

Early Intervention Annual Family Survey Frequently Asked Questions for Early Intervention Leaders

When is the survey open?

- The FY 2022-23 Early Intervention Family survey will be **opened on February 1, 2023 and closed on June 30, 2023**



Who should respond to the survey?

- Families with a child who has an IFSP/IEP with Early Intervention services, on February 1, 2023, should be offered the opportunity to respond to the survey.
- Infants and toddlers who are in the tracking program on February 1, 2023 should not participate in the survey.
- Children who are referred or evaluated after February 1, 2023 should not participate in the survey.

Why does Pennsylvania's Early Intervention program send out an annual family survey?

- OCDEL is committed to a continuous, quality improvement process across our Early Intervention Program. The voices and opinions of families are an integral part of any improvement process. The family survey has been a part of Early Intervention's improvement efforts for over a decade.
- The family survey is just one of the tools that we use to evaluate the quality of our Early Intervention programs. The survey results validate that the strengths we see in Early Intervention programs are also recognized by families.
- The family survey allows us to see where we have areas across our Early Intervention programs that we can work to strengthen.
- The family survey is a reporting requirement of the federal Office of Special Education programs.

What methods are used to disseminate the survey?

- The family survey is an online survey that families access through a weblink or QR code. Families can use their computers, smartphones, or other devices to access the survey.
- Local Early Intervention programs, because they have close connections with the families in their programs, are responsible for disseminating the survey links.
- OCDEL provides standardized materials for local Early Intervention programs to use. Materials are available in both English and Spanish.
- The survey is available in both English and Spanish. There is a separate link and QR code for each survey.
- Local Early Intervention programs should develop a plan to encourage all families in the Early Intervention program, including those who are typically underrepresented, to respond to the family survey. This plan should include steps to reach families who need additional assistance to respond to an English or Spanish survey.
- Families are often motivated to complete the family survey when they know how it will be used by the local Early Intervention program to make local changes. Early Intervention programs are encouraged to develop talking points about how they intend to use the results from the family survey.

- Early Intervention staff should be trained on best practices for disseminating the survey to families.

How is the family survey data be used by OCDEL?

- The data collected in the family survey is used for reporting to the federal Office of Special Education Programs and in Pennsylvania’s determination process for Early Intervention programs. It is also used in the Verification process.
- OCDEL provides results to local Early Intervention programs for use in their quality improvement efforts.

How can local Early Intervention programs use the family survey data?

- Here are some examples of how Local Early Intervention programs have used the family survey data:
 - Local Interagency Coordinating Councils have used data from the family survey as a starting point in their development of goals/activities.
 - Early Intervention programs use family survey results to identify areas for improvement as they develop their local QEP Plans.

Common Questions about the Survey:

Are the Family Survey Responses Confidential?

- Survey responses have NO impact on a child’s services or eligibility for Early Intervention.
- ALL survey responses are confidential. Early Intervention program will not know which families responded to the survey. For both state and local reports, responses are compiled for any reports.

I tried to get the survey and link is not working.

- Confirm that the family has entered the entire link correctly.
- Suggest that the family use the QR code through their phone or tablet.
- Ask for the family’s email or text number and send them the link directly to cut down on inaccurate typing.

What do you do with the survey responses? Why are you doing this survey?

- Your child’s local Early Intervention program and OCDEL are working together to improve Early Intervention services to families and children.
- Family survey results are grouped together and shared with local Early Intervention programs and at the state-level to assist in identifying areas of strength and areas that could be improved.
- Local programs should develop their own talking points to describe the concrete ways that the program intends to use the data.

I don’t know why I am getting this survey. My child is not in Early Intervention/has not received any Early Intervention Services

- If family indicates that their child is “no longer in EI” let them know that if their child had received any services from July 2022 to February 2023, they are welcome to fill out the survey. Their responses are welcome even if their child has transitioned out of the Early Intervention program.

- Clarify for families that the services they are receiving are “Early Intervention”. Describe the actual services that they receive to help make the connection. For example, say “The speech-therapy services that Ms. Jones provides are Early Intervention services.”
- Ask the family if their child has had any therapy services in the past year or if they go to a program/school.
 - Often families may not associate a therapy service with Early Intervention.
 - Families might not think of their child’s preschool program as Early Intervention. Give families cues such as: does your child go to “preschool” or “a classroom/program at an Intermediate Unit – or if they are in Philadelphia, through Elwyn”. Help families understand why they were included.
 - It is common for families in the Preschool Early Intervention program to say “they are no longer in EI”, because they transitioned from the Infant/Toddler program to the Preschool program.

Some of the questions don’t apply to me

- Families should be directed to “skip” (not answer) questions that they feel do not apply to their situation.

I have had a variety of experiences, so I don’t know how to respond

- Families may interact with a variety of people during their time receiving Early Intervention Services. Tell families to consider all those experiences, as a whole, when responding to the questions.

I don’t have a computer/smart phone & cannot fill out the survey.

- Develop a plan to address the needs of families that need additional assistance in filling out the survey.
- Allow families to use program technology to fill out the survey. (*While ensuring that devices do not contain any protected/confidential information that could accidentally be accessed. Programs should have a “clean” device for this purpose*)
- Encourage families to use a local library’s computer to complete the survey.
- A paper copy of the survey, in both English and Spanish, will be made available for the limited times when families don’t have a way to access the survey. The completed survey should be sent to OCDEL for data entry. Directions on how to return the completed paper survey can be found on the form.

Family needs the survey to be translated.

- The survey is available in English and Spanish.
- Anticipate the language needs of their families who are completing the survey. Local Early Intervention programs should implement different strategies to ensure that typically underrepresented families can access the survey in the language they need. Early Intervention programs may consider using the interpreter who works with the family during service delivery and meetings.
- If a local option is not available, families can call CONNECT (1-800-692-7288) for language translation assistance.