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Illinois Department of Human Services

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To: All Early Intervention Stakeholders

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

Date: June 4, 2021

Re: Early Intervention (EI) Weekly Update

Last week, we updated our [guidelines](#) for how services can be provided during the Bridge Phase of the Reopen Plan. For a complete list of the changes, explore this [link](#). As with other guidance, this information was developed in consultation with Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) officials and guided by the best available evidence currently on hand and what we know about the population we are serving. A primary motivation for many of the continuing requirements is the knowledge that Early Intervention children under the age of three are not yet eligible to be vaccinated. This means that EVERY family visited has at least one unvaccinated person and that this person can potentially contract and pass on the virus. Therefore, IDPH has asked that “**to the maximum extent possible**” individuals providing in-person support be vaccinated. This, like all the other recommendations (e.g. continued mask use, improved ventilation, and repeated emphasis on live video visit use), is intended to mitigate the spread of the virus.

We have received a variety of questions about vaccination status. **The Bureau continues to encourage everyone who is eligible to obtain the vaccine, but we will not collect or share vaccine information on anyone.** While it is currently our best defense against the virus, we understand that some individuals are not eligible or willing to receive the vaccine. As stated in prior updates, we are not asking individuals (providers or families) to share their vaccination status. We are sharing public health recommendations and relying on our stakeholders to honestly comply. Service coordinators will not be collecting or tracking provider vaccination status. As with referrals prior to the pandemic, family preferences often guide provider selection and sometimes are able to be met and sometimes are not. When a provider declines a referral, the provider is not required to share why they are not able to meet the family’s stated preference.

We have also received questions about having more than one provider in the home. The guidelines reflect IDPH’s recommendation. “More than one provider can be in the home (dependent on family consent and comfort level) if those individuals are fully vaccinated.” We were not given an upward limit on the number of vaccinated individuals able to be in the family’s home. This updated guideline affords opportunities for arena evaluation/assessment, co-treatment, interpreter attendance, student observations, and assistant-supervisor interactions.

If indicators continue to move in the desired fashion, Illinois could enter Phase 5 as soon as June 11, 2021. We will soon be consulting with IDPH to see what additional changes we can make to our guidelines in response to this shift.

To find where you can get a vaccine, visit: <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/vaccination-location>. As we evaluate the new information about the protections afforded by the vaccine, we suggest continuing to wear masks, wash hands, and maintain physical distance. 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](#).

Please monitor the [Provider Connections' website](#) for updates to policy and procedure. The [EITP's website](#) and [Facebook page](#), and the [EI Clearinghouse's website](#) should also be monitored for information and resources.

Thank you for your continued commitment to infants, toddlers, and families!