

From: DHHR WV BTT Information <dhhrrwvbtinfo@wv.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2020 3:28 PM
Subject: TA Bulletin- Temporary Emergency Policy
Importance: High

Hello Everyone,

We are posting our TA Bulletin - our Temporary Emergency Policy for WVBTT Services

We cannot post this on our website until tomorrow so I have added the full language below in this email. Please review thoroughly. We know that these are major changes, but we are trying to keep services available to families during the critical period. We want to protect not only families and children, but you and your families as well. Below is the TA Bulletin.

**TO: WV Birth to Three Payees, Practitioners, and Service Coordinators
WV Birth to Three Regional Administrative Units**

FROM: WV Birth to Three

DATE: March 17, 2020 – April 30, 2020

ISSUE: Temporary Emergency Policy for WV Birth to Three Services -Steps for Safety During COVID-19 Outbreak

Due to the community- based nature of WV Birth to Three, WVBTT is issuing a temporary policy for families, service practitioners and services coordinators to use alternative methods for service delivery. These policies will only be in effect from March 17, 2020 through April 30, 2020. If the West Virginia state of emergency is extended beyond April 30, WV Birth to Three will provide further guidance. This TA Bulletin outlines steps to be taken to initiate the use of audio-only technology. All WV Birth to Three services will be reimbursed at the Home Rate for the above time period only.

Following is guidance for the WV Birth to Three process:

Initial Contact with Family

As of today, March 17, 2020 through April 30, 2020, WV Birth to Three will have in place alternative methods for completing follow up on a referral. After an initial referral, the Interim Service Coordinator (ISC) will contact the family by phone and inform the family of WV Birth to Three emergency policy. After explaining WV Birth to Three to the family and finding that the family desires to continue, the ISC will do the following:

1. Confirm with the family how the Intake/Family Assessment will occur. The Intake/Family Assessment will occur via audio-only technology.
2. The ISC will mail a copy of the Family Assessment, Procedural Safeguards booklet, Consent for Electronic Data, Notice/Consent for Multidisciplinary Evaluation/Assessment and Authorization to Obtain Medical Information Form to the family with a self- addressed, stamped envelope for return to the RAU.
3. The ISC will document that the Intake Packet has been sent.

Intake/Family Assessment

The Interim Service Coordinator will proceed with the Intake/Family Assessment via audio only technology on the scheduled date.

1. Inform the family that WV Birth to Three must receive the original signed Notices and Consents for the child's official early intervention record.
2. WV Birth to Three will accept verbal consent to begin the Evaluation/Assessment process. ISCs must document that they have informed the family that they can use their verbal consent to proceed with services prior to receiving their signed documents.
3. Assist the family to determine the multi-disciplinary team members based on the family's priorities and concerns. Inform the family that the evaluation/assessment must be completed face to face to determine eligibility for services.
4. If the family declines to proceed to evaluation/assessment, ask the family if they would like to be re-contacted within 30 days. If not, follow the Closure of Referral Procedures.

Initial Evaluation/Assessment

To meet federal regulations for the determination of eligibility for services, the multidisciplinary evaluation/assessment should be completed in person. The ISC will contact the practitioners selected by the family to confirm their availability. Practitioners have 15 days to complete their evaluation/assessment. The practitioner is responsible for contacting the family and arranging for the visit. If there are families who do not desire to have an initial evaluation/assessment visit face to face, the practitioner must document that information on the phone/correspondence log and inform the RAU that the family has selected not to proceed at this time. For concerns that include issues in a childcare setting, the Practitioner must first contact the childcare center to confirm that a portion of the evaluations/assessments may occur in that setting. If approved by the childcare center, the practitioner may confirm the date and time of the face to face evaluation/assessment.

Prior to the Home Visit for Evaluations/Assessments

Let the family know that WV is in a state of emergency. WV Birth to Three home visits for evaluations/assessments should be confirmed by phone, email or text with the family prior to the visit to ensure the following:

1. No one in the home is isolated per medical or health department instructions.
2. No one in the home displays symptoms of being sick- fever, cough, sore throat, vomiting or diarrhea.
3. No one in the home has potentially been exposed to a person with COVID-19.
4. Confirm the scheduled visit date with the family. Document the conversation on the Phone/Correspondence Log.

For Face to Face Evaluations/Assessments

Practice good universal precautions.

1. Never conduct a visit when you are not feeling well. If you have any of the signs and symptoms noted above, cancel your visit and reschedule for a future date. Document on the Missed Appointment Form.
2. Schedule children who have suppressed immune systems early in the day before you have visited other families.

3. Always carry hand sanitizer, tissues, a change of clothes with you to protect yourself and the children and families you are visiting.
4. Sanitize your hands before entering the home or community location.
5. Limit what is carried into the home or community location. Ideally, you should only take your car keys, your phone (in your pocket or fanny pack- do not place your phone on a table or floor), those items needed immediately for charting, and supplies to clean your hands, pen and keys.
6. Do not bring in toy bag!

Initial, Annual and Six Month IFSP Reviews

All initial, annual and six- month IFSP reviews will take place by audio-only technology.

1. Once the meeting is completed, a copy of the IFSP and the original signature page will be sent to the family for review and signature for services to begin.
2. The Service Coordinator will request the family's verbal approval for services and document on the IFSP by entering on the IFSP service grid page with indication that approval was received from the family. Service Coordinators will print the names of all IFSP team members who participated on the IFSP signature page and submit the Teaming Activity note and the Authorization for Teaming Units and Documentation of Transition Conference form.
3. All evaluation/assessment team members and Service Coordinators are required to participate in the IFSP meetings. If the child is found not eligible, or the family chooses not to have any services, the Interim or Ongoing Service Coordinator will follow steps to close the child's record.

NOTE: For all team meetings during this time, the ISC or OSC should enter the location of participating individuals as 'Home'.

Transition Conferences

All children must have a Transition Conference at least 90 days prior to their third birthday.

1. For families who are inviting Part B education personnel to their meetings, some Part B folks are working during this period so the Interim or Ongoing Service Coordinator should try to contact the county school system to determine if they can participate by phone for the Transition Conference.
2. The Interim or Service Coordinator will complete the Teaming Activity note and the Authorization for Teaming Units and Documentation of Transition Conference form and submit to the RAU.

NOTE: For all team meetings during this time, the ISC or OSC should enter the location of participating individuals as 'Home'.

On-Going Services by Direct Service Practitioners

All on-going services by Direct Service Practitioners will take place by audio-only technology.

1. Inform the family, that during the COVID-19 state emergency, home visits will occur via audio only technology, as per the IFSP. Following completion of the IFSP visit, the practitioner or service coordinator will complete the Intervention Activity note and record the start and end times of the meeting as well as the date of service.
2. The practitioner will send a copy of the note to the RAU and to the family. Families will continue to receive a monthly Explanation of Benefits, so they will have the ability to match this to the Intervention Activity Notes. Note: Please do not fill in the Parent/Caregiver signature.

On-Going Services by Service Coordinators

All on-going services by Service Coordinators will take place by audio-only technology.

1. Inform the family, that during the COVID-19 State Emergency, home visits will occur via audio only technology, as per the IFSP. Service Coordination home visits will occur using audio-only technology, as per the child's IFSP.
2. Document your Service Coordination service on the Service Coordination Activity note. Service Coordinators should enter the start and end time of the meeting and the date of service. The Service Coordinator will send a copy of the note to the RAU and to the family. Note: Please do not fill in the Parent/Caregiver signature.
3. Service Coordinators may also use the non- face to face billing code in order to make an additional contact with each family monthly during this period of time to check on the family and inquire if they have any needs including referrals for other services. Document on the Phone/Correspondence Log.

Services in a Child Care Setting

No face to face services will be provided in childcare during this time. WV Birth to Three recognizes that many families require childcare in order to continue their work during the COVID-19 outbreak. In order to protect the children and the very important staff who care for them, WV Birth to Three services will only be provided in childcare through the audio-only option. The Practitioner/s will coordinate all audio only services with the childcare center director.

Accessing Necessary Resources for Audio Only Technology

WV Birth to Three practitioners and service coordinators may use resources such as telephones, Zoom, doxy.me, or other resources that are operated in a manner to protect each family's confidentiality. It would be inappropriate to record any session with a family as video recording requires written permission by the family. The platform selected for communication must meet the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Some common video-telephonic apps such as Skype and FaceTime do not meet these requirements. Telephone communications without the video components do meet FERPA requirements.

Each practitioner will need to have a conversation with each family to determine if the service they are using is acceptable to the family.

If you have questions about a certain technology, you can contact the WV Birth to Three state office at 304-356-4365 or email to pam.s.roush@wv.gov

Thank you!

Pam
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WV Birth to Three
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