



School Reopening Support

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone at Children First ABA Clinic various ways; we greatly appreciate your understanding, flexibility, and support during this difficult time. As the Governor, VDOE, and local school systems determine how schools will reopen this fall, we know you have many thoughts and concerns as to what is best for your family.

While none of us know what the new school year will bring, we do know that it will look different than previous school years. Children First ABA Clinic has been examining several of the options being discussed by local districts and working to find ways to support all of our clients and their families into the 2020-2021 school year.

With different modes of instruction come different support needs. The back of this handout includes benefits and challenges of four different modes of instruction. As with any list of benefits and challenges, these are hypothesized, and some may not apply to every child. Choosing and supporting education is a very important personal choice; however, we hope this information is helpful when making a decision that is right for your family.

Children First ABA Clinic's Plans

As schools re-open for the 2020-2021 school year, Children First ABA Clinic wants to keep everyone as safe possible and limit our impact on the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, we are using CDC guidance to develop plans to reduce possible spread and maintain healthy environments and operations. As of now, daily scheduling for the school year will look a little different than past years.

Clients who are spending time in school buildings will come to the clinic either the first or last session of the day. Each client will be in a room with only their therapist and BCBA (when appropriate). Masks will be worn as much as possible with these clients. Clients not going into school buildings will be scheduled in the middle of the day. Separation guidelines with peers and other staff will not be as restrictive as those attending school.

In order to determine schedule times for clients, we will need to know which group your child falls into. As we finalize these plans and other plans related to COVID-19, we will keep you advised as decisions are made. Again, thank you so very much for your support and flexibility in this ever-changing time.

Possible Supports available from Children First ABA Clinic:

- Parent training on visual schedules
- How to teach a skill and setting up a structure
- Curriculum support
- Testing resources
- Preschool and elementary aged ABA groups
- Supplement education with ABA
- Trouble shooting
- Compliance and behavioral support
- IEP support & service coordination
- Assistance teaching requirements of school &/or community (e.g. wearing mask, decreased social interaction)

Possible Benefits & Challenges with Homeschooling

Requirements: If you choose to homeschool your child, you MUST declare your desire to homeschool by August 15, 2020 (form is on your city's school website). The person taking responsibility of the homeschooling needs to be at least a high school graduate. By August 1, 2021, evidence of academic progress is due. This can look a variety of ways based on the needs of your child.

Benefits-

- Minimize exposure to germs
- Potentially fewer stressors on the child
- Potential for maximum individualization
- Flexible scheduling
- Targeted practice on skills that may have been lost during spring school closure
- Potential for more emphasis on practical/adaptive skills based on child's interest

Challenges-

- Not all families have this availability
- May be stressful for the parents/siblings/family
- Child may have a difficult time with school time vs. home time
- Schooling a child while having to work from home
- Decreased peer interaction
- Difficulty working on some school- or community-based skills

Possible Benefits & Challenges with Virtual Schooling

Benefits-

- Minimize exposure to germs
- Potentially fewer stressors on the child
- Maintain an IEP with modified services
- Support from the school district
- School is responsible for curriculum & testing

Challenges-

- Not all families have this availability
- May be stressful for the parents
- Child may have a difficult time with school time vs. home time
- Increased screen time
- Monitoring all day schooling while having to work from home
- Less contact with teachers & peers
- Difficulty working on some school- or community-based skills

Possible Benefits & Challenges with Hybrid Schooling (combination of virtual & in-school)

Benefits-

- Maintain an IEP with modified services
- Support from the school district
- School is responsible for curriculum & testing
- Some face-to-face instruction & potential for skill generalization in different environments
- Ability to work on some school-based skills

Challenges-

- Moderate exposure to germs
- May be stressful for the parents
- Increased schedule changes (Mon. school, Tues. no school...)
- Increased homework/virtual learning at home
- Monitoring partial schooling while having to work from home

Possible Benefits & Challenges with All In-School Schooling

Benefits-

- Maintain an IEP with maximum services
- Support from the school district
- Daily schedule is the same everyday
- School is responsible for curriculum & testing
- Face-to-face instruction & potential for skill generalization in different environments
- Ability to work on some school-based skills

Challenges-

- Maximum exposure to germs
- Homework
- Least flexible scheduling for ABA