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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 29, 2021

Re: Early Intervention (EI) Weekly Update

Last week, we released [guidance](#) for providing services during Phase 5. This guidance was developed in conjunction with input from Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) officials to ensure the safety of our entire EI community - families, providers, and service coordinators (SCs). We have received some questions about the focus on in-person service delivery. This occurred because that was the remaining piece of our system that had not fully reopened during the Bridge Phase. The emphasis on in-person service delivery was to let everyone know that there were no more limits surrounding this approach to service delivery. Given the value of Live Video Visits (LVVs) during the pandemic, the Bureau has asked the Telehealth Workgroup of the Illinois Interagency Council on Early Intervention (IICEI) to provide recommendations for the use of LVVs beyond the pandemic.

As stated in the guidance, the choice of service delivery method must remain a team (family/caregiver, EI Provider, and SC) discussion that considers the options available and potential risk factors to all team members. Since all children in EI are still unvaccinated, there continues to be a level of risk for every family and team. With the move to Phase 5, teams now have the option to provide all services in-person, but that may or may not be the best choice for individual families. We encourage teams to consider risks and preferences in their decision-making and anticipate that the Telehealth Workgroup's recommendations will assist the development of policies and procedures that support this informed decision-making. Though not specifically stated in the guidance, it is assumed that interventionists will continue to utilize the coaching skills developed/enhanced during LVVs to support caregivers' efforts to facilitate their children's development even when providing in-person services.

In anticipation of continued use of LVVs for service delivery, it is important that there is equitable access to the internet. Federal COVID-19 relief funding is being used to provide eligible households discounts on internet service and devices. You can read more about the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program [here](#). Please share this information with the families you serve and help us close the digital divide.

If you need information about where you can get a vaccine, visit: <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/vaccination-location>. Given the unvaccinated population we serve, please continue [prescreening](#) for symptoms, wearing masks, washing hands, and maintaining physical distance. The [Illinois Department of Public Health's website](#) continues to be the best source of information on [regional conditions](#).

Please continue to 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 continuing to make decisions that maximize the safety of our entire community!