



Technical Assistance Bulletin

TO: WV Birth to Three Payees, Practitioners, and Service Coordinators
WV Birth to Three Regional Administrative Units

FROM: Mel Woodcock, CSPD and Policy Coordinator
WV Birth to Three

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ISSUE: **Procedures for Use of Substitute Practitioners/Service Coordinators
(Revision to TA Bulletin – Substitute Personnel Procedures dated 05/28/03)**

WV Birth to Three confirmed practitioners may at times find it necessary to have a substitute to provide an authorized IFSP service for one or more families (e.g., medical leave, family emergency, vacation, etc). Within the guidelines of this TA Bulletin, a practitioner may have a substitute provide the authorized service for a period not to exceed six (6) weeks.

Substitute services are NOT reimbursable when they are regular, periodic, and/or of a duration longer than six (6) weeks. Substitutions cannot be used to “trade off” assignments on a routine basis. The authorized practitioner will be responsible for repayment when services are inappropriately assigned to a substitute practitioner.

In situations where the practitioner will not be available for up to six (6) weeks and decides to use a substitute, the practitioner must notify the families and service coordinator(s) of the dates of the leave of absence and provide the name and contact information for the substitute practitioner for each child. When a service coordinator needs a substitute, the service coordinator must notify the families and respective RAU(s) of the dates of the leave of absence and provide the name and contact information for substitute service coordinator.

The professional selected as a substitute must be from the same discipline and enrolled in the WV Birth to Three System. Arrangement for reimbursement of services provided by a qualified substitute is the responsibility of the practitioner/service coordinator who is authorized to provide the IFSP service. The substitute practitioner/service coordinator is working under the authorization of the originally selected individual and is to implement the strategies and activities as identified in the child/family’s IFSP. A Practitioner Confirmation form is not needed for the substitute.

If the practitioner will be absent for more than six (6) weeks, it is not considered to be a substitution. In this situation, the practitioner is responsible for informing the family and service coordinator prior to the start of the practitioner’s leave in order to give sufficient time for the family to select a replacement practitioner to provide the services. The service

coordinator will assist the family in identifying a new practitioner for the original practitioner's period of absence or for the period of the IFSP service need. For this instance, the service coordinator will complete a Practitioner Confirmation form for the newly selected practitioner.

If, for some reason, a family decides not to select a new practitioner for the period of time the original practitioner will be on leave, then the family is denying the service for that period and this decision must be documented on a Service Activity note and included in the child's educational record at the RAU. If the period of absence is anticipated or does exceed six (6) weeks, and the family denies the service for that period, there would need to be an IFSP review to document that the family is choosing not to have this service continue. The service would then be deleted from the IFSP and a Practitioner Confirmation form must be submitted to the RAU to end the authorization. Service coordination is a required service under IDEA, therefore, families cannot deny service coordination services. They will need to select a substitute or a replacement for any service coordinator absences.

If you have questions about this TA Bulletin, you may email questions to wvbt@wvdhhr.org.

Please Note: Practitioners who take medical leave for any period of time are still responsible for completing their annual enrollment credential requirements within the original timeframe.