

Maureen Shields, Mary Grillo, Mike Sacharko, Kimm Phillips

Maureen: Okay. Well thanks for joining us everybody. My name is Maureen Shields and I work for the Parent Information Center. Welcome to Working Together Remotely: Virtual IEP meetings. through a collaborative effort with the New Hampshire School Administrators Association and the New Hampshire Association of Special Education Administrators, we developed a webinar today to help families, and school districts, and everybody to come together to help navigate our new remote world. And part of a remote learning experiences also are remote IEP meetings. So, presenting with me today I have Mike Sacharko, from, Special Education Coordinator from SAU 53. I also have Mary Grillo who's from the Parent Information Center and she is also a master educational surrogate with the New Hampshire Department of Ed. We have with us today Kimm Phillips as well, who, Kimm is going to be monitoring our technology today and kind of helping us out through the webinar. So, a few, little bit of information on that. We will be, we would ask that if you please just take off your video and your camera just so that we can have good bandwidth because we do have quite a few participants on the call today. So, we just want to make sure. You will also be muted as well just to minimize background noise because there is so many of us. But we will be going through the whole presentation and also utilizing the chat feature as well. So please feel free if you have any questions or any ideas that you'd like to share with us that you've experienced through this remote IEP Meeting world, please feel free to put it in the chat feature. And we will be monitoring that throughout the presentation and then at the end of the presentation will try to go through the chat feature and answer all your questions and share some great ideas I am sure everybody has. OK so next slide Kimm.

Maureen: Disclosure agreement for The Parent Information Center. Just a topic, just to make sure that everybody understands that the Parent Information Center is not a legal service agency, but we do provide resources and information for parents.

Maureen: again, just change your audio section on you zoom bar if you'd like to increase the sound. If your computer is not working, try calling the phone number that came in with your zoom invitation and join us by phone. If you use your phone, it's good to know that you can still view this webinar on your computer. And as I mentioned before, we are using the chat feature and will go through that at the end of the presentation.

Maureen: Great. So, moving on, some learning outcomes for today. So, during and after our meeting in our time together we hopefully will understand and identify some barriers to the virtual IEP Meeting. We're going to help you get prepared for a virtual IEP meeting. And then lastly, we're going to talk about how to engage team members during virtual IEP meeting. Next slide.

Maureen: So, the most important thing is to stay calm and carry on. So, relationship matters. And in this type of environment where we are all separated, communication and engagement is at the forefront and is so important. And it is a huge learning curve for all students, and families, and districts. So that we just ask everybody to stay calm. We will get through this together and work together. And hopefully will get some benefits out of this as well. Next Slide. Great.

Mike: So, some guidance for virtual IEP meetings from the school district side of things. Virtual meetings are new for everyone; teachers, parents, others working within the school system. So, this is all new technology that we're all learning together. If a parent does not want to request; does not want to meet over a virtual video platform they can certainly request other options. It is

possible to do a conference call. And they may want to meet in person. So, if that's the case just please understand that as a school district we're required to meet certain timelines, but we're happy to make whatever requests that you have and accommodate for them. So if you want a meeting in person we would just typically request that you ask for that in writing and know that we may be outside of certain timelines that are required to be met and we can go with whatever the preferences of the parents. Just because we are virtual, all the rules are still in effect. Parents still have their right to 10 days' notice for a meeting. That 10 days' notice can be waived if the parent is willing to do that. If the 10 days' notice is not given parents can ask for the meeting to be rescheduled and we're happy to reschedule them at a time that's mutually convenient. Next slide please.

Mike: So, timelines for IEP meetings have not changed whatsoever from the Department of Ed. So, at a minimum the IEP team must meet annually to review the IEP. There may be other types of meetings that are in effect while we're remote. One instance might be an evaluation meeting so those would still follow the same timelines that are set by the Department of Ed. And the school district will try and make every attempt possible to meet within those timelines and at, in a manner that is in agreement with what the parents are requesting. All team members should be participants in those meetings unless they are excused. So, you would still be getting a meeting notice for your meetings and that would list the type of meeting it is, and which participants should be expected at the meeting. And sometimes if a team member is not able to attend you may be asked if you were comfortable with excusing that team member so there would be an excusal form that would go with that. But if it's a team member that you feel is vital to the meeting just know that the school districts are happy to reschedule at a time where those members can all be present. Next slide please.

Mike: So, what should parents be doing about signing documents? So, this is going to be really district dependent. But in most instances school districts, while we're remote, are offering parents the option to sign electronically. For some districts that may be sending documents via email and having parents give their input virtually with an email signature. That can be a response to an email. We can, we can, send information to parents via regular mail. And there's actually a new feature that's been set up by the Department of Ed called the Parent Connect Portal and that allows parents to sign the IEP documents virtually using the online system for IEPs. And that can be done with the valid email address and I believe it can also be used with a phone number. So, making sure at the start of a meeting that you have updated information is important, you know updated email an updated phone number. Next slide please.

Mike: This next slide is just information on the Parent Connect Portal. There is a short YouTube clip that you'll be able to click on at the conclusion of this presentation. And it's about 2 minutes and it gives you information on how to navigate the new portal for signing any documents that maybe sent you.

Mike: And then confidentiality with meetings. So, school districts are still held to all the same confidentiality requirements. The information that is shared within the IEP team really is only applicable to those staff members who have legitimate interest in working with your child. So, classroom teachers, unified arts teachers, the case manager, and maybe related service providers - such as Speech or OT. While we're virtual there are steps that you can take to minimize some risks with confidentiality. So, if it's preferred of having documents mailed, we're happy to send the documents that way. We can send them via email if you feel that you have a secure connection. We can also share the emails live so that they're not being sent over electronic means, as far as like anything that is permanent with email. So, there's like the option of

projecting up on the screens for parents too. And just be mindful of your surroundings when you're in a meeting. You know making sure that it's a private setting where you're not going to have to worry about others seeing those documents or hearing any confidential information. Next slide.

Mary: Thank you, Mike. Let's talk now a little bit about understanding and identifying the barriers to the virtual IEP meeting. The potential barriers that exists, we're all feeling them in different ways. But we all have a different level of comfort and experience with technology going into this. Not everybody's on the same page with how to navigate these different platforms. There's the option of the phone, or the tablet, or the computer. Sometimes you'll get online and then you'll get cutoff and you'll have to call into the meeting. So, a barrier exists that you just might not know how it's going to go before you even begin the meeting. Every team member is going to have a physical environment, it's going to be different. Excuse me. And confidentiality concerns for the web-based meeting are also a very real barrier as Mike just went into. We have different sensory experiences for the virtual meeting compared to in person because we're not next to each other. We're not reading each other's nonverbal cues and so there's a level of discomfort sometimes just because it's through technology and we're not in person with one another. Next slide please.

Mary: I found in my meetings, as a master education surrogate parent, that the discussion is sometimes cut short. That I feel like I don't have the ability to kind of delve into things with the intensity that I might want because, there's just the barrier of not being next to that person in the same room. So sometimes discussion doesn't feel as rich as it could be, but I want to remind you that you always have the right to ask for another meeting to change that if you need more time to talk. Don't let that be a barrier. Your teams willing to work with you on that one and some

parents might just be feeling intimidated or inhibited by the actual IEP process when they're doing it virtually. You feel like in the room you feel intimidated by it, but virtually it's just another layer. Parents always have the right to those accommodations though for the virtual IEP meeting. If you needed interpreter or closed captioning whatever it might be we just would ask you to think about this ahead of time and let your case manager know because they want to be able to communicate with you the most effective way possible. Next slide please.

Mary: I you have some barriers that you're encountering, please enter them into the chat field and we'll try to hopefully talk about those at the end of the presentation.

Maureen: And as we said Kimm will be monitoring the chat feature. We will try to get to everybody's shared ideas as well as questions at the end.

Mary: So, despite these barriers, and I'm sure there's more than I've mentioned, virtual IEP meetings do also offer a unique opportunity and new possibilities for flexibility, engagement, and building those relationships. And I think one of the nicest parts about them is we don't have to go to the building to have the meeting. So, this is probably a trend that will see in the future that will actually help us to be able to accomplish the tasks ahead of us in planning to meet our children's needs. Next slide.

Mary: The only difference between stumbling blocks and steppingstones is the way you use them.

Maureen. Great. Okay, Let's talk a little bit about preparing for a virtual IEP meeting. Next Slide.

Maureen: So, tips for planning in advance. Some technology tips. Always plan for worst case scenario. Have a backup plan in case the video conference software isn't working. Have a backup

meeting date or time scheduled. Ask for those necessary accommodations that you might need and also test your technology prior to the meeting. Make sure everything's plugged in make sure you're powered up and ready to go. Next slide.

Maureen: Preparing. More technology. You can request a pre-meeting phone call to discuss the platform beforehand with your case manager. You can also ask for a screenshot that might be available to view what type of technology you are going to be using to get familiar with it. But you can also request to maybe log in a little bit early, maybe 10 minutes before the meeting starts, and go through the virtual platform just to check the sound and the conferences is working correctly. Also reach out to your case manager about concerns before the IEP meeting to discuss how you want to review some of those documents as we were talking about before, whether or not you'd like to do them up on the screen, or you'd like them in advance. Prepare an agenda for the meeting would be helpful, as well. So that you make sure that all of your concerns or your questions are answered. And if the case manager has one, may be asked if they could share to everyone so the team can stay on focus. Ask how long the meeting is going to be scheduled for, and then request your meeting documents ahead of time and if you do that in writing to the IEP team would be helpful. And if the translator is needed please do make that request in advance so the school district has time to prepare for that accommodation and make sure that that is set up for the meeting.

Mike: So, some important questions that you may have can certainly be directed towards the case manager. So, who's going to send the paperwork? Again, it would be district dependent, but in most instances it's probably the case manager that's going to prepare those documents and send them home. Some districts may have Special Ed secretary sending home documents, or in other instances it could be an administrator at the school acting as the LEA that sends home the

documents. What if you get disconnected? So have a backup in mind, you know, if the video platform isn't working. There are options for other platforms and they're pretty quick and easy to set up on the school districts end so we're happy to use a certain platform if you were say familiar with zoom versus Google meet, or vice versa or doing a phone conference could be a backup as well. Who's going to help me understand the technology? So we've sat in on plenty of meetings where it may be the first time that a parent is participating virtually so we can log in a little early or take a few minutes in the beginning to kind of demo the features of whatever platform we're using. Or even requesting that a day or two in advance. We're happy to make whatever requests parents might have in order to help them navigate that new technology. Who's going to be taking the notes? Again, district dependent but usually it would be the case manager or the LEA of the meeting, or maybe another meeting participant would be helping take the notes for that meeting. Is the IEP going to be updated in real time? So oftentimes parents are sent home a draft of the IEP before the meeting or set home evaluations prior to a meeting, but those can also be projected up on the screen. So, if that's being requested you can certainly have someone from the school district project them on the screen so everyone can see what documents are being referenced in real time. And then when does the 14 day start so parents have the right to 14 days for any proposal that a school district is making and that is 14 days from when you receive your written prior notice. So, whenever the school district is sending you that documentation in writing, that's when that 14 days starts.

Mike: Some tips for planning the logistics of the IEP meeting. So, before the meeting begins you can ask what documents will be discussed. In most instances it's probably going to be an IEP or evaluations that would be reviewed. But there might be other documents that go along with it that could be reviewed, as well, such as meeting sign in sheets, excusal forms, or eligibility

documents, that might go along with the type of meeting that you're having. Plan for additional time especially if it is one of your first meetings there is a bit of a learning curve to the technology and the districts completely understand that. So, plan for a little extra time for some of your meetings. If you are meeting virtually and then it is always helpful that if there is another meeting that needs to be scheduled that that can be scheduled while you're meeting virtually, in person, in real-time rather, that way all participants who might be required at the meeting are able to check their calendars for dates and times that might work. It's a lot easier than going back and forth via email.

Mike: And then preparing for a virtual meeting so if a parent is a non-English speaker or they might require other accommodations such as a sign language interpreter or closed captioning. it is well within the parents' rights to request that and the school districts are more than happy to make meet those requests. And oftentimes if there's already a relationship established with those families we know ahead of time and we can get those set up. But if it is a new relationship and there are some of those requests that need to be made, we do ask that you ask for them in advance, so that we are able to get whatever accommodations that parents might need available for that meeting. There are other options too. So certain platforms allow you to pin the video, meaning you can have it stick to just one presenter whoever is speaking like if there is an interpreter it can pin to that person. There is the option in some instances for live captioning. And I think that's it. Next slide please.

Maureen: Okay... Some resources for preparing you for your virtual IEP meeting. We have the procedural safeguards which will be handed out again at every meeting, just the same as if it were live in the school. Also, we've added the PIC transition toolkit that's available on our website to help parents and kids prepare for a meeting that might be around transition planning.

It's a helpful tool. Also, the steps in the process, in the special education processes, another helpful handout that is on the PIC website that can help parents get more information on every step of the process including timelines. And any other additional resources are available on the PIC website. But also, we wanted to mention is Asking the Right Question which is a helpful question formulation technique that we use that PIC with a lot of families to help them prepare for our IEP meetings. And we have put down a little video right below there that you folks can access when you have the time, but it shows preparing and using this technique to help prepare for an IEP meeting.

Mary: And Maureen do we have included in those resources are the Department of Education COVID-19 specific recommendations there on the PIC website too?

Maureen: Yes, on the PIC website we also have COVID-19 information that is accessible right from the main menu. That has all different information about latest guidance's and executive orders all COVID19 related information. But thanks for mentioning that.

Mary: As it relates to schools?

Maureen: Mm-hmm absolutely.

Mary: Awesome. Thank you. So, one of the things that we all probably laugh about a little bit are the distractions that occur at home and in school during our meeting. So just be aware of your surroundings everybody because everybody can see what's going on if it's if it's a live view of you. And we don't want you to get stressed if you get interrupted. So, we put a little bit, a little funny YouTube in here for you to view of with the BBC News broadcast guy who gets interrupted by his kids during the news broadcast. So, take a peek at that if you want a little laugh. We will go to the next slide.

Mary: Don't stress over distractions. Some helpful hints might include, you know, we all know this by now if you've done a meeting, use the mute button friends to minimize that background noise. And you can turn the video off if you need to go grab that cup of coffee and you don't want anyone to see. Take advantage of those tools that you have at the bottom of your toolbar to give you the privacy you might need if you need it for a second. And then your school will help because they're going to introduce you to everybody. You'll have an icon of a person or the name of a person up there who's attending the meeting. Even if you can't see them, so you know who's present and your school is going to check in with you. You'll say how's everybody doing? Do you have any questions? And you can check in too for clarification, absolutely. Next slide.

Mike: So, this is just some ways that the school district can help parents in the meeting. So, using examples that have parent friendly language. So, it's pretty routine for our school staff to go through meetings and have certain language that they use. And we try and do our best to be parent friendly in the language that we present, but if there's anything that you don't understand feel free to ask in these meetings. You know an evaluation meeting has a lot of information that could be confusing at times so if that's the case just ask for some clarification and we do our best to use parent friendly language. As well checking for understanding throughout the meeting. Your case manager should be asking questions of you as a parent and again if you don't have, if you do have some questions, on things you can certainly ask anyone that's part of that team meeting. Engaging the parents in group discussions is an important part of being an active participant in the meeting and not muting at parents either. So, what we do ask that if there are a lot of participants in a meeting that whoever is not talking mutes. It's imperative, important, that the parents have the ability to speak during the meeting they should be the one muting themselves if they choose too. If you have a child who's perhaps in middle school or high school,

it's very common that they would participate in the meetings. So, making those connections with the students as part of those meetings is important and then stating page numbers or sections that are being referenced as part of the meeting is important as well. The school districts do have the ability to broadcast and share live those documents. So that's also very helpful so that everyone can see in real time what's being discussed. Minimizing educational jargon and acronyms. If you're not sure what something stands for, means, just ask. And then asking for parents' feedback after each section is important as well so if your case manager is not doing that you can certainly request that. And we're happy to help as far as having your feedback as part of that meeting, Next slide please.

Maureen: Great. Okay. So now we are going to talk about preparing IEP Team members for roles and responsibilities that are unique to virtual meetings.

Mike: so, this slide is about the roles of team members as part of an IEP Team. And just because we're remote, that, those roles do not change. So at a minimum your IEP team should consist of the parent, the general education teacher, the special ed teacher, and someone who can act as the local educational agency or the Lea representative - someone who's going to sign off on the proposals that the school districts making. It is it is possible that some team members serve as more than one role. So Special Ed teacher in some instances might also serve as the LEA r someone might be serving in a role as a related service provider and also an evaluator. But there are other rules that could be part of the team meeting. So, for instance if your child receives a related service such as speech or OT or PT those might be team members that are part of that meeting, or other agency representatives. So perhaps there's an advocate that's working with the family, an educational surrogate, or other community services such as voc rehab. Or maybe even

like an outside counselor who would be part of that meeting could those are all members none of that changes because we're remote. Next slide please.

Mike: So, communication when we're virtual is certainly a little different. You should expect that the school district is maintaining professionalism and being clear and transparent about any limitations for conducting virtual meetings. And also, for maintaining confidentiality. And then also understanding that nonverbal communication is definitely different when you're meeting virtually. So, it's always important to ask for clarification on these things because some of those social cues that you can pick up on when you're in person might be hard to decipher when you are meeting virtually. Next slide please.

Mike: So, documentation for IEP meetings. Either conducting them in real time or taking notes. This is district dependent, but in most instances any updates that need to be made to the IEP can happen in real time. We can project them up on the screen for you. And we can do those edits live unless it's a more extensive edit that needs to be made. So, then some notes may be taken, and those edits can be updated after the conclusion of the meeting. Asking what will the IEP team members be seeing as part of the meeting? So that would be any forms or documents that's being reviewed. So, whether it's the annual review of the IEP, it could be evaluations, or it could be other forms that go along with the meeting, such as the sign ins or the excusals and things like that. Notes can be taken as hard copies and sent home. You can request a draft of the documents beforehand so if there are IEP updates that are being made as part of the meeting you can ask for a draft IEP before the meeting starts so that you can have a chance to review what edits school district is proposing and then have your input ready at the meeting. And then also having other alternatives for technology. So, if there's a certain platform that you are more familiar with it's pretty common in typical that we've worked with, you know, multiple platforms while we've

been remote. So, we're happy to accommodate any request that parents might have for whatever technology their familiar and comfortable with. And then just also knowing that there are features built into these platforms for you to communicate in whatever means is most comfortable for you as a parent, whether that's speaking over the phone or virtually in one of these meetings, such as zoom or meet, or using the chat feature that's available. Next slide please.

Mary: so, in terms of communication and engagement, the schools really want to ensure that parents are comfortable and able to provide input throughout the meeting. And there's different ways to do that, of course, but having an agenda is a really good way to help that because everyone knows what's expected and what's going to be discussed. So parents it's your turn here if you want something on that agenda get it to the case manager a day or two ahead and let them know what the points are that you, really that, are important to you that you want to discuss. And expect that the school may be doing the same thing. Queuing and checking in. The school again will be asking you have any questions, where we're here to help, we want to help you understand this. They'll be paraphrasing in clarifying questions you might have. But I want you to do that to them as well. If you're confused just stop and ask them to say it again. Chat might be used as a tool for you to ask a question or the school might be asking you a question that way. We would encourage schools to use chat wisely. It can sometimes make an interruption, or get someone's, move someone's, train of thought when they go to read. It should be used as a tool, but basically want to be communicating everything verbally. Get things written down and clarify to make sure we're understanding each other and not to confuse each other more. If you're feeling confused, make sure you tell someone. And then who's monitoring that chat? We need to know that

because you want to make sure at the end of the meeting any question or concern that was written into the chat is answered. Next slide.

Mary: When it comes to considerations regarding any disagreement you might have its important you understand how consensus for those major decisions is being determined in this virtual setting or over a phone. So, if you're not sure, you kind of have a feeling that people are disagreeing ask for clarification. And remember you can schedule another meeting if you feel like things are just confusing and you don't really know what's going on here. Disagreements. You have the right through your procedural safeguards to disagree, as you all know. And we would recommend that you ask for another meeting if you're feeling inside that things just don't feel right here. Schools want to work with you, and they want to solve the problem. So, if a disagreement does persist you can have mediation or facilitated IEP meeting as a way to help work things out. Don't let this virtual meeting kind of make you feel like you can't work through the problem, because your school is there to help you work through the problem. Your child comes first. Next slide please.

Maureen: So now we are going to reflect on and try to see how we can enhance future virtual IEP Meetings. Next Slide.

Maureen: So after the meeting its important, as Mary was just saying, that parents review all meeting notes and documents and follow up if you do have any questions, This is something new for all of us, as we mentioned in the beginning, for the schools, as well as the parents. So, it's going to take a little while to get good at this. So definitely follow up with your IEP team members if you have any questions. Remember that the timelines are in effect. So that if you do have things to be signed you need to go back to the school and you just follow up for clarification on how that will be handled. But remember that relationships matter. And that we're

all in it together. And then if we work together and communicate, we should have great positive outcomes for our kids. The next slide

Maureen: As I mentioned at the beginning, we have several resources that we've tried to pack into the webinar so that you can review in your own time. The webinar will be available, with, as a PDF handout at the end of the presentation. And also, will be loaded on PICs website within the next couple of days for you to access. And for it to have, if you know of anybody that it's going to be coming up with the meeting and they're kind of nervous about the new technology, please have them view the webinar so that they can get some helpful hints prior to taking on that meeting.

Maureen: So here is a more meetings about just preparing for meetings resources for getting prepared also. Have next slide Kimm. You can go.

Maureen: Some more information on COVID19 related information. As we mentioned before that PIC does have COVID19 information on their website so please feel free to access that as well. Next Slide.

Maureen: The reference is used to help develop this webinar.

Maureen: And also, now that, since we've got a little time left on our presentation we want to go to the chat feature and find out what you guys have been updating us with, or if you have any questions. So, I'm going to ask Kimm, who has been monitoring our chat room, if she can just kind of help us out with what we've been hearing from all of you. And we'll see if we can get to all your questions and suggestions

Kimm: Thanks Maureen. So, there was a question at the beginning about the handouts. And I did repost them in the chat, so hopefully folks were able to receive those. And again, they will be

posted, as Maureen said, on the PIC websites. One of the main barriers that somebody on the call has encountered is the comfort level with technology, and another barrier mentioned is reliable Internet connections.

Maureen: Yes, absolutely. And that, that, I don't think you're alone with that. That is something that, especially in our state, where we do have areas that are rural that internet is. But as we mentioned in the presentation, just remember it stay calm, come up with a different way of communicating and figure out with your team. So that's why you know contacting case manager ahead of time who might be running the meeting, even the day before if you can, just to make sure that you know you're all in agreement on exactly how this meeting is going to be delivered. So, definitely.

Mary: Maureen I just want to say - I have had to call in for three of my meetings because I lost the internet connection. So now I just make it a practice to have that number ready right next to my computer. And I just call and continue the, you know, the meeting.

Maureen: Excellent. Great point.

Mary: So, I don't have to go back to my email and find the number its part of my preparing.

Mike: One of the things that can be helpful too, is requesting the documents that are going to be reviewed ahead of time. So that if you're not able to connect to a zoom or a google meet but you have those documents to be able to look at. So that if you do have to call in you can still reference exactly what's being discussed as part of the meeting.

Maureen: Great, great point Mike.

Mary: And so, the phone number, I just saw in the chat about question about the phone number. My case managers have been providing me with a phone number along with the zoom link, so I would when you get your information for your remote meeting, if you don't have a phone number get right on that with the case manager and get the number at that time.

Maureen: Perfect, great point.

Kimm There is another comment about having a virtual IEP meeting and it's hard for a student and parent to read the body language and faces. They tell a lot, and when everyone's video is off - you can't tell what people are thinking.

Maureen: Correct.

Maureen: Yeah, most of the time I would recommend, especially with the IEP team meeting, if there, you know, if you can do it and your you know your computer and your bandwidth allows it to have everybody's video up is important. Because I do believe that that, that connection is important especially during, especially when the student is involved too. Absolutely.

Mike: On the school district side of things it is pretty common practice for the meeting participants to have their videos up while the meeting is being conducted.

Mary: Would that be best practice Mike?

Mike: Yes, I would say so.

Maureen: And if not available there always is the picture icon so you at least know and recognize that person. Especially for parents who are not in the school every day, might not know, might not be familiar with every single person on the team. Having that picture up there

and maybe the display of what their role is on the team would be really helpful. So, name and then case manager, name speech pathologist. So that's also really helpful too.

Kimm: So that's all the questions that I see in the chat right now. I believe when people joined the call, they were automatically muted and I'm not sure that people are unable to mute themselves. So, if you have a question and you'd like to unmute yourself. And if you cannot then if you can find the participants list, at the bottom of that list there is an option to raise your hand, and if you raise your hand I'll make sure that I unmute you. I will try to make sure I unmute you.

Valerie (participant): This is Valerie.

Maureen: You are breaking up Valerie.

Kimm: Go ahead Valerie.

Valerie: So, one of the things...

Kimm So, I think we are having trouble hearing you Valerie. Can you put your comment in the chat?

Valerie: Let me try now, is that better?

Maureen: That sounds good.

Kimm: Okay

Valerie: One of the comments I would make, if folks are having trouble logging in or with Internet connection, is checking whether they're using Chrome versus Internet Explorer or edge or something like that. Sometimes I'm finding far more success with Chrome than I am with Internet Explorer.

Maureen: Excellent. Thank you for sharing that Valerie.

Kimm: Thank you. There's another comment in the chat. For with virtual meetings for three-year-old, it would be helpful if both the service provider and the parents have a draft IEP, and is that possible? Because they've met some resistance.

Mike: So, I can speak from the school district side of things. If you're requesting it ahead of time it is a reasonable request. It is a good practice to do that anyways, but if that's not the practice that your district utilizes, just make the request and typically it can be accommodated.

Maureen: Absolutely.

Mary: Mike, how much lead time would you need for that, would be ideal for you?

Mike: Well if an IEP is being updated for annual review, it's pretty typical that a case manager is going in the week before to start working on the edits, if not before that. So I would say it would be reasonable to ask you, if you asked a few days in advance, that's plenty of time for them to be able to get it to you before the meeting starts.

Maureen: And also, with initial evaluation to the parents - received documentation in the assessment and evaluations five days in advance.

Mike: Yeah, that is for all evaluations. So those documents should be coming home to parents at five days before the meeting or before that for any evaluations. And that doesn't change because we're remote. So those documents you should have for those meetings.

Maureen: Right. Right. And recommend to parents to request that if they haven't received it, just reach out to this school district.

Kimmm: And I'm not sure if this is a similar, or part of that same question, but what is the timeline for a new three-year-old?

Mike: So, if the child has been identified for early supports and services they need to have an, and they're evaluated and they're found eligible - they need to have an IEP in place on or before their third birthday. If it's a child who's come to the school district who was not identified through early supports and services, then the team would follow the normal procedure of determining if that child requires evaluation. Conducting the evaluations and then determining eligibility and then from there developing an IEP if they are found eligible.

Kimmm: And I would also refer folks to both the Parent Information the PICNH website as well as Race2K, race and then the number 2 and the letter K, for information about early childhood transitions. There is, oh, some best practice. Heather Hewlett is sending out draft IEPs by email three to five days prior to meetings.

Maureen: Excellent, thank you.

Mary: Great.

Kimmm So again that is all that's in the chat. If people would like to unmute if they have a question or comment. I will give it just another minute because I know with me it can be hard to unmute or to remember to unmute.

Lynn (Participant): This is Lynn. I have a question. Somebody had mentioned that they have 14 days from the written prior notice to sign the IEP, is that true for the new little ones coming in? I'm in early intervention and just need some clarification on that.

Mike: The 14 days applies to any proposal that the school district is making. So, anything that the school district is proposing. They need to provide written notice through a written prior notice that parents will get. And usually there is some kind of accompanying documentation that would go along with it. It could be eligibility, or it could be the IEP, or it could be something else that the district is proposing. But no matter what it is, the district needs to provide that in writing, and that 14 days starts once the parents receive that in writing and that is applicable to any proposal.

Lynn: Thank you.

Kimm: I see that Virginia Morris also has a question, so....

Virginia (participant): Yeah, I'm looking actually at my daughters IEP right now, and I realize that there is some significant mistake....

Maureen: Did we lose?...

Kimm: Are you still there?

Mike: I can probably respond with what I hope would answer the question, but I didn't hear the full question. So, if you're noticing anything in the IEP that needs to be changed, there are a couple of ways to go about that. I would say the best practice way would be to request another team meeting to be convened and discuss what updates need to be made to the IEP. but if it's something that's more minor, that can be updated through an amendment to the IEP. So, you don't have to draft like a brand new IEP you could just do some minor edits to it. Those can be conducted virtually as far as like, making, the case manager can make the update send home a written prior notice as to what that update is and send home the amended IEP as well, so that it can be fixed and agreed upon.

Virginia: Okay. Yeah, I just got, her coursework is all messed up. Like it says, you know, she took individualized math this year. Well that's true but it was Algebra II, and so then their saying she will take Algebra II in two years. Well no, she's not taking it again, that's for sure

Maureen: Well, Virginia, we would definitely ask for you to relay that information to your IEP team.

Virginia: Got it. Yeah, yeah. Okay, thanks.

Maureen: Yeah, so thank you.

Kimm: So, there is another message here that many families we work with can't print and have difficulty reading the forms on the screen.

Mike: Yeah. So, I mean, I guess that goes with letting the case manager know in advance what some of those difficulties are and whatever ways the school district can help, we are willing to do. So oftentimes we are able to send home documents beforehand. And if you don't have the ability to print at home and you want to draft of the IEP before the meeting, you know, maybe ask a week in advance instead of like two or three days in advance so that we can Mail them home to you. Know there's certainly ways around it, as far as, having difficulty with the technology that might be available.

Maureen: Yep. Definitely communication is key to make sure if you do need those accommodations that your team is aware of that and they can provide that for you.

Kimm: Going back to Early Supports and Services. I work in Early Supports and Services and schools have been saying since we, and they, cannot evaluate in person they can't determine eligibility. Where do they go with that response? And Valerie has said to review the

memorandums from the DOE and evaluations are expected to continue with very few exceptions.
Anyone want to respond to that?

Mike: Yeah. So, the teams still need to meet that is absolutely required. And is still required to follow the process. So, it will depend on each Individual district and what they are allowing or are not allowing. So, if a district is allowing for staff and students to have contact then there may be the ability to do some of the evaluations. If the district's not allowing for that, it's going to be limited. So what may happen is, you may go through the process, and the team may say at this point in time were not able to complete the evaluations, we need more information, so we can't find the child eligible right now. It's the reality of the limitations with physical contact right now. But I would say that it would be a best practice of the district, that once those limitations are lifted that they should be meeting again in person to be able to re determine eligibility once the evaluations are able to be conducted.

Kimm: Thank you.

Kimm: That's it for the chat right now. Again, if people would like to unmute and ask a question.

Mike: Oh, I see a question. Why does that evaluate virtually? In some instances, they may be able to so. Like you can do a clinical observation virtually, but in other instances, like conducting a cognitive evaluation - there is a test kit that goes along with it, and there's physical materials that need to be manipulated, and there's standardization as far as how the questions need to be asked and presented. And for those it may not be possible to do in virtually.

Mary: And our law does say it has to be valid and reliable. So that evaluator has, you know, there's a lot that they have to do right in order to get that data.

Maureen: Evaluations definitely had the unique challenge of remote access to students. On the parent input is also very important. So that any evaluations that the parents have or from an outside evaluator can be provided to the IEP team and discussed during a meeting. So, we do ask parents that if you do have data and information to bring that forward for the team

Kimm: And that is also backed up in the chat- the using progress notes previous evals observations through virtual things and parent service provider feedback.

Kimm: So again, we have 5 minutes left. Last call for questions.

Kimm: Alright.

Maureen: Great. Okay. Do we have one more there Kimm or we good? I just heard a ding, so I want to make sure.

Kimm: No that was someone just coming into the waiting room.

Maureen: Okay. Well, I think, and I want to be cognizant of everyone's time and this brings us to the end of our presentation. And I just want to thank everybody who participated, thank you for your time, and your input, and your questions were really helpful. We do appreciate that, and I want to thank our Co-presenters Mary and Mike. Thank you so much for joining us. And Kimm, thank you for monitoring our technology. And I think that brings us to our end. And as I said this is going to be available on the PIC website soon, and the handouts are available for you with all the links included. So, thank you everyone. Stay healthy.

Mary: yeah, stay healthy.