



ANNOUNCEMENT: EI-09 # 17
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING
BUREAU OF EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

ISSUE DATE: October 5, 2009
EFFECTIVE DATE: October 5, 2009
SUNSET DATE: On-Going

SUBJECT:	Qualifications for Individuals to Provide Speech-Language Pathology Services in Early Intervention and the Requirements for Billing
TO:	Early Intervention Coordinators, MR Coordinators, MH/MR Administrators, Preschool Supervisors, Special Education Directors, Executive Directors
FROM:	Harriet Dichter Deputy Secretary, Office of Child Development and Early Learning

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harriet Dichter".

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this announcement is to provide guidance on the qualifications needed for an individual to provide speech-language pathology services in Early Intervention and requirements for billing.

BACKGROUND:

Local Early Intervention programs have requested clarification on the hiring of professionals to provide speech-language pathology services and the billing of these services through the Infant/Toddler Early Intervention Medical Assistance Program, Infant, Toddler and Families (ITF) Waiver and the School Based ACCESS Program for preschool programs.

DISCUSSION:

Due to the varying communication needs of eligible young children, there may be more than one professional who can provide supports and services related to the communication needs of these young children. Depending on the services and supports needed for the child and family, the provider could be a speech-language pathologist or an early interventionist /teacher who is trained in language development of young children and is supported in the field by a speech-language pathologist.

The following guidance was developed to assist in hiring professionals who are able to provide speech-language pathology services, and to direct local programs to the appropriate sections of 49 PA Code Chapter 45 *State Board of Examiners in Speech-Language and Hearing* on the qualifications and requirements for supervision of those professionals who have not yet received their licensure in Speech Language Pathology. Requirements of Chapter 45 can be found at <http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/049/chapter45/chap45toc.html>.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR AN INDIVIDUAL TO PROVIDE SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY SERVICES IN EARLY INTERVENTION
Infant/Toddler Programs

To provide speech-language pathology services for infant/toddlers in Early Intervention, an individual is considered qualified if the individual possesses one of the following:

- 1.) A speech-language pathology license in Speech-Language and Hearing issued by The State Board of Examiners in Speech-Language Pathology under Chapter 45 *State Board of Examiners in Speech-Language and Hearing*.
- 2.) A master's degree in speech-language pathology , including the completion of a practicum experience, and
 - a. is currently in a year of supervised professional experience, and
 - b. is adhering to the scope of practice requirements at §45.20.
- 3.) A bachelor's degree from an accredited academic institution and
 - a. holds a master's equivalent as defined in, §45.18(a)(1)(i-ii) and §45.18(a)(2)
 - b. is currently in a year of supervised professional experience, and
 - c. is adhering to the scope of practice requirements in §45.20
- 4.) A bachelor's degree from an accredited academic institution and
 - a. working towards a master's degree and participating in a practicum experience of a accredited program as defined in §45.19 and
 - b. is adhering to the scope of practice requirements in §45.19.

Early Intervention/Medical Assistance funds and Infants, Toddlers and Families Waiver funds can be the billing venue for the qualified individuals referenced above as long as the scope of practice requirements outlined in Chapter 45 *State Board of Examiners in Speech-Language and Hearing* are being met and the child is Medical Assistance eligible. Infant/Toddler Early Intervention programs should review the scope of practice requirements outlined for these professionals when determining whether an individual is qualified to provide speech-language pathology services and for the billing to Medical Assistance and ITF Waiver. For professionals who do not have a license (as listed above), the services they provide must be under the supervision of a licensed professional. For those individuals, any billing to Medical Assistance for speech-language pathology services must be under the license of the person providing the supervision.

Some infants and toddlers may have communication needs that do not require the services of a speech-language pathologist or only require the services of a speech-language pathologist on a consultative basis. These infants or toddlers may have their communication needs met through special instruction services provided by an early interventionist. For example, an individual who possesses one of the following could be considered qualified to provide special instruction services related to a communication need as long as the individual meets the qualifications of an early interventionist established in §4226.55:

- 1) A Certificate of Clinical Competency from American Speech-Language-Hearing Association but does not have a Pennsylvania License, or
- 2) Master's Degree in Speech Language and not actively pursuing Pennsylvania licensure, or
- 3) A teaching Certificate in Speech-Language from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).
- 4) Bachelor's Degree in Speech-Language Pathology
- 5) Early Intervention Language Special Instruction Credential

The Infants, Toddlers and Family Waiver funds or State/Local Early Intervention funds can be the billing venue for the aforementioned individuals qualified to provide special instruction services.

Preschool Programs

To provide speech-language pathology services for preschool children in Early Intervention, an individual employed by an intermediate unit or school district is considered qualified if the individual holds a valid teaching certificate in the area of speech-language pathology or an emergency teaching certificate in the area of speech-language pathology issued by the Department of Education.

If an individual is employed by a private provider agency with whom the Preschool EI program has a contract for speech-language pathology service provision, an individual is considered qualified to provide speech-language pathology services if he/she holds:

- 1) a valid teaching certificate issued by the state of Pennsylvania in Speech and Language
or
- 2) A speech-language pathology license in Speech-Language and Hearing issued by The State Board of Examiners in Speech-Language Pathology under Chapter 45 *State Board of Examiners in Speech-Language and Hearing* and a current Certificate of Competency issued by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, which is to be renewed on an annual basis.

However, some young children eligible for Preschool Early Intervention services may not require a certified speech-language pathologist to meet their language communication needs but rather, can be served by appropriately certified special education teachers with consultative support from a qualified speech-language pathologist. An individual who has received an Early Intervention Language Special Instruction Credential and possesses a teaching certification in special education or early childhood can fulfill this role.

Only a speech-language pathologist can participate in the School Based Access Program under the following conditions:

- 1.) Possesses a License of Speech-Language Pathology issued by the State Board of Examiners in Speech-Language and Hearing,
or
- 2.) Has been granted a Certificate of Clinical Competence by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
or
- 3.) Possesses a Master's Degree in Speech-Language Pathology
or
- 4.) Holds certification by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) in speech/language pathology, and
Possesses a bachelor's degree from an accredited academic institution, and
Holds a master's equivalency with completion of a program study comprised of 39 graduate hours distributed as follows:
 - 6 hours in normal processes of speech, language and hearing;
 - 20 hours in the nature of speech-language disorders, evaluation and treatment;
 - 3 hours in case management;
 - 3 hours in audiology;
 - 3 hours in habilitation and rehabilitation of speech-language problems associated with hearing-impairments;
 - 4 hours allocated among the areas listed in this paragraph or earned in other course work related to speech-language pathology.

Graduate semester hours in practicum may not be counted toward satisfying the 39 semester-hour requirement.

Rendering providers meeting the following criteria and working in the same building under the direct supervision of a qualified speech-language pathologist, may be qualified to bill for services. All School-Base ACCESS Program service documentation must be reviewed by the supervising speech-language pathologist and his or her signature provided on all documentation is required.

- Holds certification by the Pennsylvania Department of Education in speech-language pathology.

NEXT STEPS:

Local Early Intervention programs should review their current practices and revise any local procedures to ensure the guidance in this announcement is implemented.