

# Learning Environments During COVID-19

## Helping Special Education Directors, Teachers, and Staff Identify Key Differences

These learning environments can be confusing, and some are often misinterpreted or misused. Each environment has specific statutory references or policies and procedures for implementation. Distance learning is an alternative instructional learning model being utilized by many public education agencies (PEAs) across Arizona as a result of COVID-19. Review the comparison below to understand the key differences in each.

### Arizona Online Instruction

As outlined in A.R.S. §15-808, Arizona Online Instruction (AOI) refers to approved online schools to provide instruction through a variety of educational methodologies employed by the school to meet the needs and learning styles of targeted pupil populations. Entitlement to IDEA applies and the reporting standards for AOIs apply according to School Finance guidance.

### Distance Learning Program (per EO 2020-51)

A distance learning program (DLP) is the education of students who may not always be present physically at a brick-and-mortar school that can be completely distance learning or combined with in-person learning and is not defined as an AOI program. Entitlement to IDEA applies and traditional reporting for students is still in effect however there are certain caveats with DLPs; see guidance from School Finance.

### Home Instruction

Home instruction is a placement on the least restrictive environment continuum (34 C.F.R. §300.39). An IEP team may only place a student with a disability on home instruction if it determines he/she can't receive FAPE in a less restrictive setting. Entitlement to IDEA applies.

### Homebound

Governed by A.R.S. §15-901, homebound applies to *general education and special education* students who are unable to attend school as certified by a medical doctor for a period of not less than three months, either consecutively or intermittently. This is reported as a student need in AzEDS and is not a special education disability, however entitlement to IDEA applies.

### Homeschool

A nonpublic school conducted primarily by the parent, guardian, or other person who has custody of the child or nonpublic instruction provided in the child's home as defined in A.R.S. §15-802. Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) does not apply however equitable service may.