(Updated 4/8/2020)
AzEIP COVID-19 FAQs

Alternative Service Delivery Methods

1. *(Updated 4/8/2020)* **Question: What alternative service delivery methods are EIPs allowed to use to support families at this time?**

   Answer:

   - EIP teams must ensure they discuss the family's technology access and preferences in receiving support through alternative service delivery. EIPs are encouraged to be creative, use phone, tablets, videos, books, etc.
   - We recommend reviewing the various resources available on the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) and Division for Early Childhood (DEC) websites, such as: the FIPP Early Childhood Intervention Tele-practice video and Larry Edelman's Planning for the Use of Video Conferencing for Early Intervention during the COVID-19 Pandemic.
   - Some families may prefer to suspend services and ask to contact your program when they are ready to resume services in person. Other families may ask for team members to check in with them on a regular basis. Still others may ask for activity ideas that the team could share through a variety of methods, including by phone, email, or U.S. mail based on their request.
   - Document all of the options discussed, as well as the family's preference, in the SC and/or provider notes.
   - **At a minimum, the service coordinator must continue to contact the parent on a monthly basis via their preferred method of communication as required by AzEIP policy.**
   - Complete a Prior Written Notice documenting the family's preference and send it to the family with a copy of the Child and Family Rights Handbook.
     - Sample/example PWN:
       - Select Propose
       - Select Change in provision of early intervention services.
       - Description of action(s): OT will be provided by video conference effective 4/20Example/20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic unless or until otherwise requested by the parent.
     - Note: The PWN should address each service on the IFSP that will be provided in an alternative method.

2. *(Updated 4/8/2020)* **Question: What should we do if a family does not have internet, internet quality is low, or their cell phone is pay by the minute?**

   Answer:

   - Contact the family to find out about their technology access (cell phone, computer, video, email, etc.).
   - Determine the best approach to visits if the family would like to continue them virtually.
   - Discuss a back-up plan if technology is not meeting needs or working as expected.
   - Document the plan in the SC and/or provider notes.
   - **At a minimum, the service coordinator must continue to contact the parent on a monthly basis via their preferred method of communication as required by AzEIP policy.**
   - Complete a Prior Written Notice documenting the family's preference and send it to the family with a copy of the Child and Family Rights Handbook.

3. *(3/18/2020)* **Question: If a family would like tele-intervention but doesn't have an email address, can we assist the family in setting up an email address?**

   Answer: Yes, you may offer visits by phone only or assist with email set up. This is a part of the role of the SC.

4. *(Updated 4/8/2020)* **Question: What is the procedure or process if the family declines alternative service delivery methods?**

   Answer:

   - If a family declines to participate in alternative service delivery methods for any reason, document the family's decision in the SC and/or provider notes.
   - **At a minimum, the service coordinator must continue to contact the parent on a monthly basis via their preferred method of communication as required by AzEIP policy.**
   - Complete and send a Prior Written Notice to the family with the Child and Family Rights Handbook and include the contact information for the AzEIP state office.
     - Sample/example PWN:
       - Select Refuse
       - Select Other (specify): Team offered alternative service delivery and family declines at this time
       - Description of action(s): IFSP services will be suspended at the parent's request effective 4/23/20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic unless or until a change is requested by the parent. Service

Coordinator will continue to contact the parent on a monthly basis via telephone (or parent's preferred method of communication) as required by AzEIP policy.

5. *(Updated 4/8/2020)* **Question: Is there a form that families need to sign to indicate they agree or disagree with the use of tele-intervention?**

   Answer: No, at this time the family may provide verbal consent.

   - Document the family's decision in the SC and/or provider notes**.**
   - Complete a Prior Written Notice documenting the family's preference and send it to the family with a copy of the Child and Family Rights Handbook.

6. *(Updated 4/8/2020)* **Question: If a closure occurs (county, EI office, etc.) and tele-intervention is not an option, do compensatory services need to be offered?**

   Answer: In accordance with guidance issued from the US Dept. of Education (https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/qa-covid-19-03-12-2020.pdf, the AzEIP program will ensure continuity of services from EIPs while also protecting the health and safety of families and providers. Unless closed, the EIP must offer services in an alternate means. Upon the lifting of the state of emergency and restrictions on travel or social distancing, the service coordinator and IFSP team may meet to determine whether the child's or family's service needs have changed and identify potential changes to the IFSP as needed.

Timelines

1. *(Updated 4/8/2020)* **Question: If we are unable to meet timelines because of the current situation how should that be documented?**

   Answer: Follow current AzEIP policy and procedures and document any delay according to the individual situation:

   - If a family wants to wait to hold a meeting or receive services, document this in the SC and/or provider notes and I-TEAMS as a family delay.
   - If a team member cancels a meeting or is unable to provide services, document this in the SC and/or provider notes and I-TEAMS as a team delay.
   - If the TBEIS program is closed, i.e. not providing any services including tele-intervention, document this in the SC and/or provider notes as "program closed due to COVID- 19". Document the Delay Reason in I-TEAMS as Weather/Natural Disaster delay.

2. *(Updated 4/8/2020)* **Question: If a TBEIS contractor or DDD SC needs to complete a meeting (IFSP, etc.) for timeliness, but one or more of the active team members is not available, how should the SC proceed?**

   Answer: Follow the guidance outlined in the AzEIP Procedure Manual to ensure team member participation in the meeting or input prior to the meeting. If a team member is not available for a scheduled IFSP, follow standard business practice (invite, obtain feedback prior to the meeting, consult with EIP leadership, discuss at a team meeting, etc.).

3. *(Updated 4/8/2020)* **Question: How should we proceed with new referrals and will we be given a grace period for the 45-day timeline due to the pandemic?**

   Answer: According to IDEA, there is no ability to waive the 45-day timeline requirement. As an EIP, do everything possible to support the family within the required timeframes. When and if OSEP offers additional guidance on the 45-day timeline, the AzEIP office will provide that information. Please refer to 4/1/2020 IPP/Evaluation Guidance on the AzEIP website.

Documentation

1. *(Updated 4/8/2020)* **Question: How do we obtain consent from a family and can we accept verbal agreement?**

   Answer: Verbal consent is acceptable if obtaining written consent is not feasible due to limited or no technology access or other reasons. However, SCs should always attempt written consent through U.S. mail, fax, email or other agreed upon means.

   - Mail or fax: mail or fax document(s) to the family and request document(s) be returned in the family's preferred method:
     - Family signs document(s) and returns via U.S. mail (SC should provide a self-addressed stamped envelope).
     - Family signs document(s) and returns via fax.
   - Email: email document(s) to family and request document(s) be returned in the family's preferred method:
     - Family enters email signature on document(s) and returns via email.
     - Family prints document(s) from email, signs and returns via U.S. mail (SC should provide a self-addressed stamped envelope).
     - Family prints document(s) from email, signs and returns via scan/email.
     - Family responds to the email with the following

statement for consent purposes: I, (parent name) consent to (name of document(s)) as written on (date) at (time). Attach this email to the record for which consent was obtained.

Note: The date the activity (screening, evaluation, IFSP, etc.) occurred should be the consent date documented in ITEAMS.

2. *(Updated 4/8/2020)* **Question: How do we proceed with the Initial Planning Process (including evaluations) when we're not conducting in-person visits?**

   Answer: Please refer to 4/1/2020 IPP/Evaluation Guidance on the AzEIP website.

3. *(Added 4/8/2020)* **If a child's IFSP has a service at a frequency of 1 hour every other week, but a full hour of teletherapy is not feasible for the family, so instead we change to 30-minute sessions weekly, how do we document this change?**

   Answer: Document the change in service frequency in the SC and/or provider notes. Once the state of emergency is lifted, determine if any adjustments to services are needed.

Incident Reports

1. *(Updated 4/8/2020)* **Question: What should we do if a family or provider receives a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19?**

   Answer: If you are notified of a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 and there is risk of exposure to multiple families or providers, submit an incident report to AzEIPQualityImprovement@azdes.gov. Simultaneously, contact the assigned CQIC for the EIP to discuss and determine all appropriate notification procedures and any potential individual circumstances that need to be addressed. Additionally, if this is in regards to a child who is also eligible for DDD, this situation must be communicated with the child's DDD Support Coordinator, who must follow the internal DDD incident reporting standard work procedures for COVID-19, released on March 31, 2020, and as may be amended. TBEIS, ASDB, and DDD team members may not release personally identifiable information to other organizations or entities. For more information, please see STUDENT PRIVACY POLICY OFFICE FERPA & Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) March 2020: https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/sites/default/files/resource_document/file/FERPA%20and%20Coronavirus%20Frequently%20Asked%20Questions.pdf.

Referrals

1. *(3/20/2020)* **Question: What should I communicate to families about referrals to AzEIP at this time?**
   Answer: AzEIP is still accepting referrals statewide. Please submit a referral for any child age birth-3 that is suspected of having a significant developmental delay and/or established condition. Here is the link https://des.az.gov/services/disabilities/developmental-infant/contact-arizona-early-intervention-program. Currently there is no disruption in the original processing of referrals.

2. *(Updated 4/8/2020)* **Question: What about consent for DDD application?**
   Answer: As of 4/3/20, the TBEIS contractor should only submit DDD applications dated February 2019 or more current. The most current application is available in the Document Center on the DES website: https://des.az.gov/documents-center, therefore, the best approach is to always obtain the application from this location. Since all programs are currently operating remotely, attempt to obtain an electronic signature on the application. If the family does not have access to email, obtain a verbal consent for the DDD application, document the consent in the SC notes, and notify the eligibility team when submitting the application packet. Please refer to the DDD website https://des.az.gov/services/disabilities/developmental-disabilities for your local eligibility office for additional questions.

AzEIP Website

1. *(Updated 4/8/2020)* **Question: How will we know when COVID-19 updates are made to the AzEIP website?**
   Answer: Regular guidance from the AzEIP office will be posted to the AzEIP website. Please review the website often.

Team Collaboration

1. *(Updated 4/8/2020)* **Question: How can we be successful as an EIP during this time?**
   Answer: Do what you do best, support!
   - Communicate with the family to determine the family's preferred method of communication and service delivery.
   - Collaborate with other team members to determine how best to meet the family's preferred communication and service delivery needs.

- Determine who (TBEIS contractor team member, DDD SC, ASDB team member) will take the lead on facilitating the use of the family's preferred method of communication (telephone or video conference) for meetings.
- Review resources posted on the AzEIP website.
- Maximize team meetings by meeting regularly (even daily) for planning and coordination. Include the family in the discussion about their child if they would like and are able to participate.
- Meet regularly as EIP leadership to discuss barriers and address specific scenarios for all families you serve.