- CDC COVID-19 Key Facts: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/share-facts.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Fshare-facts.html
- CDC Resources in Multiple Languages: <https://wwwn.cdc.gov/pubs/other-languages?Sort=Lang%3A%3Aasc&fbclid=IwAR1GWgtsT1G6CJqfXVYmL43E0CV4mMf0uWHIY6O6-Nc5a9zGsaAK0wtIfO8>
- CDC Underlying Health Conditions: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>
- John Hopkins University -- global map / database tracking confirmed COVID19 cases by country, state etc. (updated every 3 hours) <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

[Top ↑](#)

Education

- ISBE COVID-19 website: <https://www.isbe.net/COVID19>
- ISBE Statewide School Closure Guidance: <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/FAQ-4-15-20.pdf> (updated regularly so check the ISBE COVID-19 website for current version: <https://www.isbe.net/COVID19>)
- ISBE Remote Learning Recommendations (March 27, 2020): www.isbe.net/Documents/RL-Recommendations-3-27-20.pdf
- ISBE Special Education FAQ: <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/SPED-FAQ-04-20-20.pdf>
- Relevant Illinois Governor’s Executive Orders:
 - [Executive Order 2020-15](#) (March 27, 2020) (March 27, 2020) suspends all state assessments, creates Remote Learning Days and Remote Learning Planning Days, addresses Early Childhood Block Grant funds, and permits virtual submission of school construction bids.
 - [Executive Order 2020-05](#) (March 15, 2020) requires all public and non-public schools to close beginning on Tuesday, March 17 through Monday, March 30. EO 2020-05 also provides flexibility in e-learning plans.
 - [Executive Order 2020-07](#) (March 16, 2020) includes Open Meetings Act flexibility
 - [Executive Order 2020-06](#) (March 25, 2020) exempts schools operated by the Department of Juvenile Justice, State Board of Education or Department of Human Services from EO 2020-05.
- Illinois Governor’s COVID-19 website: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/coronavirus/Pages/default.aspx>
- U.S. Department of Education’s (Department’s) COVID-19 website: <https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus>
- CDC Considerations for School Closure: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/considerations-for-school-closure.pdf>

Talking to Children

- The Dr. Binocs Show (cartoon): <https://youtu.be/R-JbDMYmAQM>
- CBC News, Dr. Peter Lin: <https://youtu.be/kIL5m5XznNY>
- American Academy of Pediatrics (talking to children): <https://healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/2019-Novel-Coronavirus.aspx>

II. Access to Resources During School Closures

Meals

- Q. Do Illinois school districts have to provide meals to students during school closure?**
- A.** *Illinois has joined a growing list of states granted federal waivers from the U.S. Department of Agriculture allowing them to provide food to students outside of a group setting in the event of school closures specific to coronavirus precautions. Districts must provide a free lunch to students eligible for free meals during the mandatory suspension of in-person instruction. While districts are not required to provide meals to all students during the mandatory suspension of in-person instruction, it is strongly encouraged. Districts are asked to make every effort to provide meals for all children who need them, in the way that works best for the community, such as grab-and-go or delivery. Districts are encouraged to consider multiple methods of distribution, such as: drive up; walk up; satellite*

[Top ↑](#)



locations, such as libraries, churches, park districts, and youth centers; home delivery via bus routes; and other options.

Illinois' Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program is now funded to provide additional benefits to all SNAP-eligible households with school-aged children. For more information:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/Media/PressReleases/Pages/PR20200420.aspx>.

Q. Can older siblings or parents be allowed to pick up free meals for children in their families? Do children who qualify for these meals have to be present?

A. Students can receive two meals a day (one breakfast, one lunch, or one snack in any combination). Both meals can be distributed at once either by pick-up, drive-up, or delivery by parents/guardians or the students themselves. Children do not need to be accompanied by an adult to receive food.

Q. How are families being notified when meal service is available?

A. Schools should use different ways of communicating to students and families about the time and location of meal service, and how they will be distributing meals. Schools should allow families a reasonable amount of time for meal pick-up for each meal service.

Q. Can schools and districts provide meals to students between the ages of 18 and 21 receiving special education services?

A. Yes, as long as the student receiving special education services is enrolled in the school district.

Childcare

Q. Can ISBE encourage school districts to open up schools to provide space for emergency childcare for families who cannot afford to miss work? Does the recommendation that school districts keep at least one administrator on site mean school districts are available to provide childcare?

A. No, districts are not available to provide childcare. The goal of the mandatory statewide school closure is to limit social contact and encourage students and families to stay home. The purpose of ISBE's recommendation that an administrator remain in the building is to ensure the safety of any students who happen to come to school and to ensure that an individual with executive decision-making capacity is available on site.

Q. Can ISBE provide guidance to help school districts practice safe social distancing in school-based childcare settings?

A. ISBE has put out Guidance for Childcare Centers that states "Early education programs in public and private schools are also required to close while the K-12 schools are closed. As of March 21, 2020 licensed and license-exempt child care centers and licensed and license-exempt homes have been required to close as well." March 22, 2020 guidance from ISBE Superintendent Dr. Carmen Ayala states that effective March 21, ISBE encourages schools, community-based organizations such as churches and social services organizations, or health care facilities or other workplaces for essential workers to apply to the state to serve as Emergency Child Care Sites for the children of critical emergency workers.

Homework and Distance Learning

[Top ↑](#)

Q. How will school instruction happen during school closures? Will students be graded for work done/not done during this time?

A.

Act of God Days

March 17-30 are Act of God days and therefore not Instructional Days. ISBE strongly encourages all schools and districts to provide continuous learning opportunities during the statewide school closure through whatever means possible, including through technology and free online resources, based on what works best for the school community. No schoolwork done on these days is graded, whether it's e-learning or packets sent home, according to ISBE. The state board says that it is a matter of equity not to have assignments impact grades during this time. These days do not need to be made up at the end of the year.

Remote Learning Days

Beginning March 31 and until in-person instruction can resume, Illinois public schools will move into Remote Learning Days that will count as Instructional Days. Illinois schools will be closed through the end of the 2019-20 school year and students will finish the year with remote learning.

Remote Learning Days – Student Grades

On March 27, 2020 ISBE released Remote Learning Recommendations that **strongly encourage** that school districts' local grading policies during Remote Learning Days embrace the principle of "no educational harm to any child" and that school districts adopt grading models of pass or incomplete.

The Recommendations state that "Grading should focus on the continuation of learning and prioritize the connectedness and care for students and staff. All students should have the opportunity to redo, make up, or try again to complete, show progress, or attempt to complete work assigned prior to the remote learning period in that time frame. A focus on keeping children emotionally and physically safe, fed, and engaged in learning should be our first priority during this unprecedented time." ISBE also makes clear that work completed during school closures **must not** negatively impact grades or academic standing, taking into account the fact that students have different access to support and technology at home. In addition, ISBE provides that schools **may** allow student work during school closures only to increase a student's academic standing.

ISBE's goal is that no student is negatively impacted by the closure and that no school district's policies or procedures widen the equity gap.

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has announced a remote learning plan that will begin on April 13, 2020. Under this plan, CPS will distribute 100,000 electronic devices, like laptops and iPads, to students who need them. The plan will also include learning options for families that do not have internet access.

Q. How can I support my child's learning at home, regardless of whether my school provides e-learning opportunities?

A. ISBE has compiled a library of free online resources and platforms at www.isbe.net/keeplearning. There are also a number of resources that have been developed by non-profit organizations [see "VI. Additional Resources" section at the end of this document].

Q. What if I don't have access to the internet, or have a computer/laptop/tablet at home?

[Top ↑](#)

- A. A number of the major internet broadband providers have provided offers to the public in order to enable access to broadband. Illinois state agencies have also released a map of hotspots to help students that do not have internet in their homes: <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IBHE-Wifi-Hotspot-Map-Release.pdf>

Comcast:

Comcast announced it will make Xfinity Wi-Fi free and pause data plans, disconnects and late fee assessments for customers struggling to pay the bills as COVID-19 takes a toll on the economy. The provider will also give new low-income families 60 days of free internet and send free self-install kits with modems and routers.

Comcast is also offering free hot spots. Xfinity WiFi hotspots across the country will be available to anyone who needs them for free – including non-Xfinity Internet subscribers. For a map of Xfinity WiFi hotspots, visit www.xfinity.com/wifi. Once at a hotspot, consumers should select the “xfinitywifi” network name in the list of available hotspots, and then launch a browser.

Charter Communications:

Charter will offer free Spectrum broadband and Wi-Fi access for 60 days to households with K-12 and/or college students who do not already have a Spectrum broadband subscription and at any service level up to 100 Mbps. To enroll call **1-844-488-8395**. Installation fees will be waived for new student households.

Other Sources of Support:

The NEA Foundation, in partnership with the National Education Association, Grantmakers for Education, and others, is leading efforts to create a COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund to pool resources from education philanthropies toward a coordinated response. This pooled fund will **deliver financial resources to school districts, out-of-school time service providers, and others with access to students and families across America** who can receive and utilize the funds quickly. Schools, districts and community-based organizations are encouraged to reach out to the NEA Foundation for more information (neafoundation@nea.org).

Key Resources

Meals

- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Pandemic EBT press release: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/Media/PressReleases/Pages/PR20200420.aspx>.
- ISBE Statewide School Closure Guidance: <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/FAQ-4-15-20.pdf> (updated regularly so check the ISBE COVID-19 website for current version: <https://www.isbe.net/COVID19>)

Childcare

- IL Guidance for Childcare Centers, Childcare Homes and Early Education Programs: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Documents/COVID->

[Top ↑](#)

[19%20Guidance%20for%20Child%20Care%20Centers%2c%20Child%20Care%20Homes%2c%20and%20Early%20Education%20Programs.pdf](#)

- COVID-19: Frequently Asked Questions Following the Mandatory Closure of All Child Care Centers and Homes: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Documents/COVID-19%20Frequently%20Asked%20Questions%20Following%20the%20Mandatory%20Closures.pdf>
- CDC Guidance for Childcare Centers (including social distancing): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html>
- IL Governor’s Office for Early Childhood Development, COVID-19 Guidance: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Pages/COVID-19.aspx>

Homework and Distance Learning (more in “[VI. Additional Resources](#)” section at the end of this document)

- ISBE’s Remote Learning Recommendations (March 27, 2020): <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/RL-Recommendations-3-27-20.pdf>; a map of Illinois statewide hotspots is available here: <http://illinois.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=23e8046edd2940bc8ad3ad1725e47cd0>
- NESCA: Tips for families to cope and keep learning going during school closures (with links to activities): <https://nescanewton.com/making-the-most-of-covid-19-school-closures/?fbclid=IwAR0aPO3OXsNFvEHTzTX5ycK1ADDj7tfQ-G4daj1fYL6SC4XFUFVCxn-k2g>
- Virtual Tours of 12 Museums: https://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours?utm_medium=social&utm_term=59F3F59E-653B-11EA-938E-3D9296E8478F&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=travelandleisure_travelandleisure&utm_content=link&fbclid=IwAR2Vc5DFfQotqStTq_RFZHF3dU8TmiiyG5ph2nSU1AZIDek2vzvcAbNOmyQ
- Comcast: https://corporate.comcast.com/press/releases/internet-essentials-low-income-broadband-coronavirus-pandemic?utm_source=sendinblue&utm_campaign=COVID19_PM_resource_email_3132020&utm_medium=email
- Charter Communications: <https://corporate.charter.com/newsroom/charter-to-offer-free-access-to-spectrum-broadband-and-wifi-for-60-days-for-new-K12-and-college-student-households-and-more>

III. Implicated State Education Policies*

*Please go to ISBE’s website for the most up-to-date state education information:

<https://www.isbe.net/COVID19>

Grades and Graduation

Q. *How will school closures impact graduation requirements for students?*

A. *ISBE highly recommends that districts strategize and prepare for how it can meet the needs of graduating seniors, including ensuring transcripts are accessible and students have the continued ability to request recommendations from teachers and the district. ISBE is also investigating*

[Top ↑](#)

opportunities to provide flexibility for graduation requirements for seniors, such as coursework requirements.

Scholarships

Q. How will school closures impact access to scholarships and financial aid for students?

A. There is not a lot of clarity right now around what the school closures mean for access to scholarships and financial aid. If you have a student(s) already enrolled in college, you are encouraged to reach out to that institution's financial aid office. For high school students currently applying for financial aid and/or scholarships for next year, you are encouraged to continue with those application processes. As additional information becomes available, ISBE and others will share it out.

For Invest in Kids scholarship recipients, state law requires they be assessed "in the same manner" as public-school students. As State assessments have been suspended, Invest in Kids scholarship recipients will not need to complete State assessments during the Spring 2020 testing window.

Advanced Placement (AP)

Q. What are the implications of closure on students in AP courses ?

A. All AP students and teachers will be able to draw on the free online resources that were provided to every AP classroom this fall. Additional resources will be made easily accessible to AP students and teachers through mobile phones and other devices. Beginning on March 25, students and teachers could begin attending free, optional live AP review courses, delivered by AP teachers from across the country. Courses will be recorded and available on-demand. These mobile-friendly classes are designed to be used alongside work schools may continue to assign.

AP exams:

For the 2019-20 exam administration only, students can take a 45-minute online exam at home. Educator-led development committees are currently selecting the exam questions that will be administered. Students will be able to take these streamlined exams on any device they have access to—computer, tablet, or smartphone. College Board recognizes that the digital divide could prevent some low-income and rural students from participating. Working with partners, College Board will invest so that these students have the tools and connectivity they need to review AP content online and take the exam. For updates on College Board decisions please go to their website:

https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/about-ap/news-changes/coronavirus-update?SFMC_cid=EM285330-&rid=15167318

School Accountability and Testing

Q. Will testing be suspended?

A. The Governor's order regarding testing suspends state assessments for the duration of the Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation. With this order, state assessments, including the Illinois Assessment of Readiness, SAT, DLM-AA, the Illinois Science Assessment, and Constitution exam are all suspended for Spring 2020.

Free SAT provided by the state is the only opportunity many students get to take a college entrance exam. ISBE is working with the College Board on developing options to allow current 11th grade students to take the SAT in the fall. ISBE hopes to have more information on these options by the end of April.

Q. How will schools be identified for improvement during this time?

A. This closure will not impact school year 2019-20 summative designations. If needed, the Department would consider a targeted one-year waiver of the requirement to identify a school for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement if the reason for the identification was related to the school being closed for a significant portion of the school year.

Special Education

Q. How will education and related services be provided for students with disabilities during this time?

A. On March 16, 2020, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) released its guidance for protecting the rights of students during periods of school interruption due to COVID-19. OCR stated that all districts must ensure that each special education student receives equal access to educational opportunities that are provided to general education students. ISBE recently released Special Education Guidance for districts and schools that is available on its website. Schools are required to continue to observe all relevant federal and state timelines during the statewide school closure. On March 21, 2020, the US Department of Education released a Supplemental Fact Sheet on serving students with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic that states the following:

"To be clear: ensuring compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504), and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act should not prevent any school from offering educational programs through distance instruction."

ISBE has developed an in-depth FAQ focused on special education during remote learning:

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/SPED-FAQ-04-20-20.pdf>.

Homeless Students

Q. How will homeless students be supported during this time?

A. The Lead Area Homeless liaisons and School District liaisons are required to work directly with families during this trying time to make sure that homeless children and youth have all of the materials needed to complete assignments, to provide access to meals, and to ensure the safety and stability of this vulnerable population. The ISBE State Homeless Coordinator will continue to work closely with the liaisons to ensure that homeless children and youth, including unaccompanied youth, receive the same services as all other children. Lead Area Homeless Liaison contact information can be found here: <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL-Map-with-Contacts.pdf>.

Attendance

Q. Will the school year be extended?

A. All days that a school is closed pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order 2020-05 will be counted Act of God Days. Emergency Days will not be used. At this time, these Act of God

[Top ↑](#)



Days do not need to be made up at the end of the school year. School districts are strongly encouraged to provide instruction to students during these Act of God Days through whatever means possible. Student work completed during the mandated statewide school closure March 17-30 must not count toward student grades or otherwise impact a student's academic standing, as these are Act of God Days and not Instructional Days.

As of March 31, until schools can re-open and in-person instruction can resume, the state will move to Remote Learning Days. This means that beginning March 31, 2020, Remote Learning Days will now count as Instructional Days.

Q. How will absences be counted?

A. Many states, including Illinois, use absences (or "chronic absenteeism") as a way to measure how well schools are serving their students. This measure of school accountability is probably most likely to be impacted by COVID-19 due to school closures or student absences. For this reason, the U.S. Department of Education is considering a one-year waiver for states like Illinois to exclude this measure from their accountability system during this time.

Key Resources

School Closures

- ISBE Statewide School Closure Guidance: www.isbe.net/Documents/FAQ-3-27-20.pdf (updated regularly so check the ISBE COVID-19 website for current version: <https://www.isbe.net/COVID19>)
- ISBE COVID-19 website: <https://www.isbe.net/COVID19>

Testing

- US ED additional information regarding the impact of COVID-19 on assessments and accountability from the U.S. Department of Education: <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2020/03/COVID-19-OESE-FINAL-3.12.20.pdf>.
- College Board, AP Updates: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/about-ap/news-changes/coronavirus-update?SFMC_cid=EM285330-&rid=15167318

Special Education

- ISBE Special Education FAQ: <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/SPED-FAQ-04-20-20.pdf>
- Special Education Services: Memo from Department of Education: https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcitrs/qa-covid-19-03-12-2020.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1QKWNC0BGiLWR_oqs064h3hrsnUq9ct_H_j_UD2O8LO15sNbiKTdG05v4
- Supplemental Fact Sheet Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Schools While Serving Children with Disabilities: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/frontpage/faq/rr/policyguidance/Supple%20Fact%20Sheet%203.21.20%20FINAL.pdf>

- ISBE Special Education Guidance: <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/School-Closure-SpED-Guidance.pdf>
- Civil Rights and Education Leaders on Waivers from Federal Requirements in Response to Coronavirus: <https://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Coronavirus-Waivers-Joint-Statement-002.pdf>

IV. Parents/Caregivers Work-Related Concerns

Immigration

Q. Where do we send families, especially undocumented families to access health care?

A. Immigrant families should access health care through trusted local clinics in their community. Families should call their clinic or access clinic website to get updated on the clinic's changes to hours, appointments, etc.

The public charge rule penalizing immigrants for using services took effect in February 24, 2020 but on March 13, 2020 the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) issued the following statement: "USCIS encourages all those, including aliens, with symptoms that resemble Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) (fever, cough, shortness of breath) to seek necessary medical treatment or preventive services. Such treatment or preventive services will not negatively affect any alien as part of a future Public Charge analysis."

Q. Will immigration court be suspended during this time?

A. Immigration court in Illinois has not yet been suspended. However, ICE has suspended most deportations during this time. According to the ICE website "To ensure the welfare and safety of the general public as well as officers and agents in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic response, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) will temporarily adjust its enforcement posture beginning today, March 18, 2020. ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) will focus enforcement on public safety risks and individuals subject to mandatory detention based on criminal grounds. For those individuals who do not fall into those categories, ERO will exercise discretion to delay enforcement actions until after the crisis or utilize alternatives to detention, as appropriate." For additional information, please go to the ICE website: <https://www.ice.gov/covid19>

Chicago Immigration Court:

All hearings for detained immigrants are still scheduled. All non-detained immigration court hearings are cancelled through April 10, 2020. At present, the court remains open to receive filings, including asylum applications. If you want to file an application in person, please call the court first at 312-697-5800 to make sure the court is open.

USCIS:

USCIS has suspended all in-person services until at least April 1, 2020, including field office interviews, asylum office interviews, and biometrics appointments. Individuals scheduled for interviews before April 1, 2020 do not need to attend their interviews and will received a rescheduled date. Filings can still be submitted to USCIS via mail, but USCIS may not be able to adjudicate all applications due to the suspension of in-person services. Individuals who have filing deadlines, including to file

[Top ↑](#)

for asylum or to file for a U visa, should still file their applications by the deadline. For more information please go to the USCIS website: www.uscis.gov

Housing and Utilities

Q. How will housing, utilities and debt collection be impacted during this time?

A. Housing:

The Trump administration announced Wednesday, March 18, 2020 that it is temporarily suspending evictions and foreclosures for people living in Housing and Urban Development properties, and for homeowners who have single-family mortgages backed by the Federal Housing Administration, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

The Governor has banned all evictions and utility shut-offs statewide during the duration of the COVID-19 emergency disaster declaration. Right now, the declaration extends until at least April 30, 2020.

Utilities:

The Governor has called for a moratorium on shutoffs for all utility companies, including energy, telecom and water. On Wednesday, the Illinois Commerce Commission voted unanimously to formalize Governor Pritzker and the ICC's request of Illinois electric, natural gas, water and wastewater utilities to cease disconnections and the threat of disconnections during the coronavirus public health emergency. The order also calls on the utilities to suspend late payment fees until May 1, or the crisis has passed, and to implement flexible utility credit and collection procedures to ensure customers remain connected to essential utility services when the emergency status ends.

Debt collection:

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot announced that debt collection in the city will be suspended until April 30 for a variety of fines, and utility bill payments will also be delayed. Also during this time, Chicago will suspend all booting and towing, and only issue parking tickets for public safety reasons.

Expiration of Illinois driver's licenses will be given a one-month extension. Thirty-day extensions will also be given for vehicle registrations and ID cards.

Economic Assistance and Unemployment

Q. What if I lose my job or I am unable to work to provide for my family during this time? Is Illinois offering unemployment benefits or other assistance?

A. Unemployment benefits may be available to some individuals whose unemployment is attributable to COVID-19. The Illinois Department of Employment Services (IDES) recently adopted emergency rules to try to make the unemployment insurance system as responsive to the current situation as possible. Financial help is available in Illinois and Chicago for the many people who are taking a big financial hit during the pandemic. Illinois has launched a new website for COVID-19 resources, including unemployment eligibility for those impacted, at <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/coronavirus/FAQ/Pages/Unemployment-FAQ.aspx>.

[Top ↑](#)

The Illinois Department of Employment Security's unemployment benefits customer service phone number is: 800-244-5631 or 866-488-4016 TTY.

The City of Chicago has an Office of Labor Standards that is enforcing several ordinances (Fair Wage, Paid Sick Leave, Fair Work Week) that protect all workers in Chicago, regardless of status https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/bacp/supp_info/officeoflaborstandards.html.

- Q. Will ISBE and the Illinois Department of Human Services (ILDHS) offer emergency access to childcare subsidies (e.g. Child Care Assistance Program/CCAP) to parents who have to work in critical industries (health care, restaurants, nursing homes, etc.) to allow them the flexibility to work?**
- A.** ILDHS has not yet provided information on access to childcare subsidies for essential workers. Please contact the ILDHS helpline by phone (1-800-843-6154, 1-866-324-5553 TTY or email (<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=16&type=2&item=29720>).
- Q. Have there been any other areas of financial relief that the government has provided?**
- A.** The following
- **Student loans:** On March 20, 2020, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced that all borrowers with federally held student loans will automatically have their interest rates set to 0% for a period of at least 60 days. In addition, each of these borrowers will have the option to suspend their payments for at least two months to allow them greater flexibility during the national emergency. This will allow borrowers to temporarily stop their payments without worrying about accruing interest.
 - **Tax Filing:** On March 21, 2020, the Treasury Department and Internal Revenue Service announced today that the federal income tax filing due date is automatically extended from April 15, 2020, to July 15, 2020. Taxpayers can also defer federal income tax payments due on April 15, 2020, to July 15, 2020, without penalties and interest, regardless of the amount owed. Taxpayers do not need to file any additional forms or call the IRS to qualify for this automatic federal tax filing and payment relief.

Healthcare

- Q. What is the best way to access healthcare, especially for those without insurance?**
- A.** In terms of health care access for the uninsured, underinsured and undocumented, the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights provides resources for accessing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in Cook County, as well as a list of community health centers that are accessible to ALL Illinois residents, regardless of status: <https://www.icirr.org/healthcare-access>.

Key Resources

Immigration

- USCIS Public Charge Rule: <https://www.uscis.gov/greencard/public-charge>
 - **Coronavirus Talking points** for immigrant families

[Top ↑](#)

- <https://protectingimmigrantfamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/You-Have-Rights-Protect-Your-Health-Updated-February-2020-ENGLISH.pdf>
- www.protectingimmigrantfamilies.org . You can also sign up to receive these messages directly by going here: <http://bit.ly/PIFCampaign>.
- ICE Website: <https://www.ice.gov/covid19>
- National Immigration Justice Center: <https://www.immigrantjustice.org/press-releases/covid-19-impact-updates-nijcs-chicago-office-3182020>

Economic Assistance and Unemployment

- Illinois Economic Assistance: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/coronavirus/Resources/Pages/EconomicAssistance.aspx>
- FAQ from Illinois Dept. of Employment Services regarding unemployment insurance for folks impacted by COVID 19: <https://www2.illinois.gov/ides/Pages/COVID-19-and-Unemployment-Benefits.aspx>
- Delivering on President Trump's Promise, Secretary DeVos Suspends Federal Student Loan Payments, Waives Interest During National Emergency: <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/delivering-president-trumps-promise-secretary-devos-suspends-federal-student-loan-payments-waives-interest-during-national-emergency>
- Tax Day now July 15: Treasury, IRS extend filing deadline and federal tax payments regardless of amount owed: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/tax-day-now-july-15-treasury-irs-extend-filing-deadline-and-federal-tax-payments-regardless-of-amount-owed>

V. State Contact Information

Please visit ISBE's COVID-19 website for the most up-to-date COVID-19 information: <https://www.isbe.net/COVID19>. If you have additional questions and concerns during this time, please contact your school and district first. If you are unable to reach your school or district, you may email your questions or concerns to ISBE's COVID-19 email: COVID19@isbe.net

VI. Additional Resources – Supporting Your Children at Home

From Emerson Collective:

The Emerson Collective provides a list of At-Home Learning and Other Resources for Students and Families

[Online Learning Platform to Teach K-12 Students Coding and Computer Science](#)

Code.org

A nonprofit dedicated to expanding access to computer science in schools and increasing participation by women and underrepresented youth, [Code.org](#) provides the leading curriculum for K-12 computer science in the largest school districts in the United States.

[Best Messaging Apps and Websites for Students, Teachers, and Parents](#)

Common Sense Media

[Top ↑](#)

Apps and websites for texting, messaging, and communication that make it easier for teachers to send out assignments, reminders, and progress reports and communicate with parents and students.

[Virtual Field Trips and Experiential Learning](#)

Common Sense Media

Great games, apps, and websites that can bring places and experiences fostered by field trips to the classroom. While not an outright replacement, these field trip tools can offer inspiring and intriguing experiences for students.

[Printable At-Home Packets and Online Math/Reading Content](#)

Curriculum Associates

Printable at-home activity packs from Curriculum Associates are designed to provide students with valuable self-directed exercises and practice during extended absences from school. Each pack is designed to reinforce key concepts for a given grade. Resources are available for Grades K-8.

[School Closure Learning Guide during Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Great Schools

Resources from Great Schools that will help your child learn from home if school has closed. Find out how to set up at-home learning and use the grade-based resources to fill in the gaps.

[Using Khan Academy for Remote Learning During School Closures](#)

Khan Academy

Khan Academy produces short videos paired with supplementary web-based practice exercises. The website also offers tools and materials for educators.

[Live Online Classes for Ages 3-18](#)

Outschool

Connecting motivated learners, parents, and teachers together to create great learning experiences, Outschool offers unique online classes from hundreds of independent teachers, and classes meet via group video chat.

[At Home Learning](#)

PBS SoCal

As part of the public media mission to ensure all kids, regardless of their capabilities, have access to continued free educational resources at home, PBS SoCal | KCET, in partnership with LAUSD and in collaboration with California PBS stations, are offering broadcast programming and accompanying digital resources that adhere to California's state curriculum to provide continued at-home learning.

From Learning Heroes and Great Schools:

Learning Heroes' Readiness Roadmap is available here: <https://belearninghero.org/readiness-roadmap/>

Great Schools' Coronavirus support information is available here:

<https://www.greatschools.org/gk/coronavirus-school-closure-support/>

[Top ↑](#)

Resources for Sharing:

Prepared Parents: <https://preparedforsuccess.org/covid19/>

- Prepared Parents provides tips and resources for successful distance learning, including links to activities to bring the family together. The site is available in English

Worksheets: <https://www.greatschools.org/gk/worksheets/>

- GreatSchools provides free math, language arts, and science worksheets for students in PK through 5th grade, The worksheets are available in English, while their descriptions are available in English and Spanish.

Vocabulary Lists: <https://www.greatschools.org/gk/?s=vocabulary%20lists>

- This link provides access to grade-level vocabulary lists for 1st through 12th grade. These lists could be used during the portion of the day dedicated to writing practice. Vocabulary lists are available in English.

Milestone videos: <https://www.greatschools.org/gk/milestones-home/>

- These videos are designed to help families better understand grade-level expectations for their children. The videos are available in English and Spanish.

Weekly grade-based newsletters: <https://www.greatschools.org/catalog/newsletters/>

- Through this link families can register for weekly newsletters that will share grade-level specific education information. The site is available in English.

Zearn: https://about.zearn.org/distance-learning?utm_campaign=distance-learning&utm_medium=native&utm_source=homepage

- Zearn provides math activities, ranging from digital lessons to paper-based materials, for students in Kindergarten through 5th grade. The site is in English.

PRX Podcasts: <https://www.prx.org>

- PRX provides a library of podcasts that families can listen to to learn more about a variety of topics. The PRX page is in English, as are most podcasts. A few bilingual Spanish/English podcasts are available.

Parenting.com: <https://www.parenting.com>

- Parenting is a magazine producing articles covering a range of parenting topics, including how to balance working remotely with taking care of and educating kids. The articles are in English.

Abound: <https://aboundparenting.com>

[Top ↑](#)

- Abound is an app that provides daily conversation prompts and other activities for families to do with children to promote literacy. Abound is available in English.

EdAllies: <https://edalliesmn.org/blog/march-2020-research-rundown/>

- EdAllies’s March blog post contains a list of other sites that are providing resources for teachers and families during distance learning. The post is in English.

Books lists

Book Lists: <https://www.greatschools.org/gk/book-lists/>

- This site provides lists of books by theme (i.e. Mystery) and objective (i.e. boost vocabulary) to help families build their children’s reading lists. The majority of the lists are in English, while a Libros en Espanol list is available.

Social/Emotional Learning

Parenting Cue Cards: <https://www.greatschools.org/gk/cue-cards/>

- GreatSchools provides resources to support families in incorporating elements of social-emotional learning at home. This site is available in English and Spanish.

Emotional Toolbox: https://www.greatschools.org/gk/emotional-toolbox/?utm_source=GreatKids&utm_medium=web&utm_content=emotional_smarts_module&utm_campaign=Emotional_Smarts

- GreatSchools shares videos and articles to help families address social-emotional learning issues, such as bullying and time management. This site is available in English and Spanish.

Greater Good Science Center: <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>

- Greater Good iMagazine is published by the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley. The site contains articles, videos, and other resources connecting scientific research on social and emotional well-being to families and educators. The site and its content are available in English.

Evidence-based academic work

Learning Heroes Readiness Check: <https://belearninghero.org/readiness-check/>

- The Readiness Check is like a game but shows your child’s progress with key math and reading skills. It connects you to videos, activities, and more to support learning at home and on your phone!

Learning Heroes Readiness Roadmap: <https://belearninghero.org/readiness-roadmap/>

- The Readiness Check is like a game but shows your child’s progress with key math and reading skills. It connects you to videos, activities, and more to support learning at home and on your phone!

[Top ↑](#)

Khan Academy: <https://khanacademy.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360040167432-How-can-Khan-Academy-be-used-for-remote-learning-during-school-closures->

- Khan Academy provides standards-aligned lessons and practice in math, grammar, science, and history for students in Kindergarten through 12th Grade. The site is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French.

Books & Media lists

Scholastic: <https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome.html>

- Scholastic Learn at Home provides science and social studies activities, including access to books connected to the day's lesson, for students in pre-K through 9th grade. New activities will be added weekly through mid-April. The site and all activities are available in English.

Common Sense Media: <https://www.common sense.org/education/coronavirus-resources>

- Common Sense Media provides tools and tips for educators as they prepare to deliver distance learning. The site is available in English.

Colorin Colorado: <https://www.colorincolorado.org/reading-tip-sheets-parents>

- Colorin Colorado provides tips and resources tailored to the needs of families and educators of English Language Learners. The site and its resources are available in English and Spanish.

Storyline Online: <https://www.storylineonline.net>

- Storyline Online features videos of actors reading storybooks alongside creative animation. The books are read in English.

PBS Learning Media: <https://whut.pbslearningmedia.org>

- PBS Learning Media provides standards-aligned videos, interactives, and other resources in a variety of subjects and for all grade-levels. These resources can be used by teachers or families. The site and its resources are available in English.

Ready4K: <https://ready4k.parentpowered.com/covid.html>

- Ready4K is a provider of family-engagement curricula focused on early childhood education. The site is available in English.

Common Sense Media Latino: <https://www.common sensemedia.org/espanol/blog/las-mejores-apps-de-aprendizaje-para-ninos-de-preescolar>

- This is an article, in Spanish. Describing the best learning apps for preschool children.
- Este artículo describe los mejores apps de aprendizaje para niños de preescolar.

WNET Education: <https://www.wnet.org/education/>

[Top ↑](#)

- This library of free at-home learning resources for students in pre-k through 12th grade includes activities connected to the arts, social-emotional learning, and media literacy. The site is available in English.

Vroom: <https://www.vroom.org>

- Vroom is a program dedicated to helping families integrate elements of early childhood brain development into daily routines, such as bathtime. Vroom is available in English and Spanish.

Edmodo: <https://go.edmodo.com/distancelearning/>

- Edmodo is a distance learning platform available for free to educators. The edmodo site is in English.

Digital Promise: <https://digitalpromise.org/covid-19-online-learning-resources-and-faq/>

- Digital Promise is a nonprofit committed to addressing issues of educational equity by closing the digital learning gap. Their site provides resources and examples to support educators and families during distance learning. This site is available in English.

Learning and Attention Issues

Understood: <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/coronavirus-latest-updates>

- Understood provides resources and support for families and educators of students with special needs. Their site currently includes tips and activities for discussing the outbreak and promoting a positive distance learning environment for all students. The site is available in English.

From Education Post:

Learning From Home A.K.A. Instant Homeschool!

Thomas B. Fordham Institute: From one parent to another, Fordham’s president shares the best YouTube channels, Netflix options, and even podcasts!

TNTP: Before you hop into all the homeschooling links available, you’ll want to take a look at these guiding principles so you don’t get completely lost in the sauce.

EdNavigator: Working from home with children isn’t easy...you’re going to need a plan. Here’s one option.

Great Schools: If you’re a parent, by now you’ve gotten tips from everyone—and their mom. It doesn’t hurt to also try these seven tips to help make learning from home a little bit easier.

New York Times: The NYT has this really cool thing where students can respond to daily writing prompts inspired by the NYT—and the great thing is, you don’t have to have a subscription!

Atlantic: As much as you may love your children, being in quarantine is tough. Here’s how parents can keep kids busy (and learning) in quarantine.

Free Digital Learning Resources

Great Minds: Math is probably one of the most difficult subjects to keep kids on-track at home. Luckily, you don't have to do it alone. Great Minds has written material for math (Grades K-12) and daily instructional videos for English language arts (Grades K-8), and science (Grades 3-5). The best part about this resource? New video lessons and content is updated *daily*.

Khan Academy: A familiar, tried and true online resource for everything preK-12.

NewSchools School Closure Resources: A living document sharing the latest resources available for families and educators. If you're in need of internet assistance, you should definitely check this out.

Pave: A (really) long (but helpful), and updated, list of education companies offering free subscriptions due to school closures. Be prepared to sift through but it'll probably have what you're looking for.

PIE Network: A collection of resources that everyone can benefit from whether you're an educator, parent and/or activist.

Zearn: Thanks to donations, their entire K-5 math curriculum is now available for *free*, this includes paper-based materials that can be used without a device. This is a big deal!

For additional information, please go to Education Post's COVID-19 Resources for Families and Educators website here: https://brightbeamnetwork.org/covid-19-resources-for-families-and-educators/?utm_source=brightbeam+Master+List&utm_campaign=32ebf9afbb-hatc_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_6bb7d2d2db-32ebf9afbb-266638529&utm_source=Education+Post+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=c0fabe3ba9-Weekly+Newsletter_091517_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1b7a185fca-c0fabe3ba9-266368465

From Illinois Families for Public Schools:

Illinois Families for Public Schools provides COVID-19 resources, including resources for learning at home here:

https://www.ilfps.org/resources_covid_19?utm_campaign=march_news&utm_medium=email&utm_source=ilfps

From the National PTA:

The National PTA provides COVID-19 information that includes a link to resources for learning at home here: <https://www.pta.org/home/family-resources/coronavirus-information>

[Top ↑](#)