

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





The rapidly evolving challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, including statewide school closures, have caused countless disruptions for educators across Tennessee as they strive to support their students with disabilities well when working remotely. To support you at this time, Tennessee Department of Education grantees providing services to special populations within public schools have collaborated to identify, develop, and share resources that educators can use to serve their students and families well.

We have organized just a sampling of these relevant resources by general topic and project. We also indicate which resources are available *right now* and which are *coming 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 begun offering remote outreach and support to school-based SLP clinicians and special educators who are trying to meet the unique communication needs of their students with disabilities. We will be offering a calendar of educational webinars to expand skills with AAC for those who need training related to AAC assessment and implementation. Our experts are now available by phone or videoconference for consultations to assist with addressing the specific communication needs of your students.

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

- Resources and ideas to school-based SLP staff for providing telehealth AAC services
- Links to sites from other states/ organizations offering AAC resources
- Informational webinars
- Printable communication materials
- Contact information for regional coordinators

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

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

## 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:**  
[tennesseebps.org/tbsp-covid-19-response](https://tennesseebps.org/tbsp-covid-19-response)

### TBSP Response to Pandemic

TBSP will continue to serve districts and schools during this time, by providing professional development and technical assistance to district and school teams to support appropriate student behavior and enhance teacher-student connections during remote learning. Additionally, we will provide guidance and technical assistance for preparing faculty, families and students for



their return to school after prolonged school closures. We will disseminate these resources three ways:

1. on our “COVID-19” website, which provides resources for educators to support families and continue connecting with students during this time,
2. through weekly Twitter chats to engage educators and provide a format to share ideas for supporting students and families, and
3. through weekly “TBSP Office Hours” where educators can work with TBSP team members to brainstorm ways to help students and families during this time using positive behavior supports.

**Resources Available Right Now:**

- [Teacher Tipsheets](#) related to positive behavior supports for students
- Free [Online Modules](#) addressing different aspects of Classroom Management
- [Video Presentations](#) on “How-To” implement positive behavior supports and examples from schools
- Resources for School and District Leadership to support RTI2-B in schools/  
[Family & Community Engagement](#)

**Resources Coming Soon:**

- Resources for fostering positive school climates online and reinitiating positive school climates when school returns, including (a) spring/summer remote training opportunities to help school leadership teams prepare for students returning to school by implementing RTI<sup>2</sup>-B and (b) downloadable resources or videos for educators
- Opportunities for educators across the state to share ideas for creating positive learning



environments (now and when students return to school): through [RTI<sup>2</sup>-B Twitter Chats](#) and TBSP Office Hours hosted online for educators to learn about resources and ideas to support families and students with positive behavior supports.

- Tools for adapting effective classroom and behavior management strategies for online learning environments
- for educators can share with parents on adapting behavioral interventions that students were receiving at school for the home environment (e.g., Check-In, Check-Out; Breaks Are Better)

## Resources Related to Supporting Families

### 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's Family Engagement Project is always available to help districts with trainings on how to increase family engagement in special education. During this time, we are following guidance from the Tennessee Department of Education and creating resources for families and educators involved in special education so they can work together to help students access curriculum at home the best they can. We are updating our educational resources daily and will gladly meet with your special education teams virtually to help them reach families and make those connections to best serve their students.

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

- Our "[COVID-19 School Closure Updates for Families in Special Education](#)" resource was created for families, but is helpful to educators as well.
- A [large compilation](#) of resources for students with special needs learning at home.

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

- Web trainings to review updated Special Education guidelines from Tennessee and U.S. Departments of Education.
- Infographics that schools can share with families to help build awareness of what's being done and why.

## 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 from Knox and Sevier County. In addition to working in the special education classrooms, the project includes opportunities for recreation/leisure education/outdoor educational programs throughout the year such as Camp Koinonia, Camp Oginali, and Funtastic Field Day. 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/](http://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). Educators can disseminate this information to their students' families or use them to augment their own lesson plans. Additional recreational therapy resources will be provided to support special educators who are trying to meet their students' IEP goals in a creative way at home.

**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.
- American Therapeutic Recreation Association Intervention Resources: This [link](#) from our national association provides interventions and activities for recreational therapists and educators.

**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 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 will be available to support all students in their homes, whom we have already been supporting in schools. Additionally, we will host virtual office hours for educators to request resources and support, offer live coaching and support to any educator in Tennessee engaging in virtual teaching of students with disabilities, and provide a variety of distance-learning oriented tip sheets about strategies that may help educators adjust their instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

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

- Hundreds of brief online training modules on a large variety of educational topics, including creating schedules, principles of explicit instruction, reinforcement strategies, communication, mental health, mindfulness, and many others
- Archived webinars on a variety of topics, including those listed above
- Remote coaching and consultation across a number of areas for participants in TRIAD services

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

- Video demonstration of how to register for TRIAD's online portal and how to navigate to trainings highlighted
- Curated list of online modules, online tool-kits, and archived webinars appropriate for teachers who are providing distance learning or providing assistance to caregivers
- Live Zoom office hours for educators seeking consultation and resources from TRIAD educational consultants
- Remote coaching and consultation for any educators providing distance learning

to students with disabilities or unique behavioral needs

- Tip sheets providing ideas and evidence-based practices to make distance learning easier

### 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 immediate phone or email contact from Project PAVE TVI's to referring TVI's to communicate that Project PAVE is active and continues to take referrals for students with visual impairment. In addition, 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.

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

- Individualized lesson plans for use of prescribed hand held optical devices
- Consultation with educators via phone and email regarding visual needs of their students



### **Resources Coming Soon:**

- Future online conferences to assist educators and families with visual needs in the home learning environment
- Providing resources from TN School for the Blind (TSB), TX School for the Blind (TSBVI), American Printing House for the Blind (AFB)

## **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://www.transitiontn.org)  
(registration is required, but free)

### **Transition TN Response to Pandemic**

We will continue to serve all interested schools and districts, including our technical assistance sites. We will hold regular Zoom forums led by local and national experts to share practical guidance on supporting transition-age students with disabilities and their families remotely. We will offer professional development opportunities through our extensive website, using webcasts, through social media, and in our email newsletter. We are regularly updating a new webpage of resources and guidance for educators.



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

- Free, [online modules](#) that can be accessed on a wide range of transition topics, such as age-appropriate assessment, transition planning, employment, college preparation, self-determination, and community living
- A large collection of [archived webcasts](#) focused on best practices in transition
- A large listing of [resources](#) for delivering transition services remotely and at home
- Active Twitter and Facebook accounts for sharing the most relevant transition resources available in the state and nationally

### **Resources Coming Soon:**

- Ongoing online Zoom forums convening technical assistance districts
- Online Zoom forums that bring together educators, providers, and others to share ideas, resources, and strategies for delivering transition at this time





## UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE CENTER FOR LITERACY, EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT (UT CLEE)

We work with students, teachers, and school systems to provide training and resources to support youth with disabilities in the areas of Self-Advocacy and Career Planning as well as Transition IEP development. Our Self Advocacy curriculum helps students discern their interests and abilities, learn more about post-secondary options, make choices and decisions, and chart a career and life course into their future.

☆ **Access Resources:**  
[clee.utk.edu/education/college-career-transitions/](http://clee.utk.edu/education/college-career-transitions/)

### UT CLEE Response to Pandemic

Staff are reaching out to school systems and previous education contacts to offer virtual trainings and supports. We are also reviewing existing and potentially new trainings and resources that could be offered via Zoom, webinars, or other virtual methods.

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

- Training and technical assistance on writing Transition IEPs
- Self-Advocacy Curriculum training and technical assistance
- Age-Appropriate Transition Assessments that can be made available via Zoom or webinar
- Developing Partnerships to Support Transition Services that can be made available via Zoom or webinar

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

- Support for educators on ways to deliver instruction & services remotely and/or support/collaborate with parents/caregivers
- New online modules and resources based on the Self-Advocacy Curriculum

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**University of Tennessee Center for Literacy, Education & Employment (UT CLEE)**  
[clee.utk.edu/education/college-career-transitions/](http://clee.utk.edu/education/college-career-transitions/)