



JB Pritzker, Governor

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To: All Early Intervention Stakeholders  
From: Heather Hofferkamp, Interim Chief <sup>HMA</sup>  
Bureau of Early Intervention  
Date: March 2, 2022  
Re: Early Intervention (EI) Stakeholder Update

**Voucher Update:** Provider vouchers have been processed thru February 23, 2022.

**COVID-19 Guidance-** We have appreciated our [families](#) and [providers](#) willingness to adapt to changing rules and regulations throughout these unprecedented times. Our priority has always been the continuation of services for children, while protecting their safety. This remains our priority. Therefore, EI will continue to recommend wearing masks during in person services. This decision follows the Governor's guidance to still require masks in certain high-risk settings. EI serves some of the most vulnerable populations impacted by COVID-19. It is our duty to take precautionary measures to keep our families, providers, and staff safe. As we continue making a return to normalcy, we do not make these decisions lightly. We rely heavily on guidelines set by our local, state, and federal government, the CDC, and the advice and guidance set forth by the Illinois Department of Public Health. EI providers should continue to complete the [Family Risk Screenings Checklist](#) with the family prior to all in person visits and we recommend that everyone who is able remain masked during any in person service delivery. Live Video Visits (LVV) remain a viable option for service delivery if a family does not wish to participate in person with EI service providers. We appreciate your understanding of our need to keep the vulnerable populations we serve safe. Links to additional resources are imbedded above.

**EI Inquiry Highlight-** *Why are there limited codes for direct service billing?* As there are many types of therapy for every discipline, we offer, one direct therapy billing code for each discipline, Speech Therapy is 92507, Physical Therapy is 97110, Occupational Therapy is 97530. We do not offer alternate codes for service delivery modalities at this point. The question that we are highlighting was specific to Speech Therapy services and the provision of two different Speech Therapy services (feeding/articulation) on the same day. We have discussed best practice in terms of multiple therapy sessions on the same day with many different individuals/disciplines, and all agree that we never want to overwhelm a family with multiple therapies in one day. We have been advised that many time the Speech provider will divide the authorized time and offer 30 minutes of Speech, and 30 minutes of Feeding at one visit, so families are not overwhelmed.

**Provider Connections Website Change-** Provider Connections is pleased to announce the migration to a new and improved website effective March 1, 2022. The new site has a different URL. Users who use the current URL will be redirected to the new site address which is [www.providerconnections.org](http://www.providerconnections.org). We are hopeful this effort will provide users with a more easily navigated website.

**CDC Milestones-** As you may have heard, the CDC has updated their [developmental milestone checklist](#). It is important to recognize that the CDC milestones are a **support** for developmental surveillance and were never intended to take the place of developmental screening, evaluation, assessment, having conversations with families, etc. Previous CDC checklists set developmental milestones using 50th percentiles, that is, what 50% of the children are expected to achieve by a certain age. For example, according to these checklists, 50% of children were expected to pull up to stand and walk holding on to furniture at 12 months. According to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) (AAP), milestones set in that way often led to a "wait-and-see approach", since half of children aren't expected to reach that milestone by that age. This wasn't helpful to identify potential developmental problems because it delayed diagnoses and interventions. The new checklists use 75th percentiles, meaning they are based on what at least 75% of the children can do by a certain age. This makes it easier to identify potential delays in the 25% of the children that lag behind. The revised milestones now align with the 'health supervision' or wellness visits across the first few years.

**Innovations-** The EI Clearinghouse received Governor's Emergency Education Relief funds to support the purchase of equipment for LVV. They have technology items such as iPads and hotspots that can be borrowed by families participating in EI services. Families and providers can request a tech loan for any EI family through [EI Clearinghouse website](#). Please share this information with families who would like to participate in LVV but lack the technology to do this.