

Early ACCESS Guidelines for AEA Staff to Implement In-Person Services

Early ACCESS is a system of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with special needs and their families. As provided within Iowa Administrative Code, Title XVIII, Chapter 120, 281-120.2 and 34 CFR 303 of Part C, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Early ACCESS outcomes include:

- Enhancing the development of eligible children;
- Reducing the educational costs to society by minimizing the need for special education and related services after such children reach school age;
- Maximizing the potential of eligible children for independent living in society; and
- Enhancing the capacity of families to meet the needs of their eligible children.

The goal of Iowa's Area Education Agencies (AEAs) is to balance the provision of Early ACCESS services with the health and safety of Early ACCESS staff, families and eligible children. Individual AEAs must consider the delivery of services given the current COVID status of the county in which services will be provided. **In order to protect Early ACCESS families and providers from COVID-19 during AEA services, we are committed to continuing to provide virtual AEA services (video and telephone visits).** The AEAs also understand there are unique circumstances that require an in-person visit. The questions below should be considered when determining if an in-person visit is necessary in order to provide Early ACCESS services to an eligible child and family. Follow the "If, Then" protocol of considerations on the next page to determine whether a virtual service will meet the family's needs, or if an in person visit is required. Early ACCESS staff are required to consult with their supervisor before any in-person visit is completed.



If...	Then...	Considerations for staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The parent requests face-to-face services and the AEA team determines that virtual services are effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide virtual AEA services 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The parent requests face-to-face services and virtual services aren't effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begin working through the additional questions and considerations in the order presented below 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The parent requests virtual services - The AEA team thinks virtual services will work and the parent has access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide virtual AEA services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What training does the parent need to access the virtual services or use the technology?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The AEA team thinks virtual services will work but the parent doesn't have access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The IFSP team should identify the barrier(s) to access - Discuss in-person services using the additional 'If...Then' statements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the issue due to a lack of connectivity? - Is the issue due to the family not having a device?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virtual services aren't possible, and - The parent is willing to meet outside in a natural environment (i.e., yard, park) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consult with your supervisor to discuss the need for an in-person visit - Provide services in the outside natural environment as identified by the IFSP team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are restroom facilities available? - Will the parent be able to provide transportation?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virtual services and providing services outside aren't possible, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consult with your supervisor to discuss the need for an in-person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the location allow for 6 feet social distancing?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The parent is willing to bring their child to another location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> visit - Provide services in a community-based setting (i.e., library, community center) or outside the natural environment (i.e., AEA office, school) as identified by the IFSP team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the location allow for individuals to use the facility for services other than what would normally be provided? - When can the location be accessed? - Does parent have access to transportation for him/herself and the eligible child?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virtual services and providing services outside or in a community-based or outside a natural location aren't possible, or - The cost to provide virtual services or services outside or in a community-based or outside a natural location is prohibitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consult with your supervisor to discuss the need for an in-person visit - Provide the in-person service in the family's home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What must be done during the home visit? - What equipment must be taken into the home during the visit?

In addition to the considerations listed above, there are child- and family-specific variables to consider in order to identify the need for an urgent in-person visit. These unique family situations and individual needs require providers to use sound professional judgement when considering an urgent, in-person visit. Provider(s) should be prepared to discuss these, and possibly other considerations with their supervisor when seeking approval for an in-person visit.

- What is the concern or problem that necessitates an in-person visit?
- Is the concern time-sensitive or requires an immediate response?
- What IFSP outcome must be addressed during the visit?
- What have you tried doing virtually to address the immediate concern? What was the response/result?
- How will an in-person visit be more effective?
- What must be done during the in-person visit to address the immediate concern?
- What equipment must be taken into the home during the in-person visit?
- Is there an imminent risk to the child's development if the in-person visit is delayed?

- Are there evaluation components that must be completed in the near future?
- Is this a one-time visit or is there a need for on-going visits?
- Is it feasible for the parent/caregiver to participate with only that one child?
- Does anyone involved in the potential in-person visit have any known risk factors?
- Does the need for the in-person visit outweigh the risks of contracting or exposing others to COVID-19?
- What plan do you have to minimize the risk of contracting or exposing others to COVID-19?

The following stipulations must be met in order to conduct in-person services in outside locations, a non-natural location, or in the home:

- Only one in-person visit may be scheduled per day.
- Only one Early ACCESS staff member can participate in the in-person visit.
 - If a joint visit is required, one of the direct service providers must join the visit virtually.
- Only one family member and the child being served can participate in the in-person visit.
- If the services occur outside, the provider and parent must maintain social distancing or wear a face covering
- If services occur in an alternate location (e.g, library, community center) or outside a natural environment location like the school or AEA office, the provider and parent must wear a face covering and follow the guidelines established by the facility.
 - A face covering will be provided to the parent as needed.
- If a parent/caregiver refuses or is unable to wear a face covering, they **must** agree to adhere to the following conditions:
 - The visit **must** take place in an outdoor location.
 - The family member must remain at least 6 feet from the provider at all times.
 - The provider has the right to terminate the visit if the family member does not adhere to the required conditions during the in-person visit.
 - The family member has the right to terminate the visit at any time and for any reason.