



Eric Holcomb, Governor  
State of Indiana

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**To:** Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services (BDDS) and Bureau of Quality Improvement Services (BQIS) Stakeholders, which includes individuals, families, providers, and case managers  
**From:** Cathy Robinson, BDDS Director and Jessica Harlan-York, BQIS Director  
**Re:** COVID-19 Family Guidance  
**Date:** March 20, 2020

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The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH), Governor Eric J. Holcomb and the White House have issued several directives in response to the COVID-19. The Bureau of Developmental Disabilities is adhering to those directives and taking every precaution to ensure the health and safety of our individuals, families and community. Due to these limitations and necessary precautions you may be experiencing a disruption in your services and daily routine.

One such precaution and limitation is social distancing. Social distancing will slow the spread of COVID-19. By slowing the spread we will avoid maxing out our healthcare resources, decrease the number of hospitalizations and minimize the number of deaths. Social distancing can be hard and feel isolating. This is especially true for children and adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families who rely on the consistency of the supports and services they receive on a daily basis. It is also important to remember that a number of the individuals and families who access our services are also considered to be high risk and therefore BDDS considers social distancing and other recommended strategies to protect these individuals as the primary concern at this time as it is critical to their health and welfare.

The Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services has issued guidance to our case managers and providers in accordance with the CDC, ISDH and Executive Order of Governor Eric J. Holcomb. Our waiver providers and case management companies have also issued their own policies in regards to how their company/organization is responding to the pandemic. Following are some of the ways providers and case managers may be working to continue to support you but in a different way:

- Therapies, team meetings and contacts may only be available virtually or over the phone.
- Day programs may have temporarily suspended, restricted visitors, modified daily activities, or following daily screening and prevention recommendations. Remote Supports or electronic monitoring may be used to replace staff when appropriate
- Visitation to supervised group living may not be allowed.
- Visitation to supported living homes may ask to be limited and/or to follow screening and prevention recommendations.

Following are some things you may be able to do as a family member to support your loved one with an intellectual/developmental disability during this time:



- Prepare them for potential changes in their daily/weekly routine.
- Create a new daily/weekly schedule for them to follow
- Create a list of replacement activities that they would enjoy while practicing social distancing.
- Prepare them for the possibility of different support staff.
- Practice using video calling options to stay connected to their family and friends.
- Make sure they have food that is easy to make.
- Make sure they have sufficient medications and supplies, if necessary.

During this time it may also be necessary for families to provide additional supports, if possible, when no staff or programming is available.

Additionally, a family member or guardian may choose to bring the individual to their home or keep an individual in their home and out of services during this time. It is recommended that if a family member or guardian wants to pursue this option, the individual support team should meet virtually or by phone on a regular basis as the situation evolves to ensure the safety of the individual and to allow for a smooth transition back to services once the individual, family and provider are ready to do so.

If you have concerns or complaints on exposure, social isolation or current practices due to COVID-19 please reach out to your case manager, provider and/or district BDDS office to discuss and resolve those concerns if appropriate.

At this time, it is important that everyone, regardless of age or disability, take precautions to avoid the spread and contact of this virus. For information on how to prepare your family, protect your health, and what to do if you are sick visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/protect/index.html>

For more information on the virus and the impact on Indiana visit [https://www.in.gov/isdh/28470.htm?utm\\_source=agency-website&utm\\_medium=&utm\\_campaign=&utm\\_term=&utm\\_content=](https://www.in.gov/isdh/28470.htm?utm_source=agency-website&utm_medium=&utm_campaign=&utm_term=&utm_content=)

We encourage you to keep open communication and discuss any concerns with your case manager and/or waiver providers who can assist you in developing a plan and staying up to date as we move through this continuously changing time. General questions about COVID-19 may be directed to the ISDH Epidemiology Resource Center at 317-233-7125 [317-233-1325 after hours] or e-mail [epiresource@isdh.in.gov](mailto:epiresource@isdh.in.gov) Families and individuals with disabilities who have questions about their BDDS services during this time may contact Heather Dane, Family Engagement Specialist at [heather.dane@fssa.in.gov](mailto:heather.dane@fssa.in.gov)

