

Dear families,

On March 11, 2020, to provide additional coordination for the District's response to the coronavirus (COVID-19), Mayor Muriel Bowser declared both a state of emergency and a public health emergency.

As a result, the offices of the state lead agency (Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)) and the early intervention service (EIS) provider (Strong Start, DC's Early Intervention Program (DC EIP)) did not provide Part C early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families during the period of Monday, March 16, 2020, through Tuesday, March 31, 2020.

At the direction of the Mayor, and as a response to coronavirus (COVID-19), lead agency staff and Strong Start staff are working remotely. **As of Wednesday, April 1, 2020, DC EIP will open and resume the delivery of Part C services, remotely.**

- Due to public health and safety concerns as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak in the area, Part C services provided to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families during this period of time shall not be provided in-person.
- Effective April 1, 2020, and until further notice, services shall be exclusively offered and delivered virtually to children and their families through telehealth.
- The term telehealth includes services delivered by phone (audio) or through video conferencing (audio-visual) technology.
- Early interventionists will contact families on or after April 1, 2020 to schedule and prepare for virtual visits.
- Early interventionists will have to obtain consent to deliver virtual early intervention services. Consent must be obtained for each service type (e.g., speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, developmental therapy, ABA services).
- Families have the right to decline services provided via telehealth and request to resume early intervention services in-person when they become available.
- The enclosed document "*Guidelines for Families and Caregivers: What Should My Virtual Visit Look Like?*" offers families guidance to prepare for virtual visits and what to expect during a visit.
- All referrals received between Saturday, March 14, 2020, and Tuesday, March 31, 2020, will be accepted and families will be contacted and notified that a service coordinator will be assigned once the Strong Start office reopens on Wednesday, April 1, 2020.

Current families, if you have questions relating to this guidance, please contact your assigned service coordinator directly.

If you have any questions about referrals or for general inquiries, please contact Strong Start at (202) 727-3665 or at osse.dceip@dc.gov.

Thank you for your understanding and ongoing commitment to making the safety of our children, early education workforce and child care facility communities a priority. Regular updates will be shared with you via email.

For resources and additional information about the District of Columbia Government's response to coronavirus (COVID-19), visit coronavirus.dc.gov.