



**State of Louisiana**  
Louisiana Department of Health  
Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities  
EarlySteps

March 24, 2020

Dear EarlySteps Families:

On Sunday, March 22, 2020, the Governor announced a statewide shelter-in-place order in effect until at least April 12, now extended to April 30<sup>th</sup>. According to the order, "people should not go to work unless providing essential services;" and stay-at-home means:

- Stay home (stay unexposed and do not expose others)
- Only go out for essential services
- Stay six feet or more away from others
- Don't gather in groups

EarlySteps services are designed to improve the family's capacity to enhance their child's development. This is usually accomplished through home visits with providers coaching families through their daily routine activities for support in meeting child needs in-home and in the community and to help each child achieve outcomes on their Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). EarlySteps would like to continue to provide families with necessary supports to meet the outcomes of their IFSP while still maintaining statewide stay-at-home orders during COVID-19 Pandemic.

To accomplish this, EarlySteps is transitioning home/community-based service delivery to the exclusive use of "teletherapy," effective March 24, 2020 and will continue as long as necessary, to ensure the health and safety of early interventionists and families.

Teletherapy is the online delivery of early intervention services via live video conferencing. The Division of Early Childhood recognizes coaching and direct collaboration with parents and caregivers as a practice in early intervention and the teletherapy model was based in these principles. EarlySteps believes teletherapy will be the most successful method of continuing those supports for the health of our families and our service providers. EarlySteps providers will assist families in setting up the teletherapy system which include platforms such as FaceTime and ZOOM and others.

We hope that this service model helps families to continue to meet their child's needs during this time. If there are ways in which EarlySteps can assist you during the COVID-19 pandemic, please contact the family support coordinator (FSC) or provider.

Stay safe and well,  
EarlySteps