

To: All Early Intervention contract managers and FCFC coordinators
From: Nathan DeDino
Date: September 23, 2022
Subject: Early Intervention Program Updates, #2219

MESSAGE FROM THE PART C COORDINATOR

DODD is extending the deadline to complete the 2022 EI family questionnaire from September 23 to September 30. As of Wednesday, our overall response rate stood at approximately 16%. We e-mailed EI contract managers and FCFC coordinators county response rates yesterday. Please help us continue to improve our response rate by encouraging families who have not yet completed the questionnaire to take a few moments to share their experiences in EI with us. This information is invaluable as we evaluate how best to strengthen and improve Ohio's EI system.

I always invite your feedback. Do not hesitate to contact me at nathan.dedino@dodd.ohio.gov. I look forward to hearing from you.

DID YOU KNOW?

“Principles of Special Instruction” (POSI) is a required course to renew a 5-year developmental specialist (DS) certification under the current rule (5123-10-05). Individuals who were issued a 5-year DS certification after July 1, 2021, will be required to complete POSI to renew certification on or after July 1, 2026. POSI will be available on DODD's MyLearning starting in January 2023.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Conference

We know that many Ohio EI teams are attending the 2022 DEC conference in Chicago. Please join your DODD EI team on Thursday, September 29, from 8:00-8:45pm in room 4R at the Hilton for a meet and greet! Your DODD team looks forward to seeing you in Chicago!

SFY 22 Timely Receipt of Services (TRS) Baseline

DODD staff are finalizing initial verification of records submitted for the TRS baseline. Any clarification requests will be sent out as applicable. DODD expects to send results memos in late October.

Transition Success Stories Wanted!

There is still time to share your success stories about Transition. How have you built relationships with local educational agencies (LEAs) and other programs in your county to support families as they exit EI? Do you have an annual meeting or quarterly call? Do you collaborate on an event? Maybe you network over coffee and doughnuts. What has worked for you? Examples of success stories will be shared at the upcoming EI forum on October 19 and also included in a future edition of the Program Updates. Please send your stories to Melissa Courts at melissa.courts@dodd.ohio.gov by September 30.

EI Eligibility Flow Chart

As part of our ongoing supports for local programs implementing the EI eligibility process, DODD has developed a new resource. This resource, called “Determining Eligibility: Step by Step Process,” was sent last week to EI contract managers and FCFC coordinators. It is now posted on the EI website in the Guidance document section:

<https://ohioearlyintervention.org/storage/ocali-ims-sites/ocali-ims-oei/documents/Determining-Eligibility-EI.pdf>

Join DODD in a webinar next month to learn more about this new resource. We will share changes around documentation of a diagnosis on the list and walk through the decision process for determining whether a child is eligible for EI. We will also share the new hospital-based child find referral form and updated verification standards. The targeted audience is EI Contract Managers, FCFC Coordinators, EI Service Coordinators, Evaluators, and Assessors. The webinar will also be recorded.

Date: October 5

Time: 9:00am

Register: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6024798579249218572>

Data Entry of Exits

DODD would like to provide some additional clarity around the requirement in this year's EI service coordination grant that exits need to be entered in the EI Data System (EIDS) within one business day of the exit occurring. This requirement was implemented after DODD became aware of referrals that had been missed because the child had been exited from EI and, during the time between when the child was exited and the exit was entered in EIDS, the parent had been re-referred. We understand that sometimes service coordination agencies may struggle to enter exits within one business day. If an exit is entered late, it is imperative that the contact log is checked prior to entering the exit to determine if central intake has received a new contact referring the child. Should an agency need to prioritize data entry of exits, exits for children who are exited due to turning three should be prioritized last since it is obviously impossible to make a re-referral for these children. If you have any questions, please contact your EI program consultant.

RESOURCES AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Balanced Intervention: Supporting Caregiver and Child Learning during (and between!) Early Intervention Visits

This training series featuring Dr. Dana Childress kicked off on September 20. There is still time to register and participate in the follow up sessions. The series will build awareness of early intervention practice and a balanced perspective to facilitating learning for both caregivers and children during visits. These sessions will also offer participants opportunities to reflect on their practices, try using specific strategies between sessions, and learn from others during interactive chat conversations that engage participants during each webinar. Registration information follows below:

Six Early Intervention Adult Learning Principles for Supporting Caregiver Learning

October 18, 8:30-10:00am

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/7362542487589587723>

Gathering Meaningful Information from Families to Guide Early Intervention

November 15, 8:30-10:00am

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6501030047250383115>

Writing Functional IFSP Outcomes: A How-To-Guide

January 17, 8:30-10:00am

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/8209358855512014095>

Steps and Strategies for Conducting Balanced EI Visits: Time to Reflect

February 21, 8:30-10:00

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/3041385924127659534>

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation in Ohio Early Intervention

Please join us on November 9 from 9:00 am-10:00am for updates about early childhood mental health (ECMH) consultation in early intervention. Lisa Golden, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Program Administrator from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OMHAS), will join Tiffany Madden, EI Personnel Development Coordinator, to explain the interagency agreement between DODD and OMHAS to provide these services and to clarify the role of the ECMH consultants. Lisa and Tiffany will also share plans for expanding the ECMH consultant's responsibilities to serve as qualified personnel to assist with Part C evaluation and assessment for children with social-emotional concerns. Please register here:

<https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/8097487948928078349>

New DEC Community of Practice

The DEC is hosting a webinar at 12:30pm on October 5 about its new Family Partnership Community of Practice. Please consider sharing this opportunity with families. More details are available here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEuceGoqj8iHtPyzaYJlavW0gGm-l_Sl88h

EARLY INTERVENTION FORUM

Sponsored by OACB in collaboration with DODD Early Intervention

Join OACB and DODD, along with Part C providers, partners, as well as families throughout Ohio to hear hot topics and up-to-date research on best practices in Early Intervention (EI)!

Held virtually on
Wednesday, October 19, 2022

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

All Part C Providers and Families welcome to attend!

CPDUs are available with MemberConnect registration. To receive CPDUs from Sessions 1-4, attendees must complete the registration forms linked under each session.

Attendees will be billed just \$25 for the entire day (one or more sessions).

If no CPDUs are needed, register via the links at the end of this email (no cost).

9:30-10:30 a.m.

The Impact of COVID on Children, Families and Professionals in EI

Dr. Foster (Akron's Children's Hospital) will discuss the latest research specific to the impact of COVID on children, families, and professionals. Foster will also review current research and outcomes for babies born during the pandemic, the developmental pattern's impact on anxiety in the child and the parent-child relationship, recognizing the early signs of autism spectrum in this time of COVID, as well as implications for EI professionals.

Speaker: Jessica E. A. Foster, MD, MPH, FAAP

[REGISTER FOR SESSION 1](#)

10:45-11:45 a.m.

The Importance of Connecting Families to Families in EI

This session will explore the well-documented impact of positive informal social support for families in early intervention. This includes the role that providers have in identifying potential connection opportunities for families enrolled in early intervention, current resources and activities for connecting families, and how technology can be used to connect families.

Panel: Amanda DeLuca (parent), Lindsey Althaus (parent), Dr. Marilyn Espe-Sherwindt, Consultant (Project TREES Consultant, Eurlayid, (retired) Director of Family Child Learning Center, Akron Children's Hospital and Kent State University), Jena Wells, Community Engagement Coordinator

[REGISTER FOR SESSION 2](#)

12:30-1:30 p.m.

Little Mozarts: Using Music in Early Intervention to Support Development

Learn more about music therapy, the impact of music on brain development, and the disadvantages and advantages of recorded music, music videos, and screen time for children ages birth to three. Participants will also learn simple music experiences to support development and how to create their own music experiences.

Speaker: Alexa Kemmann, MT-BC (Music Therapist Board-certified)

[REGISTER FOR SESSION 3](#)

1:45-2:45 p.m.

Celebrating What is Working for Families during Transition from Part C Early Intervention at Age Three

This session will highlight real strategies being implemented throughout Ohio that support positive transition experiences for families. Superintendents, EISCs, EISC Supervisors, Developmental Specialists, and other EI Team members will learn strategies to support a positive transition experience for families from a cross-agency perspective. After this session, participants will be able to identify at least one strategy that can be implemented at their county board to improve the parent's transition experience. Families will learn what resources may be available when their child transitions out of Part C from the local county board.

Panel: Diane J. Fox LSW, MA, Assistant Deputy Director of Early Childhood Initiatives (DODD), Melissa Courts, Early Intervention Monitoring Consultant (DODD), Karen Kincaid, Early Intervention Program Consultant (DODD), Shelly Palumbo, LSW, Early Intervention Program Consultant Supervisor (DODD), Patrick Kilbane, SSA, (Miami DD), Jenni Remeis, M.Ed., TVI, COMS, Statewide Coordinator Early Intervention Vision Services (Ohio State School for the Blind), Heather Knoble, Early Intervention Supervisor (Lorain DD)

[REGISTER FOR SESSION 4](#)

FAMILY AND NO-CE REGISTRATION LINKS:

- **[REGISTER FOR MORNING SESSIONS HERE](#)**
- **[REGISTER FOR AFTERNOON SESSIONS HERE](#)**

For any questions, please contact Susan Jones (sjones@oacbddd.org) or Beth Popich (bpopich@oacbddd.org).

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Where Ohioans Can Turn for Help Finding Infant and Other Specialty Formulas

A national infant formula shortage has left many Ohio families struggling to access the products they depend on to feed their children. The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) has been working closely with manufacturers and partners to find solutions for Ohio families until formula is more readily available, and continues to share information and resources with Ohioans who need help finding formula. This includes exploring every avenue to meet the needs of children and families participating in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

Here are frequently asked questions about how Ohio is helping connect families with the nutritional resources they need for their children and where Ohio families can turn for help to ensure their children's nutritional needs are being met.

What should families do if they can't find their baby's formula?

In most cases, if your baby's regular brand of formula is not currently available, it's best to check with your healthcare provider before choosing a similar version. If you're still having difficulty finding formula, please contact your child's healthcare provider or your WIC clinic if your family is receiving WIC benefits.

What should families receiving WIC benefits do to access other infant formulas?

WIC state agencies have contracts with one of three manufacturers to provide formula to infants receiving WIC benefits and who are partially or fully formula-fed. Ohio WIC's contracted infant formula rebate partner is Mead-Johnson. ODH has worked with the company to provide alternate products and sizes within the contracted brand.

ODH has applied for all available waivers through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and has worked with vendors and the contracted brand to ensure that Ohio families have access to formula. These waivers allow WIC agencies to offer participants additional infant formula options such as alternate sizes, forms, and brands.

More information: [WIC Infant Formula Alternatives](#)

In addition to the efforts put forth by the Ohio WIC program, the Ohio [Children with Medical Handicaps \(CMH\) program](#) provides eligible children with coverage to receive disease-specific formula and supplement options. **If you need help getting formula or a specialty formula for special medical needs, please contact your healthcare provider, local WIC clinic or your local the CMH Public Health Nurse at your Local Health Department.**

What waivers are currently in place for Ohioans receiving WIC benefits?

Ohio WIC has applied for all waivers that have been made available from the USDA. The following waivers are currently in place:

- **Vendor Exchange Waiver.** Allows participants to exchange recalled formula at WIC-authorized vendors. This waiver expires September 30, 2022.
- **Maximum Monthly Allowance (MMA) Waiver.** Gave Ohio WIC the ability to offer other brands and can sizes of formulas.

- **Medical Documentation Waiver.** Waives medical documentation requirements set forth in the WIC Federal Regulations.
- **Formula Fly Waivers.** Allows for out-of-country formulas to be sold in the U.S. and to be redeemable by families receiving WIC benefits. All USDA eligible formulas have been added to the Ohio WIC alternatives list.

The USDA waivers, which were previously set to expire on September 30, 2022, have been extended, ensuring families have continued access to the formula they need. This allows WIC state agencies, with the necessary agreements from their infant formula contract manufacturers, to offer participants additional infant formula options, such as alternate sizes, forms and brands. Ohio's contract manufacturer is Mead Johnson. Alternative options for milk and soy-based Mead Johnson products and imported formulas will be available for purchase through December 31, 2022. Other brands' milk and soy-based formulas (Similac, Gerber, store brands) and alternative sizes for specialty formulas will be available for purchase through November 30, 2022.

What formula substitutions are available?

There are many formula alternatives that WIC families can choose from including brands from Mead-Johnson, Abbott, Gerber, and individual stores. You can find a complete list of formula alternatives [on the ODH website](#). If your child is on a prescription/specialty formula, you will need to speak with your provider about comparable products.

How can families get help accessing specialty formulas?

The Ohio WIC program has been working with local WIC offices to provide formula to eligible families, including hypoallergenic and other specialty formulas. In addition to the WIC program, the [Children with Medical Handicaps \(CMH\) program](#) has been working to help eligible Ohioans support nutritional needs through coverage of disease-specific nutritional formulas and supplements. For eligible individuals on the CMH Treatment Program, "Special Formula" coverage may be added to their benefit package, which includes access to coverage for hundreds of available formulas and supplements that may not be otherwise covered through other insurance. To be eligible for the CMH Treatment Program, an individual must meet financial criteria and have one of the eligible medical diagnoses.

The metabolic formula program under CMH provides metabolic formula and essential amino acids to individuals born with inborn errors of metabolism that are screened for on the Ohio Newborn Bloodspot Screening Panel. Examples of these disorders include phenylketonuria (PKU), maple syrup urine disease (MSUD), tyrosinemia, and propionic acidemia. Without these special formulas, infants and young children may develop poor health outcomes. Coverage of metabolic formula can continue for any Ohio resident with a qualifying diagnosis who is followed at an [Ohio-based Comprehensive Genetic Center](#).

Is a medical prescription for formula needed for children who have a special nutritional need based on their medical diagnosis?

A medical prescription is needed because medical documentation is **federally** required to issue specialized formulas. To increase access to formula for Ohio families, ODH has requested that healthcare providers issue medical prescriptions to participants enrolled in the WIC program for equivalent formulas that may be more readily available on store shelves. Additionally, ODH sent local WIC clinics an updated medical prescription form that enables the healthcare provider to mark a checkbox for a hypoallergenic store brand equivalent and select a first, second, and third choice option for formulas.

Resources:

[Frequently Asked Questions About Infant Formula Shortage](#)

[Information for Families During the Formula Shortage](#)

[WIC Infant Formula Alternatives](#)

[American Academy of Pediatrics: Safe infant formula alternatives during the shortage](#)