



## Getting Set Up

### Step 1 Build on Your Mindset of Integrated Team Planning

For students with more intense needs, with the majority of their instruction occurring in highly structured and intensely staffed programs, we may have to think very differently about how we ensure continuous learning as we move from *classroom-based*, to *distance learning* to possible *hybrid models*. It's important to consider the balance between maintaining educational benefit while also reducing the potential overload in demands and expectations for both students and families.

We've identified some critical planning steps, and scaffolds to support that work, that we hope will enable educational teams to do this with intention and purpose. Our goal is to continue to provide our students with access to opportunities to grow and develop in the key and essential skill areas identified in their individualized plans, regardless of the learning model. Having a unified and integrated model for planning and shifting will help us to achieve that goal for our students and families.

These first three steps set the foundation for the work that will happen on a weekly basis. These steps are done at the beginning of a classroom planning cycle (e.g. the beginning of a school year; at the beginning of a “distance learning rollout”) and are adjusted or updated if and when needed (e.g. essential team members change; new students enroll; significant changes occur to student’s IEPs).

We know that integrating the needs of our learners, across domains and specialists, is a highly effective practice. This mindset will allow us to effectively and efficiently plan and implement learning across these very different learning models. In our system (Placer County Office of Education), we start the year out by establishing priorities specific to some of our individual program needs. We then develop rubrics and ask teams to work together in self-evaluating and establishing some areas to target for the year. Using this process, we reinforce our belief that the learning environment is the responsibility of ALL team members, not just the teacher. This is collective and integrated work.

Check out our [Self-Evaluation of Program Effectiveness \(rubric template\)](#) and the [sample](#), customized for our students with complex communication and access needs, our students in what we identify as SMD, or “students with multiple disabilities”, programs). For these programs we have identified FIVE priority areas for teams to integrate their work around:

- Core academic instruction provided to all students;
- Students receive “language input” across the day;
- All students have access to clearly defined communication strategies and tools;
- Students have opportunities for reciprocal interactions;
- Within learning activities, materials are adapted for physical and sensory needs.

Because our County Office of Education uses the Center for Educational Leadership (CEL) “5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning”, we also align our selected priorities within this framework so that we can build a shared understanding of what these high-quality instructional targets are for these students with more complex needs. The rubric can be customized for whatever priority areas your team is aiming for, and for whatever framework you are using to support the implementation of high-quality instruction.

*The point is to get your teams working towards the same unified outcomes, and thinking about how they can integrate their planning to support the overall shared responsibility to effectively design the classroom learning environment for their students.*

## Step 2 Identify Each Student's Toolbox

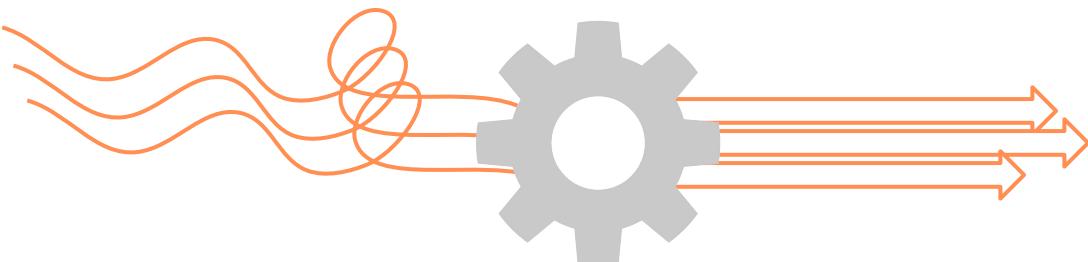
One of the roadblocks we identified in our quick roll-out of distance learning was determining what equipment needed to be provided in the home environment. What we needed to know and understand about a student's need for AT was not always clear from reviewing their IEP. We also had the scenario where teams weren't sure, in a distance learning model, which tools would be needed, and which might not. And we also had the scenario where distance learning presented new access barriers that might need to be addressed. We created the [Student Toolkit](#) as a scaffold to help support this decision making. For more information, read the "[Best Practices for Managing AT & LI Equipment for Home Use](#)" document! If you're looking for additional training and resources for supporting your teams in conducting "AT Consideration", those are available on the [Open Access Website](#).

Check out the [Student Toolbox](#) scaffold and a [sample](#).

## Step 3 Align Student's Goals to Classroom Activities and Staff Responsible

The final critical step to building an effective foundation for integrated planning, is to work together as a team to know and understand your students and their overall learning needs or priorities (e.g. what are the IEP goals that need to be incorporated into a total classroom plan?). The [Classroom Matrix](#) scaffold is a tool that is designed to support IEP teams as they engage in this process of aligning IEP goals to specially designed programming within a distance learning plan. For more information, read the "[Best Practices for Using a Classroom Matrix to Make Sure Your Plans Address All Learner's Needs](#)".

Check out the [Classroom Matrix](#) scaffold and samples for a [preschool program](#) and [middle school program](#).



## Week by Week

## Step 1 Plan Social Connection and Integrated Curriculum-Based Learning Activities for the Week

The steps of creating a [Classroom Matrix](#) leads the team towards identifying the targeted classroom-wide activities that will align with the individual learning needs of each student in the classroom. For our distance learning plans, these are aligned with the expectations for structured learning time appropriate for students by grade level (for more information, read the "[Best Practices for Setting Expectations for a Distance Learning Plan](#)"). We also prioritized as a program that virtual (real-time, online) learning would focus on "social connection" activities for our students. In addition, as classroom teams, we determined additional integrated curricular lessons or activities based on how much structured learning time was appropriate for that grade level, and what the student's individual needs and goal areas were. We prioritized a manageable number of well-designed and integrated learning activities broken down into small chunks, over a higher number of isolated learning activities from a number of different providers.

Check out [Planning Tool for Social Connection Activities](#)

Check out [Planning Tool for Integrated Curriculum-Based Activities](#)

## Step 2

### Update Weekly Classroom Schedule with live links for classroom “Distance Learning Plans”

All of that is summarized in one central plan shared with the family each week. One **Weekly Calendar** for all providers, students, and families. Setting up learning expectations over the course of a week, versus a day is important for our learners. Students and parents need flexibility as they work to implement and support plans in the home environment. Distance learning is **NOT** the same as brick and mortar learning. Our goal is **NOT** to replicate a typical classroom schedule or routine across the home day, effective distance learning is not designed to work that way. We want to build in the appropriate amount of structured learning for a student’s grade level, incorporating ALL need areas rather than layering them “on top of”, and then allow the family to integrate learning based on the student’s availability for learning and the parent’s ability to provide the necessary support. That is going to change for our families day by day. For more information, read the “[Best Practices for Designing a Weekly Distance Learning Plan for a Classroom](#)”.

Check out the [Weekly Calendar template](#) and samples for a [preschool program](#) and [middle school program](#).

## Step 3

### Develop Individualized Weekly Plans for Distance Learning at Home

*The final step* is to provide a layer of individualization, communicating those student-specific things that parents need to know in order to effectively support or implement a plan.

The **Individualized Weekly Plan** has two parts:

- Participation Plans: this section provides space to give the parents any specific instructions for both the “social connection” and “integrated curricular” activities designed for the classroom as a whole, that will allow them to focus on their child’s unique or specific needs.
- Learning at Home Plan: this section provides space to identify “learning at home” activities. For every IEP goal that was NOT addressed during the classroom-wide activities, we encouraged providers to support the family with suggestions of how they could embed that skill into a normal home routine or activity. We did not want to layer on more structured expectations; we wanted to give families less structured activity ideas, that tied into their family’s normal routines and tied into student’s interests and what motivates them.

For more information, read the “[Best Practices for Designing Individualized Weekly Plans at Home](#)”.

Check out the [Individualized Weekly Plan](#) template and samples for a [preschool student](#) and [middle school student](#).



For more information and resources, visit the [Accessible Distance Learning](#) website!



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