

## Frequently Asked Questions about Live Video Visits (i.e., teletherapy) for families of children receiving early intervention (EI) during COVID-19

Because of COVID-19, the Illinois Early Intervention (EI) program is offering to provide EI through live video visits (also known as teletherapy or telehealth). Below are some frequently asked questions and answers for families who are considering live video visits for EI. **It is not mandatory that you receive EI services through live video visits; the choice is entirely yours.** If you are a family with an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or your child has been determined eligible for EI services, then you are eligible for live video visits.



### What are live video visits?

Live video visits are conducted remotely between the family/child and the EI provider. The live video visit is conducted through an internet platform (e.g., Zoom, WebEx, FaceTime) where you can see and hear your EI provider in real time. You will need an internet/data plan with a stable connection. You will also need a phone/laptop/tablet/computer with video and audio ability.

For more family-friendly information about live video visits, see:

<https://eicclearinghouse.org/einotes/telehealth-intro>

### What can I expect during the live video visit?

Just like in-person EI visits, the live video visits will be conducted at a date/time that is convenient to you. During the visit, the EI provider will coach you about strategies for your child. This may include: checking in on how things have been going since you last saw or spoke with one another, reviewing your family's outcomes and discussing what has been working and what has been challenging, jointly planning what you would like to focus on during the visit, observing your child at play or within routines or interactions with other family members, suggesting strategies or modifications to try, connecting you with necessary resources, and planning strategies to try until your next visit. Live Video Visits do not require your child to be attentive to the provider for the entire visit. There will be times when your child moves away from the camera/screen and that is expected.

For a short (four minute) video about what to expect during the live video visit, see:

[http://www.infanthearing.org/ti101/families/main\\_content\\_module\\_2\\_how\\_do\\_you\\_get\\_started\\_cc\\_19\\_ti\\_a\\_family\\_perspective.html](http://www.infanthearing.org/ti101/families/main_content_module_2_how_do_you_get_started_cc_19_ti_a_family_perspective.html)

For more information about how live video visits differ from in-person visits, see:

<https://eicclearinghouse.org/einotes/telehealth-description/>

## **How do I choose whether live video visits are right for my family?**

### **Is it my choice to receive live video visits?**

It is entirely up to you whether to receive live video visits at this time. During the current crisis, you may decide that live video visits would be uncomfortable or take up too much time. You can change your mind about receiving live video visits at any time by calling your service coordinator. You are an expert on your child and your family; you will make the best choice for your family. Your service coordinator will share information to support you in making an informed choice for your family.

If you choose not to receive live video visits, there are other options for your family. You can choose to talk by phone (i.e., phone consultation) with your providers. Or you can choose to maintain contact only with your service coordinator, by phone. Additionally, here are some resources to continue working on EI strategies at home:

<https://eicclearinghouse.org/einotes/telehealth-implement/>

### **If I decline live video visits, when COVID-19 ends, will I receive make-up services for missed EI sessions (before and after live video visits were offered)?**

Make-up services (i.e., compensatory services for missed sessions) will be determined on an individual basis. When in-person visits are available, you and your EI team can meet and determine whether your child should receive make-up services. To help document whether your child may need make-up services, contact your Parent Training and Information Center which provides information, referral, trainings, and individualized assistance to families for free:

- Family Resource Center on Disabilities (serves McHenry, Lake, Kane, DuPage, Cook, Kendall, Will and Grundy counties; [www.frcd.org](http://www.frcd.org))
- Family Matters (serves all other counties in Illinois; <https://www.fmptic.org/>)

### **Is there an additional cost to me for the live video visit?**

There are no additional costs to you for the live video visit. You are not expected to purchase anything for the live video visit.

Beginning the month of March of 2020, families started receiving a credit of their family fee monthly installments through future months while face-to-face services are prohibited. Specifically, during the months wherein the Stay-at-Home Order is in effect, families will receive a monthly credit. All other family fee policies and procedures will remain.

If you become unemployed due to COVID-19 and, accordingly, have a change in your household income or family size, you should contact your service coordinator to recalculate your fee.

### **What technology do I need for the live video visit?**

You will need an internet/data plan with a stable connection. You will also need a phone/laptop/tablet/computer with video and audio ability.

For more information about needed technology, please visit:

<https://eicclearinghouse.org/einotes/telehealth-technology/>

Family Technology Checklist for Live Video EI Visits (pdf):

<https://blogs.illinois.edu/files/6150/807741/170536.pdf>

### **What if I do not have the needed technology and/or internet capability?**

There are resources to help you with technology and internet. Your service coordinator may be able to help you access these programs. For example, the Early Intervention Clearinghouse is loaning, for free, technology (i.e., iPads and WIFI hotspots) to families to conduct live video visits. To receive the technology, families can contact the Early Intervention Clearinghouse at: [illinois-eic@illinois.edu](mailto:illinois-eic@illinois.edu), or 877-275-3227 or 217-333-1386. See the final page of this document for other resources to access technology and Internet.



### **Do I have to do a 60 minute live video visit? Or can it be 2x a week, 30 minute sessions or just 30 minutes?**

You and your EI provider can determine whether a 60 minute weekly visit or two, 30 minute weekly sessions or less time are appropriate for your child. It is perfectly acceptable to split up the session into two, 30 minute sessions or reduce the total time to even 30 minutes.

### **What is my role (i.e., the parent) during the live video visit?**

Your role in the live video visit will be key! The provider will discuss with you what you would like to focus on during the visit and, together, you will problem-solve and then may try out strategies and provide feedback.

### **Does my child need to be present during the entire live video visit? Isn't this just more screen time for my child?**

Your child does not need to be present for the entire visit. Live video visits provide EI services and strategies that you can use to support your child. Live video visits would not be considered additional screen time for your child. In a live video visit, there will be times when your child may not want to stay in the area or may not be fully engaged. That is alright! This time is an

opportunity for you and your provider to reflect on the strategies attempted, discuss changes, and problem solve together.

### **What does the process look like for live video visits?**



#### **What is the first step in a live video visit?**

Your service coordinator will contact you and explain the live video visit. Your service coordinator may call you from a blocked or “unavailable” number; please try to answer the phone. You will be asked to provide consent about whether you want live video visits. You can provide written consent or verbal consent (i.e., consent over the phone). Notably, written consent is not required to receive live video visits--it is your choice if you want to provide verbal or written consent.

If you want to provide written consent, you will need to provide a signature to the service coordinator. Your service coordinator will mail the forms for you to sign; you will be asked to return them by mail to your service coordinator. <https://eiclearinghouse.org/einotes/telehealth-description>

#### **Can all EI services be provided through live video visits?**

All EI therapies may be provided through live video visits at the current time. As appropriate to the specific service, some EI services may not be able to be provided through live video visits.

It is possible that some providers may not be able to offer live video visits due to their own family's circumstances or due to the fact that they do not have the technology to offer services in this format. Your service coordinator can help you understand which of your current providers are available as well as determine the need to seek out other providers.

#### **Can I choose to have live video visits with only one or some of my providers?**

Yes, it is your family's decision as to how you receive any of your EI services at this time. You can choose for each service to receive live video visits, or phone consultation, or put ongoing services on hold and continue with service coordination.

#### **Can new families be referred for EI and can initial eligibility be determined using live video visits?**

Yes, referrals for EI are still being accepted. Specifically, if a child has a diagnosed physical or mental condition with a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay or the child meets the criteria for eligibility via risk factors, then, upon the service coordinator obtaining documentation of these conditions, the child can have an assessment and receive EI services via live video visits.

If a child needs an evaluation to determine whether the child qualifies for EI, then, if appropriate, an initial evaluation can be conducted via the live video visit.

### **How can my child's skills be assessed through a live video visit?**

This is a great question! Many of your child's skills can be assessed by observing everyday interactions with you and other family members. For example, fine motor skills can be assessed by observing mealtime (e.g., watching how the child uses their hands to drink from a cup). A professional can also observe the child's independence during mealtime (e.g., does the child drink from an open cup?). A professional can also observe the gross motor skills of the child (e.g., can the child sit independently on a chair during mealtime?). The live video visit will incorporate these authentic measures of assessment. However, it is entirely up to you whether you want to pursue an evaluation via live video visit.

### **How will medical diagnostic evaluations be conducted?**

The medical diagnostician will receive and review information about your child prior to your child's medical diagnostic appointment. If you feel comfortable, you can share video clips of your child to the medical diagnostician. Your medical diagnostic evaluation can be conducted through live video visit or in-person. If the evaluation is conducted in-person, then there will be precautions to ensure your family's safety (e.g., you and your child can come to the visit in-person but other family members would participate virtually in the visit; the professionals as well as you and your family may be wearing masks; if your child is aged 2 or older, the child may be asked to wear a mask, if tolerated; social distancing will occur, to the extent possible).

### **For a medical diagnostic evaluation, how can my child's skills be assessed through a live video visit?**

Your medical diagnostician will watch you participate in specific interactions with your child. The diagnostician will ask you to have your child try specific activities. In these ways, the diagnostician will get a sense of your child's strengths and skills. Also, the diagnostician will ask you questions to understand your perspective as well as to identify your concerns.

### **What happens if I missed my child's medical diagnostic evaluation due to the Stay-at-Home Order?**

Your service coordinator is working with the medical diagnostician to reschedule your visit before your child ages out of early intervention.

### **Will live video visits continue to be offered after COVID-19?**

Live video visits are only being approved during the Stay-at-Home Order period of time.

However, the EI Bureau is interested in exploring the ability to continue to offer live video visits post the Stay-at-Home Order period of time and may reach out to you regarding your family's experience.

### **What to expect once I accept live video visits?**



#### **Will interpreters be provided during live video visits?**

Yes, interpreters will participate during the live video visit.

#### **What are some tips for successful live video visits?**

Some tips include: find a location within your house that you think will be comfortable for you and your child and that will have fewer distractions; having a stable internet connection; put a blanket on the floor so you know when you are within view of the EI provider; identify toys or other items that will help your child be comfortable during the visit; and consider what you want to share with the EI provider before the visit.

Here is a document to prepare for a live video visit:

<https://blogs.illinois.edu/files/6150/807741/170327.pdf>

#### **Can live video visits be for families who are waiting for EI services?**

Yes, if you have been waiting for EI services, you can receive services through live video visits.

#### **Can I receive EI services through live video visits even though my child is aging out of EI (i.e., turning three years of age)?**

The Bureau of Early Intervention is working with the Illinois State Board of Education to determine how best to provide services to families of children who are aging out of EI. At present, at three years of age, children should be evaluated and, if eligible, served by their local school district.



#### **What if I have concerns about the live video visits?**

As the parent of a child receiving early intervention services, you have rights. You have the right to express your concerns or disagreements with your service coordinator. If you are not satisfied with the result of that discussion, there are formal options for dispute resolution available to

you. You can find such options in Section Six of “A Guide for Families” (<https://www.childfind-idea-il.us/Materials/family-guide.pdf>). You can also talk to other parents about your rights:

- Family Resource Center on Disabilities (serves McHenry, Lake, Kane, DuPage, Cook, Kendall, Will and Grundy counties; [www.frcd.org](http://www.frcd.org))
- Family Matters (serves all other counties in Illinois; <https://www.fmptic.org/>)

### **Who can I contact with questions about Early Intervention?**

You can contact the Bureau of Early Intervention at: 217-782-1981.

### **Other resources have been developed to help ensure live video visits can be provided to families without access to technology and/or stable internet connection:**

- Comcast has a program that offers low-cost computers. For additional information, please visit <https://internetessentials.com/low-cost-computer> .
- The Arc of Illinois-Technology Fund for families will pay for a \$500 device for a family. For additional information, please visit <https://www.thearcofil.org/assistive-technology-program-application-form> .
- Internet Essentials - Comcast has a program for low-cost, high-speed internet services for families with low- income. They have recently increased internet speeds to 25/3 Mbps and new customers get two months of free service. For additional information, please visit <https://www.internetessentials.com> .
- Comcast is offering free Wi-Fi and pausing data plans amid COVID-19 crisis.
- AT&T also has a program for low cost, high speed internet services. For additional information, please visit <https://www.att.com/support/article/u-verse-high-speed-internet/KM1094463> .
- Lifeline Program: Mobile telephone and internet companies can provide free mobile service including both voice and data through this program. The customer accesses the Lifeline benefit by obtaining service from one of the participating companies and the companies verify eligibility.

For additional information, please see the Citizens Utility Board brochure or visit the Illinois LinkUp/Lifeline website at <http://linkupillinois.org> for qualifying assistance programs. Safelink is a well-established lifeline mobile carrier. For additional information, please visit: <https://www.safelinkwireless.com/Enrollment/Safelink/en/Web/www/default/index.html#!/newHome> .