



# General Requirements for Vendors

## General

Tennessee's Early Intervention System (TEIS) has state employed personnel who provide service coordination, developmental assessments, developmental intervention, child find, and public awareness activities through Single Point of Entry District Offices (SPOE). In addition, TEIS provides services through contracts with providers such as an Early Intervention Resource Agency (EIRA). TEIS also has agencies and individuals who provide services as required by Part C of IDEA. These agencies and individuals enter into a vendor agreement, an Authorization to Vendor (AV), with the Office of Early Childhood (OEC). Vendor agencies have staff members that are licensed individually as is appropriate for their discipline. Entities such as clinics, hospitals, home health agencies, and others may enter into a vendor agreement with the Tennessee Department of Education. Further, AV's are arranged between the Tennessee Department of Education and individuals who agree and are qualified to provide a specific service. In all situations, the vendor agreements require that state and federal regulations regarding IDEA Part C must be followed. In the vendor agreements, the state is purchasing the service only. All vendors bill for the services rendered.

Direct intervention services specified on the IFSP are provided through programs operating within the TEIS district. These include:

- State Employed Early Interventionists
- Early Intervention Resource Agency (EIRA) – Service programs in various locations in the state funded by the TN Department of Education. These agencies have a specific focus including rural service delivery, outreach and services to the Non-English Speaking community, and specialty services related to children with autism and behavioral concerns.
- Vendor Service Providers – Agencies/Individuals sign an Authorization to Vendor (AV) with the State of Tennessee for specific services such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and/or assistive technology

This section contains information about requirements that are applicable to vendors rendering a service for TEIS. Vendor agencies or individual practitioners who want to provide and directly bill for services within TEIS must submit appropriate documentation. Any agency or individual who is interested in an Authorization to Vendor should contact the OEC for specific instructions regarding the information that is required or view the TEIS website at <http://tn.gov/education/teis/>. Please select the Vendor/Provider Information tab located to the left of the page.

## Orientation

The OEC Central Office staff or SPOE Data Manager provides an orientation program for vendors. The Orientation program includes components such as this Operations Manual, IDEA Part C State and Federal Regulations, TEIS Policy Manual, TEIDS, and monitoring indicators of compliance.

## **Public Awareness and Child Find**

Vendors participate in public awareness by informing the public in their population of service about early intervention services available to families. Vendors may also be involved in child find activities if those arrangements are a part of their agreement.

## **Primary Referral Source**

Vendors may be regarded as primary referral sources for early intervention in that these agencies may receive information directly from other community agencies or individuals about a child who is suspected of having developmental delays. Clinics, hospitals, home health agencies, and other health care providers may be involved in receiving notification/referral information. In these situations, the vendors will submit the information to the SPOE District Office immediately in order that the information regarding the child may be entered into the system appropriately as a notification/referral.

## **Request for Potential Service Provision**

The State Point of Entry (SPOE) District Office processes the notification/referral by assigning a Service Coordinator who will contact the family and schedule a meeting. The Service Coordinator, along with the eligibility team, determines if the child is eligible for TEIS.

For eligible children, the Service Coordinator contacts EIRAs and vendors to determine the availability for potentially needed services. The Service Coordinator obtains a signed release from the parents in order to release personally identifiable information to the potential vendor(s) for the purposes of determining service availability and accessibility. The selection of potential service providers is based on the following:

- County or zip code where the family resides is considered in relation to the location of the provider to the family's home or other natural environment location.
- Looking at family assessment-type information in order to best accommodate the family's regular life routines. When does intervention best fit into the family's daily life to cause the least disruption?
- The expertise of potential service providers is considered in relationship to the needs of the child and family. The provider's background, experience and training with certain populations or disabilities such as autism, visual impairment, hearing impairment, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, behavioral concerns, social detachment conditions and others may be considered when beginning the process of connecting the family with the appropriate service provider.
- Availability and accessibility of the vendor to provide services in the natural environment. Note: Federal and State target of compliance – timely delivery of services. IFSP services begin no later than 30 days from the start date listed on the IFSP Service Page. This timeline is taken into account when identifying available vendors.

The final decision for a vendor will be made after the actual development of the IFSP outcomes that incorporates family assessment information related to natural environments (including routines), concerns, priorities, resources, supports, and services. The Service Coordinator collaborates with the TEIS SPOE Leadership Team and is responsible for identifying appropriate vendors for eligible children once a service has been determined needed by an IFSP team.

## **IFSP Participation**

Once the vendor is confirmed, the service information is entered onto the IFSP. The provider is expected to continue to contribute to the IFSP team through service provision and communication with other team members. The Service Coordinator ensures that the vendor is notified of the confirmation of the service by that particular vendor. The vendor is responsible for keeping the Service Coordinator informed regarding any progress involving the child.

## **Evaluation**

The vendor uses the family assessment information provided in the IFSP to develop intervention plans for the child and family. The vendor administers the evaluation specified in the IFSP document within the timeframe allowed or communicates the need for additional time to the Service Coordinator.

## **Service Delivery**

The Service Coordinator enters the information about the vendor into TEIDS as a service provider and informs the vendor. The vendor is able to access TEIDS information about the child and family. The vendor is responsible for the following:

- Obtains orders from the physician as needed
- Contacts the family and schedules the initial session within 30 days from the planned start date on the IFSP
- Allows the current IFSP a sufficient amount of time (3-4 months) to assess progress
- Enters information regarding each session on the Service Log in TEIDS within three working days from the date of service. Note: vendors should follow the Medicare guideline for billing known as the "eight minute rule." This rule provides guidelines about how to round time into 15-minute increments for billing purposes.
- Date entered into the Service Log is the actual date of the service delivery
- Enters information related to communication with the family and other team members in the Contact Log in TEIDS
- Reviews communication from other team members in the Contact Log and Service Log to ensure that all team members are approaching the support and service to the family in a coordinated and comprehensive manner

Vendors participate in the transition of children who exit the system the day before the child's third birthday. Vendors are available to complete assessments as specified in transition plans, participate in the development of the transition plan and provide suggestions and recommendations regarding supports and services needed for the child after exit.

## **Early Intervention System of Operation**

Vendors establish and maintain a system of operation that meets the requirements as defined by the agreement with the State of Tennessee Department of Education.

- Vendors have a current approved Authorization to Vendor between the State of Tennessee Department of Education and the agency on file.

- Vendors' invoices reflect actual service(s) rendered.
- Vendors maintain documentation for all charges against the state under the Agreement with the State of Tennessee Department of Education for a period of three years from the date of the final payment.
- Vendors ensure that the early intervention services provided for eligible children meet the definition of early intervention services and are provided in manner consistent with state and federal requirements under IDEA Part C.
- Vendors ensure that all individuals rendering services are licensed, when applicable, or hold the necessary credentials as appropriate for their specialty area. The Vendor further agrees to produce documentation of licensure and/or copies of degrees/transcripts if requested in an audit.

## **Data Collection and Reporting**

Vendors are responsible for entering data and ensuring accuracy in Tennessee's Early Intervention Data System (TEIDS). TEIDS is a web-based data system which tracks a child's progress and includes an accounts payable feature. If the Tennessee Department of Education requests additional information or data, vendors must comply with request.

## **Description of the Claims Processing System**

Services provided by vendors are processed via an individual purchase of services system. This system allows billing and payments for a variety of services. The system has the following features:

- All services are based on a fee for service
- All payments for services are on a reimbursement basis
- Services are billed on a weekly or monthly basis

### **Vendor Responsibilities Related to Reimbursement of Claims**

Vendor responsibilities include the following:

- Submission of documents and requests required for establishment as a vendor within the claims processing system
- Submission of accurate and timely weekly or monthly billings for provision of authorized services
- Submission of timely rebilling or corrections
- Submission of documentation as required to justify units of service billed
- Submission of additional claims processing information as requested by the OEC Central Reimbursement Office
- Notification to the OEC/CRO in the event of errors, omissions or additions
- Further claims processes are detailed in the Central Reimbursement Office Billing instructions.
- \*Reference the Terms of Authorization section (Item 9) of the Authorization to Vendor for specific guidelines

### **Establishing a Vendor Account**

The following requirements must be met prior to receiving reimbursement for services:

- An executed Department of Education Authorization to Vendor
- Licensure, if required, must be verified

Vendors will need to be established in the Edison system. Project Edison is the State of Tennessee's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. Vendor information must be verified to ensure active status on the Edison system. To set up or activate a vendor's status:

- Complete an Edison Vendor Registration
- Submit a substitute W9 and ACH direct deposit form and voided check or deposit slip.  
**\*All vendors are required to accept payment by direct deposit.**
- Any subsequent changes to name, address, or any other information regarding your agency must be communicated to the OEC.

#### **Service Authorization**

TEIS SPOE District Offices are responsible for the approval of IFSPs to authorize services and supports. Entries into TEIDS are made in the Service Log section by the vendors. This produces information that is populated into TEIDS Accounts Payable.

#### **Corrections in TEIDS**

Any correction to names, Social Security Numbers, TennCare numbers or other information must be communicated to the TEIS SPOE District Office.

#### **Service Limits**

Services are reimbursed in accordance with limits approved in the IFSP. OEC will not provide payment for services provided in excess of the authorized limits.

#### **Retroactive Requests for Service Authorization**

Payment of retroactive service authorization requests is prohibited. The OEC Director or Part C Coordinator must approve any exceptions in writing.

## **Claims Processing**

#### **Invoice Report**

The Invoice Report from TEIDS is the official billing document for services used to process claims in the OEC Central Reimbursement Office (CRO). The Invoice Report details the services approved for each service recipient that may be billed by the vendor. Vendors should verify the information.

#### **Timeliness and Accuracy of Claims**

Claims must be accurate. The vendor must maintain documentation to justify all service units billed. Initial billing for TEIS sole payor service units must be made within sixty (60) days from the date of service. Service units involving commercial insurance with explanation of benefits (EOB's) must be submitted within one hundred and twenty (120) days. Rebilling should occur as soon as possible.

#### **Corrections and Late Billing**

Corrections or late billings must be submitted in a timely manner. Corrections must go through the OEC/CRO. Questions about delays and/or corrections must be communicated with the OEC/CRO.

**All Payments from the Department of Education are processed through Edison. Payments may occur up to sixty (60) days after the created Invoice Report is generated from TEIDS.**