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Illinois Department of Human Services

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To: Early Intervention Providers

From: Heather Hofferkamp, Interim Bureau Chief *HMH*  
Bureau of Early Intervention

Date: May 9, 2022

RE: Early Intervention/Extended Services (EI/ES) Option

Beginning January 1, 2022, the Illinois Early Intervention (EI) Program offers parents of eligible children, under the Early Intervention/Extended Service (EI/ES) option, the choice to continue to be eligible for EI beyond their child's third birthday until the start of the school year following their third birthday, when all of the following **criteria** are met. The child must:

- have been determined eligible for early intervention with services identified and consented to on the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), and
- have their third birthday between May 1 and August 31 and
- have been found eligible for early childhood special education services (ECSE) under IDEA and Section 14-8.02 of Public Act 102-0209 (Section 11h) and created an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Many of our providers have already been contacted regarding this change, as they have children on their current caseloads who are potentially eligible for this option. If you have not been contacted and you have questions or concerns about a child who falls into this category, please reach out to the Service Coordinator.

Please note, timeframes for submission of required documentation and the transition process have not changed. Since there is no guarantee that a child will be determined eligible for an IEP, transition should proceed as usual. There will not be a requirement for an updated IFSP to extend services, so providers will need to focus their coaching strategies on supporting families through the transition that could occur at age three and also consider what they might continue to provide throughout the summer if the child is determined eligible for EI/ES.

Providers should be prepared to give examples of what types of continuing coaching options will be provided if the child qualifies for and the parent consents to services after age three. Parents need this information to make an informed decision about their options at the IEP meeting if the child is determined eligible. School districts will be sharing the parents' decision with the Child and Family Connections Office (CFC) within two business days of the IEP meeting. Service Coordinators will then advise the IFSP team of the decision as soon as possible, to avoid any gaps in service.

When assessing your current caseload, it is especially important to review your current strategies and the goals on the IFSP to determine if continued services would be beneficial for the child and family. If you determine that the child has met their objectives, you will need to share this assessment with the family and work with the IFSP team to determine if continued services are developmentally appropriate for the child.

After review of your current caseload, you may be concerned that there are multiple children who will be transitioning to Part B on the same date, due to having the same start date with ECSE. The CFCs have shared that they are aware of this issue and that they will make every effort to be sure that new families are aware of all available providers when offering parent choice during IFSP planning. As the number of referrals has increased dramatically over the past few months, we do not foresee any significant delays in replenishing provider caseloads.

This is new for all of us! The Bureau plans to continually review the current process and will work with all our stakeholders to ensure that any gaps in procedure or planning will be addressed as we move forward. Thank you for everything you do for our families!