

What types of settings are being offered to families?

- Early intervention services are not offered in terms of a setting, but rather, in terms of the special education support a child is eligible to receive. That support is defined by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the team that builds it. These services are to be provided in a setting that is as reflective of where the student would learn as possible (referred to as Least Restrictive Environment, or LRE), which could include community preschools/daycare programs, nursery schools, libraries, home daycares, PKC, Head Start, other service provider locations (itinerant locations), home, virtual services, or early childhood special education classrooms.

What criteria is being used to determine a setting that a family is being offered classroom versus in home services or groups?

- The IEP team starts with the setting that is reflective of where the child already is - a community preschool/daycare, PKC or Head Start, in the home, or elsewhere in the community. When the team does not conclude that the services in the IEP can be delivered in an inclusive focused setting, consideration of a more restrictive settings, including an early childhood special education classroom, is made. These classrooms are the most restrictive and OCDEL consistently guides the CAIU to not place students in such settings unless all other options will not meet the child's need.

We have many families that are now being offered home services and small group settings. Could you please explain what the PALS, Mindfulness in Motion, and parent-child classes are? What happens when a parent is not available to attend a "parent and me class?"

- Services are individualized to meet the child's needs. As you know, EI is not a location and it is about the services of what the child is eligible for. Through the IEP process, it may be determined that the child's services can best be delivered in the home and meet the provision of FAPE: free appropriate public education. This is determined case by case and individualized to meet the child's needs.
- The Play and Language (PAL) service delivery model is a small group session co-taught by a special education teacher and speech and language pathologist who utilize coaching and collaboration strategies. Sometimes an OT and PT will be part of the PAL group. When an OT/PT is not part of the PAL group, and if the child receives OT and/or PT, a child/family member may be offered to attend a Mindfulness and Motor small group coaching session led by an OT/PT. Once again, this is an IEP discussion and based on the needs of the child.

Can you also explain what "staff support" means when a child does not qualify for IU services. A therapist recently was told this was the recommendation when the child did not qualify for PT services.

- Support to program personnel (SPP) is where a therapist offers suggestions to the IEP team instead of providing direct therapy. This is listed as a service on the IEP.

Is transportation still being offered for children to attend a community activity if the setting is not in an IU classroom?

- If families enroll their child in a community preschool then they would be responsible for providing transportation for their child. If transportation is a provision of free appropriate public education (FAPE), the IEP team will discuss that as a service at the IEP meeting with the family.

Are IU classrooms still being offered for children who are not enrolled in preschool settings?

- We are required to provide services in the least restrictive environment. An IEP is individualized to meet the needs of the child. CAIU classrooms are the most restrictive and OCDEL consistently guides the CAIU to not place students in such settings unless all other options will not meet the student's need.

Are parents being told that they only have virtual options? We have had a few families where this was told to them. If the family declines virtual services what is the next step for them?

- Over the course of the past few years, virtual services have been recognized as an appropriate option of service delivery to provide free appropriate public education (FAPE). As a result, virtual services is a service delivery option and maybe offered to families. As part of the IEP process, a family is issued their Procedural Safeguards and a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement.

How is the new "coaching initiative" going to impact CAIU service delivery?

- The CAIU is in cohort 2 which will begin in July 2023.

Will IU classrooms no longer exist?

- CAIU classrooms are the most restrictive and OCDEL consistently guides the CAIU to not place students in such settings unless all other options will not meet the child's needs.

Are there currently wait lists for CAIU services? Parents have shared with some of our staff that their child is on a waitlist and asking what they can do during the time that their child is not receiving services.

- The CAIU EI Program does not have a "wait list". IEPs are developed for children transitioning from EI 0-3 prior to or on the child's 3rd birthday.

If a child is showing characteristics of autism but has not yet been evaluated for autism prior to their CAIU Preschool Evaluation, are the children being evaluated for an autism diagnosis through the IU in any manner? Is a school psychologist brought in at any time? At the initial IU eval or through observation once the child begins IU services?

- Prior to the child's third birthday, the CAIU will complete an evaluation to determine eligibility for early intervention services. Many of the children we evaluate are initially diagnosed with Developmental Delay (DD), which allows a child to access special education services. Educational services are not based on a child's diagnosis. Prior to a child transitioning to Kindergarten, the IEP team will determine if a school psychologist needs to be part of the reevaluation process to look at changing the disability category for school age programming. All children with a DD diagnosis will have a psychologist part of their reevaluation at the IU. If families are interested in receiving community-based services, the CAIU will assist families in how to access a clinical evaluation. We started a new partnership with TeamCare and look forward to sharing more information with families and community stakeholders as we fine-tune our referral process for families. Stay tuned!