

## Home Study Frequently Asked Questions

### *Special Needs/Special Education Questions:*

#### **What must I do to enroll my child who has special needs or is eligible for special education services in a home study program?**

Families self-identify if their student has a disability. The Minimum Course of Study (MCOS) for these students must include a description of any special services or adaptations to be made to accommodate the disability. This must be completed annually regardless of their MCOS exemption status. Families may (but are not required to) provide a copy of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan in their enrollment packet.

#### **What are adaptations?**

Adaptations are methods or materials used to accommodate any special needs the student has as a result of a disability. Adaptations enable students to make progress which is commensurate with his/her age and ability while factoring in the disability. The goal of implementing adaptations is to enable a student to progress as closely to his/her age and ability as can be reasonably be expected within the course of a school year.

It's important that families develop their own adaptations and not take them solely from the IEP or 504 plan as they may not be applicable to the home study program. For example, in schools, teachers may give students preferential seating. This is most likely closer to the teacher for the student to hear or see better, be more focused and/or experience fewer distractions. While preferential seating may have been important in the school setting, it may not be necessary in a home study setting.

#### **What if adaptations are not needed for every area in the MCOS?**

*Only* identify the adaptations needed for the specific content areas. For example, if the student has a math disability, he/she might use manipulatives, a calculator, or an online program such as Kahn Academy to provide supplemental instruction. Since these adaptations are only for math, then they are not required for every subject area.

If there are general adaptations that will span the entire MCOS, there is a specific section on the Adaptations form where this can be identified, thus the adaptation will not need to be repeated for each subject area. For example, if the student accesses a voice-to-text program to write, that adaptation may be used during Basic Communication: reading/writing, Citizenship/History/Government, and Natural Sciences. This adaptation is more global and only needs to be identified once.

### **Will my school still provide my child with special education services?**

Students enrolled in home study programs are not entitled to special education services at the school. At the discretion of the school, they may provide special education services to homeschoolers through a Services Plan. A services plan may include consultation, special education and/or related services.

Families who would like to be considered for a Services Plan for their child should contact the school principal or special education director.

### **Can my child access an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?**

If a student with a disability is participating in a class at the public school and needs supports and/or services to access the class, then the student may have a Services Plan or IEP for that class. For example, if the student has a math disability and needs specialized math instruction to be able to access an Algebra class, then the student may be able to receive a Services Plan or IEP for math only. Additionally, if the student has a reading disability and wants to access a PE class, then the student most likely will not need any reading supports and services. The receipt of an IEP is at the discretion of the individual school.

### **May I request that my public school complete a special education evaluation for my child if I suspect there is a disability?**

Families who suspect that their child has a disability may request a special education evaluation. If the school district feels that an evaluation is not warranted, then the school must provide that information in writing. If the school district agrees to conduct an evaluation, it is at no cost to the family.

To access a special education evaluation, the student does not need to be enrolled in the public school. Contact your local school for more information about evaluations.

### **Who can I contact if I have questions regarding special education?**

The VT Agency of Education Home Study technical assistance line: 802- 828-6225,  
The VT Agency of Education Special Education technical assistance line: 802-828-1256  
The Vermont Family Network at 800-800-4005 or  
The Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health: 802-876-7021

### **Other Questions:**

#### **I need help, how can I contact someone at the Home Study Office?**

You can contact the Home Study office by email: [aoe.homestudy@vermont.gov](mailto:aoe.homestudy@vermont.gov) or by our technical assistance phone number, (You will not initially talk to a staff member, as this is a voicemail system): 802- 828-6225.

Emails and voicemails are generally answered within 1-2 business days depending on the time of year and the volume of calls/emails.

Please choose to either email or call the Home Study Office. Emailing and contacting multiple staff members directly with the same questions significantly delays our responses to families. We appreciate your patience.