

# The UPDATE

## News and Information for Massachusetts EI Providers

March 2020



### Important Dates...Mark your Calendar!

**CANCELLED:** March 12, 2020: ICC Meeting

#### Part C Public Hearings

##### March 12, 2020

MA DPH Offices  
67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA  
2:30p – 4:00p

##### March 13, 2020

DPH Northampton Regional Office  
23 Service Center Road  
Northampton, MA  
1:00p – 2:30pm

**March 24, 2020, 10a–11a: Monthly EI Webinar**—Topics include:

- **State Systemic Improvement Plan—Part 2**



### DPH Updates

#### Coronavirus (COVID19-2019) Update

The Department of Public Health as the lead agency for the MA Early Intervention System has received several inquiries in the past few weeks regarding the actions MA EI practitioners and programs should or should not take in response to the emergence of the Coronavirus (COVID-2019). Although the risk to the public remains low at this time, the situation is rapidly evolving. We understand that EI programs, staff and families are concerned.

#### What EI programs should Know:

The MA Department of Public Health has been in constant contact with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state and local partners, and launched a site that includes extensive information and is a "source of truth" at: [mass.gov/2019coronavirus](https://mass.gov/2019coronavirus). The site includes resources and fact sheets translated in multiple languages that can be printed and shared.

DPH continues to work with local public health authorities in accordance with federal guidance regarding travelers returning to the US. This is part of routine public health practice and DPH will not be disclosing specific information in order to respect individual privacy.

Linked, you will find information from MDPH on how to [prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like the flu and COVID-19](#).

Please stay informed by visiting both the [MDPH](#) and [CDC](#) websites. To prepare for potential community spread of COVID-19, please also think about your own personal preparedness and visit our [website](#) to learn more about developing a preparedness plan for you and your family.

Below are hyperlinks from DPH's website that provide specific guidance and recommendations for: (1) businesses and employers, and (2) elementary and secondary schools. To access the hyperlinks hold "Ctrl" and click the link.

Guidance for [businesses and employers click here](#).

Guidance for [elementary and secondary schools click here](#).

Regarding continuity planning, employers should consider how best to decrease the spread of acute respiratory illnesses and lower the potential impact of COVID-19 in workplaces in the event of an outbreak by taking steps to:

- Reduce transmission among staff
- Protect people who are at higher risk for adverse health complications
- Maintain business operations
- Minimize adverse effects on other entities in their supply chains

All private and public sector agencies are encouraged to develop or update contingency plans to ensure they can continue to carry out essential functions regardless of the threat or impact. All EI agencies should work with their health care consultant and agency administration in making decisions related to program practice. For guidance and more information on continuity planning visit <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/continuity-and-safety-planning-guidance>.

As stated in the OSEP "Non-Regulatory Guidance on Flexibility and Waivers for Grantees and Program Participants Impacted by Federally Declared Disasters", September 2018, if the offices of the State Lead Agency (DPH) or the EI Program or provider are closed, then services under Part C of the IDEA would not need to be provided to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families during that period of time. If Part C services cannot be provided in a particular location services may be provided in an alternative location, identifying other parent or community resources or through alternative means such as teleconference or consultative services to the parent. MA EI does not currently have a Telepractice/Telehealth policy nor is there reimbursement for these services at this time. We are working with MassHealth (MH) to have EI included in the upcoming MH Bulletin as an approved entity to be able to provide telepractice, however, DPH and MH will need to develop the Policies and Procedures for when and how it can be used in EI.

Thank you for all your work to provide services and support to children and families in the Commonwealth.

## **Guidance Related to Early Intervention Operational Standards (EIOS), Section IV Catchment Area**

*"The Early Intervention program that serves the city or town considered as the child's primary residence is designated as the program responsible for providing service to an eligible child and family." (EIOS Section IV.A.)*

RE: Children in foster care: There have been a few questions recently about which EI program is responsible for a child's EI services. For children who are in foster care, the child's primary residence would be the residence of the foster parent(s)/guardian even if the DCF plan is for reunification with the biological parent(s) who may reside in a different catchment area. This is not a change in practice. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has a policy that addresses children in foster care who receive special education services that differs from the EIOS. For children 3-22 placed in foster care who require special education, the biological parent's legal residence is assigned financial responsibility for the child's services, while the district where the child resides (in care) is assigned responsibility for the child's special education services (known as "programmatic responsibility").

## **Home Visiting Survey**

Programs recently received an invitation to complete a survey on home visiting from Tufts and DPH. They have received many responses so far and are eager to hear from more of you.

Please consider filling out the home visiting survey, conducted by Tufts University in partnership with MA Department of Public Health, to learn more about home visiting programs in Massachusetts. Upon survey completion, you will be sent a \$5 gift card to Dunkin' Donuts! You also will be given the opportunity to enter your email address into one of two raffles for a \$100 Amazon gift card.

Tufts and DPH are so excited to get your feedback and hope you will consider completing the survey today. Here is your survey link: [Tufts Home Visiting Survey](#)

If you have already completed the survey, thank you! We notice that some of the folks who indicated that they would like to receive a gift card and/or be entered into the Amazon gift card raffle did not provide an email address. If you completed the survey and have not yet received your DD gift card, please contact Jess at [jessica.goldberg@tufts.edu](mailto:jessica.goldberg@tufts.edu).

## Mission and Key Principles SSIP Strand Professional Development Supports (Follow-up from February Webinar)

The chart below outlines all of the DPH professional development offerings developed that help support the work of the mission and key principles SSIP strand. All of these materials can be accessed through the new mass.gov website. Past newsletters are in the drop box and podcast can be accessed wherever you typically listen to podcasts.

Title	What	Description
Functional Assessment Part I- Overview	Grab N Go	These resources will support EI Specialists in learning about functional assessment (FA). They will explore through PowerPoint and support activities what FA is, and how they can gather this type of information when working with families. EI Specialists will also learn about the specific clinical skills needed to gather good functional assessment information through their work with families.
Functional Assessment Part II- Clinical Skills	Grab N Go	These resources will support EI Specialists in learning about functional assessment (FA). They will explore through PowerPoint and support activities what FA is, and how they can gather this type of information when working with families. EI Specialists will also learn about the specific clinical skills needed to gather good functional assessment information through their work with families.
Delivery of Sensitive News to Parents	Grab N Go	These professional development resources will support Early Intervention Specialists in being more confident and competent when needing to deliver sensitive news to parents. The materials will help providers reflect on the importance of relationships when having to deliver sensitive news. As well as give them strategies to consider and opportunity to practice their skills in safe space.
Caring for You While Caring for Others Training	Grab N Go	This professional development resource will support you in understanding, recognizing, and addressing burnout while working in Early Intervention. This prepackaged resource includes strategies on how to address and talk about burnout as well as having some simple self-help activities that will aid in tackling and preventing future burnout.
Principles and Practices of Child Development	Online training module	The Part C System in the Commonwealth of Virginia has established this resource for their EI providers. They have graciously agreed to make this on-line course available to EI providers in Massachusetts at no cost. The module takes approximately 2 hours to complete.
Valuable Collaborations	Online training module	This module will review the importance of engaging in collaborative activities to achieve positive child outcomes for children who are receiving Early Intervention services in Early Education and Care settings. The Valuable Collaboration document and the IFSP are shared as tools to support this collaborative process.
EI Home Visiting	Online training module	The offering will cover basic information to support early intervention specialists in their roles as home visitors. The module will provide a definition of home visiting and review the roles of those individuals providing home visits. Ideas for setting ground rules for building relationships with families and caregivers in their homes will be provided. Strategies for planning and implementing home visits will be identified and the importance of evaluation of the process will be reviewed.
Online Universal EI Curriculum	EITC newsletter- February 2019	Authentic Assessment, Foundational Pillars of Early Intervention, and Seven Key Principles  <i>The Early Intervention/Early Childhood Community of Practice has developed a free online curriculum. The free online materials come with a user's guide, facilitator's guide, as well as additional resources for supervisors and professional development personnel. These materials could be used on your own, in supervision, or as a program team activity. They can be found here... <a href="http://universalonlinepartceicurriculum.pbworks.com/w/page/79643207/Online%20Curriculum">http://universalonlinepartceicurriculum.pbworks.com/w/page/79643207/Online%20Curriculum</a>.</i>
Discipline Cross-walk	EITC newsletter- December 2018	Match between licensing boards and MKP  <i>The ECTA center has this wonderful crosswalk between the EI mission and key principles and the different licensing boards to show how each of the licensing boards align and support the national Early Intervention key principles and mission statement. You can find the cross walk here: <a href="http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/topics/eiservices/keyprinciplesmatrix_01_30_15.pdf">http://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/topics/eiservices/keyprinciplesmatrix_01_30_15.pdf</a></i>

Pediatric Medical Home Article	EITC newsletter- October 2017	What is EI- AAP Collaboration <i>In 2013 The American Academy of Pediatrics released a clinical report outlining information on the Collaboration for Best Practice and Best Outcomes. This article can be used as a resource when working with referral sources as well as parents in helping them to understand Early Intervention and how services should be carried out to achieve the best outcomes. The article can be found here...<a href="http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/132/4/e1073">http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/132/4/e1073</a></i>
Early Intervention Mission Statement and Key Principles Fact Sheet	MA Clearing-house	<i>A fact sheet outlining the mission statement and key principles of the Early Intervention (EI) Program - a program for infants and toddlers (birth to 3 years old) who have developmental delays or are at risk of a developmental delay. EI services are designed to help support families and caregivers, and to enhance the development and learning of infants and toddlers through individualized, developmentally appropriate activities within the child's and family's everyday life experiences.</i>
EI on the Fly Podcasts	Podbean or any other podcast platform	This podcast is designed so you can easily listen between visits during your day. Each episode focuses on an important topic discussed by Dana Childress, PhD and Emily Webb, MS ED, two experienced EI professional development specialists who have also been service coordinators, service providers, and parents of children enrolled in EI. Listen often to learn, reflect, and hear a few good tips to add to your practices. This podcast is a collaborative effort of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (through a contract with the Partnership for People with Disabilities/VCU)."

## Public Charge Regulation

Many of you have seen information in the news about a new Public Charge federal regulation. This new regulation is related to immigrant families who receive certain public benefits. This issue is complex and new details are being revealed on a regular basis. The resource below contains easy to understand fact sheets and information for both providers working with immigrant families and families themselves. It also includes fact sheets in additional languages. If you are interested, there is also an email listserv to receive additional information on this subject.

## NCSEAM Family Survey Update

This March is the first distribution month of the NCSEAM Family Survey for 2020. Please make sure service coordinators are giving a Survey, cover flyer and stamped self-addressed envelope to all eligible families. These are families whose children have been enrolled in Early Intervention for at least six (6) months and did not receive a survey in October 2019. We are working hard to increase the survey return rate for 2020. Our goal is to exceed a 40% return rate. Your help is one way to make this happen. Service coordinators should remind families why their input is important and that the way to share their thoughts about their EI experience is to complete and return the Survey in the envelope provided. Families may mail the envelopes themselves or may seal and initial the sealed envelopes and give them to their service coordinators to be mailed.

Thank you and please let us know if we can help in any way.

## EIPLP: Making Contact with Your Parent Contact



Last week Kris Martone-Levine reached out to all Program Directors asking for confirmation of each program's Parent Contact. This request was made in anticipation of the 2020 MEIC (Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium) Conference being held on May 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. As in years past, the EIPLP (EI Parent Leadership Project) will be supporting your program's Parent Contact registration through the generosity of DPH. If you do not have a Parent Contact, or if they are unable to attend, EIPLP would like to extend this invitation to another family in your program. Please respond by March 15 with your confirmation or the name and contact information for another caregiver in your program. Thank you, we look forward to connecting with your families!

## Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) Update

The EIPLP was pleased to support a large group of families to attend the Federation for Children with Special Needs annual *Visions of Community 2020* conference. We had the following breakdown of parents in attendance: 5 Parent Contacts; 7 ICC Parents and 13 (of which 3 are also parent representatives on the ICC) parents who are participating in our leadership development training, *Finding Your Footing: Using Your Family's Experience to Impact System Change*. It was wonderful to see so many EI parents, learning, networking and accessing resources at this conference.



## Professional Development for EI Providers Update

### Professional Development Training Calendar FY21

Training Name and Description	When and where it will be offered
<p><b>Foundations 1 and 2:</b> DPH required orientation for EI providers who work more than 20 hours OR act as Service Coordinators.</p>	<p><b>When:</b> Monthly <b>Where:</b> Regional location</p>
<p><b>PIWI Learning Institute:</b> Three day learning opportunity with online components and assignments between meetings to help people better learn how to support program-wide PIWI implementation.</p>	<p><b>When:</b> Fall of 2020 (September- December) <b>Where:</b> West and Southeast  <b>When:</b> Spring of 2021 (March- June) <b>Where:</b> Northeast and Central</p>
<p><b>Reflective Supervision Training:</b> Three day training for supervisors to learn more about using reflective supervision to support the Mass. EI Mission and Key Principles. Participants must make a commitment to provide weekly supervision while attending the training.  Must be a supervisor to attend.</p>	<p><b>When:</b> Fall of 2020 (September- December) <b>Where:</b> Northeast and Central  <b>When:</b> Spring of 2021 (March- June) <b>Where:</b> Southeast and West</p>
<p><b>Assessment Institute:</b> Four day learning opportunity to learn about general assessments as well as how to administer the BDI-2 with fidelity.  Helpful to send someone who supports ongoing assessments and can make suggestions, edits, or changes to program evaluation practices.</p>	<p><b>When:</b> Spring of 2020 (March- June) <b>Where:</b> Central</p>
<p><b>Child Development Institute:</b> Four day learning opportunity for those that want to learn more about infant toddler development. Participants will learn about typical and atypical development and how this information guides assessments, IFSP development, functional assessment, and ongoing services.</p>	<p><b>When:</b> Fall of 2020 (September- December) <b>Where:</b> Central  <b>When:</b> Spring of 2021 (March- June) <b>Where:</b> Central</p>





New podcasts will be featured in this section as they become available.

They are always available at <https://eionthefly.podbean.com/>.

**About EI on the FLY:** "As an early interventionist, you meet different families, work in homes and community settings, watch infants and toddlers grow and learn, and yes – spend lots of time in your car. This podcast is designed so you can easily listen between visits during your day. Each episode focuses on an important topic discussed by Dana Childress, PhD and Emily Webb, MS ED, two experienced EI professional development specialists who have also been service coordinators, service providers, and parents of children enrolled in EI. Listen often to learn, reflect, and hear a few good tips to add to your practices.

*This podcast is a collaborative effort of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (through a contract with the Partnership for People with Disabilities/VCU)."*

[Episode 1: What is Functional Assessment and Why Does it Matter?](#)

[Episode 2: Intentional Observation](#)

[Episode 3: Asking Meaningful Questions \(Emily's personal favorite!\)](#)

[Episode 4: Active Listening](#)

[Episode 5: Implicit Bias](#)

[Episode 6: Functional Assessment and the Initial IFSP](#)



## [Specialty Services Update](#)

### **Specialty Services for Vision Loss RFR Posted**

The contract for Specialty Services for Vision Loss will be **ending on June 30, 2020**.

As such, the RFR for re-contracting has been posted. For more information, please click on the link below.

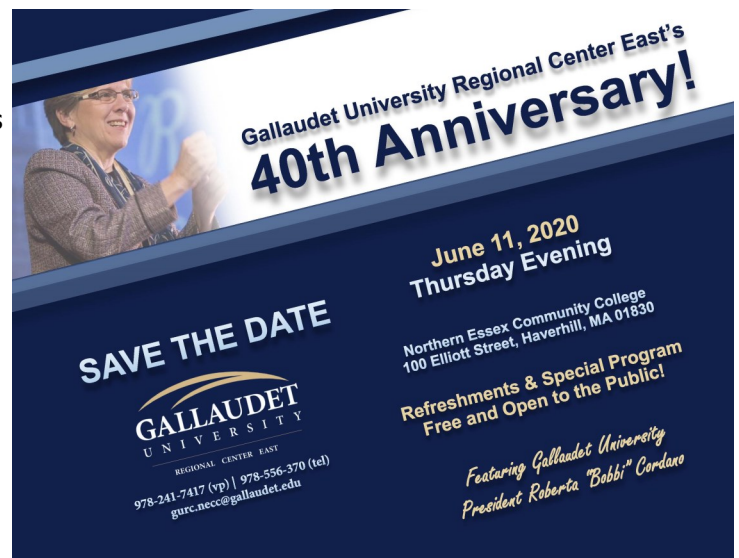
<https://www.commbuys.com/bs0/external/bidDetail.sdo?docId=BD-20-1031-BFHN0-BFH03-49231&external=true&parentUrl=bid>

### **The Gallaudet University Regional Center Celebration!!**

The Gallaudet University Regional Center at Northern Essex Community College (NECC) in Haverhill, Massachusetts will be celebrating **40 years of service** this year and will have a special program planned to highlight their work and recognize a number of individuals who have been instrumental to the establishment of the Center at NECC.

Roberta "Bobbi" Cordano, President of Gallaudet University, will be joining the celebration, so this is an event **not** to be missed!

The celebration will be held at NECC in Haverhill, Massachusetts on **Thursday, June 11, 2020, in the evening**, so please save the date! More details will be shared as the date gets closer!



## Resources & Events

### Improving Parental Monitoring of Developmental Milestones

The CDC currently reports that 1 in 6 children have a developmental disability and that approximately half of those children are not identified before age 3. The CDC has a program called, *Learn the Signs. Act Early*, which was designed to promote parental monitoring in between regular doctor visits. Developmental screening combined with developmental monitoring, is the best way to identify children with a delay. You can follow the CDC's Milestones Matter Community Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/milestonesmatter/>.

Each state has an Act Early Ambassador from the CDC, who works to implement the *Learn the Signs. Act Early* initiative into the state's programs, such as Early Intervention, Head Start, Department of Child and Family Services, etc. Our current ambassador, Dr. Kate Barlow, is an assistant professor of occupational therapy at American International College and works part time as a feeding consultant in the THOM Early Intervention office in Springfield, MA. She travels across the state to provide trainings on program implementation. The *Learn the Signs. Act Early* program and the trainings are free.

The state of Massachusetts has an Act Early Team, which is composed of leaders across the state who work in the birth to five population. Joan M. Butterfield, OTR/L, CEIS, Director of Specialty Services in the Division of Early Intervention, is one of the key members of the MA Act Early Team. The MA Act Early team is hosting a free educational summit on child development and early identification at Bristol Community College, in Fall River, on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Please check out the MA Act Early webpage for more information or to register for the free conference: <https://www.maactearly.org/>. The MA Act Early group also has a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/MAActEarly/?ref=bookmarks>.

If you are interested in your site receiving a training, please contact the CDC's Act Early Ambassador directly at [Kate.Barlow@aic.edu](mailto:Kate.Barlow@aic.edu). You can also find out more about the CDC's *Learn the Signs. Act Early* program on their website: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html>.



### Early Intervention and Child Welfare Voices Research Project

The *Early Intervention and Child Welfare Voices* research project is seeking early intervention professionals to take part in one 45-minute **virtual focus group** (flyer link). You can participate from anywhere that may be convenient for you – your office, home, or your car! This research project is seeking to understand the experiences and trainings of early intervention providers working with children who have experienced maltreatment. This study has been approved by the UMass Boston's IRB and follows strict guidelines regarding confidentiality. For questions regarding the study or your participation please contact Kelly Brown at [Kelly.Brown002@umb.edu](mailto:Kelly.Brown002@umb.edu) or 781-856-6792.

#### — SHARE YOUR VOICE —

Early Interventionists and DCF Social Workers are being invited to participate in a **virtual focus group** for a research study. This study is seeking to explore early experiences working with children with disabilities who've been exposed to maltreatment.

Focus Groups taking place in March and April 2020.



Please Scan the QR Code or Click the Link Below to Complete a Brief Survey to Enroll in the Focus Group

<https://forms.gle/7aXcZK9HwANwv1L6>



For More Information: [Kelly.Brown002@umb.edu](mailto:Kelly.Brown002@umb.edu)



**Comments, contributions or feedback, please contact:**

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