

Family Member Engagement Guide

DDS wants to encourage thoughtful discussions between family members, self-advocates, service providers and regional centers about each individual's goals, needs and services during the COVID pandemic. There is not a set timeline by which individuals need to return to their prior services nor an assumption that the services will be the same. We know that individual's needs may change over time and that discussions about needs and services will be ongoing. This Guide is intended to facilitate discussions about what each individual needs, and how we can continue to ensure safety and promote choice, flexibility and innovation. Thoughtful discussions and planning will help families and self-advocates make the choices that are best for them. We encourage you to share all or some of this information with your regional center and service provider.

Current Goals, Activities, and Services

1. Think about the goals in your family member's IPP. Do any of these need to change because of COVID19?
2. How does your family member currently spend their days? What do they like? What do they dislike?
3. How are regional center services and supports currently provided? What works well? What would you like to change?

Changes in Health Status, Changes in Family Member Work Status

1. Have there been changes to your family member's health? Have you, another family member or caregiver experienced a serious illness related to COVID? Does your family member need any support to address these health concerns?
2. Has your family member experienced any new or increased behavioral challenges? Have you or your family member experienced any of the following while at home: stress; isolation; death of a family member, caregiver, or friend? Does your family member need support to address these concerns?
3. Have there been changes to your work? How do these changes impact the services your family member needs?

Safety Equipment and Safety Protocols

1. Do you and your family member have access to PPE such as masks, gloves, sanitizers? Do you need help obtaining any PPE? Do you or your family member need training about how to use PPE?
2. Is your family member able to follow safety procedures such as wearing a mask, social distancing, not touching their face, hand washing, or temperature checks? Are there any disability related reasons your family member cannot follow any of these procedures? Is there other PPE that works better for your family member such as a clear face shield?

Service Needs and Options

Think about the services your family member received before and during the stay at home order. You may want some of those services to continue. You may want some of those services to be changed. You may want some different services.

1. Some individuals received services remotely through technology such as Zoom. Are these remote services helpful? Are there ways to make them better? Do you want these remote services to continue?
2. Some individual therapies such as ABA services, speech or early intervention services may have been provided in your home. If those services stopped or are now provided remotely do you want those services to start again in your home, once public health guidelines allow for this?
3. Are you comfortable with your family member participating in programs outside of your home when safety protocols are followed? What type of activities are you comfortable with? Are there types of activities you don't want your family member to do?
4. Do you want to learn about other kinds of services your family member can receive at home? For example, through participant directed services, you can directly hire a person you choose, including a family member. This person can provide respite, day care, transportation, services provided by a licensed nurse, day services, personal assistance, independently living skills and supported employment services. The services are paid through an FMS. More information may be found here: https://www.dds.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/DDSDirective_AdditionalParticipantDirectedServices_03302020.pdf or through your regional center.

Communication with Service Providers, Regional Center Service Coordinators and Staff

Think about how you and your family member communicated with regional center staff and service providers during the stay at home order. It may have been by phone, by email or technology like Zoom.

1. Which of these communication methods worked best for you? What ways would you like regional center staff or service providers to communicate with you in the future?
2. Did you or your family members have any barriers to using technology to communicate with service providers or regional center staff? Is there technology you need to more effectively communicate with regional center staff or service providers or to receive remote services?
3. Do you or your family member need training so you can access technology?

Training Needs

1. Is there training you or your family member needs? For example, do you or your family need training about how to use a mask, hand washing, social distancing or other CDC safety guidelines?
2. Is there training you or your family member needs so they can more effectively use technology? Does your family member need adaptive equipment and training to be able to access technology?
3. Would training about service options be helpful? This could include information about the different types of services regional centers can provide, the different ways that services can be provided, ways in which services can be modified as you think about resuming services.