

Update to Policies and Practices for the NJ Early Intervention System

June 22, 2020

****Please note that the policies outlined in this guide will become effective July 6th.****

Temporary Procedures: Service Settings Considerations

Telehealth

Telehealth services will continue to be an option for service delivery for the NJEIS through at least September 30, 2020. A family's decline to receive service via telehealth is *not* considered a decline of the service.

Center-based Services

Early Intervention Provider (EIPs) agencies that are equipped with space and materials to provide services in a controlled environment such as a center, school building or set aside office space, may offer center-based services as an IFSP service delivery option. The center-based environment must:

- a. Adhere to the minimum safety protocols outlined in the "Guidance for New Jersey Child Care Facilities On COVID-19 Related Health and Safety Requirements May 29, 2020".
- b. Limit the number of participants in the session to 3 individuals (the child, family member and practitioner)

A family's decline to receive service via a center-based option is not considered a decline of the service.

In-home services

In-home services continue to not be allowed until approval of Governor Murphy and DOH.

IFSPs that require in-home visits will resume in accordance with safety guidelines and protocols and at a timeline determined by DOH. In-home services shall be limited 3 participants: the child, the parent and the practitioner. Practitioners will be required to adhere to additional safety procedures outlined and provided by DOH.

Hybrid service delivery

Each of the above provides families and practitioners flexibility in meeting the IFSP needs of individual families and children. IFSP teams are encouraged to devise Hybrid service delivery methods, which include a combination of telehealth, in-home, and center-based services.

Temporary Procedures: Evaluation and Assessment

Annual Evaluations

The annual evaluation shall be conducted at times and places convenient for families and with consideration of the family's preferred method. Evaluations may be conducted: a. In a telehealth platform, or b. In a center-based environment which adheres to the minimum safety protocols outlined in the "Guidance for New Jersey Child Care Facilities On COVID-19 Related Health and Safety Requirements May 29, 2020".

Developmental Assessments

Due to Covid-19, all NJEIS families had an adjustment to their services based on individual concerns, priorities and resources including receiving services via telehealth. Therefore, to ensure the

appropriateness of IFSPs that consider the current concerns, priorities, developmental status and resources of families, assessments are needed to update IFSPs via periodic review for:

- a. Children who did not receive any telehealth services and had “standby” IFSP
- b. Children who were unable to access telehealth; and
- c. Children who had IFSPs at Public Expense

This assessment is not for determination of continuing eligibility, only developmental status and family concern updates due to COVID. The assessment shall be conducted at times and places convenient for families and with consideration of the family’s preferred method. Evaluations may be conducted: a. In a telehealth platform, or b. In a center-based environment which adheres to the minimum safety protocols outlined in the “Guidance for New Jersey Child Care Facilities On COVID-19 Related Health and Safety Requirements May 29, 2020”

Temporary Procedures: Compensatory Services for Children Age 3

Policies have been established to provide procedures for determining and providing compensatory/make-up services to children who have or will turn 3 and did not receive certain services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Children covered under this Temporary Procedure/Policy:

1. Children who have or will turn 3 years of age and did not receive certain NJEIS services between March 8, 2020 up to and including March 17, 2020.
2. Children who have or will turn 3 years of age and did not receive certain NJEIS services from April 1 through their 3rd birthday.
3. Services missed March 18 through March 31, 2020 do not qualify for make-up/compensatory services.

If the family requests compensatory services, services can be provided by telehealth or by in-person visits at a center based service.

Additional policies and procedures are expected by July 1 regarding compensatory services for children currently active in the system (under age 3), initial evaluations and assessments for children exiting the system.