

Good afternoon,

I'm writing to shine a little light on my son's experience during distance learning. He has very special needs, he's significantly delayed. He had to endure the mess that is "distance learning", along with his classmates. His goals are ones that can really only be reached from in-person instruction. Speech, OT, and PT through Zoom was a joke. It was impossible for my son and zero alternatives were given. His special education teacher is absolutely incredible, but in distance learning, her hands are tied. There's only so much they can do through a computer screen. It was honestly completely pointless. It was one of the most depressing and stressful experiences for my son. He was a different person during that time. He was frustrated and angry... very self-injurious, hitting his head frequently. He is a non-speaker and it was an absolute nightmare for him, as well as the rest of my family. It was heartbreaking watching him suffer.

Since going back to in-person learning, even though it is insanely insufficient (only 2.5 hours/day), he is indeed much happier. His self-injurious behavior has almost totally subsided. He has started reaching goals again. He's FINALLY able to receive all his special services (speech, physical therapy, occupational therapy), something that was completely absent for the duration of distance learning. Please work to never let this happen to our children again. It is detrimental to their mental health. It is absolutely wrong and every single child deserves and has the right to a proper and equal education. Children like mine, ones with disabilities, were just cast to the side and not given a second thought during all this. Please protect these kids.

-Jenee Gleason