

**Supporting Students  
with Disabilities  
During COVID-19:  
Resources for  
Tennessee Families**





The challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have been huge for so many families across Tennessee. To support you at this time, Tennessee Department of Education partners have collaborated to identify and share resources for students and caregivers.

We have organized a sampling of these relevant resources by general topic. We also indicate which resources are available *right now* and which are *coming very soon*. Because new resources are being added, we encourage you to regularly visit the following website: **[vkc.vumc.org/specialpopulations](https://vkc.vumc.org/specialpopulations)**

Information about upcoming online forums, webinars, and other events will be shared here and on individual project webpages.





## Resources Related to Assistive Technology

### TENNESSEE TALKS PROJECT

Our four regional centers across Tennessee are working collaboratively to help public schools serve the needs of their students with significant communication challenges who may benefit from alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) interventions. Tennessee Talks works with schools at no cost to provide direct assistance with addressing the communication needs of these students, while providing training for school staff and parents.

☆ **Access Resources:**  
[tennesseetalks.org/covid19](https://tennesseetalks.org/covid19)

### TN-Talks Response to Pandemic

TN-Talks has bolstered the content available on our website by adding demonstration videos and printable communication resources for families to assist them in supporting the communication needs of their children in the home-school setting. In addition, we are creating a calendar of online instructional modules for learning more about AAC and following these with moderated group calls to provide guidance. The four regional coordinators are available to remotely collaborate with families and the school-based speech therapist to address their child's communication needs in the home.

#### **Resources Available Right Now:**

- Consultations by phone or video calls with local Tennessee Talks coordinator to address specific issues regarding their child's communication needs and to receive technical support
- Communication materials created for AAC

users that address the pandemic, such as communication boards, related symbols, social stories, and electronic page-sets for download onto speech generating devices

- Information about free special education tools and Internet access during this crisis
- Connection with the Tennessee Talks agency serving their region (for specific student support)
- Informational webinars, tutorials, and guides

#### **Resources Coming Soon:**

- Calendar of monthly webinars (live and recorded) with interactive follow-up Q & A meetings hosted by TN-Talks coordinators
- New YouTube channel for video-based instruction
- New Twitter account
- New Facebook group for Live demonstrations or presentations and sharing among members

## Resources Related to Recreation and Leisure

### PROJECT THERAPEUTIC RECREATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS (TRIPS)

Project TRiPS: Therapeutic Recreation in Public Schools provides recreation therapy programs for children in special education classrooms. The various programs are offered in conjunction with service-learning courses at the University of Tennessee with the service providers being participating college students.

☆ **Access Resources:**  
[krss.utk.edu/undergraduate/recreation-and-sport-management/therapeutic-recreation/camp-information/](https://krss.utk.edu/undergraduate/recreation-and-sport-management/therapeutic-recreation/camp-information/)



### TRiPS Response to Pandemic

Project TRiPS has enhanced our webpage content by adding links to physical activity curriculum and videos. We will also be making many of our recreational therapy lesson plans available through activity tool kits that are adaptable for all ability levels and organized by specific functional domains (ex. physical, social, cognitive) or themed activities (ex. cooking, science, art, exercise). In addition, we are creating a virtual camp experience through video exchanges between campers and counselors.

#### *Resources Available Right Now:*

- FunDoRoo: This is a [physical activity curriculum](#) used in Project TRiPS that focuses on improving motor skills for youth with and without disabilities (Available on Google Play, App Store, or at amazon - \$5.99).
- The Energizer! A Camp Koinonia Classic: This is a [fun choreographed dance video](#) that encourages everyone to get up and get moving with prompts provided.

#### *Resources Coming Soon:*

- Outcome based Activity Tool Kits: These kits are focused on IEP goals from the primary, middle, and high school setting and will address outcomes such physical, social, and cognition skills.
- Theme based Activity Tool Kits: These kits are modified from the camp environment for application at home and will address themes like cooking, art, science, games, exercise and more!
- Home Fitness Videos: A compilation of helpful links for home exercise videos for youth with and without disabilities.



## Resources Related to Accessing Special Education Services

### THE ARC TENNESSEE'S FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

We work closely with the Tennessee Department of Education to provide frequently updated resources to families involved in special education. We are taking guidance provided by the State Department of Education along with the US Department of Education to help families navigate school closures and figure out what it means for their child's services and rights to a Free and Public Education (FAPE) through the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA). We can also help districts and educators understand this guidance and brainstorm ways to best serve students with disabilities at home.

☆ **Access Resources:**  
[thearctn.org](http://thearctn.org)



### The Arc TN Response to Pandemic

The Arc Tennessee is quickly adapting and organizing resources that are relevant to families during this time of COVID-19. If you go to our website we now have a COVID-19 Resources tab on the top left side of our landing page, which is organized by topic. We are using more social media to better reach families where they are. We are coordinating Facebook Live and Zoom videos to answer frequently asked questions that are coming up as a result of the coronavirus and school closures, especially for students with disabilities.

#### **Resources Available Right Now:**

- Up-to-date information and guidance on [COVID-19 School Closure Updates for Families in Special Education](#)
- A [large compilation](#) of resources on students with special needs learning at home
- A [video](#) providing federal policy updates on the COVID-19 response for people with disabilities
- An online guide addressing [supported decision-making for parents and educators](#)
- Information on how individuals with disabilities can join [People First Tennessee](#) to help find social connections during this time of isolation.

#### **Resources Coming Soon:**

- We will host a virtual Disabilities MegaConference online on May 21st
- Facebook Live video chats to answer questions and provide support to families through [facebook.com/fespedtn](https://www.facebook.com/fespedtn)

### Resources Related to Social and Behavioral Supports

#### **TENNESSEE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS PROJECT**

We support schools in providing positive behavioral and social supports for students and staff (referred to as RTI<sup>2</sup>-B in Tennessee). We provide training, online modules, and downloadables about creating a positive school environment for all students, as well as social and behavioral interventions for groups of students and individual students. Our three regional grant sites—University of Memphis-Lambuth, Vanderbilt University, University of Tennessee-Knoxville—can provide support to their respective schools and districts.

☆ **Access Resources:**  
[tennesseebsp.org/tbsp-covid-19-response](https://tennesseebsp.org/tbsp-covid-19-response)

#### **TBSP Response to Pandemic**

TBSP is creating short videos and tip sheets that families can utilize to learn how to adapt school strategies to implement positive behavior supports at home. These will be shared on a newly created website where resources (e.g., videos, downloadables) to support families will be housed. Our goal is to align resources for families with what districts and schools are doing to support appropriate behaviors in school settings so families can implement similar supports at home, during this time.

#### **Resources Available Right Now:**

- Tips for Supporting Positive Behavior at Home ([extended video](#) and [presentation](#))
- Quick Tips for Families [Video Series](#)
- Examples of a Home Matrix to set family rules and expectations in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
- Sample [Home Ticket](#) for Families to use within a positive behavior system



**Resources Coming Soon:**

- Adding more Quick Tips for Families to Implement Positive Behavior Supports to our [Video Series](#)
- Tipsheets to accompany Quick Tips for Families Video Series

## Resources Related to Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

### TREATMENT AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS (TRIAD)

TRIAD, among other activities, is a services-based organization within the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center with a mission to improve assessment, treatment, and educational services for individuals with ASD and other disabilities/needs, as well as their caregivers and loved ones. Through our two-decade collaboration with the Tennessee Department of Education, we provide training, coaching, consultation, and support to educators and school districts throughout the state in the areas of academic instruction, behavior, classroom management, communication, mental health, transition, and social skills, amongst many other topics.

☆ **Access Resources:**  
[triad.vumc.org](http://triad.vumc.org)  
[triad.vkclearning.org](http://triad.vkclearning.org)

### TRIAD Response to Pandemic

TRIAD is making hundreds of online modules, archived webinars, and online toolkits available to families through a free learning management system. We will be ensuring all students who were receiving services at a school are provided the opportunity through their schools to connect directly with our experts to support their needs at home – including academics, communication, and behavior.



**Resources Available Right Now:**

- Families First Online Education Series, Thursdays 1-1:30 CST, focused on helping caregivers provide meaningful structure to their days while other services are paused (these are also archived and available)
- Brief online training modules on a variety of education topics, e.g., using schedules at home, common preschool strategies to use at home, building blocks of communication, behavior

**Resources Coming Soon:**

- Video demonstration of how to register for TRIAD's online portal and how to navigate to trainings highlighted in curated list for caregivers
- Curated list of online modules, online toolkits, and archived webinars appropriate for caregivers who are teaching their children at home
- Behavior Intervention Plan summary support- TRIAD consultants can work with families and school districts to create family friendly, 1-page summaries of existing TRIAD behavior intervention plans from IEPs



- Tip sheets providing ideas for strategies to make learning at home easier and more effective

## Resources Related to Students with Visual Impairments

### PROJECT PAVE (PROVIDING ACCESS TO THE VISUAL ENVIRONMENT)

Project PAVE provides no-cost services to 90 students each year. Participants can be enrolled in schools across the state, at Tennessee School for the Blind, or home-schooled. Services include a comprehensive clinical low vision evaluation, optical devices prescribed from the evaluation, and training for those devices to students, teachers, and families in the natural learning environment.

☆ **Access Resources:**  
[vanderbilthealth.com/eyeinstitute/23641](https://vanderbilthealth.com/eyeinstitute/23641)

### PAVE Response to Pandemic

We are making phone or email contact from Dr. Kehler to referring ophthalmologists and optometrists to encourage continued referrals to PAVE. We are planning for weekend or after-hours clinics to ensure all participants receive their low vision evaluations before or just after the school year begins in Fall 2020. Additionally, we will offer phone call or video conference with students and families enrolled in the 2019/2020 school year to wrap up optical device training and answer any remaining questions.

### Resources Available Right Now:

- Tips and explanations to individual families for the home learning setting via phone and email

### Resources Coming Soon:

- Video conferencing with students and families to troubleshoot any visual barriers in the home learning environment
- Compose individualized home lesson plans for students to bolster visual skills, utilizing optical devices

## Resources Related to Transition Services and Secondary Education

### TRANSITION TENNESSEE

We focus on equipping educators, agencies, families, and communities to improve the transition outcomes of youth with disabilities in Tennessee. We provide free online professional development for educators and Pre-ETS providers, as well as webcasts, technical assistance, and resources focused on best practices. Our goal is to ensure the best of what we know works for transition is adopted statewide.

☆ **Access Resources:**  
[transitiontn.org](https://transitiontn.org)  
 (registration is required, but free)

### Transition TN Response to Pandemic

We will share resources with families through social media like Twitter and Facebook. We are regularly updating a list of resources specifically aimed at families. We will host an online transition fair so students and their families can learn more about the transition to adulthood and resources available in their region or throughout the state.

### Resources Available Right Now:

- Recurring [blog](#) focused on transition- and employment-related topics for family members of individuals with disabilities



**Find links to each project at:  
[vkc.vumc.org/  
specialpopulations](https://vkc.vumc.org/specialpopulations)**

**The Arc Tennessee**  
[thearctn.org](https://thearctn.org)

**Project Pave (Providing Access  
to the Visual Environment)**  
[vanderbilthealth.com/eyeinstitute/23641](https://vanderbilthealth.com/eyeinstitute/23641)

**Project Therapeutic Recreation in  
Public Schools (TRiPS)**  
[krss.utk.edu/undergraduate/  
recreationand-sport-management/  
therapeuticrecreation/camp-information/](https://krss.utk.edu/undergraduate/recreationand-sport-management/therapeuticrecreation/camp-information/)

**Tennessee Behavior Support  
Project (TBSP)**  
[tennesseebsp.org/tbsp-covid-19-response](https://tennesseebsp.org/tbsp-covid-19-response)

**Tennessee Talks Project**  
[tennesseetalks.org/covid19](https://tennesseetalks.org/covid19)

**Transition Tennessee**  
[transitiontn.org](https://transitiontn.org)

**Treatment and Research Institute for  
Autism Spectrum Disorders (TRIAD)**  
[triad.vumc.org](https://triad.vumc.org) or [triad.vkclearning.org](https://triad.vkclearning.org)

- A large listing of [resources](#) families can access right now to learn about supporting strong transitions for their child with a disability

***Resources Coming Soon:***

- An online transition fair so families and students with disabilities can learn more about the transition to adulthood
- Online (Zoom and call-in) forums that connect parents with ideas for what they can do at home to prepare their children in the area of transition

**Tennessee Disability Pathfinder**

In response to the outbreak of the Coronavirus, Tennessee Disability Pathfinder will connect individuals to information and resources available to meet their needs.

☆ **Access Resources:**  
[vkc.vumc.org/vkc/pathfinder/corona/](https://vkc.vumc.org/vkc/pathfinder/corona/)

