

## **Overview:**

In July, 2003, the Department of Public Health (DPH) began collecting a fee for families receiving Early Intervention (EI) services.

### **“How will the plan work?”**

An EI staff person will ask you to provide information about your family size and income. This will take place when you enter the program and again on an annual basis.

**The information will be provided to the DPH and will always be kept confidential. This data is not available to any other program (public or private) without your written permission.**

### **“How does the DPH determine who pays a fee? What are the costs?”**

Based on your family size and income, the EI program will determine if you will need to pay a fee. The program will match this information into one of six categories according to the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG).

Your Early Intervention program will determine which category applies to your family depending on family size and income.

**Category A:** Families whose size and income are below 300% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines will not pay a fee. Any child in foster care or who has any form of MassHealth will not pay a fee.

**Category B:** Families whose size and income are between 301% and 400% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines will pay an annual fee of \$60. There will be a fee of \$60 for the second child receiving EI. A family will not be charged more than \$120 annually.

**Category C:** Families whose size and income are between 401% and 550% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines will pay a fee of \$180. There will be a fee of \$180 for the second child receiving EI. A family will not be charged more than \$360 annually.

**Category D:** Families whose size and income are between 551% and 750% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines will pay a fee of \$350. There will be a fee of \$350 for the second child receiving EI. A family will not be charged more than \$700 annually.

**Category E:** Families whose size and income are above 750% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines will pay a fee of \$500. There will be a fee of \$500 for the second child. A family will not be charged more than \$1,000 annually.

## **“I thought services had to be provided for free.”**

Part C of IDEA (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) requires that some Early Intervention activities must be provided for free.

Those activities include:

- **Child find** (outreach to find children who might be eligible for EI).
- **Evaluation and assessment** (to determine if a child is eligible for EI).
- **Service coordination** (activities which assist in finding resources for families).
- **Development of Individualized Family Service Plans** and their reviews.
- **Family rights** (known as procedural safeguards and due process).

## **I thought insurance covered the cost for Early Intervention services.**

Most health insurance plans cover Early Intervention services up to \$5,200 a year. The Department of Public Health pays any and all costs that are not covered by insurance. MassHealth covers Early Intervention services in full.

**“What if I choose not to give information about my family’s income?”**

Early Intervention program staff will ask you to complete the form about your family size and income. They will also ask you to include a statement that you do not wish to provide the information at this time. If you choose not to provide income information, you will be assessed an annual fee of \$500 based on Category E.

No family will be denied Early Intervention services based on their inability to pay the fee.

**My child is leaving the EI program soon. Will the fee be adjusted?**

The fee will be adjusted if your child does not have an IFSP written for a full year.

- ◆ If your IFSP is written for up to 3 full months, you will be billed for 25% of the fee.
- ◆ If your IFSP is written for up to 6 full months, you will be billed for 50% of the fee.
- ◆ If your IFSP is written for up to 9 full months, you will be billed for 75% of the fee.
- ◆ If your IFSP is written for 10 months or more, you will be billed for the full amount.

**“What if I move or transfer to another Early Intervention Program?”**

If you move or decide to change programs, you would still need to provide the information about your family’s size and income to the new program. You should tell the new program that you have already paid the fee. The fee is non-refundable.

**Questions or Concerns?**

The Program Director at your Early Intervention program should be able to answer questions you have about the fee system or any other questions you have about Early Intervention.

You can also contact Mary Dennehy-Colorusso from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Early Intervention Services, at the following numbers: (978) 851-7261 ext. 4016 or TTY (978) 851-0829

Program information here:

# MASSACHUSETTS EARLY INTERVENTION

## Information about the Annual Fee

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