

The information below is a guide for families. Consider each child's unique learning style when choosing a school option. Children respond differently to learning environments, and families may have additional considerations for their child.

Benefits

Considerations

In-person instruction — public & private schools

- Face-to-face learning, many opportunities for interactive discussion, questions answered in real time, teacher-guided practice, etc.
- Traditional school schedule will likely be maintained (five days per week or hybrid/hyflex instruction, standard eight-hour days, bus routes offered, etc.).
- Peer interaction and opportunities for same-age socialization
- Access to in-person IEP/504 Plan services and therapies (if applicable)
- Possible access to school-based athletics, camps, clubs and other extracurricular activities
- Potential improved mental health of children (return to familiar routines, schedules, friend groups, etc.)
- Allows working parents to return to their workplaces (full or part time depending on class schedule)
- Expected to have smaller class sizes than typical

- Heightened risk for COVID-19 exposure
- Safety protocols may create an environment that looks and feels different than traditional school (social distancing, face masks, no classroom rotations, etc.)
- If a classmate or teacher experiences symptoms of COVID-19, the class (or whole school) will likely transition to virtual learning for 10-14 days (this may happen several times throughout the school year, requiring reliable technology and internet at home)
- Potential extended school closures and transition to long-term virtual learning
- Potential last-minute, unpredictable childcare needs
- Potential long-term substitutes, if teachers or staff are ill and/or exposed to COVID-19
- Potential heightened anxiety related to disruptions in routine (transitions between in-person and virtual learning) and concerns about health and safety

Virtual instruction — public, private & online schools

- Minimal COVID-19 exposure risk
- Participation in livestreamed or prerecorded lessons led by public or private school teacher(s)
- If technology is available, schools may livestream class instruction for a more inclusive home learning experience.
- Ample opportunities for movement, brain breaks, choice activities, etc.
- Schools may be able to provide varying degrees of IEP/504 Plan services and therapies virtually (instructional delivery and service hours may be adapted to support virtual needs).
- **Public and private school** virtual learning will likely be better structured than in spring 2020, as schools have had time to plan, prepare and provide various forms of professional development to teachers and staff.
- **Online schools** are specialized in virtual learning and will likely have more robust online programs than what public and private schools are able to establish for COVID-19 crisis home learning.

- Requires adult in-home supervision
- Requires reliable home access to technology and internet
- Children must remain disciplined to keep up with the classwork schedule with minimal teacher support.
- Individual progress may not reflect grade-level expectations if the child is unable to dedicate necessary time, effort and attention towards learning at home.
- Virtual IEP/504 Plan services may not be as individualized or effective as in-person.
- Possible academic and/or skill regression
- Potential feelings of social isolation
- Therapies (occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, mental/behavioral health, etc.) may need to be provided in full or part by private or clinic therapists to support development.
- Limited exposure to diversity and fewer opportunities to learn with peers of different backgrounds
- Increased screen time
- Families with multiple children must provide each child with independent work time, space and materials, and may require multiple technology devices and higher internet speeds, etc.

Homeschool

- Minimal COVID-19 exposure risk
- Schedule, routine and curriculum flexibility
- Fully individualized learning, plentiful 1:1 and small group learning opportunities
- Ample opportunities for movement, brain breaks, choice activities and child-led learning
- Child can be taught exclusively at their developmental level, moving at their own pace, which may lead to faster progress and fewer frustrations
- Group learning opportunities are available through a variety of cooperative programs (for certain subjects) to promote social development and interactive learning with peers.

- Requires adult in-home supervision
- Parent (or other adult) is the child's primary teacher
- Parent (or other adult) must identify a teaching philosophy (classical, de-schooling, unschooling, etc.) and select curriculum that meets state requirements.
- Parents must understand homeschool regulations and maintain legal compliance (laws vary by state).
- Curriculum and learning materials may be costly.
- Homes with multiple children must provide each child with appropriate age/skill-level curriculum and instruction.
- No access to public or private school IEP/504 services
- Academic progress may not reflect grade-level expectations if parent is unable to dedicate the necessary time and energy towards instruction
- Instructional limitations include parent's comfort teaching less familiar subjects
- Therapies (occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, mental/behavioral health, etc.) are typically provided through private or clinic therapists to support development.
- Possible academic and/or skill regression
- Potential feelings of social isolation
- Limited exposure to diversity and fewer opportunities to learn with peers of different backgrounds
- It is difficult (though not impossible) for both parents to maintain full-time jobs; may increase financial strain.

Homebound instruction — public & private schools

- Traditionally, the teacher(s) travels to the child's home to provide 1:1 in-person instruction, assist with work completion and help the child progress towards educational goals (services may be virtual during the COVID-19 pandemic).
- Reduced COVID-19 exposure risk, though more risk than virtual or homeschool, since the teacher comes into the home
- Ample opportunities for movement, brain/rest breaks, choice activities, etc.

- Requires adult in-home supervision
- Extensive qualification needed as part of an IEP/504 Plan; requires physician recommendation and signature
- Service may be limited to 1-2 hours a few times each week for a finite time period; many children will also have independent or parent-assisted schoolwork time.
- Often utilized as a temporary plan during periods of medical instability (not a long-term placement)
- Academic progress may not reflect grade-level expectations with less instructional time.
- Possible academic and/or skill regression
- Potential feelings of social isolation