

Ensuring Support Services for Youth With Disabilities & Special Health Care Needs Amid COVID-19

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With schools closed and families social distancing, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed the lives of children across the country. For youth with disabilities and special health care needs and their caregivers, the [challenges brought about by the pandemic](#) have been even more acute, leading to issues accessing critical therapies and disrupted services at home and school.

There are a multitude of questions around how to ensure the health and safety of children with disabilities and special health care needs as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses: What do parents and those who care for children need to know about the impact of COVID-19? What will health and safety protocols for a return to school look like? Can therapies and services that are critical for youth well-being be delivered safely, and what concerns exist around disparities in access?

On July 1, 2020, PolicyLab hosted a virtual conversation titled, “Ensuring Support Services for Youth With Disabilities & Special Health Care Needs Amid COVID-19” with state education leadership, health care providers, and policy experts with lived-experience who discussed these issues and more.

Panelists included:

- Sophia Jan, MD, MSHP, division chief of general pediatrics, Cohen Children’s Medical Center and faculty scholar at PolicyLab (*moderator*)
- Carole L. Clancy, director, Bureau of Special Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Susan Coffin, MD, MPH, professor of pediatrics in the Division of Infectious Diseases at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and attending physician at CHOP
- Rylin Rodgers, director of Public Policy, Association of University Centers on Disabilities
- Kate Wallis, MD, MPH, attending physician in CHOP’s Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics and faculty member at PolicyLab

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