



## Early Intervention Child & Family Connections #15 July 2021 Family Newsletter

Will/Grundy/Kankakee/LaSalle Counties



The Early Intervention Clearinghouse has created an Everyday EI parent pack for families containing tip sheets, a beach ball, a pen, a bookmark, and two KN95 masks. [Click here to complete the form to request your parent pack!](#) The EI Clearinghouse also has a [facebook page](#), a [newsletter for families](#), and a [blog](#) with lots of information on the EI system such as this article on [The role of the Service Coordinator in Early Intervention](#).

Did you know that [July 10th is UnPlug Illinois Day](#)? This is a day to get outside, unplug, play and have fun through local park and recreation agencies. Check out this article on [49 Simple and Fun Outdoor activities for Preschoolers \(& Toddlers\)](#) or this list of [Outdoor activities around Chicago to do with your kids from MyKidlist.com](#).

Please enjoy the information below on **fun activities** and **support resources** for all families. This month we have included information on **some July awareness days** (please note this is not a list of all July Awareness days).

### July is...

- Independence Day on July 4th!
- Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month with info from the [Arthritis National Research Foundation](#)
- Sarcoma Awareness Month with info from the [Sarcoma Foundation of America](#)
- National Fragile X Awareness Month - [National Fragile X Foundation](#)
- July 10th is [UnPlug Illinois Day](#) - A day to get outside and play! [Check out this Unplug calendar of events!](#)
- [National Cell Phone Courtesy Month](#)
- [National Ice Cream Month](#)
- [National Blueberry Month](#)
- [National Anti-Boredom Month](#) Check out this list of [21 Ways to Beat Boredom](#)
- July 21st is [National Hot Dog Day](#)

If you know someone who is concerned about their child's development please refer them to our office or share this resource on [making a referral to Early Intervention](#).

-The staff at CFC 15

# Important Information and Updates on Early Intervention In-Person Visits

As of June 23rd, the Illinois Early Intervention Program has removed limits to the number of families Early Intervention Providers can see in person. Additionally, Live Video Visits continue to be an option for all families.



In the memo dated June 29th, the Illinois Department of Human Services Early Intervention Bureau Chief Ann Frieburg shared that "the choice of service delivery method must remain a team (family/ caregiver, EI Provider, and SC) discussion that considers the options available and potential risk factors to all team members. Since all children in EI are still unvaccinated, there continues to be a level of risk for every family and team. With the move to Phase 5, teams now have the option to provide all services in-person, but that may or may not be the best choice for individual families." Live Video Visits (LVV) will continue as an option for EI services for all families. *See information in the section below on resources for families regarding accessing equipment and internet access for LVV services.*

The recommendations for In-person Early Intervention services continue as follows:

- To the maximum extent possible individuals providing in-person support be vaccinated.
- Masks are to be worn when meeting indoors.
- Teams consider conducting in-person visits outdoors or in well-ventilated areas.
- Team members continue to utilize good handwashing practices and sanitize items that are used across homes before each use.
- In-person services should not occur if any individual participating has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days or if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- If individuals who are not fully vaccinated have been exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days, in-person services should not occur.

Please review the [In-person checklists for Early Intervention providers and for families](#) to help determine if it is safe to have an in-person visit. If you or a member of your family is sick with any of the symptoms on the checklist please contact your Early Intervention providers and cancel any upcoming in-person visits.

## Live Video Visit Information, Resources, and parent survey

**Live Video Visits** continue to be a great opportunity for parents to learn from their EI providers how to help their child learn and grow! There are programs available for families to help provide technology devices and internet access for Video Visits. [The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program](#) is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program that provides a temporary discount on monthly broadband bills for qualifying low-income households. If your household is eligible, you can receive:

- Up to a \$50/month discount on your broadband service and associated equipment rentals
- Up to a \$75/month discount if your household is on qualifying Tribal lands
- A one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, tablet, or desktop computer (with a co-payment of more than \$10 but less than \$50)

Go to [www.getemergencybroadband.org](http://www.getemergencybroadband.org) or [www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit](http://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit) to check if you qualify and apply online. You may also sign up through a participating broadband provider or by calling (833) 511-0311 between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. any day of the week to request a mail-in application and more information about the program.

The [Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse](#) also continues to offer a device loan program for all families in Early Intervention. Available technology includes:

- iPad with a data plan (i.e., you are requesting a device for live video visits that also has an Internet plan)
- iPad without a data plan (i.e., you are requesting a device for live video visits; you already have Internet access)

• Hotspot (i.e., you have a device for live video visits but no internet access)  
Quantities are limited. To apply to receive the technology, please complete the [Device Loan Request Form](#).

If you have questions about whether Live Video visits can work for you and your child please reach out to your service coordinator and view the following videos, from the [ETCA \(Early Childhood Technical Assistance\) Center](#). In these videos real parents share their experiences with using Live video visits for their children in Early Intervention.

- [A Family's Story: Virtual Home Visits with Ares' Family](#)
- [A Family's Story: Virtual Home Visits with Zander's Family](#)
- [La historia de una familia: Visitas virtuales al hogar con la familia de Liam](#)

Click here to be taken to [ETCA Center youtube videos](#) to view all their videos.

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You are invited to take part in a research study conducted through Rush University titled "Experiences with Live Video Visits," about how families are experiencing the shift to live video visits. If you're willing to participate, we will ask you questions about your experiences with live video visits. The survey takes about 10 minutes. Your responses can help shape the future of early intervention! <https://redcap.link/FamilyLVVs>

If you have any questions about this survey, please email: [Lauren\\_Little@rush.edu](mailto:Lauren_Little@rush.edu)

Está invitado a participar en un estudio de investigación llamado "Experiencias de las familias sobre Teleterapia", acerca de cómo las familias están experimentando el cambio hacia las Teleterapias. Si está dispuesto a participar, le haremos preguntas sobre sus experiencias con Teleterapia. La encuesta toma aproximadamente 10 minutos. ¡Sus respuestas pueden ayudar a dar forma al futuro de la intervención temprana! <https://redcap.link/Teletherapies>

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## Do you know someone who needs help with groceries?



[My Pantry Express](#) is an online food pantry that gives those in need of food assistance the opportunity to shop once a week for a variety of free grocery items. Items can be picked up from 3 locations in Will County. Please click the link for details.

**No income or residency restrictions apply.**



The Northern Illinois Food Bank has a list online of [upcoming Mobil Food Pantries and Pop up Markets listed monthly by county](#). Both types of distributions are currently using a drive-thru model. **Everyone is welcome – no ID or referral is needed.**



**Will County has created [Food Access Maps](#)** where you can locate food pantries, micro pantries, mobile food pantries, and community gardens in Will and some of the surrounding counties.

[Find Food IL Community Food map](#) allows you to search by zip code for Food pantries, School meal sites, grocery stores, and SNAP & WIC offices.

To get information or help with your [SNAP \(supplemental nutrition assistance program\) application](#) click the link or call 844-600-SNAP.



**\*\*This summer, help kids and teens age 18 and under in your community find the food essential to their well-being! Text 'Food' to 877-877 or visit [summerfeedingillinois.org](http://summerfeedingillinois.org) to find a meal site to access Free breakfast and lunch in your area! Learn more about this program and follow updates on the [facebook page](#).**



## Fun Family Activities | July 2021

*Summer is the perfect time to get outside and play! Local libraries and park districts are great resources for fun and educational activities and events for young children this summer!*



### In person events

- [Wild Fest](#) July 11th at Big Run Wolf Ranch. See all kinds of exotic animals. Check out their [facebook page](#) for more information.
- [Big Run Wolf Ranch Family Day](#) on July 25th from 10-4pm. \$8/person
- Mark your calendar for the [Downtown Joliet Family Fun Festival on August 21st](#). Children 12 and under are free.
- [Ottawa's 2021 Music in the Park Concert Series](#) in Washington Park on Saturdays from 6-8pm.
- [Joliet has Concerts on the Hill](#) every Thursday during the summer from 6:30-8:45pm at the Billie Limacher Bicentennial Park & Theatre
- [Friday's After 5 in the New Lenox Commons](#) July 16th. There will be live music and food trucks. Event is free for all ages.
- [Kids on Canal event in Lemont](#) on August 8th 9am-2pm. There will be food, local vendors & authors, music and fun! \$5/child.
- [Mokena Farm and Barn Fest](#) on August 7th Come learn about farm life and enjoy music, food, demonstrations and kids events.

Check out this list of [Chicagoland you-pick-farms for 2021!](#) This is a great way to get outside, have fun, and pick some healthy fruits and vegetables!

[Dupage Children's Museum](#) is open & pre-registration is required. See the website for details. [Kidswork Children's Museum](#) in Frankfort is open for in person play. Advanced sign up only required for weekends.

[Discovery Center Museum](#) in Rockford is open and reservations are required.

[The Shedd Aquarium](#) is open and tickets must be reserved in advanced.

[Field Museum](#) is open with advanced ticket purchase

[The Museum of Science and Industry](#) is open with advanced ticket purchase. [Click here](#) to see their FREE days for Illinois residents!

[The Art Institute](#) is open with advanced ticket purchase

[Lincoln Park](#) and [Brookfield Zoo](#) are open! Face coverings are required in all buildings.

[Cosley Zoo in Wheaton](#) is open with advanced registration.

[Sky Zone in Joliet](#) is open and has a Little Leapers program for kids age 7 and under on Saturdays from 10-11am. See their [calendar](#) for details.

[Starved Rock State Park](#) and [Matthiessen State Park](#) both located in LaSalle County are great places to get outside and enjoy nature!

### Virtual Events

- [Campkinda](#) is an at home summer camp for kids age 3-13 with a new virtual camp experience each week to keep them engaged, curious, and having fun this summer!

- **Michaels Crafts** stores are hosting free online events for children and adults. Check out their [Free Kids club zoom events for Mini Makers age 3 and up](#)
- **Barnes and Noble** has a [you tube channel](#) with virtual kids story times and many adult book club virtual events as well.
- **Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie** has virtual programs for kids from July 1-15 Send an e-mail to [SM.FS.Midewin\\_RSVP@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.Midewin_RSVP@usda.gov) or call 815-423-6370 to register.

**Will County Forest Preserve District has an events calendar** with virtual & in-person events for children and families. Don't miss the...

- [Food Truck Friday on July 9th at Hickory Creek Preserve](#) from 5-7:30pm
- [Sidewalk Chalk Challenge at Monee Reservoir](#) Kick off is July 10th, event runs through July 31st
- [Lego Gone Wild event on July 20th](#) at Messenger Woods in Homer Glen

For more information on fun family events in the **Chicagoland area** go to [Chicago Parent.com](#) and [Family Time Magazine](#). Check out this article from Chicago Parent on [5 At Home Olympic Games for Kids](#) to celebrate the Tokyo Olympics which begin July 23rd.

For fun events and parenting tips in **LaSalle County** go to the [Illinois Valley Area Parent References](#) Facebook page. Also check out the [LaSalle County Calendar of Events](#).

For fun events in **Kankakee County** visit the [Kankakee County Calendar of Events page](#).

Many **libraries** and **park districts** are hosting in-person events for children and families. Please check out your local library and park district website for details. Also don't forget to sign up for your **library's summer reading program!!** Check out this flyer on the [Summer reading program at Joliet public library](#).

Here a list of websites for several of the park districts in our area:

- [Joliet Park District](#)
- [Bolingbrook Park District](#)
- [Romeoville Park District](#) - their summer brochure is now available online!
- [Lemont Park District](#) -
- [Mokena Park District](#)
- [Frankfort Park District](#) -
- [New Lenox Park District](#) click to view upcoming special events.
- [Plainfield Park District](#) click to check out their upcoming special events!
- [Naperville Park District](#) - their summer program guide is available online
- [Channahon Park District](#) click to check out their upcoming special events!
- [Crete Park District](#)
- [Braidwood Park District](#)
- [Wilmington Island Park District](#)
- [Godley Park District](#) has up to date info on events and programs on their [facebook page](#)
- [Bourbonnais Township Park District](#) The [Exploration station](#) is open with advanced registration. Register online!
- [Momence Park District](#)

Local **Special Recreation Associations** are continuing to host virtual events and in-person events. See below for websites of some area Special Recreation Associations:

- [River Valley Special Rec Association](#) in Bradley
- [Lincolnway Special Rec Association](#) in New Lenox - Check out their [Summer 2021 brochure](#)
- [Northern Will County Special Rec Association](#) (NWCSRA) in Romeoville. Check out their [Summer 2021 brochure](#) They have a sensory room that is available to reserve for individual use located at 10 Montrose in Romeoville. Check out this great resource! Email [Gina Petkus](mailto:Gina.Petkus) for info.
- [SRJC](#) - Special Recreation of Joliet and Channahon
- [The NorthWest Special Recreation Association in Rolling Meadows hosts online sibshops](#) for siblings, who are ages 8-12 year old, of children with disabilities to meet other siblings for peer support and fun! **In July they are hosting an in person picnic on July 17th.** Fee is \$10/family. Contact [ljevane@nwsra.org](mailto:ljevane@nwsra.org) for more information.

## Family Support Resources For All Areas

The Illinois [Early Intervention Clearinghouse](#) has a device loan program for families in EI. Available technology includes:

- iPad with a data plan (i.e., you are requesting a device for live video visits that also has an Internet plan)
- iPad without a data plan (i.e., you are requesting a device for live video visits; you already have Internet access)
- Hotspot (i.e., you have a device for live video visits but require Internet access)

Quantities are limited. To apply to receive the technology, please complete the [Device Loan Request Form](#).



[The Arc of IL has an Assistive Technology Consumer Stipend Program](#) which during the pandemic will provide funds to pay for the assistive technology (Ipad, tablets, laptops etc) needed to attend virtual events and meetings for people with developmental disabilities and their family members. Click to [download the application](#). Any questions? Call 815.464.1832 ext 1010. Completed applications can be submitted online or faxed to 815.464.5292

### Parent/Family Support Programs:

The [2021 Illinois Rental Payment Program](#) is open for applications now through July 18th. Assistance will cover up to 15 months of emergency rental assistance for those who qualify. The coverage period is July 2020 through September 2021. Applications must be initiated by tenants with a landlord completed portion of the application as well. To learn more read the [tenant FAQ](#), call 1-866-ILHELP1 (1-866-454-3571), email [Questions.ILRPP@ihda.org](mailto:Questions.ILRPP@ihda.org) or go to <https://ilrpp.ihda.org/> to begin an application.

[14th Annual Free Virtual Family Conference for Families of Children with Disabilities](#) held through Star Net Illinois on July 29th- August 1st. One session is held each day and families can register for individual sessions. [See the program Flyer for details](#)

[The Special Fathers Network](#) is a Dad to Dad mentoring program for fathers raising children with special needs. They host zoom calls on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month for Dads to connect. [Click here to view the list of previous and upcoming zoom calls](#).

[ACES 5 week FREE parenting program](#) is a parent education program that provides parents with information on trauma, toxic stress, brain science, and how adverse experiences may be impacting your child. Please call 815-942-6389 for information.

[The Jump Start homevisiting Parental Training Program](#) is a parenting enrichment program offered in Will, Grundy & Kankakee counties. It is a free program that offers parent education and family support services throughout pregnancy until their child is 3 years old. In Will and Grundy Counties contact Alyssa at 309-370-9998 or in Kankakee County call Tyler at 815-600-9744 or [enroll online](#). For more information on this great program check out their [facebook page](#)

Easter Seals has a [Parent's Raising Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders Support Group](#) or other [Social Interaction/Communication Disorder](#) that meets every Wednesday of the month at 6:00 pm via Zoom. Email Laura at [lgardner@joliet.easterseals.com](mailto:lgardner@joliet.easterseals.com) for an invitation to join the group. See the [flyer for the July 14th group meeting](#) on the SOS feeding approach. They also offer a [Spanish Speaking group that meets weekly on Fridays at 3pm](#).

[Easter Seals is offering Free walk in mental screenings for children](#) age 1-17 years old. Following the screening, families will be provided with information, resources, and tools if needed. Screenings are held the 2nd Friday of every month from 9am-11am or to schedule a virtual appointment call 815-927-5466. [Screenings are also offered in Spanish](#).



**Erikson Center for Children and families** is offering in-person and virtual mental health **services** to parents, caregivers, and children focusing on prenatal to 5 years old. Services available in English and Spanish. For more information contact their intake line at 312-709-0508 for English and 312-934-6446 for Spanish.

Catholic Charities of Joliet is hosting a [Breastfeeding Mom's Group "Lunch Hour Lactation"](#) every Wednesday at Noon on zoom. As well as a [Support Group for Parenting Teens](#) that meets monthly on zoom.. Click the links for information on these groups.

### **Educational & Informative webinars for parents & caregivers:**

[Illinois School for the Visually Impaired](#) has posted their calendar of events for upcoming zoom webinars. These webinars are free for families and professionals who are interested in learning more about children's eye conditions. Also check out their [facebook page](#) for info.

[Be Strong Families](#) has a webinar series for parents to help them stay strong and positive for themselves and their children. Past webinars are also available to view. Click the link for more information or to register. Registration information is in English and Spanish.

### **Informational Online Resources:**

The Child Mind Institute has created a short [video series on helping young children manage anxiety](#). Kids can go on a Journey with Nixie and Nimbo to see how thoughts and actions affect how we feel. Click here to view the [guide for parents](#) about the video series. The [Child Mind Institute](#) is an online resource for children's mental health information.

[SPARK](#) - Simons Foundation Powering Autism Research - has [information and webinars for parents](#) of children on the Autism Spectrum.

[The Northwestern Infant and Child Development Center](#) is inviting parents and children from newborn to age 6 to participate in a research study on how babies learn so much so fast! Click [here to sign up](#) to participate in the study.

Northwestern University researchers are studying parent satisfaction with therapeutic services for children with disabilities during the coronavirus. To access the survey for this study go to <https://is.gd/parentingduringcovid> for questions on this survey please contact [ashleymurphy2020@u.northwestern.edu](mailto:ashleymurphy2020@u.northwestern.edu)

[The Early Intervention Research Group \(EIRG\)](#) offers many research studies for young children. Click here to [view all of their current research studies](#).

[Illinois Hands and Voices](#), supports families with children who have a hearing loss. Check out their website to receive updates and new blog posts.

[The Will County AOK \(All Our Kids\) Network](#) hosts monthly meetings for professionals working with children & families, community members, and parents. They have a [resource guide](#) with information on many local resources for families.

### **Developmental/Educational Online Resources:**

[The Division of Specialized Care for Children](#) (DSCC) has several resources on their website for families related to education and childcare for children with healthcare needs or disabilities. They also have [tips and tools for remote learning for families](#)

[Family Matters Parent Training & Information Center](#) has many resources related to education, support, and advocacy for parents of a child with a disability.

[Zero to three](#) has a [Baby Steps newsletter](#) for parents and caregivers that delivers interesting articles and resources to your inbox. Also check out the [Zero to Three facebook page](#).

[The Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development](#) has information on resources for families with young children such as accessing childcare services.

[Harvard Center on the Developing Child](#) is an informational resource for families with young

children. They cover topics such as Early Childhood Development, Brain Architecture, Executive Function & Self Regulation, and Toxic Stress.

[Sesame Street in Communities website](#) (Produced by Sesame Workshop) is a customizable resource for parents/caregivers to provide learning opportunities and help support children through challenges such as community violence, & traumatic experiences.

PBS Kids and HBO have worked together to create a series for children called [The Power of We](#) for parents and kids to view together to learn about how to bridge differences and become upstanders against racism. [View an episode together here!](#)

## COVID-19 Vaccine Information



All Illinois residents age 12 and over are eligible for the Covid vaccines.

For those interested in learning more about the COVID-19 vaccine and its availability in your area, go to <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/>.

You may also access information on the vaccine from your local Health Department.

- [Will County Health Department](#)
- [Grundy County Health Department](#)
- [Kankakee County Health Department](#)
- [LaSalle County Health Department](#)

Click here for more information on the [State of Illinois Vaccination Plan from the Illinois Department of Public Health](#). For information on the safety and efficacy of the vaccine go to <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html>.



## Covid-19 Information & Resources

Information to support families:

- [Call 4 Calm](#) - text TALK to 552020 for English or HABLAR for Spanish if you or a loved one are struggling with stress related to the pandemic. This is free and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- [Emotional Well-being Toolkit for Children, Families, and Caregivers](#) created by the [Governors Office of Early Childhood Development](#)
- [The Child Mind Institute](#) has put together resources to support families during the pandemic including facebook live chats, tips via email, and much more.
- The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA), the Office of Head Start (OHS), has created [a list of resources to support children with disabilities and their families](#) during the COVID pandemic.
- Parenting for Lifelong health has created [COVID-19: 24/7 Parenting](#) with information and online resources for parents during this time.
- Here is some information from Child Trends on [10 Ways to Support Children's Emotional Well-Being During COVID-19](#).

About Us:

Visit our  
website

*[Child and Family Connections #15](#) is the regional office serving as the point of entry for children and families into the Illinois Early Intervention Program. CFC #15 serves children age 0-3 year*



*and their families in Will, Grundy, Kankakee, and LaSalle Counties.*

*For more information about the Illinois Early Intervention Program, please visit:*

*[Illinois Department of Human Services](#) or [The Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse](#)*

**\*\*The events and information contained in this newsletter are not sponsored by Child and Family Connections #15. This newsletter contains information from many different agencies and organizations and is provided to families as a resource.\*\***