



DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

ALTERNATIVE SERVICES & EARLY START

SEPTEMBER 3, 2020

Questions during this webinar may be submitted in the “Q&A” feature or by using the “Raise Hand” feature to be called upon to speak after this presentation.

Following the webinar, self advocates, family members or providers should contact their local regional center with any questions. DDS continues to welcome input regarding Alternative Services

https://www.dds.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/DDSDirective_Policies-ProceduresAlternativeNonresidentialServices_08312020.pdf

at DDSC19Directives@dds.ca.gov.

TRANSITION TO ALTERNATIVE SERVICES

- Nonresidential providers gained experience in alternative community responses to COVID-19
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) clarified federal funding was time-limited for absence payments (retainer payments)
- Lessons learned – flexibility and adjustment
- Increases opportunities for consumers to guide service providers to creatively respond to individual needs and preferences
- Builds on the innovative service delivery approaches to support consumers while limiting potential exposure to COVID-19
- Secures Federal Funding

NONRESIDENTIAL SERVICES FRAMEWORK



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The slide features a background with a green-to-blue gradient. In each of the four corners, there is a cluster of translucent, 3D-rendered bubbles of various sizes, some overlapping. The bubbles have highlights and shadows, giving them a realistic appearance.

Alternative Services offers the flexibility to tailor services to meet people where they are.

TYPES OF ALTERNATIVE SERVICES

- Supports related to minimizing the exposure to or impact of COVID-19
- Completion of an individual assessment
- Completion of an individualized service plan
- Services delivered to the consumer via telephone, video or other electronic communication
- Delivery of meaningful supplies or other items to the consumer's home
- Use of self-guided training and educational materials supplied by the provider to support the service

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TYPES OF ALTERNATIVE SERVICES (CONTINUED)

- Skills training to individuals within the household to support the consumer
- Service provided in-person, modified to comply with the most protective state or local guidelines in effect
 - Staff must be trained on COVID-19 safety precautions
- Supports for transition to the Self-Determination Program
- Other alternative services

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The family's needs are the driver for the services and supports delivered.

ALTERNATIVE SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION

- September 2020
 - Providers engage families about service options, initiate individual service plans (ISP), and provide Alternative Services
 - Notify regional centers, regional center letter to family to confirm
- Providers submit one-time certification to regional centers
- October 2020
 - Providers finalize ISP for each child and provide Alternative Services
- For these months only, reimbursement claims utilizing existing rate and each consumer's prior average attendance
 - Claims only for child and family who received services during the month

ALTERNATIVE SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION (CONTINUED)



- Monthly rate and backup documentation to providers for review in September 2020
- Beginning in November 2020, reimbursement based on monthly rate
- DDS establishes reporting tools – requirements identified in directive
- Monthly reporting
 - September and October reports are due November 5, 2020
 - Due by the 5th of each subsequent month

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ALTERNATIVE SERVICES MONTHLY REPORTING

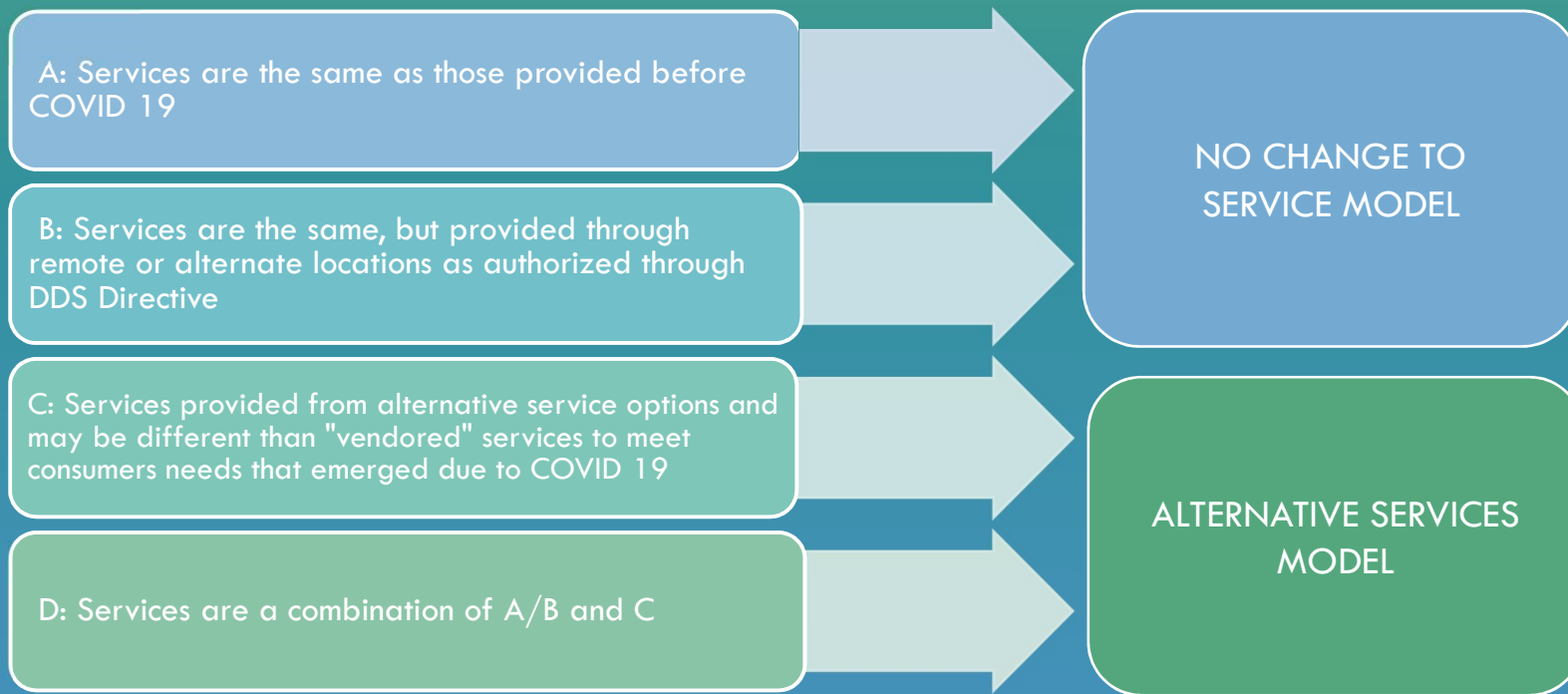
- The number of consumers with service authorizations
- The number of consumers who did and did not receive traditional services
- The number of consumers who did and did not receive Alternative Services
- The number of consumers who used each type of Alternative Service
- The number of days in each month each consumer received services

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Alternative Services does not apply to services that continue as they did before as long as they meet the needs of the child and family.

SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS



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CONSUMER AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- **Family Member and Self-Advocate Engagement Guide**

A set of guiding questions to facilitate thoughtful discussions and planning to help families and self advocates make the choices that are best for them

- **Statewide Family Calls**

A series of meetings to include updates, ongoing discussion and training of interest to family members and self advocates

- **Collaboration with Community-Based Organizations (CBO)**

Input to identify barriers or concerns from underserved communities and how to best connect and address issues

- **Exploring Family Member and Self-Advocate Survey**

A survey to gather feedback from family members and self advocates about current needs and interests

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING

- **Symposium for Alternative Services - September 2020**

A series of statewide webinars to highlight innovative approaches to service delivery to inform and inspire options for Alternative Services model

- **Technical Assistance and Training Agent - September 2020 – June 2021**

- Promote and coordinate collaboration among service providers to maximize the opportunities of Alternative Services
- Source consultants, conduct statewide outreach to service providers seeking assistance, make connections and develop consultation agreements to provide technical assistance and training as needed
- Consultation agreements may vary in frequency and duration, ranging from open online events for large groups to individualized consultation
- Agent will be selected through a Request for Proposal (RFP) facilitated by San Diego Regional Center

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

As an Early Start vendor, we are currently seeing clients through telehealth. Will this continue to be a valid billable mode for delivery of service?

Yes. Telehealth services can be provided and billed in the traditional manner.

If our typical service model includes some of the activities listed as Alternative Services (e.g. provision of specialized materials for families to use at home), do the certification, reporting and other requirements of the Directive apply?

No. If there are no changes to the service, then the Directive on Alternative Services would not apply.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Will each vendor have to choose if they are going to provide all traditional or Alternative Services, or can it be determined on an individual consumer basis?

The service delivery mode and types of services provided are based on the needs of each child and family.

If we are providing traditional services and see a client for only 1.5 hours out of a 3 hour session, can we bill for the entire session?

Just as before COVID, billing for traditional services is based on the amount of time service is provided.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

I will be providing the same services to my consumers, with the exception of delivering a packet to them. Does that make this Alternative Services, or will they continue to be billed the same way.

If the packet or supplies are to be used in lieu of traditional service delivery, it is Alternative Services.

If the packet or supplies are to be used to support traditional service delivery, it is not Alternative Services.

What rate is used if the family wants a combination of traditional services and Alternative Services?

A combination of services should be billed using the Alternative Services monthly rate.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

How are rates calculated if we don't have 12 months of history for everyone or the number of people served changed?

The monthly rate for everyone receiving services from the provider will be the average per person, per month cost and only months where services were provided will be included in the calculation.

If we are providing services in the usual way, except remotely, do we still need to track services provide and turn in the monthly report?

No. The monthly report is not needed for vendors who are not providing Alternative Services.

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SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL EARLY START MATTERS

- Referrals to the regional center are lower than before the pandemic
- Some families have declined remote services all together due to scheduling and other new challenges
- Concern for conducting in-person services for the safety of service providers and families
- Speech and Language Pathologists assessments may be difficult due to the sub-optimal audio quality of remote services
- Encouraged by family engagement and seeing coaching in early intervention services working well with remote services
- Technology continues to be an access issue for some families

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PUBLIC COMMENT

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