



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH SERVICES

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Birth to 3 Program Family Communication

Families and COVID-19: Receiving the Services You Need

To help ensure access to important early intervention services during this global pandemic, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is continuing, with local county programs, to make early intervention services available for families. DHS understands the uncertainty families may be experiencing during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic and is committed to helping families keep life as normal as possible, while also keeping them safe and healthy. The purpose of this communication is to share current updates and important information with families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keeping Families Connected

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important for families and service coordinators to stay in touch to make sure that families' and children's most important needs are being met. These connections are also a chance for the family and service coordinator to discuss any new needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Families and service coordinators will work together to develop a plan for communicating during the pandemic. This may include telephone calls, email messaging, or video calls. Service coordinators will reach out to the family based on conversations with the family and their needs. Families can reach out to service coordinators at any time.

For Families New to the Birth to 3 Program

Families who are new to the Birth to 3 Program usually take part in an evaluation to see if their child can receive services. If they are eligible, they also develop a personalized care plan called an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). During the COVID-19 pandemic, it may not be possible to hold some evaluations in person.

Programs may choose to use a short-term service plan called an interim IFSP to allow immediate access to the Birth to 3 Program without waiting for an evaluation. An interim IFSP allow programs to begin providing services without an evaluation. Interim IFSPs are only needed for families who do not yet have an IFSP and if the evaluation can't be completed. The child's evaluation will occur when the COVID-19 pandemic ends and programs begin meeting face-to-face with all families again. Families should reach out to the service coordinator with any questions about an interim IFSP.

Parental Cost Share during COVID19

The [Birth to 3 Program Parental Cost Share System](#) is the process for determining if or how much families will pay toward the cost of early intervention services. This system has always allowed parents to ask for a flexibility to the parental cost share based on individual family circumstances. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the parental cost share will be waived if a family is experiencing a hardship due to COVID-19. This may include if a family member has become unemployed, if any member of the household has tested positive for COVID-19, or other circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

If services have been reduced due to COVID-19, the parental cost share will be reviewed and recalculated. Families and service coordinators will connect if they have any questions about the parental cost share.

Tips for Staying Safe during Home Visits

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many early intervention services are able to be provided using phone or video calls. In some cases, families may decide with their service coordinator to continue face-to-face services in their home. The following [tips](#) can be used to help protect families from COVID-19 during a home visit for early intervention services.

Before a home visit, families should decide where they will meet with their service provider. They should disinfect commonly touched surfaces such as doorknobs, counter tops, phones and other surfaces, and gather the things that might be needed for the visit. Before the service provider arrives, families should wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and then put on a face covering if they have one. Children under the age of two should not wear face coverings.

When the service provider arrives, they should already be wearing a face covering. As soon as they enter the home, they should wash their hands and put on gloves. During the visit, families should not touch their eyes, nose, or mouth and should try to stay six feet away from the service provider if possible. Once the home visit is over, families should disinfect the area where they met with the service provider and wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. Home visits should be canceled if the infant or toddler, anyone in the home, or the service provider are not feeling well.

Not everyone will be able to follow each step. Families should talk with their service coordinator, service provider, and members of their household to create a plan that works for them.

Helpful COVID-19 Resources for Families

These links may be useful for families during the COVID-19 pandemic. Families with limited internet service can check with the service coordinator to ask about ways to access resources.

[Updates for the Birth to 3 Program during COVID-19](#)

[Up-to-date information about COVID-19 in Wisconsin](#)

[Changes to Foodshare requirements](#)

[Tips for staying safe during home visits](#)

[How to make a cloth face covering without sewing](#)

[Connect with other parents in Wisconsin with similar experiences](#)