



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Health and Social Services

SENIOR AND DISABILITIES SERVICES
Director's Office

751 Old Richardson Hwy, Ste 100-A
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701-7813
Main: 907.451.5045
Toll free: 800.770.1672
Fax: 907.451.5046

To: Alaska Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program (EI/ILP) Families

From: Maureen Harwood
Alaska Part C Coordinator
Senior and Disabilities Services

Re: EI/ILP Services during Covid-19 Update

Date: January 22, 2021

Many Part C organizations across the country and in the territories continue to make tough decisions related to allowing in-person home visits while the national Public Health Emergency (PHE) is still active. In a recent national meeting close to 70% of Part C programs continue to be hesitant to allow in-person visits and rely on distant delivered services and the coaching to provide effective supports to families. COVID 19 remains an active reality in terms of planning for a safe in-person home visit. While Alaska's Lead EI/ILP agency, Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS), continues to support and encourage alternative service delivery options in light of the continuing COVID pandemic in Alaska, we honor that local programs have developed Safety Plans that offer ways to lessen the risk of COVID spread and would allow for in-person service delivery.

A primary concern for the Lead agency is that families, their members, and staff are safe and know they have choice in how supports can be offered. Families MUST be fully informed of all elements in the Safety Plan of their local agency and how it was constructed to ensure the health and well-being of everyone involved in the Part C system. The Lead agency expects that agencies will continue to offer a hybrid model of service delivery so all families have access based on their choice of either in-person or distance delivered services.

The Lead agency plans to continue to work with the local agencies to discuss their Safety Plans and be certain local agencies are able to begin offering in-person visits starting 2/22/21. However, prior to implementing a return to in-person service delivery, in full or in part, this option must be developed using a shared decision process to ensure all families understand the risks of having an in-person visit at this time.

If any agency feels the risk are simply too high, they can choose to delay in-person visits and the Lead agency will support them in their choice.

Alaska Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program providers must continue offering alternate methods for referral, intake, meetings and service delivery. All modifications to services the Part C system offers are intended to allow for continuity of services and respect the health of all involved with our programs.

If you have any questions about current services related to your child, and would like to speak to someone at the State EI/ILP office, please contact your family service coordinator and they will connect you with a State EI/ILP state employee.