



JB Pritzker, Governor

Illinois Department of Human Services

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To: All Early Intervention Stakeholders

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

Date: August 13, 2021

Re: Early Intervention (EI) Weekly Update

The Illinois Interagency Council on Early Intervention (IICEI) Reopen Early Intervention (EI) workgroup met for the final time July 27, 2021. They received final recommendations from the social-emotional subgroup and workgroup updates. They were also informed that the Governor signed HB3308 which will permit the continued use of telehealth/live video visits in early intervention. The IICEI telehealth workgroup also met at the beginning of August to finalize their recommendations for live video visit use beyond the pandemic. The Bureau is grateful to all the members of the Reopen workgroup and thanks them for their contributions!

Illinois is now seeing concerning trends, e.g. increasing positivity rates, decreasing hospital bed availability and/or increasing COVID-19 patients in the hospital, in *every* region. As a result, we would like to remind everyone about the importance of using the strategies outlined in the [revised plan](#) to mitigate the spread of this virus. **We recommend that everyone (providers, service coordinators, and families) continue wearing masks, washing hands, and maintaining physical distance.** To the degree possible, we also recommend providing services in well-ventilated indoor spaces or outdoors.

While this update reinforces the importance of mask use for our provider and service coordinator communities, the EI Clearinghouse and the Central Billing Office will be providing messages around the importance of mask use to families as well. If providers encounter families unwilling to use masks or if families encounter providers unwilling to use a mask, they should reach out to their service coordinator for assistance.

Given new information about the Delta variant, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) updated their [guidance](#) for fully vaccinated people. 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>.

With the rising number of cases and the passage of the telehealth law, it is likely that live video visit use may increase. In order to ensure that families obtain the support they need, providers should continue to provide the amount of service authorized on the Individualized Family Service Plan and should only be shortening the length of visits at the family's request. It is permissible to offer two, shorter visits within the same week to reach the full amount of time authorized, e.g.

two thirty minute visits rather than one sixty minute visit. For additional resources on successful live video visits, explore both the [EI Training Program \(EITP\) website](#) and the [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center \(ECTA\) website](#).

This week also brings updates to the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) accounting system which took effect July 1, 2021. The Bureau successfully completed payments for all weekly vouchers from SFY21 ending with the weekly voucher of June 30, 2021 and have been collaborating with IDHS Budget and Fiscal teams to move the process into the new system for SFY22. While some hiccups have occurred, we continue to engage with those responsible for ensuring correct transactions.

We are currently moving weekly vouchers for 07/07/21 and 07/14/21 forward and have noticed some issues. Please understand we have staff specifically dedicated to working on this process daily to ensure it resumes in the new system just as it did in the former system as quickly as possible. We appreciate your continued patience and understanding while this transition takes place. We will continue to provide updates as we confirm the status with IDHS team members as quickly as we receive them.

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.

Thank you for continuing to make decisions that maximize the safety of our entire community!