

Early Intervention and Turning Three During COVID-19

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Guidance Updates on Early Intervention

- DPH/Mass Health:
 - Approved a temporary policy change and eligibility extension for EI providers/vendors to continue care (under 130 CR 440.403(A)(3)).
 - Extension until a comprehensive Part B eligibility evaluations completed, and the Local Education Authority (LEA) determines that the child has successfully transitioned to ECSE or until October 15, 2020, whichever is sooner.
 - EI providers must ensure there is no duplication of services with services provided by LEAs during the transition.

Temporary Eligibility Extension

- Covers:
 - EI services to eligible children who turn three between March 15 and August 31, 2020.
 - Referred to LEA for a Early Childhood Special Education evaluation.
 - Signed IEP but needs continued EI services to support transition to Special Education.

Temporary Eligibility Extension

- Purpose:
 - Continue to provide services, *to the extent possible*, in order to prevent regression.
 - To provide a “bridge” between EI and appropriate Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services.
- Link: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/masshealth-provider-bulletins-by-provider-type-d-h#early-intervention->

Temporary Eligibility Extension

- Provides:
 - Coverage of EI services between June 1, 2020 and October 15, 2020.
 - EI programs can provide your child's IFSP services, even if your child was already discharged from EI upon turning 3.
 - EI specialist and program must be certified.
 - EI assessments and IFSP can be utilized to build IEP although Special Education (timelines are still in effect).

Temporary Eligibility Extension

- Additional:
 - Collaboration between school districts, EI providers and family to determine best transition plan for each child.
 - If the child has started IEP services (even remotely), they would not be eligible for extended services unless the district decides to contract with the EI providers to provide such services.
 - ECSE:
 - Due to COVID 19, school districts' ability to provide inclusionary public preschool programs may be impacted due to decreased enrollment of nondisabled peers
 - Updated waiver process related to Inclusionary Class Size, 603 CMR 28.06 (7)(e) and (f) is forthcoming

Source: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>

Temporary Eligibility Extension:

- Parents Next Steps:
 - Contact your Early Intervention Provider to inform you would like to continue implementation of your child's IFSP, even if services were discontinued.
 - Follow steps needed to continue needed evaluations for Special Education eligibility.
 - Telehealth or in-person?
 - Follow proper protocol/guidelines for PPE/Social Distancing/Health Safety

Tips for Parents

- Communicate regularly with service provider.
- Keep expectations realistic.
- Review child's IFSP goals and benchmarks and prioritize.
- Work collaboratively
- Share your challenges and concerns with the provider/team.
- Document any struggles and regression.
- Be patient with your child and yourself.

IFSP versus IEP

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| Used in EI for children birth to 3 and their families | Used in special education for children ages 3 to 21 |
| Includes information about the child's present levels of development | Includes information about the child's present levels of educational performance and participation in developmentally appropriate activities |
| With the family's approval, it may also include information regarding the family's resources, priorities, and concerns related to the development of their child | Includes information about the family's concerns for enhancing the child's education |
| After the team determines a list of priorities and concerns, the family determines which outcomes will be included on the IFSP | The IEP team, including the parents or guardians and related service providers who work with the child, determines the goals |

IFSP versus IEP

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|---|--|
| <p>Includes the major outcomes desired for the child and family, as well as the methods, timelines, and a plan to measure progress</p> | <p>Includes measurable annual goals, academic and functionally, designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general curriculum;• Describe how progress will be measured and how often• Describe how progress will be reported to the family |
| <p>Includes the natural environments where services will be provided</p> | <p>Describes services provided in the least restrictive environments (LREs) and an explanation of the extent, if any, that the child will not participate with typically developing children</p> |
| <p>Includes the early intervention services and supports necessary to meet the unique need of the child and family in order to achieve the identified outcomes.</p> | <p>Includes the special education, related services, supplemental aides and services, modifications, and supports to help the child make progress and participate in developmentally appropriate activities</p> |

IFSP versus IEP

Team membership includes:

- A parent or parents of the child
- Other family members as requested by parents
- An advocate or person outside of the family if the parent requests
- Service Coordinator
- A person or persons conducting evaluations or assessments.

Team membership includes:

- A parent or parents of the child
- Regular Education Teacher
- Special Education Teacher
- A representative of the school district who can commit resources
- Person who can interpret results of evaluations
- Others who have knowledge or expertise about the child.

Source: <https://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c59.pdf>

Early Intervention Resources

Early Intervention:

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/early-intervention-division>

ASHA Webinar Series/Covid-19:

<https://www.asha.org/Events/COVID-19-ASHA-Web-Event-Series-on-Early-Intervention/>

Early Intervention to Special Education:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/ecse/StrategicAreas.html#transition>

Telehealth and COVID-19:

<https://www.mass.gov/alerts/ei-telehealth#1483216>

Video Series Early Intervention through technology:

<https://ddc.ohio.gov/video-ei-series>

Special Education Resources

Tips on Pre-K and Distance Learning:

<https://cec.sped.org/Tools-and-Resources/Resources-for-Teaching-Remotely/Webinars/EarlyChildhoodOnline>

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/7-tips-managing-distance-learning-preschool>

<https://sites.google.com/dpi.nc.gov/nck-3fap/remote-learning/pre-kindergarten-remote-learning>

The Student Remote Learning Plan:

<https://files.constantcontact.com/2cce95d1401/920816a3-3746-4a0e-9243-18968e516280.pdf>

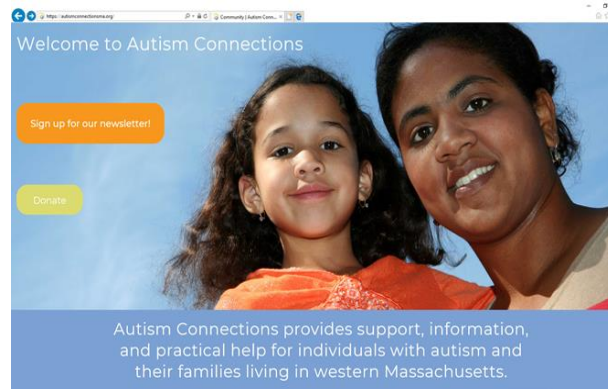
The Student Daily Remote Learning Record:


<https://files.constantcontact.com/2cce95d1401/be8a6bee-8eaf-4914-a700-68082250b68a.pdf>

Questions and Contact Info

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- We have two Facebook pages:  *Autism Connections and Autism Connections Berkshire*

Autism Connections is a  Pathlight program

