



JB Pritzker, Governor

Illinois Department of Human Services

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To: All Early Intervention Stakeholders
From: Heather Hofferkamp, Interim Chief
Bureau of Early Intervention
Date: January 7, 2022
Re: Early Intervention (EI) Weekly Update

IDHS is currently finalizing new policy and procedure information for extended services. Once this is completed, the next step is gaining approval from the Office of Special Education Programs and then finally posting the information for public comment.

Given the recent surge of the Omicron variant, the Division of Early Childhood wants to remind everyone of resources to promote safety and health, both physical and economic. Please visit the [Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development \(GOECD\)](#) for information on vaccines, as well as links to the most current guidance and opportunities, such as the new Strengthen and Grow Child Care Grants, the recently extended Child Care Restoration Grants, and the Workforce Bonus. You can also view the [presentation recording](#) and [slides](#) from the most recent GOECD Briefing, during which IDPH Epidemiologist, Shelby Daniel-Wayman, shared the latest data on COVID-19 in Illinois child care settings.

The new variant continues to create concerning trends related to COVID-19. It is important that everyone continue using the strategies outlined in the [revised plan](#) to mitigate the spread of this virus. **In addition, everyone (providers, service coordinators, and families) should continue wearing masks, washing hands, and maintaining physical distance.** Those who are able should also obtain the vaccine and booster.

The surge in cases has some providers choosing to provide remote services only. This may or may not fit with the plan that families have for their service provision, but it is permissible for providers to make this choice based on their own health and well-being. Telephone consultation with families continues to be a permitted use of IFSP development time during the pandemic. We ask that everyone take the steps necessary to mitigate the additional spread of the virus while still supporting the children and families in the system.

The Early Intervention Clearinghouse received Governor's Emergency Education Relief funds to support the purchase of equipment for live video visits. They have technology items such as iPads and hotspots that can be borrowed by families participating in early intervention services. Families can request a tech loan at this link: <https://eiclearinghouse.org/resources/techloan/>. **Please share this information with families who would like to participate in live video visits but lack the technology to do this.**

The [Illinois Department of Public Health's website](#) continues to be the best source of information on [regional conditions](#) and the activities permitted within each region. For details about approved activities, review the [updated plan](#). If you need information about where you can get a vaccine, visit: <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/vaccination-location>. Please continue to monitor the [Provider Connections website](#) for updates to policy and procedure. The [EITP website](#) and [Facebook](#) page, and the [EI Clearinghouse website](#) should also be monitored for information and resources.