



## State of New Jersey

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
DIVISION OF FAMILY HEALTH SERVICES  
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[www.nj.gov/health](http://www.nj.gov/health)

JUDITH M. PERSICILLI, RN, BSN, MA  
*Commissioner*

To: All NJEIS Practitioners  
From: Susan Evans Ed.D. Interim Part C Coordinator  
Re: Coronavirus (COVID-2019) and NJEIS operations  
Date: March 9, 2020

The Department of Health as the lead agency for the New Jersey Early Intervention System (NJEIS) has received several inquiries in the past few weeks regarding the actions NJEIS practitioners should or should not take in response to the emergence of the Coronavirus (COVID-2019). Although the risk to the public remains low, and the risk to New Jersey residents is low, we understand that NJEIS staff are concerned.

### **What NJEIS practitioners should Know:**

1. The Department of Health is closely monitoring this rapidly evolving situation and working across our agency and with hospital and public health partners.
2. **As of today, the DOH has not issued or recommended any changes to NJEIS operational procedures for the delivery of services. All timelines and policy requirements are in effect.**
3. As the Coronavirus situation continues to evolve, DOH will update NJEIS administrators, Service Coordination and families if there becomes a need for specific guidance, recommendations or procedures outside of normal operations. The NJEIS is expecting additional guidance from OSEP later this week on the flexibility allowed under IDEA.
4. Your agency administrator is your best resource for up to date information from DOH and should be contacted for further questions or concerns.
5. The DOH hotline for the public is 1-800-222-1222.
6. Up-to-date information can be found on the CDC website and/or the NJ Department of Health <https://www.nj.gov/health/>

### **What NJEIS practitioners should DO:**

1. **Practice Universal Precautions:** Ensuring that you practice universal precautions helps to prevent the spread of virus and other illnesses. Winter is normally cold and flu season and since NJEIS works with young children in home visiting settings, **attention to proper sanitation of materials, frequent hand washing with soap, using alcohol-based hand sanitizer and staying home when**

**you are sick** are all basic behaviors that help minimize the spread of all types of illness, including COVID-2019.

2. Many practitioners bring toys and materials with them to augment their intervention sessions. The use of materials not natural to the child's environment is a discouraged practice in NJEIS for several reasons. The spread of germs is just one of those reasons. Should you choose to continue this practice, the DOH reminds you that sanitizing these materials **between sessions** is a highly important and required step in minimizing the spread of COVID-2019 and other flu and cold viruses.
3. A specific reminder to the **Targeted Evaluation Team** practitioners that the materials and manipulatives contained in the BDI kit also require sanitation **between evaluations** to minimize the spread of viruses as you travel from home to home.
4. Please share with your NJEIS families the phone number for DOH hotline if they have specific questions. The hotline is equipped to speak with residents in multiple languages. 1-800-222-1222

On March 4, 2020 the US Department of Education and the Office for Civil Rights issued a reminder to all Education partners, including Early Intervention personnel, that services and supports are to be provided without discrimination or harassment to children and families. The USDOE advised that there are increased reports of stereotyping, harassment and bullying directed at persons perceived to be of Chinese American or more generally Asian descent, including students. NJEIS personnel should take special care to ensure that all children and families are able to access NJEIS in a manner that is free from discrimination.

Thank you for all you do to provide services and supports to the children and families in the NJEIS.