**Frequently Asked Questions for Home Visits during COVID-19 Emergency**

**I have cases in which teletherapy is working fine, should I continue with teletherapy?**

Yes. The guidance states “EI services should be provided virtually to the greatest extent possible.” Face to face visits should be an option only when all other options have been exhausted.

**I would like to start face to face visits what should I do?**

Contact the family and ascertain if they are comfortable with the face to face visits and if they agree to comply with health and safety protocols.

**I am not comfortable providing home based services what should I do?**

You may continue to provide teletherapy. If there are families in which teletherapy is not feasible, have a conversation with the family, and then contact the appropriate service coordinator to figure out the best course of action.

**If a parent wants to resume in-person services, and the therapist/teacher who has been providing teletherapy is unable to provide in-person services to the child?**

The provider and On-going Service Coordinator Provider should communicate with families that teletherapy services will continue until an in-person provider is located.

**I would like to try a hybrid model, some teletherapy and some face to face, is this allowable?**

Yes. There are circumstances in which you may have to temporarily revert to teletherapy. It is also fine to make a plan to alternate between teletherapy and face to face. Please contact the appropriate service coordinator with your ideas.

**I started face to face sessions with a family but have determined that it is not safe, may I return to teletherapy?**

There are many circumstances that may prevent face to face once it has started; it is up to you to determine the safety of continuing face to face. Please contact the appropriate service coordinator if this happens.

**Does this include preschoolers with IEPs?**

Not in Ulster County. Continue with teletherapy for preschoolers.

**Some of my families have limited materials for therapy, what are my options?**

The guidance from BEI clearly stated that ***bringing materials and toys from outside*** into home and community-based settings ***is strictly prohibited***. You need to adjust your curriculum to accommodate what the family and use the materials that are in the home, even if limited. This has always been best practice even pre-Covid-19.

**What do I do if persons in the home are at increased risk for exposure to Covid-19 because of their profession of other factors?**

It is up to you to decide if you feel safe working in the home. Keep in mind that essential workers are often very well educated regarding precautions for the spread of Covid-19.

**Is it mandatory to maintain a six foot distance?**

The guidance from BEI states, “To the greatest extent possible, a physical distance of at least six feet should be maintained when *inside* the home. If the services being delivered do not allow for physical distance, PPE should be used and good hand hygiene must be practiced.” Please conduct sessions outside the majority of the time or whenever possible 100% of the time.

**What is mandatory and what is a recommendation?**

The threat of Covid-19 spreading between homes is very real. Please take all the recommendations very seriously. Exceptions should only be made with the greatest caution.

**Does this mean telehealth is over?**

NO - Please understand that this suspension removal does not negate the idea that *telehealth should continue to be used to the maximum extent possible.*I ask that you work with each family and service coordinator on a case-by-case basis to see where in-home services are the only appropriate option.  You have the choice of when to return to in-home care and should only do so when you are comfortable and able to conduct universal precautions as recommended within your practices and business or agency policies and procedures.

*Families are also being asked to also follow health and safety measures within their home before providers will be allowed in and are still given the choice to not have outside persons in their home.*

**What are the precautions I need to take to resume in-home care?**

Social distancing, hand hygiene and face coverings remain the best form of protection against COVID-19.

I have included a checklist created regionally that will assist in your choice as to whether or not to conduct a home visit with a family and to help in the creation of your policy and procedure plan.  Families are being sent a similar checklist and are being asked by their service coordinator to sign as agreement to these safety plans.

At this time, the county and state are providing no specific directives regarding COVID testing requirements, specific PPE requirements or additional protective clothing beyond face coverings.  (Not specific to COVID-19, gloves should continue to be worn however when doing any therapy techniques involving contact with bodily fluids.)

Our recommendation for knowing what is required is that you continue to follow the guidance documents as referenced here from NYS DOH, NYS BEI, NYSED, CDC as well as from any of your discipline specific professional organizations regarding the level of and changing of PPE that is conducted between sessions.

**If I or another IFSP service provider begins in-person sessions, do we all have to provide in-person sessions?**

No. Each decision for in-person sessions for each individua service is a case by case decision by the family and service provider for very specific reasons.

**Who is responsible for the Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)?**

As a provider with a NYS Early Intervention Appendix Agreement, it is the responsibility f the provider to purchase, supply and/or furnish the PPE.