



The Update:

News and Information for MA Early Intervention Providers

July 2008

Welcome to "The Update." This is a periodic newsletter focusing specifically on issues and information in MA Early Intervention. Some versions will be paper; some electronic. Please let us know how you like this format!

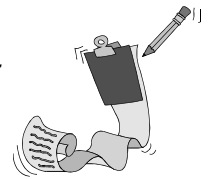
Out of Catchment — Summer Services



Just a reminder as we move full swing into summer that Early Intervention Programs are responsible for providing individualized services to families as outlined in the IFSP, and families are entitled to IFSP services provided within the community in which they are enrolled. During the summer months many families are vacationing outside of their service/catchment area. Early Intervention Providers are not required to provide IFSP services to children and families from out of the catchment area in which they reside. Programs may choose to service children from out of the catchment during the summer months if they have the capacity to meet the individual need of the child and family. Consistent with current DPH policy, services provided by a secondary program would require a waiver. Programs may also share additional community resources with families in the vacationing area. If families choose to pursue services outside their catchment area, they would be responsible for investigating funding sources with their insurance provider.

Established Conditions List

The DPH has been working with providers and clinicians to review the current Established Conditions List. The review process is near completion and the revised *Massachusetts Early Intervention Diagnosed Conditions List* will be distributed to providers shortly with an **October 1, 2008** implementation date. Effective October 1, 2008 all children eligible for the Massachusetts EI with an Established Condition must have a diagnosed condition from *the Massachusetts Early Intervention Diagnosed Conditions List (October 1, 2008)*.



Certain conditions will require annual eligibility evaluations. However, many conditions under this list will result in children being eligible for early intervention services until the child's third birthday, *unless* there is a change in the status of a diagnosis or the condition resolves with medical/surgical treatment provided through the health care system combined with developmental support services provided through EI. Early Intervention providers will be encouraged to provide ongoing assessment for these children for IFSP planning purposes. Redetermination of eligibility through an evaluation by a multidisciplinary team will not be required on an annual basis; however, a discharge evaluation utilizing the same eligibility tool must be completed as close to discharge as possible for child outcome reporting. EIIS Guidance will be provided on the completion of the EIIS form for Initial and Ongoing Eligibility Determination.

EIIS Trainings



Two statewide EIIS training opportunities will be offered this fall highlighting the importance of accurate data, federal reporting requirements, and the completion of EIIS forms. The trainings will be held in the Central Region and Boston. Providers will be strongly encouraged to attend the morning session of one of the trainings which will discuss the eligibility changes implemented in January 2008, the Massachusetts Early Intervention Diagnosed Conditions List (October 1, 2008), the importance of data, and system updates. The afternoon session will be optional and provide an overview and review of the EIIS forms and Error reports.

A Save the Date notice with additional information regarding the trainings will be forthcoming.

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FY08 Annual Report Data Verification/File Review & Timeliness of Services



The DPH will distribute the File Review/Data Verification and Timely Provision of IFSP Services section of the FY08 Annual Report/Self Assessment to EIPs at the end of August. Programs will have six weeks to complete these sections and allow DPH regional staff an opportunity to follow up with providers on any questionable or missing data to ensure the accuracy and reliability of data submitted in the upcoming federal Annual Performance Report.

Focused Monitoring Update

Massachusetts received additional technical assistance and guidance in FY 07 from Sharon Walsh from the Data Accountability Center (DAC) as part of our ongoing evaluation process of the Focused Monitoring (FM) system. Based on this guidance and with the input from the FM Stakeholders, the FY09 onsite selection will be based on the Local Program Determinations, thus allowing the DPH to provide more resources and support to providers.



In making FY 07 Determinations, the DPH used the four compliance indicators (Timely Services, Initial IFSP meetings within 45 days, Transition, and Timely Corrections of Non-Compliance) as well as six measures for Timely and Accurate Data and two for Complaint Management issues. Programs with a determination of “Needs Intervention” or “Needs Substantial Intervention” will receive an onsite Focused Monitoring visit. The new onsite selection process will allow the DPH staff to more efficiently utilize its resources and provide the additional technical assistance and support to programs to come into compliance and improve performance.

The DPH will complete four onsite visits in FY 09. Early Intervention Programs receiving an onsite visit will be notified shortly. The onsite visits will be done in October 2008, January 2009, March 2009 and May 2009. A pre-onsite planning meeting will occur about 10 weeks prior to the onsite visit to determine what type of information will be requested from the program and from the DPH EIIS for the desk audit meeting. At the Desk Audit meeting, information will be reviewed and discussed in the development of a hypothesis. The logistics for the onsite will be discussed with the program well in advance of the visit.

The Focused Monitoring Team at this time will consist of Regional Specialists and Parents. Based on feedback from Stakeholders the DPH would like to expand the composition of the team to include a “peer” team member. This may be an administrative staff person from another Early Intervention program or other community or state agency. Anyone interested in participating in the Focused Monitoring process as a “peer” team member should contact Patti Fougere at 617-624-5975 or Faith Piaggi at 413-586-7525. This would be a great opportunity to contribute to the field and share your expertise and knowledge of the system.

Early Childhood Outcomes



The DPH is currently engaged in an active discussion with the Early Childhood Stakeholders and the EI community with regard to the identification and implementation of alternative measurement activities to more accurately capture the functional improvement for all EI children. The OSEP reporting requirements are as follows:

- Percent of children who demonstrate improved:
 - Positive social emotional skills (including positive social relationships)
 - Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication)
 - Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs

One of the options seriously being considered for the Massachusetts system is the Child Outcome Summary Form which is a 7 point rating scale based on multiple sources of data, often including assessment tools, observation, family report, etc. The Stakeholders are currently working on finalizing a Vision and Mission statement for the Massachusetts approach to ensure that information and resources are embedded throughout the Massachusetts Early Intervention system to support the reporting of Federal early childhood outcomes data.

Additional information on the progress of the Stakeholders will be available at the October ICC Retreat. Stay tuned!

Family Survey Update



New NCSEAM Family Surveys, cover flyers and stamped self addressed envelopes should coming to your program by the end of July. The number of surveys each program receives is based on FY 07 EIIS data. We will have additional surveys available at DPH if programs find they need more. The dissemination plan is the same as last year. Service Coordinators should distribute materials to families at the six-month IFSP review. Again we ask that Service Coordinators **do not** directly assist families in filling out the Survey. Please identify someone within your agency who can help any families who request assistance whether due to language, literacy or other reasons. Information about additional resources to support families in completing the survey will be available soon.

Our expectation is that each family enrolled in Early Intervention will complete **one** survey a year. Families whose children are eligible for EI services based on established condition should receive the NCSEAM Family Survey at their six month IFSP review. Families whose children are eligible based on developmental delay, clinical judgment or at risk should receive a Family Survey at their six month eligibility re-determination after being enrolled in EI for at least six months. If the child is found eligible and remains in EI, the family does not need to receive/complete a Survey at the next six month eligibility re-determination.

Community-wide CEIS Competency Review Process

As you are aware, the competency review process began in November 2007 with a letter from Ron Benham announcing the communitywide process for competency review, and providing ways for people to participate. From the beginning, the process was based on the existing 9 competency areas. There were six workgroups covering the 9 areas. Each workgroup was co-facilitated by two or three DPH staff members.

Workgroups were recruited from all parts of the Massachusetts EI community. They included 42 people in the following categories: DPH staff; MA EI families; staff of EITC at EDC; EI program directors; EI specialists; staff from the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC); Institutions of Higher Education; and members of other resource organizations.

The workgroups began meeting in February 2008. By May, each workgroup had presented recommendations to DPH, which reviewed them and prepared them for the final workgroup meeting in June 2008, during which wording for all new competencies was finalized by the workgroups.

The final competency indicator recommendations will be posted for public review from August 1 through September 15, on www.eitrainingcenter.org and the Early Intervention pages of www.mass.gov/dph.

Final wording recommendations of the workgroups, along with any public commentary, will be presented at the ICC fall retreat October 2-3, 2008, with an ICC vote to follow during the fall.



Comments, questions and ideas for future issues to:

Patti Fougere

Assistant Director of Early Childhood Programs

617-624-5975

Patti.fougere@state.ma.us