Department of Education
Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

July 31, 2020

New York City Department of Education
Guidance for In-Person Contract and Independent Related Services during COVID-19 Pandemic

Beginning August 3, 2020, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) will approve the provision of in-person related services by contract and independent providers. Service may be provided individually, or, for students recommended for group services, in a group of 2; no larger groupings for in-person services are permitted until further notice. Remote service provision remains the preferred option.

Providers/agencies must follow the *Procedures for Arranging In-Person Related Services* (below), and must develop and implement protocols in accordance with the *Provider and Agency Requirements for In-Person Related Services* (below), as well as any other relevant guidance issued by the NYS Department of Health or NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Agencies are responsible for training their providers on these procedures, providing personal protective equipment (PPE), and implementing controls to monitor and ensure adherence to these procedures. In-person services are billed using the standard form and standard CPT codes.

Procedures for Arranging In-Person Related Services

Upon request of the parent, contract and independent related service providers may provide in-person services, pursuant to their contract or Related Services Authorization (RSA). Before delivering in-person services, the related service provider must inform the parent that:

- In-person related services can now be provided
- Remote related services are still available and preferred at this time
- For in-person related services, parents would need to provide consent and agree to follow specialized protocols for the health of all involved

Document the conversation with the parent, including the parent's decision, and maintain this documentation; for school-age students, upload the email confirmation to the student's record in SESIS.

- If the parent opts for remote services, the provider must utilize the remote services consent form here.
- If the parent requests in-person services, discuss the Consent for In-Person Related Services online form with the parent. Consent **must** be obtained before the day of the first in-person session. We will forward instructions for completion of the form on Monday under separate cover.

Related services may be provided in any location within New York City consistent with the student's needs and applicable health regulations. Group service IEP recommendations may be provided individually or in

a group no larger than 2 (regardless of the maximum recommended group size). Individual service recommendations may only be provided individually.

If a family is interested in in-person related services but the provider is not available to provide the services in-person, the agency must assign a new provider or reject the transmittal; providers not affiliated with an agency must contact the authorizing DOE office.

Provider and Agency Requirements for In-Person Related Services

Implement Health Plan:

All related service agencies/providers must put a plan in place that complies with all guidance (as applicable) on physical distancing; personal protective equipment; hygiene, cleaning and disinfection; communication and signage; screening; and physical capacity limitations as described in:

- The NYC Health Department's COVID-19: RESTART Guidance for Businesses: Consult the section applicable to the NY Forward Phase during which the provider is initiating or resuming in-person services or general operations.
- The NYSDOH's Interim Advisory for In-Person Special Education Services and Instruction During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (June 8, 2020)
- The NYSDOH's Child Care and Day Camp Programs Guidelines

We encourage all providers and families to avail themselves of COVID-19 diagnostic testing. Tests are free at NYC Health + Hospital testing sites. Visit nyc.gov/covidtesting for more information.

Face Covering Requirements

All related service providers must wear a face covering during the entire course of the session.

Related service providers may supply students with alternate face coverings (such as face shields that are transparent at or around the mouth) for activities that require visualization of the movement of the lips and mouth. These alternate coverings may also be worn by the provider, for students who benefit from being able to see more of the provider's face (for example, due to a hearing impairment).

Everyone who will be present for the session and is 2 years or older must wear a face covering if it can be tolerated.

Related services providers should monitor the student's ability to keep the face covering/mask on and adjust intervention strategies to best meet the student's needs.

Physical Distancing

To the extent possible while maintaining the efficacy of the intervention/service, related services providers should keep 6 feet of physical distance from the student and any other person present.

Anyone who is not participating in the session must maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance from others who are not members of the same household.

Make sure that family and staff groupings are as static as possible by having the same group or individuals consistently interact.

Healthy Hand Hygiene Before, During and After Session

All providers must put plans in place to make sure that:

- All parents and students present for the session wash their hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol before and after each session.
- All related services providers wash their hands for 20 seconds using soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol before and after each session.
- All related services providers who practice more hands-on interventions/services should put on gloves and leave them on for the entire session.
    - Leave gloves on until the end of the session. Remove by grasping the inside of the wrist end and pulling inside-out over your fingers, then discard into a plastic bag or lined trash can. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol or wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after removing gloves.
    - If gloves must be replaced for some reason during the session (for example, contact with stool or excessive body fluids such as saliva, mucus, vomit or urine), remove them, wash hands as described above, and put on a new pair of gloves
    - Please note that wearing gloves does not take the place of thorough handwashing.

Use of Toys and Other Materials

Home, Childcare, School, and Community Settings

The practice of bringing toys or other materials into multiple homes or childcare settings during in-person service delivery has the potential to spread COVID-19 or other infections. **Therefore, until further notice, it is prohibited to bring materials and toys (other than paper) from outside into home-based, school, or community settings.**

Teletherapy has demonstrated that providers can successfully use the materials, toys, and objects already in a family's home for therapeutic purposes during a session.

Agency Location Settings

Materials that cannot be cleaned and sanitized should not be used in the therapeutic treatment area. Toys with soft or porous surfaces (e.g., plush toys, wooden blocks, board books etc.) cannot be used in therapeutic settings as they cannot be properly disinfected.

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Required Screening Protocols

Providers/agencies must have plans to ensure that:

- Providers and families implement ongoing self-screening prior to the session to determine whether they or anyone else who intends to participate in the session:
    - Has COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell)
    - Has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days (diagnostic test, not a blood test for antibodies)
    - Has been in close contact (10 minutes within 6 feet or any direct physical contact) with a person with COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) or a confirmed COVID-19 infection within 14 days
    - Has been told by a health care provider or the NYC Test & Trace Corps to remain home due to being exposed to COVID-19
    - Is required to quarantine based on the New York State COVID-19 Travel Advisory (https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory)
    - **If any of the above is TRUE, those sessions must be conducted remotely, in line with the guidance issued on March 31, 2020, or rescheduled for at least 14 days out if it is not possible to conduct the sessions remotely.**
- On the day of the visit, before the provider enters the home or as part of a coordinated intake process, contact the family to determine whether the student or anyone in the household:
    - Has a fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, etc.
    - Has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days (diagnosic test, not a blood test for antibodies)
    - Has been in close contact (10 minutes within 6 feet or any direct physical contact) with a person with COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) or a confirmed COVID-19 infection within 14 days
    - Has been told by their health care provider or the NYC Test & Trace Corps to remain home due to being exposed to COVID-19
    - Is required to quarantine based on the New York State COVID-19 Travel Advisory (https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory)
    - **If any of the above is TRUE, those sessions can be conducted remotely or rescheduled for at least 14 days out if it is not possible to conduct the sessions remotely.**
- If a session is cancelled due to concerns about COVID-19, the provider should call the family the night before services are scheduled to restart to confirm that it is safe to resume.
- It is important to be able to seamlessly shift back to providing services remotely. In the event that the service can no longer be delivered in person, follow the guidance on remote service provision.