

Family Guide for Considerations of In-Home/In-Person Early Intervention (EI) Services During COVID-19



Considerations for Families



Decisions about in-person services will be made in collaboration with your EI team, that you are a part of. Tele-intervention services remain an option if your family has concerns about your family/child's safety and/or well-being and/or if you prefer tele-Intervention services to continue.

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Where to Start the Conversation with your Team

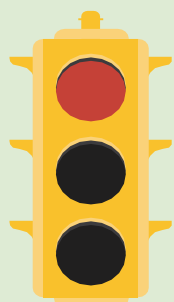
The Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports (BEISFS) recognizes that families need to understand and navigate a lot of information. For example:

- the status of COVID-19 in Pennsylvania and your community
- the guidance that BEISFS is providing to EI program leaders and EI provider(s)
- where to go for information related to COVID-19 and guidance
- what is your family's comfort level, as well as the potential risks and benefits of in-person services for your child and family

Resuming EI in-person services will only occur if your family is comfortable with this option. Tele-intervention will continue to be available as a delivery method of services.

★ Look for this icon for additional resources. (Resources are located at the end of this document.)

Step 1: Know about COVID-19 in your Community & Guidance to EI Programs.



- In-person EI services are not provided. The use of tele-intervention is encouraged.
- Evaluations are held virtually.
- Preschool EI, including special education classrooms, follow the preliminary guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) regarding in-person instruction for the red phase. ★

- Tele-intervention and virtual evaluations continue.

- If requested by the family, in-person services can be provided if access to technology that allows for tele-intervention is not available, or it is determined that tele-intervention alone is not an effective option for specific EI services.

- The EI team may identify a need to schedule an in-person assessment if the assessment cannot be completed remotely.

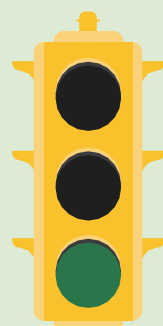
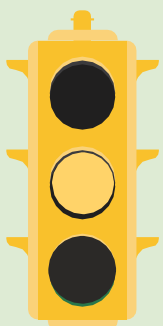
- Preschool EI special education classrooms should follow the preliminary guidance from the PDE regarding in-person instruction within schools for the yellow phase. ★

- Tele-intervention for the delivery of Infant/Toddler and Preschool EI services and conducting evaluations may continue.

- EI providers must follow Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) guidelines. ★

- In-person services and evaluations may resume when there is minimal concern for the spread of COVID-19 in the area.

- Preschool EI special education classrooms follow the preliminary guidance from the PDE regarding in-person instruction within schools. ★



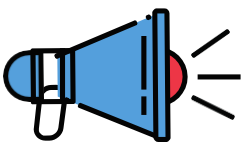
Step 2: Know and Understand the Screening Questions

Prior to **every in-person EI service visit**, families will be asked the following screening questions. The purpose is to identify your risk of transmitting COVID-19 and your risk of complications should you or a family member become infected. Your provider will be assessing their risk of transmitting COVID-19 prior to asking you these screening questions.



1. Has anyone in the home tested positive or suspected of having COVID-19?
2. Does anyone in the home have signs or symptoms of a fever, new or worsening cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, respiratory illness?
3. Has anyone in the home had contact within the last 14 days with someone with or under investigation for COVID-19?
4. Has anyone who will be present during the visit traveled outside of Pennsylvania in the past 14 days?
5. Will a person with a weakened immune system, a person who is over the age of 65 years, or a person that has chronic health conditions (e.g. heart disease, lung disease, diabetes), or other factors that pose a risk if the person becomes infected with COVID-19 be present during the visit?

If your EI provider is not able to contact you before the in-person visit and decides to proceed with the visit, the provider will ask these health screening questions prior to entering the home. The provider should stand approximately six feet from the doorway when asking these questions.



If the EI Provider believes they are at risk of transmitting COVID-19 or the response is **yes** to any of the first three questions above, the provider of EI services will coordinate with you to schedule a tele-intervention session instead of an in-person session.

If the response is yes to question(s) #4 and/or #5, the provider of EI services and you will discuss the possible risk in delivering an in-person session and document the decision. Tele-intervention will be an option for service delivery.

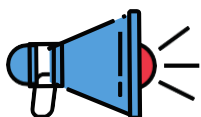
Step 3: Considerations for Your Family

Who is at Risk for COVID-19 & How it is Spread?★

- Everyone is at risk of getting COVID-19.
- Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at higher risk for more severe illness (including pregnant women).
- You can become infected by coming into close contact (about six feet or two arm lengths) with a person who has COVID-19.
- COVID-19 is primarily spread from person to person.
- You can become infected from respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- You may also be able to get it by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and then by touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

You may wish to consider these questions.

- What questions do I have for my child's provider about how they will help to keep my family safe?
- Will I be able to stay about 6 feet away from my provider? What about other family members who will be home? What about my child?
- How could I limit the surfaces (such as toys, household objects you might use during the visit as well as surfaces, doorknobs, tables, chairs etc.) that anyone involved in the visit (family members, child, provider, me) touch? Will I be able to disinfect surfaces that would be touched?
- Who else does my family/child interact with that might be at a greater risk if they were to be exposed to COVID-19?
- Do these considerations affect my comfort level? Is there anything that could make me feel more comfortable?



Providers will be wearing a mask or cloth face covering during in-person EI services. Adult family members and children who participate in the session are required to wear a mask or cloth face covering as per the DOH order requiring universal face coverings. If a child 2 years old or older is unable to remove a face covering without assistance, the child is not required to wear one.

Any child over the age of 2 or adult, not including Early Intervention personnel, who cannot wear a mask due to a medical condition, including those with respiratory issues that impede breathing, a mental health condition, or disability is encouraged to wear a full-face shield. Additionally, social distancing between non-household members must be in place for the duration of the in-person Early Intervention service. ★

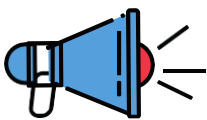
Step 3 continued: Considerations for Your Family

Tele-Intervention: What Have You Learned?

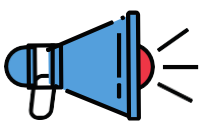
What has been successful and challenging regarding tele-intervention? Tele-intervention is a new service delivery method in Pennsylvania. Tele-intervention is the lowest risk service delivery method. As you consider what is/is not working, collaborate with your EI team to determine if making changes to how you are implementing your tele-intervention services, planning to move to in-person services, or a combination of both is the best fit for you and your child. Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA) and your local EI program are providing professional development to assist both providers and families to increase the effectiveness of this service delivery method.

You may wish to consider these questions.

- What priorities do I have for my child/family?
- What (if any) challenges have arisen with tele-intervention?
- Can these challenges be addressed through additional support for my family or professional development for my EI Team; or by discussing when and how tele-intervention services are delivered?
- What aspects of tele-intervention have been successful?
- What have I learned about my child and their EI services during this time?



Together, your EI team can individualize services to meet your child/family's needs and comfort level. Services don't need to be 100% tele-intervention or 100% in-person. **The key will be communication with your child's EI Team.** Look at your EI team services in a way that allows for flexibility. The use of tele-intervention as a means for service delivery will remain available.



Consider talking with your child's/your family member(s) health care provider if you have specific concerns related to health conditions and/or risks associated with COVID-19 and resuming in-person EI services.

Once You Decide to Start In-Person EI Services

Stay Informed



- Know what your EI providers are doing to implement CDC and PA DOH guidance. ★
- EI Preschool Programs must develop a health and safety plan, as outlined in the PDE guidance. The plan must be approved by their local board/governing body and must be publicly posted, prior to any in-person service delivery. ★
- Ask questions and share any concerns with your Infant/Toddler Service Coordinator or EI Preschool Program.

Remain Aware

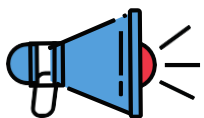


- Continue to monitor your child and other family member's health.
- Keep up to date on guidance from PA DOH, PDE & CDC.
- Know what is happening in your community related to the spread of COVID-19. ★

Stay Safe



- Wash hands (or use hand sanitizer) before the EI visit.
- Clean surfaces (door handles, toys, shared household items, other hard surfaces) both before and after the EI visit.
- As much as is reasonable, maintain a six foot distance between your child/your family members participating in the visit and the EI provider.
- Understand your provider will be required to wear a mask or face covering. Keep in mind, their mask helps to protect you, your family members, and child.
- Adults from your family participating in the session will need to wear a mask/cloth face covering.
- Children under the age of two should not wear a mask or cloth face covering.
- Your family will be asked to have and wear masks for your use during services. (Your provider will have their own mask/cloth face covering.)
- The risk of transmission of COVID-19 is lessened during outside activities. Consider if services outside are a safe and reasonable option for your child.
- If services will be provided indoors, consider opening windows and ensuring ventilation.
- The risk of possible transmission of COVID-19 increases with time spent in close proximity. Consider if there are portions of your EI services or session that could occur through tele-intervention.



Tele-intervention services can continue and/or resume if your family has concerns related to health/safety, or if you feel they are the most appropriate way to address your family/child priorities.



Federal & Pennsylvania Guidance for EI Providers

Center for Disease Control (CDC) Business and Workplaces

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html

COVID-19 Guidance for Businesses (Pa DOH)

www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Businesses.aspx

PA Department of Education Preliminary Guidance Phased Reopening of Schools

[www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-](http://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/Pages/default.aspx)

[19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/Pages/default.aspx)

Pennsylvania & Federal Guidance Regarding Masks

PA DOH Universal Face Coverings Order (including exemptions)

www.governor.pa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/20200701-SOH-Universal-Face-Coverings-Order.pdf

Center for Disease Control (CDC) Use Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.htm

Resources for creating masks to support communication

<https://www.myodp.org/mod/book/view.php?id=25106&chapterid=184>

Keeping Up to Date on COVID-19 in Your Community

Pennsylvania DOH COVID-19 Page

www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx

Pennsylvania DOH COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard

www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Monitoring-Dashboard.aspx

Additional Resources to Help Keep Your Child & Family Safe

Center for Disease Control (CDC) COVID-19

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.htm

Center for Disease Control (CDC) How to Protect Yourself and Others

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html

Center for Disease Control (CDC) Caring for Children

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/caring-for-children.html

Center for Disease Control (CDC) People Who Need to Take Extra Precautions

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.htm

PA Early Intervention & Early Childhood Resources

Early Intervention Technical Assistance Portal Resources to Support EI Work During COVID-19

www.eita-pa.org/resources-to-support-ei-work-during-covid-19

PA Promise for Children

papromiseforchildren.com

Talking to Children about COVID-19

PA Dept. of Education- Talking to Children about COVID-19

www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/TalkingtoChildren/TalkingtoChildrenCOVID19/Pages/default.aspx

Sesame Street Talking to Children About COVID-19

www.sesamestreet.org/caring

Resources to Support Your Child from National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations

Wearing Masks: These scripted stories, with their colorful and fun photographs of children and families, help explain to children the how, why, and when of wearing face masks during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also available in Spanish.

challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Wearing-Masks_Story.pdf

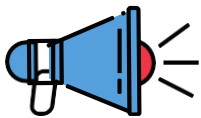
Helping Children Understand Emotions When Wearing Masks: These tips and ideas help children identify emotions when faces, our most expressive feature, are covered by a mask. Parents and practitioners can use these strategies to let children know that behind the mask, a kind and warm expression is still there.

challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Wearing-Masks_Tipsheet.pdf

Greetings While Social Distancing: This colorful greeting board uses expressive photos of children to demonstrate ways to greet each other while maintaining social distancing. In English and Spanish, the examples included are air hug, elbow bump and thumbs up.

challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Greeting-Board_EN-SP.pdf

If you have questions or concerns about your child's EI services, contact your Service Coordinator or EI Preschool Program as a first step. They can assist you to understand and navigate this information and help to address your questions and concerns.



If you have difficulty in reaching your Service Coordinator/EI Preschool Program, email the Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports (BEISFS) and they will assist you:

RA-ocdintervention@pa.gov

