

The UPDATE

News and Information for Massachusetts EI Providers

July 2017



Important Dates...Mark your Calendar!

July 18, 2017; 10am—11am: Webinar: Review Forms for Specialty Service Autism Referral

July 25, 2017; 10—11am: Monthly Webinar—IFSP Rollout Update

August 22, 2017; 10—11am: Monthly Webinar—TBD

September 14, 2017: ICC Retreat, Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel, Marlborough, MA



Staff Announcement

It is our great pleasure to announce that **Joan Rafferty** has moved into the position of the **Director of Specialty Services**. Previously Joan was functioning in the role of Regional Specialist and Coordinator of Specialty Services for Autism.

Joan will have oversight responsibilities for administrative and programmatic matters related to children with low incidence conditions including Autism, Deaf & Hard of Hearing and Vision within the Division of Early Intervention. Joan brings excellent communication, training, and relationship building skills to the position. She has experience in grant writing, developing needs assessment and evaluation, facilitating workshops and providing technical assistance, consultation and support to families of children with complex medical care needs. She is an extremely motivated, organized, dynamic, articulate and creative individual and has effectively worked with diverse staff and families to build solid relationships within organizations and throughout the Commonwealth.

Joan will no longer continue her role as Regional Specialist effective immediately. Michelle Conlon will be the contact person for Joan's former EI programs and will triage questions to the appropriate DPH staff. Michelle's contact information is michelle.e.conlon@state.ma.us.

The Department would like to thank Darla Gundler, Director, Parent Leadership Project and Communications and Marketing for EI for providing support to the Deaf & Hard of Hearing & Vision Programs until a full time Director of Specialty Services could be hired.



DPH Updates

Annual Report—Parent Contacts

As the time draws near for EI Programs to complete their Annual Reports, many will be looking to identify new Parent Contacts. This is a great opportunity to recruit a family that is interested in becoming involved in EI beyond the scope of services on their IFSP.

The **FYI: Section X Family Participation, EI Operational Standards: Page 45**

Identify and support a parent currently receiving Early Intervention services to be the contact person for the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project; this parent contact will share information with the PLP and may share information with program staff and families enrolled in the program. The current parent contact will be identified on the program's DPH Annual Report.

Continued

Here are some key points to keep in mind when talking with families about what a Parent Contact does:

- Have regular communication with the director **or** designated staff person at their EI program as well the EIPLP
- Receive and read the Parent Perspective newsletter, via email or in print
- Share news from the EIPLP of upcoming opportunities for family involvement with EI program staff
- Receive monthly communications from the EIPLP about resources and opportunities to become involved in the MA EI System
- Share news with the EIPLP about family involvement opportunities within and throughout their program
- Attend the annual MEIC conference at no direct cost, to attend workshops and meet other Parent Contacts from around the state of Massachusetts
- Become involved with other parents whose children are receiving EI services

Aside from fulfilling the requirement in the EI Operational Standards, there are lots of other benefits to having a Parent Contact. This parent can help increase program awareness of issues important to families, provide valuable feedback, enhance team building opportunities, and provide access to a well-informed constituency.

If you have a parent who would like more information about becoming a Parent Contact for your program, please refer them to the EIPLP Statewide Training and TA Coordinator Liz Cox at 413-586-7525 x3116 or liz.cox@state.ma.us.

Children’s Behavioral Health Knowledge Center July Webinar: Ways to Keep Babies and Young Children in Mind

On Wednesday, July 19, 2017 from 11am to 12pm, the Children’s Behavioral Health Knowledge Center will hold their July webinar called Ways to Keep Babies and Young Children in Mind. This webinar will introduce participants to some principles of infant and young child mental health practices and suggest what practitioners should be listening for when it comes to attending to these young children and their needs. Participants will also learn about resources and programs available to serve infants and young children in the Commonwealth. Learn [more](#).

Training Opportunity: SSI/Public Benefits for Children with Special Health Care Needs

Please see the attached the [Training Offer flyer](#) from Gail Havelick, SSI/Public Benefits Training & Policy Specialist for the Division for Children & Youth with Special Health Needs Bureau of Family Health & Nutrition. Gail has training dates available for in October and beyond. Programs may contact Gail directly at gail.havelick@state.ma.us to schedule a training date for their program.



Save the Date: Introduction to Pediatric Nutrition Conference

The Center for Nutrition at Boston Children’s Hospital will be presenting their annual Introduction to Pediatric Nutrition conference on Monday, October 30 and Monday, November 6, 2017. These days run from 8am until 4:30pm in the Folkman Auditorium in the Enders Building at Boston Children’s Hospital. Please see the [letter attached](#).

Program and registration information will be forthcoming in the interim, please contact Alison at 617-355-4677 or nutritiondept@childrens.harvard.edu with any questions.

Institute for Health & Recovery (IHR)—Parenting Resource

IHR is sharing a resource especially useful for new or unconfident parents www.raisingchildren.net.au/baby_cues/baby_cues_alternative.html. This Australian parenting website provides short videos on recognizing baby cues, as well as printable diary sheets for tracking the cues, caregiver actions, and baby’s reactions.

As always, please contact karenwelling@healthrecovery.org or karengould@healthrecovery.org for any training and technical assistance needs, and to get your hand-delivered (training included) Trauma-Informed Tip sheets.



Policy & Clarifications

Considerations for Documenting Aggressive or Inappropriate Parent/Caregiver Situations ([printable version here](#))

Providers have made DPH aware of incidents related to reports of inappropriate behavior on the part of parents and staff safety while working in a home visiting environment. The incidents reported involve some sort of interaction or activity involving a parent(s) or other family members and staff and are unrelated to the child. The incidents have resulted in the EI program presenting a proposal to change the location of IFSP services. Providers have also asked about how to document a justification in the IFSP for services that are not provided in a natural environment and on the Prior Written Notice (PWN) form.

Each situation has been unique. Some of the concerns articulated, though credible, could still be considered subjective, a misinterpretation of events or behavior, or an assertion which can't necessarily be substantiated. The perspectives of those involved may be vastly different. These have not been reports of tensions between parent and clinician. These incidents have been more serious and include reports of parents/family members demonstrating inappropriate behaviors toward staff. DPH recommends programs/agencies consider the following with respect to documentation in the child's record:

It's the child's record: While there will always be documentation related to family members in a child's record, the "eligible" recipient of EI services is the child. Information in a child's record that involves other family members may be sensitive, but may need to be available to substantiate eligibility or file a report with the Department of Children and Families. DPH supports an internal program practice of routinely reviewing records to assess objectivity and relevance to IFSP outcomes and services.

Programs should consider: Does the incident need to be documented in the child's EI record? If the specifics of the incident or interaction involve the parent/family members and the staff person, it may not particularly if the interaction does not relate or directly involve the child. Conversely, if the incident involves the safety of the child, the program may believe it's necessary to include detailed documentation. It may be helpful to bring in someone from within your agency or your agency legal counsel to gain additional perspective.

The EI record follows the child: It is a condition of the agency's contract with DPH that the program maintains the child's record for seven (7) years post discharge. Changes in child custody and program staffing may occur over time. Consider if the documentation maintained about the incident today may be hurtful, harmful, or relevant to the child in the future. If a parent signs a release to disclose "the entire record" years later, they may or may not realize the scope of information in the record that is being disclosed.

Documentation considerations: Your agency may consider sending a letter written directly to the parent(s) that reviews the incident and reasons why the incident is perceived as a potential risk to staff. Remember, the perception could be different from the other party. Because the letter is addressing the incident vs. being directly related to the child, it may be kept separately from the child's EI record. The letter could document the program's rationale for the proposed change in location of IFSP services. The program may also wish to consider sending the letter certified mail and/or having the letter translated if there's indication that the parent's native language is not English.

Be Transparent: If the program opts to document the incident directly in a letter to the parent(s) and not include the letter in the child's record, this should be explained this to the parent(s). From the parent's perspective, it may be confusing to receive a detailed letter from the program only to see something like "community safety concern" written on a Prior Written Notice form, or in the IFSP (under the "natural environment" statement, or on an IFSP review page) after receiving the letter.

As previously noted, each incident reported to DPH had unique features such that guidance on what to specifically include (or exclude) or how to document the reason for a change in location cannot be applied to every situation. EI programs are encouraged to consider the above and seek counsel from within their agency should an incident occur.



Data Manager Update

Who do I Enter into the Transition Survey System (TSS)?

Simply put, a child should be entered into your TSS system when your EI program actually does the referral to the LEA. This includes children who may not be viewed as potentially eligible but the family wants to be referred. If your program notifies the LEA of this child then the child's information must be entered into the TSS. Here are some guidelines about who to enter into TSS:



- Only enter children into TSS who received a referral to the LEA from your program.
- At times a family may self-refer to an LEA. These LEA referrals should NOT be entered into the Transition Survey System (LEA).
- If a child is transferred and the preceding EI program did the LEA referral and you are NOT doing an LEA referral then do NOT enter this child into the TSS.

As always, please remember Linda's Rule of Thumb: If you enter data that day, transmit that night (once a day is enough).

New SecureMail System

SecureMail has been updated, including having a new website address: <https://ppsecuremail.state.ma.us/encrypt>. If you have not used SecureMail since 6/27/17 then please refer to the [attached instructions](#). You will be able to register into the new SecureMail without any problems but the system will ask you for a "new" password (you can enter your "old" SecureMail password as your "new" password). If you have any questions about the new SecureMail system please contact Jean Shimer at jean.shimer@state.ma.us.

Fiscal Year 2017 Annual Report

The fiscal year 2017 Annual Report will be distributed to program directors via Interchange at the end of July. An additional survey question is being added and one of the responses on the Timely Services section is being updated. The remainder of the Annual Report will stay the same. EI programs will be responsible for returning their Annual Reports to their EI Regional Specialists by Friday, September 15, 2017.



Forms & Materials

Forms & Materials will be posted here when there are any.



EITC Update



Provisional Certification Update

The Certification Tracking Form requires a license number and expiration date to ensure that the applicant has current licensure in their field.

The Association of Social Work Boards, on behalf of the Massachusetts Board, is now confirming exam results via email with the License Number and effective date. The Department will accept this email as verification of licensure and process the Certification Tracking form. However, it will be the responsibility of the Program to monitor the Board website to ensure that the applicant's paperwork has been processed and to send DPH the expiration date of the license once posted.

This holds true for all licensure. If the Department is not able to locate the individual on their appropriate Board's website then the Program will be asked to send us the missing information.

MA EI Home Visiting Philosophy

Several programs have asked for information about the philosophy of MA EI home visiting, in relation to the PIWI philosophy, to be created, that can be shared with eligible families. The Training Center and the Parent Leadership Project have been working hard to create this document. We received input from seven programs statewide, as well as families from different programs. This document is being formatted and is expected to be available by September 2017. This document is intended to be a resource and is not required to be used by programs.



Specialty Services Updates

Free Workshop for Families of Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: Transitioning from EI to Preschool (PLEASE SHARE WITH FAMILIES—Flyer)

A **free** workshop for families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing will be held on **July 20** in Waltham.

Transitioning from Early Intervention to Preschool will be presented by the Boston Children’s Hospital Otolaryngology and Communication Enhancement team from 10am to 1pm at Gore Place, 52 Gore Street, Waltham. Included in the day’s event are art activities, educational resources, moderated panel, parent advice, and a picnic lunch.

Childcare provided. The event is funded by the Decibels Foundation and The Caroline Bass Fund.

The workshop is open to all families with deaf and hard of hearing children who are in the process of transitioning out of early intervention. Interested families should RSVP: lauralyn.chetwynd@childrens.harvard.edu or 781.216.2207 by July 13, 2017!



Comments, contributions or feedback, please contact:

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