

Toileting and Diapering: When Physical Distancing is Difficult or Contraindicated for Students on IEPs

Purpose

There may be instances where educators are not able to physically distance from students, such as when a student requires personal care. This document provides recommendations on providing personal care supports to students who need them, specifically as related to toileting and diapering for students in grades K-12. For **questions about PreK students, please contact Katie McCarthy, the AOE's Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator, at katie.mccarthy@vermont.gov.**

UPDATED

These should not be taken as new requirements, but as recommended approaches, and, taken together, as being generally supportive of providing students with the resources and help that they need in a social distancing context.

General Considerations: Action Planning and Staff Involvement

"Teachers and staff should maintain a distance of 6 feet from students as much as possible. However, brief periods of closer contact, such as when a student may need one-on-one guidance, clarification, or assistance are expected and permitted. In these cases, staff should stand/kneel/sit side-by-side students (rather than face-to-face) for brief amounts of time (less than 15 minutes)." - [A Strong and Healthy Start: Safety and Health Guidance for Vermont Schools FAQ 3: Instructional Practices](#)

The assumption of this toileting and diapering guidance is that the toileting process will exceed the 15-minute time frame, and therefore requires additional guidance.

If staff are anticipating the need to provide a student with personal care, an action plan should be developed within the IEP team, in conjunction with the school nurse. Special consideration should be given to instances where staff anticipate needing to be close to the student for longer than 15 minutes. When appropriate, guidance from the child's physician may help bring the team clarity around the safest and most viable solution.

Toileting

A student may need a toileting plan if the team anticipates that there will be significant distancing issues when staff are providing that student with support. Toileting plans should be discussed within the IEP team in conjunction with the school nurse.

Contact Information:

If you have questions about this document or would like additional information please contact: [Katy Langevin](#), Student Support Services, Special Education

A recommended, general application toileting procedure follows. This procedure is designed to be adopted by an IEP team, or to be modified by an IEP team to fit the specific needs of a student. Adopted procedures should be posted in all toileting and diaper changing areas.

Model Toileting Procedure

1. Staff should gather the necessary materials (gloves, a fresh change of underwear if needed, wipes if needed etc.) ahead of time and store them where they will be readily accessible during toileting.
2. Designated staff member should wash their hands and the hands of the student.
3. Designated staff member should put on gloves.
4. If the student is unable to wear a mask for the majority of the day but can wear one for short periods of time, have the child put a mask on. Staff may use their gloved hands to help them with their mask.
5. Place student on toilet if the student needs help.
6. Staff should stand an appropriate distance away from the student, unless there is a risk to the student's safety (such as falling into the toilet). Exceptions to this approach should be discussed within the IEP team.
7. Staff should help the student to clean themselves as needed.
8. Staff should roll soiled gloves over any un-flushable garbage (wipes etc.) by holding the garbage in your gloved hand and rolling the glove off over it. Do the same with the other hand.
9. Dispose of trash.
10. Flush toilet.
11. Staff should wash their hands, and the hands of the student.

Keeping the Student on the Toilet

Keeping the student on the toilet will reduce the number of times that a staff member needs to place the student back on the toilet, thereby decreasing close contact with the student. The strategies described below may be used, at a school's discretion, when a student is likely to get up from the toilet before finishing.

- Provide a stool for stabilization if the student's feet cannot reach the floor.
- Provide an adaptive seat that fits the student, and that prevents them from slipping
- Give the student a highly motivating "bathroom toy" or activity that they can only access while sitting on the toilet. This can be an actual object (that will need to be cleaned in a bleach solution after each use) or an activity, such as singing a song that they love or blowing bubbles.

Diapering

Students who are able to stand are often changed using a Standing Change method, but this technique may be contraindicated if it puts the student's face at the same eye-level as the caregiver, as it makes the exchange of droplets more likely. This scenario should be discussed

by the IEP team in conjunction with the school nurse to determine the best course of action given the unique circumstances surrounding the student, facilities and available staff.

A recommended, general application diapering change procedure follows. This procedure is designed to be adopted by an IEP team, or to be modified by an IEP team to fit the specific needs of a student. Adopted procedures should be posted in all toileting and diaper changing areas.

Diaper Change Procedure

1. Staff should gather the necessary materials (gloves, a fresh diaper, wipes, creams or powders if needed etc.) ahead of time and store them where they will be readily accessible during diapering.
2. If using the laying down method, sanitize mat and roll changing paper over the sanitized mat.
3. Staff should wash their hands and the hands of the student.
4. Staff should put on gloves.
5. Staff should put on added PPE, such as a face shield.
6. If the student is unable to wear a mask for the majority of the day but can wear one for short periods of time, have the child put a mask on. Staff may use their gloved hands to help them with their mask.
7. Open diaper and use wipes to clean student.
8. Roll soiled gloves over soiled diaper and wipes by holding the rolled-up diaper with wipes inside in your gloved hand and rolling the glove off over it. Do the same with the other hand. If the diaper is too large, roll up the diaper and dispose of it, and then roll off gloves.
9. If reusable cloth diapers are used during diaper changing, they should not be rinsed or cleaned in the facility. The soiled cloth diaper and its contents (without emptying or rinsing) should be placed in a plastic bag or into a plastic-lined, hands-free covered diaper pail to give to parents/guardians or a laundry service.
10. Staff should put on new clean gloves, apply any needed creams or powders, and apply a fresh diaper to the student.
11. Dispose of gloves.
12. Staff should wash their hands and the hands of the student.
13. Disinfect the diapering area with a fragrance-free bleach that is EPA-registered as a sanitizing or disinfecting solution. If other products are used for sanitizing or disinfecting, they should also be fragrance-free and EPA-registered. If the surface is dirty, it should be cleaned with detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.