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**Westchester County Department of Health
Bureau of Early Intervention
COVID-19 Return to In-person Services**

Recommendations for resuming EI Home Visits during the COVID-19 Pandemic

This continues to be a rapidly evolving situation. It is the responsibility of each provider to follow all New York State Department of Health guidelines, Westchester County Department of Health and those of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Prior to resuming home visits, it is recommended that you update your Health and Safety policy to include universal precautions related to COVID-19.

Early Intervention (EI) services should continue to be provided via telehealth, to the greatest extent possible. Westchester County Department of Health is, however, permitting a return to in-person home and community-based service delivery in appropriate situations for EI children. The following forms of in-person service delivery will be allowed to resume July 1, 2020:

- Home/community-based Early Intervention services
 - Multidisciplinary Evaluations to establish eligibility for the Program
 - Supplemental evaluations after eligibility has been established
 - Individual facility-based services
1. Service Coordinators: review with families the attached documents:
 - Westchester County Department of Health Early Intervention Program – Resumption of In-Person Services - This document is to be completed by the provider and the family prior to the start of in-person services. This form is to be completed **one time** when in-person services resume. This document must be attached to the child's integrated case in NYEIS.
 - Westchester County Department of Health COVID-19 Health Screening Assessment - This form is to be completed by the provider at **every** in-person session. This form requires the signatures of the provider and family member attesting to the accuracy of the information for all household members.
 2. If it is appropriate to resume some or all of in-person home- or community-based services:
 - Service Coordinators are required to discuss the benefits of continuing the telehealth modality in the Early Intervention Program, including that:
 - Use of telehealth helps slow the spread of COVID-19
 - Research shows that telehealth
 - Provides greater scheduling flexibility for parents
 - Is as effective as in-person therapy

- Increases positive child outcomes
 - Increases reports of parent engagement, self-efficacy, and empowerment
- Service Coordinators should review with families the information in the attached document titled ***New York State Department of Health Guidance to Early Intervention Providers Regarding Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Reopening New York: Resuming In-Person Early Intervention Program, issued June 18, 2020***
3. If a parent wants to resume in-person services, and the therapist/teacher who has been providing telehealth is unable to provide in-person services to the child:
 - Provider agencies should communicate with families that telehealth will continue until an in-person provider is located.
 - Obtain Consent for the Use of Telehealth during the Declared State of Emergency for COVID-19 to allow for flexibility in service delivery; in-person and telehealth when appropriate.
 4. Early Intervention services in childcare settings:
 - The delivery of Early Intervention services in childcare settings is permissible once childcare centers reopen.
 - Early Intervention providers must verify that the childcare program is open and available to reinstate in-person services.
 - Early Intervention providers must follow all requirements issued by the NYS Department of Health regarding the delivery of Early Intervention and other itinerant services in childcare centers during COVID-19. Refer to the attached ***New York State Department of Health Guidance to Early Intervention Providers Regarding Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Reopening New York: Resuming In-Person Early Intervention Program, issued June 18, 2020.***
 - Early Intervention provider must follow all entry screening and control protocols implemented by the childcare center for prevention of transmission of COVID-19

References:

See the NYS DOH BEI “Frequently Asked Questions Related to Virtual Early Intervention Visits During COVID-19 Declared State of Emergency and Re-opening New York: Resuming In-Person EIP Services; June 18, 2020

NYS DOH COVID 19 Webpage:

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>

Westchester County Department of Health:

<https://health.westchestergov.com/>

For program services under the Office of Children and Family Service:

<https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/news/COVID-19/>

Centers for Disease Control:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>