

Ohio Early Intervention

Virtual Reality: The Real World of Evaluation and Assessment

Frequently Asked Questions and Tips

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On July 21, 2020, Early intervention hosted a webinar focused on the virtual conduction of evaluations and assessments. Featured speakers from this webinar were Rachel Staley, Allen County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Erin Wladyka, Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Kathy Greenawalt-Cherry, Miami County Board of Developmental Disabilities, and Tracy Ball from Enable My Child, The frequently asked questions (FAQ) and tips from that session are included in this document.

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FAQ

Electronic Signature and Consent

We received many questions about obtaining written consent in EI using electronic means. As discussed in Program Updates #2017, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires consent to be obtained in writing, although electronic means are acceptable. Given the vast array of potential electronic signature programs available, it is impossible to provide directions for each one. DODD encourages local systems to work with their agency's legal counsel to ensure that whatever process they use to obtain written consent electronically meets the four criteria OSEP laid out. OSEP said that an electronic signature is acceptable if it

- is signed and dated,
- identifies and authenticates a particular person as the source of the electronic consent,
- indicates such person's approval of the information contained in the electronic consent, and,
- is accompanied by a statement that the person understands and agrees.

Q: What do we do about past families whose written consent was not received (it was verbal)? For the families that we opened, can I get them to sign the forms now?

A: EISCs do not need to do anything with the cases that verbal consent was received prior to EI Program Update #2017 (July 10, 2020.) All consents starting on July 10, 2020, need to follow the guidance given in this document.

Q: Until Program Update #2017 came out, where can I locate information that consents needed to be in "writing," not verbal?

A: Guidance on electronic signatures can be found on the EI website

- page 30 of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) Guidance Document (Provider Tab under Guidance and Memos)
- EI Update #2006 3/13/20 (Provider Tab under COVID-19 Guidance)
- updated EI COVID-19 Guidance 3/19/20 (Provider Tab under COVID-19 Guidance)

Q: What is a "virtual signature?"

A: A signature signed via technology, like Adobe Pro, using the cell phone to snap a picture and sending the signature page.

Q: What type of information is included in the packet that EI Service Coordinators (EISC) give to evaluators three days before the evaluation?

A: The intake packet consists of the evaluation checklist which is a locally developed document that ensures that the EISCs have all of the necessary documents, consents, prior written notice (PWN), etc. The intake packet also includes the IFSP with the sections on the IFSP that the EISC is responsible for completing filled out. The Routines Based Interview (RBI) and ECOMAP is also included in the intake packet. Any medical documentation is also included.

Q: Can families take pictures of the pages they have signed after printing them out?

A: Yes, several counties use this method. Take the picture of the signed form and send it to the EISC.

Q: Can the same technology Allen County uses for virtual signatures (Adobe Pro) be offered to all counties?

A: You would need to check with your Superintendent.

Q: For a new referral, for instance, I will ask the parent to text EISC their consent for family assessment and child evaluation and assessment and consent to waive the 10 day notice if they have done so after explaining these to them. After they text this to the EISC, what date do we put on the actual forms we fill out later (after mailing them out or dropping them off to the family and reviewing them together)?

A: The date that the parent texts the consent will be used. A copy of the text message should be put in the child's file with written documentation from the EISC of what was explained and discussed. Prior to getting consent, the EISC should be reviewing the form with the parent and explaining to what the parent is consenting. See program update #2017 for how the text or email parent's consent should read.

Q: Have you attempted to do the Zoom calls via phone video? Some of our families are only doing Zoom calls for us but can't do a share screen.

A: Have a conversation with the family prior to the visit, practice and problem solve technology.

Q: Must the consent include the name and or number of the document to which they are agreeing?

A: The parent must identify to what they are consenting. For example, a statement from the parent that says they understand that they are waiving the 10 days to start services will suffice instead of stating Prior Written Notice EI-11.

Q: Are you having parents electronically sign while in the meeting on Zoom?

A: The forms are being reviewed with the parent present and then the parent is consenting to the electronic signature. After the electronic signature is completed, the form is shared on screen with the parent showing their electronic signature.

Q: Can you talk about how you use the "virtual signature?" Does the parent have to have something special to accept and sign and send back? What program do you use?

A: The free version of Adobe Pro can be used.

Q: Butler County uses Microsoft Teams for evaluation and ongoing visits. Are the other platforms different counties use secure? Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) approved?

A. Early Intervention is governed by Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA.) However, your agency or licensure may also require compliance with HIPAA.

Q: Are counties not administering the Battelle except for adaptive and personal-social?

A: They are administering in all domains but use Informed Clinical Opinion (ICO) for the three domains where we know the score results are not at a high confidence level-per [DODD's guidance](#)

Q: Can you address the difference and or sameness of eligibility evaluation and child assessment?

A: In EI, the evaluation is used to determine eligibility and the family and child assessment is used to help identify the family's needs and priorities to determine the outcomes and services on an ongoing basis. Although both will use similar tools and observations (similarities), why you are using them will differ.

Q: What sensory tool does Kathy Greenawalt-Cherry or the other presenters use?

A: [Checklist from Sensational Brain](#) or the [Sensory Profile 2](#).

Q: Does the same person do both the evaluation and the following delivery of services on the IFSP?

A: Typically, yes depending on the IFSP outcomes.

Q: How does information obtained during a virtual evaluation compare to information obtained during an in-person evaluation?

A: We have found that information obtained virtually is comparable to the rich information obtained through in-person assessment. In some ways, virtual assessment has the advantage of allowing the evaluator to observe the child and caregiver interactions in a more natural way. When the evaluator is in the home, the child can be distracted or anxious.

Tips

Electronic Signature

Platforms

- [EsignGenie](#)
- [Zoom -tools](#)
- [HelloSign](#)
- [Brittco Forms](#)
- [DocUSign](#) (also called EdocSign)
- [DocHub](#)
- [SignNow](#)

At first, we would write, "On ___ parent ___ gave consent for a verbal signature via technology." We have been using Brittco, It sends the form to an email and gives the parent a box to sign in. The parent clicks submit and the form goes right into Brittco.

Ross County is obtaining consents via text messages or email, having the parent sign the signature page and sending the picture of it to the EISC. We are also obtaining consents via text messages or email, having the parent sign the signature page and sending the picture of it to the EISC.

Mailing to parent to sign with a self-addressed envelope to return.

For video visits we use [Google Duo](#) and [Microsoft Teams](#), and for signature we have used Adobe Fill and Sign as an app but now have a company helping us with a program call eDoc by eSign.

Adobe, snail mail, pic texts, share screen on computer

Hardin County is using Adobe virtual signatures. Occasionally, I use Doc Hub on a "non-fillable" form.

We are using multiple tools for signatures-annotate tool on zoom, then doing a screen shot. We are using the chat feature in zoom. We are using text and email.

When using PDF, you click on "fill and sign" and you can place your signature in. (once your signature is in it will self-populate the next time).

We are typing up preapproved statements on the whiteboard on zoom and then parents sign consent on the whiteboard. A screenshot of that is taken and saved to the child's electronic file.

Zoom with screen sharing and giving remote control to the parent to be able to sign

We convert our paperwork to PDFs (I think via adobe), then using either the "e-signature" option or using the pen for signatures. For phones however, we are getting emailed consent.

Ottawa County is requesting parents and providers, etc., send in an email with a specific statement, including the child's name and the date, stating they consent to the plan or review.

Assessment Tools:

- [RBI](#)
- [HELP Family-Centered Interview](#)
- [AEPS Developmental Charts](#)
- [SAFER-free online](#)
- [MEISR-free online](#)
- [DAYC-2](#)
- [Developmental Profile 3](#)
- [TPBA](#)
- [AIMS](#)
- [CDC Free Materials](#)
- Professional Observation