

Transportation and Respite

Introduction

Transportation and respite are required Infant-Toddler Program services that are supportive in nature. These services assist parents in meeting the needs of their child and family. These services must be identified by the Individualized Family Service Plan team as being needed by the parent to support the development of his child and must be listed on the Individualized Family Service Plan and authorized by the Children's Developmental Services Agency.

Transportation Requirements

Transportation is an important component of the Infant-Toddler Program because it can assist families in accessing services. The Infant-Toddler Program requires that transportation assistance be provided to all families to any of the required Infant-Toddler Program services not provided in the natural environments of the child and family.

The Infant-Toddler Program is not required to provide transportation assistance to child care, unless it has been determined by the Individualized Family Service Plan team that the child must be in that setting for the sole purpose of receiving a required Infant-Toddler Program service, such as specialized therapies or Community Based Rehabilitative Services. Transportation to medically necessary services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech-language therapy is a requirement of the county Department of Social Services for children who receive Medicaid. The Service Coordinator is expected to assist the family in accessing this transportation assistance.

The Infant-Toddler Program provides transportation assistance either directly or by reimbursing parents. The Infant-Toddler Program Family Support Percentage is used in providing reimbursement to families. The Family Support Percentage is determined by subtracting the family's assigned Sliding Fee Percentage from 100%. For example, if the family's Sliding Fee Percentage is determined by the CDSA to be 20%, their Family Support Percentage is 80%. If the family's Sliding Fee Percentage is zero, their Family Support Percentage is 100%. Reimbursement rates are determined by the Infant-Toddler Program. The current state employee reimbursement rate is used as the base rate for miles traveled. If transportation is provided by other means (e.g., bus, taxi), a receipt is required. The Family Support Percentage is applied to the total amount due, based on the state employee rate or the amount of the receipt to determine the amount of reimbursement to the parent for the authorized transportation. (*For more information, see Policy Bulletin #23 - Fees, Billing, and Reimbursement.*)

All families must be provided information during initial contacts about their eligibility to receive transportation assistance so that arrangements for the initial evaluation can be made, if necessary. Transportation must be addressed during the initial Individualized Family Service Plan development, as well as when new services are added or services are changed. As appropriate, transportation must be addressed at Individualized Family Service Plan reviews and annual Individualized Family Service Plan meetings. The Individualized Family Service Plan must clearly indicate the provision of transportation (who, when, how, costs, etc.). The Children's Developmental Services Agency must be involved in the Individualized Family Service Plan process whenever transportation or the selection of services, which

may require transportation assistance, is discussed. The Service Coordinator should document in the child's record when a family declines transportation for which they are eligible.

Transportation assistance should focus on being workable and efficient for the family and service provider. Assistance options may include, but are not limited to, taxi drivers, bus fare, mileage reimbursement, pick-up services, and community transportation systems. The options selected should always be based on the individual needs of the child and family and in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations. Consideration of safety issues, the child's age and special needs, parental concerns, and service frequency are all vital to decisions regarding transportation. The option recommended should always be reviewed with the family at the time transportation assistance is discussed and agreed on prior to implementation of transportation assistance. Service providers providing transportation directly are to follow their established procedures on the safe transport of children.

The Service Coordinator must authorize transportation assistance using a Children's Developmental Services Agency approved form. The Children's Developmental Services Agency must approve the authorization. The parent must use a Children's Developmental Services Agency approved invoice to seek transportation reimbursement. The Service Coordinator should provide instruction to the parent in completing and submitting invoices.

Respite Requirements

Respite is a time-limited and intermittent family support service that enables parents to participate in or receive other early intervention services in order to meet the outcomes on the child's and family's Individualized Family Service Plan. Examples include the parent participating in sign language classes in order to assist the child in developing communication skills, meeting with a psychologist to design appropriate behavioral management strategies when the child is exhibiting inappropriate behavior, attending Individualized Family Service Plan meetings and reviews, and obtaining counseling or psychological services for himself.

Federal interpretation of the term respite indicates that it is not intended to mean "reprieve" or "rest" but rather a family support activity to enable the parent to develop his capacity to assist in meeting the developmental needs of his child. Respite unlike child care is periodic and infrequent. Respite is not to be provided to meet daily family needs, such as allowing the parent to work. Child care and other supports provided to allow the parent to participate in such activities as interagency coordinating council meetings, general trainings, parent support groups, etc. are not respite.

The Infant-Toddler Program Family Support Percentage is used in providing reimbursement to families. The Family Support Percentage is determined by subtracting the family's assigned Sliding Fee Percentage from 100%. For example, if the family's Sliding Fee Percentage is determined by the Children's Developmental Services Agency to be 20%, their Family Support Percentage is 80%. If the family's Sliding Fee Percentage is zero, their Family Support Percentage is 100%. Reimbursement rates are determined by the Infant-Toddler Program. The base reimbursement rate for respite is \$5.00 per hour. *(For more information, see Policy Bulletin #23 - Fees, Billing, and Reimbursement.)*

The Individualized Family Service Plan team must exercise judgment in identifying appropriate circumstances under which respite care is needed. Respite services, like all other Infant-Toddler Program services, must be listed on the Individualized Family Service Plan and must be linked to a specific outcome for the child or family. Reimbursement for respite services is limited to thirty-two (32) hours per year. The year will begin the first time respite is listed on the Individualized Family Service Plan. Local early intervention funds, if available, may be used to increase this amount.

As with all Infant-Toddler Program services the Individualized Family Service Plan team must consider the use of natural supports to meet the respite needs of the child and family. The team must explore all resources for meeting this need and give consideration to the most cost effective method. Infant-Toddler Program funds for this service will be used only when there is no other resource for this service. Any person living in the child's home cannot be paid for providing respite services. It is appropriate for the Individualized Family Service Plan team to include training for family members to increase their competence and confidence in caring for the child as an outcome strategy on the Individualized Family Service Plan. The provision of this training can enhance the ability of the family to meet their own needs, lessen their dependence on outside resources, and reduce the expenditure of Infant-Toddler Program funds.

Respite can be provided by a business which provides respite services or a person that the family identifies. Due to the very personal nature of the respite service, it is often optimal for the service to be provided by a neighbor, friend, or other acquaintance who is known to the family and child and in whom the parent has confidence. Respite services may be provided in the home of the child or another location as identified by the parent and agreed upon by the Individualized Family Service Plan team. If the needs of the child require that respite be provided by a person who has specialized training, the Service Coordinator should provide the parent with information on local resources for this service.

After the Individualized Family Service Plan team has identified a need for respite services as related to the outcomes on the Individualized Family Service Plan, the Service Coordinator must provide information to the parent on the respite policy of the Infant-Toddler Program, and if necessary, potential respite providers. Due to liability issues, selection of a respite provider and arrangements for the delivery of respite services are to be made by the parent. In no circumstances, shall Infant-Toddler Program personnel select a respite provider. Arrangements for the specific dates of respite, the time, and location of respite services must be made between the parent and the respite provider in accordance with the Individualized Family Service Plan. Providers for this service may charge the family their usual, customary, and reasonable rates and are not required to use a sliding fee scale. The provision of respite is an agreement between the parent and the respite provider. The Infant-Toddler Program assists the family by providing support through partial funding for the service.

The Service Coordinator must authorize respite using a Children's Developmental Services Agency approved form. The Children's Developmental Services Agency must approve the authorization. The parent must use a Children's Developmental Services Agency approved invoice to seek respite reimbursement. The Service Coordinator should provide instruction to the parent in completing and submitting invoices.