



Early Intervention (EI) During COVID-19

- **What is Early Intervention?**
 - Early Intervention is a program of services for children ages 0-3 with, or at risk of, developmental delays. Typically, services end when a child turns 3 years old.
 - The state agency responsible for EI works with local providers to give children ages 0-3 services such as Occupational Therapy, Speech/Language Therapy, Physical Therapy, Developmental Therapy and other services.
- **What happens when a child is going to turn 3 years old, but the child's providers and family think the child requires continued services?**
 - With permission from the family, EI providers make a referral to their local school district **at least three months before the child's 3rd birthday** to determine if they are eligible for early childhood special education (ages 3-5).
 - When a referral is made, the school district **MUST** agree to do this testing and send the parent a testing consent form in 5 days.
 - Once the school district receives the signed consent form, the school district must test the child in all areas related to their suspected disability within 30 school working days, and have a special education Team meeting with the family, EI providers, and the school district to determine eligibility within 45 school working days .
- **How is COVID-19 Impacting Early Intervention?**
 - EI providers continue to offer families services through telehealth options, such as video conference and phone calls.
 - ***The Department of Education extended EI services for students who turned 3 between March 15, 2020 and August 31, 2020. This extension ends on October 15, 2020.***
 - **School districts must continue to accept referrals from EI providers and evaluate children for early childhood special education eligibility.**
 - School districts may hold virtual TEAM meetings to determine eligibility and services.
 - **CHILD FIND MANDATE:** federal and state laws require school districts to locate and evaluate all children ages 0-22 that may have a disability and require special education. COVID-19 has not changed this responsibility.
 - **EI providers should still make special education referrals to school districts** even if the school district is doing a 'fully remote' or 'hybrid' learning model for the 2020-2021 school year.
- **I have additional questions about EI, what should I do?**
 - Contact your local Family Resource Center: www.frcma.org
 - Call MHAP for Kids' intake line at 617-275-2919