



**New York City Department of Health, Division of Family and Child Health, Bureau of  
Early Intervention Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Teletherapy During COVID-19  
(3/25/2020)**

**Introduction:** The FAQs included in this document serve as additions to the guidance provided on March 13, 2020 and March 18, 2020.

**Q1:** What is the procedure for changing a center-based group developmental intervention service authorization to a home/community-based service authorization for the purpose of delivering teletherapy during COVID-19?

**A1:** In order to expedite the changes from center-based group developmental intervention service authorizations to home/community-based service authorizations to facilitate the delivery of teletherapy:

- a. The Bureau of Early Intervention contacted all center-based providers and advised them to complete a spreadsheet titled *Service Authorization Status Report* to prioritize changes for children who get center-based services to home/community-based services. Changes should be submitted via spreadsheet to [EITA@health.nyc.gov](mailto:EITA@health.nyc.gov).
- b. Once Early Intervention center-based providers submit the list to [EITA@health.nyc.gov](mailto:EITA@health.nyc.gov), the Bureau's regional offices will create the home/community-based service authorizations for special instruction.
- c. While center-based providers are completing the spreadsheets and identifying interventionists to deliver teletherapy, the child's service coordinator must:
  - i. Obtain the ***Change in Services/Service Provider/Service Coordinator*** form located in Chapter 7 of the [NYC Policies & Procedures Manual](#)
    - The Bureau of Early Intervention is aware that the service mandate for special instruction (frequency and duration) may need to change based on the individual child and family's ability to receive teletherapy.
    - In order to expedite this process, indicate on the Service Change section if the mandate needs to be modified based on child and family ability to receive teletherapy. Therefore, section IV must be completed to indicate the requested changes.
  - ii. Obtain the ***Consent for Telehealth*** form and follow the guidance issued by the NYS Department of Health on March 18, 2020, and
  - iii. Utilize the check lists provided with that guidance to ensure that agencies, interventionists and families are prepared to facilitate/participate in telehealth sessions.

The ***Consent for Telehealth*** and the ***Change in Services/Service Provider/Service Coordinator*** forms for special instruction must be completed and attached to the child's integrated case in NYEIS for the Regional Office to make the necessary amendment in NYEIS.

Q2: How should service coordinators obtain signatures on the ***Consent for Telehealth*** form during COVID-19 if the family does not have a printer or scanner and is unable to email a signed consent form back to the provider?

A2. During this declared state of emergency, if the family is unable to print and scan the form, it is sufficient for them to email the service coordinator with the following statement: “this email / text message serves as my written consent to utilize telehealth to receive Early Intervention services during the COVID-19 Declared State of Emergency” (insert name of parent/guardian) (insert date)”. It is also acceptable for families to text that message to service coordinators, who must then print out the message. Service coordinators must upload this email/text consent statement, the completed ***Consent for Telehealth***, and the completed ***Change in Services/Service Provider/Service Coordinator*** form (center-based changes only) to the child’s integrated case in NYEIS. For center-based changes, the documents must be attached to the child’s integrated page for the Regional Office to make the necessary amendment in NYEIS.

However, it is BEI’s expectation that the parent’s signature will be obtained on the ***Consent for Telehealth*** form as soon as possible via the US Mail, fax or email to ensure that there are no billing or audit issues.

NOTE: BEI will not accept parent signatures obtained utilizing a third-party application or program.

Q3: Will individual facility-based service authorizations be converted to home/community-based service authorizations during the COVID-19 emergency response, in order to deliver teletherapy?

A3: No, individual facility-based authorizations will not be amended to home/community-based. The provider should deliver the session utilizing a teletherapy approach, with parental consent on the ***Consent for Telehealth*** form (or in a consent statement via email or text, as described in A2 above). Providers must note on the Session Note that “the service was delivered utilizing a teletherapy approach during the COVID-19 declared state of emergency”. The service coordinator must obtain the consent from the parent/guardian and attach it to the child’s integrated case in NYEIS.

Q4: Do home/community-based service authorizations need to be amended in NYEIS before teletherapy can be initiated?

A4: No modifications are needed in NYEIS. The provider should deliver that session utilizing a teletherapy approach, with parental consent on the ***Consent for Telehealth*** form (or in a consent statement via email or text, as described in A2 above). Providers must note on the Session Note that “the service was delivered utilizing a teletherapy approach during the COVID-19 declared state of emergency”. The service coordinator must obtain the ***Consent for Telehealth*** form from the parent/guardian and attach it to the child’s integrated case in NYEIS.

Q5: If the family does not want to receive their full-service mandate during the COVID-19 declared state of emergency, is an amendment needed in NYEIS?

A5: No, if the family decides to suspend a portion or all of their services, or to close their case, because of COVID-19, providers must follow the guidance issued by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene on March 11, 2020, “Documenting Family Decisions to Suspend Services of the Early Intervention Process Due to COVID-19”.

Q6: Is there a sample service log that providers can use to comply with the FAQs issued by the NYS Department of Health on March 19, 2020?

A6. Yes. Attached please find a sample service log that providers can use. Please note that parents must sign the log; typewritten names, including those written in script to look like a signature, are not acceptable. Neither are signatures obtained utilizing a third-party application or program. In addition, the information on service logs must match the information on the session notes (start and end time, date of service, etc.)