



Dear Parents,

Today, Governor Pritzker announced the “Stay-in-Place” order has been extended to April 30th. Giant Steps follows the DuPage Public School calendar as to the school closure and DuPage schools have announced that **schools will be closed until April 30th; therefore, Giant Steps will follow suit and will be closed until April 30, 2020.**

Please be assured that our staff will continue to provide services and instruction to students through a remote learning platform and all mandated school closure days will still be counted as days of attendance for your child.

The United States Secretary of Education and the Illinois State Board of Education has published guidance that will assist in ensuring all students with disabilities continue to receive services during this time. As these services look different than when the schools are typically in session, we wanted to provide additional information to our families to ensure that you understand the steps we are taking to provide your child with instruction and learning opportunities, in accordance with your child’s IEP.

What can you expect after Spring Break?

- Your child’s team will resume sending you materials/resources for your child after Spring Break, as they were doing prior to break.
- On Thursday, April 9, Giant Steps will be taking part in a “Remote Learning Planning Day” (an option created by the state of Illinois) to allow our staff to collaborate with one another as we plan for another stretch of remote learning.

- Friday, April 10th will remain a day off for “Spring Holiday” as has been planned on our school calendar. Considering these changes, you will not receive materials for Thursday or Friday (April 9th or 10th)
- Your child’s team (teacher and related service providers) will reach out to discuss your child’s needs and how remote learning going forward will be supported.
- Students and parents are encouraged to continue their engagement in learning to the best of your ability during this time of remote instruction. Please know that your family’s safety and well-being are the top priority during this season. We recognize that each family’s participation may look different based on the needs of your child, family, and community.
- The services outlined in your child’s IEP will be completed in a variety of alternative methods such as consult, home-based activities/lessons, live stream video activities, video conferencing, and phone conferencing.
- Parents should be aware that some activities from teachers could include live video streaming using platforms such as Zoom or Google Hangouts.
 - While our school building is closed, Giant Steps will continue to provide learning opportunities for our students. These opportunities will include activities such as various live stream, web-based individual or group instructional, educational and related service sessions through electronic platforms to students. Giant Steps is currently focused on the potential use of Zoom, as well as Google Hangout Meets.
 - We wanted to make you aware that the use of online and remote meeting platforms and participation in activities may inadvertently result in other individuals (e.g., parents, siblings) having the capability to view the students in these platforms, either during the instructions or thereafter, depending how the particular platform and/or those participating maintains the data or allows access. For this reason, **we ask that parents supervise these platforms while a student is using the tool** as much as possible. Further, depending on the electronic platforms utilized, the platform may otherwise maintain, utilize or disclose school student record information and other protected information for its own purposes, in accordance with the platform’s terms of service.
 - Giant Steps’ goal is to provide continuous learning opportunities, as well as very important opportunities for our students to make personal connections with peers and teachers. Giant Step’s goal to support our students and families during this challenging time, while avoiding or limiting unintended access or disclosure to the fullest extent practicable.

- Your child's optional participation in these activities constitutes a waiver of all claims against Giant Steps arising out of and connected with your student's participation in any of these activities. Participation also waives any concerns with recording video or audio while using the remote meeting platforms.
- IEP meetings will continue to be held through a video or phone conference platform. If IEP video conference meetings are conducted, they will be subject to more rigorous password protected sessions.
- Meetings will not be conducted face to face and schedules may change slightly due to the school closures. Your child's program facilitator and/or district representative will contact you to confirm and/or set up meetings and discuss the appropriate venue for the meeting (phone conference or video conference).
- Triennial re-evaluations will continue as appropriate. Due to the mandated school closure face to face assessments will not be completed until we return to school. A team member will be in communication with you to discuss evaluation components and discuss any needed changes.
- Teachers and therapists will host required virtual office hours, during the COVID-19 Remote Learning Day. Remote office hours can be conducted via email or phone call, but not via social media.
- Students' attendance will be calculated during COVID-19 Remote Learning Days as instructional days, attendance information shall be collected.

During this unprecedented time, Giant Steps continues to be dedicated to your child's growth and learning, and we look forward to continuing to have a collaborative relationship between school, home, and district. We are preparing for Remote Learning to last weeks, not days. We expect that there will be kinks in the road as students, families and our staff continue to adjust to remote instruction. We encourage you to reach out to your child's team members with any questions, concerns, or areas of support that you may have during this time. We also appreciate any feedback that you are able to provide by accessing this [E-Learning SURVEY](#) that was sent to parents on Wednesday, March 18th. Thank you to those of you who have already taken the time to complete the survey as your feedback is extremely valuable in helping us improve our e-learning structure. Let's not forget that *We are Giant Steps STRONG!*

Stay safe and healthy...

Best Regards,

Dr. Sylvia Smith

