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To: All Early Intervention Stakeholders

From: Ann Freiburg, Chief *AmF*
Bureau of Early Intervention

Date: July 22, 2020

Re: Early Intervention Weekly Update

For the week ending July 24, 2020, we want to ensure that all interested parties are aware of the IDHS-posted [guidance](#) for resuming in-person services in early intervention. While the guidance was generated from stakeholder and Illinois Department of Public Health input, we realize that many questions remain. Questions are currently being collected by various stakeholders as well as the Bureau of Early Intervention and a formal Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is being developed to help clarify the recommended practices.

In addition, the Early Intervention Training Program (EITP) is using these questions to develop recorded informational sessions that will be posted in the very near future that can be accessed at any time by EI stakeholders. If, after seeing the recorded informational sessions and/or reading the upcoming FAQs, you have additional questions, please send them to DHS.EIQuestions@Illinois.gov. While individuals submitting questions will not necessarily receive an individual, direct response to their question, the questions will definitely shape the content of future FAQs, recordings and updates to the Guidance as we continue to move through the Restore Illinois phases.

To begin clarifying guidance, we have already received a number of questions about what the “ten families” limit means. Here are some things you should know to determine what “ten” means:

- Ten is the universe of families you can have in-person contact with during a certain period of time (in-person contact is defined as face-to-face interactions within six feet for more than fifteen minutes). New families should be introduced into your weekly ten only after a period of 14 days from your last contact with the family who transitioned off your caseload.
- Ten is not a weekly number. Early Interventionists should **not** plan to have one set of ten families the first week and a different set of ten families the second week. The logic behind ten is to mitigate risk, so seeing a different ten each week does not accomplish this goal. If, for example, you are utilizing all ten of your spots for direct service, you should only pick up a new in-person child/family when another transitions or no longer receives in-person support.
- Ten is the total number of families with which you are permitted to have in-person contact across all your EI activities. This means if you have an evaluation and an IFSP meeting in a week, these two families count toward your ten. You would then only be able to see eight other families for direct service provision.

- Similarly, if you work in other settings where you are having in-person, sustained contact with children and families, they count towards your ten as well since the goal is mitigating risk. Each additional person with whom you have sustained contact increases risk.

We have also received quite a few questions about using face masks. A few points of clarification:

- All providers must wear a face mask during their time with children/families (additional face protection may be needed depending on the outcomes being addressed and the potential for aerosol transmission).
- Children under two do not wear face masks; children two and over wear masks as tolerated.
- All caregivers must wear masks during their time with early intervention professionals.

The Re-Open Illinois EI workgroup continues to meet weekly and the sub-workgroups report weekly as we continue to monitor the preparation for in-person services. A new workgroup for Communication has been formed which is charged with developing a plan for consistent and broad-spread communication for EI service delivery during the COVID pandemic.

Please continue to monitor the [EITP website](#) and [Facebook](#) page, the [EI Clearinghouse](#) as well as [Provider Connections](#) websites often for additional information as it becomes available.

We truly do appreciate the dedication of the stakeholders who have helped form the guidance as well as the dedication of all EI providers who have continued to support families through coaching in Phone Consultation and Live Video Visits. The informed decision to resume in-person services or maintain other service delivery modalities still available for families deserves intentional consideration and teaming to continue to help Illinois Early Intervention children and their families.