

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT EARLY INTERVENTION FAMILY FEES

Family Fee Assessment

What are Family Fees?

Family Fees are payments by families for Early Intervention (EI) services that are subject to fees. Not all EI services are subject to fees. Direct services, like Physical Therapy, Developmental Therapy, or Speech Therapy are subject to fees. Service Coordination, Evaluations, Assessments and Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) Development are not subject to fees. You can find a detailed list of services subject to fees in the Family Fee Report you receive from your service coordinator.

Does everyone have to pay a fee?

The Early Intervention Program requires that families who are able to help pay for their child and family's EI services, do so. Families who are on Medicaid/ KidCare or WIC, or whose income is at or below 185% of the federal poverty level are not required to pay a fee.

Aren't Early Intervention Services supposed to be free, like the services provided by the school district?

No. The Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) requirement does not apply to Early Intervention. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) says that EI services must be "provided at no cost except where Federal or State law provides for a system of payments by families, including a schedule of sliding fees," (Section 632 (B))

How much will I have to pay?

The fee assessment first calculates how much your family is able to pay over the course of one year and then breaks that down into a more convenient monthly payment amount called the Level Payment Amount. Fees are calculated using your family size (for tax reporting purposes) and annual gross income. You can estimate your fee amount using the following table.

FY 2004 FEE CALCULATION (Effective July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2004)									
<i>Find column where family size and gross income meet to determine level monthly fee amount:</i>									
	\$0 Level Monthly Fee Amt	\$10 Level Monthly Fee Amt	\$20 Level Monthly Fee Amt	\$30 Level Monthly Fee Amt	\$50 Level Monthly Fee Amt	\$70 Level Monthly Fee Amt	\$100 Level Monthly Fee Amt	\$150 Level Monthly Fee Amt	\$200 Level Monthly Fee Amt
Family Size	0-185% FPL	186-200% FPL	201-250% FPL	251-300% FPL	301-350% FPL	351-400% FPL	401-500% FPL	501-600% FPL	above 600% FPL
2	\$0- 22,422	\$22,423- 24,240	\$24,241- 30,300	\$30,301- 36,360	\$36,361- 42,420	\$42,421- 48,480	\$48,481- 60,600	\$60,601- 72,720	Above \$72,720
3	\$0- 28,231	\$28,232- 30,520	\$30,521- 38,150	\$38,151- 45,780	\$45,781- 53,410	\$53,411- 61,040	\$61,041- 76,300	\$76,301- 91,560	Above \$91,560
4	\$0- 34,040	\$34,041- 36,800	\$36,801- 46,000	\$46,001- 55,200	\$55,201- 64,400	\$64,401- 73,600	\$73,601- 92,000	\$92,001- 110,400	Above \$110,400
5	\$0- 39,849	\$39,850- 43,080	\$43,081- 53,850	\$53,851- 64,620	\$64,620- 75,390	\$75,391- 86,160	\$86,161- 107,700	\$107,701- 129,240	Above \$129,240
For family sizes above 5, add the following to above income ranges for each additional family member:									
+1	\$0- 5,809	\$5,810- 6,280	\$6,281- 7,850	\$7,851- 9,420	\$9,421- 10,990	\$10,991- 12,560	\$12,561- 15,700	\$15,701- 18,840	\$18,840

****Based on FFY 2003 Federal Poverty Level Guidelines. This table is updated annually.****

The Level Monthly Fee Amount is charged monthly beginning when your family's services subject to fees are authorized to begin and ending when your family's IFSP ends. This period, called the **Family Fee Effective Period**, is listed on your Early Intervention Family Fee Report.

Your maximum out-of-pocket expenses(also listed on your EI Family Fee Report) are calculated based on your Family Fee Effective Period. Level monthly fee amounts are charged at the beginning of your Family Fee Effective Period if one or more of your authorizations for services subject to fees starts on or before the 15th of the month. Level monthly payment amounts are charged at the end of your Family Fee Period if your IFSP ends on or after the 16th of the month.

What documentation will I need to provide in order to assess my family's fee?

You will be asked to provide your family's most recent Federal Income Tax form(s) in order to document gross annual income. If a recent Federal Income Tax form is not available, or if your most recent Federal Income Tax form does not accurately reflect your annual gross income, two recent consecutive check stubs may be used.

If your child is covered by Medicaid/KidCare or WIC, you will be asked to provide a copy of his/her current Medicaid/KidCare Recipient Card or WIC Identification Card. In addition, you will be asked to provide documentation of your annual gross income through one of the two methods listed above, if possible, or to make a written statement of your family's current annual gross income.

What if I have more than one child in EI?

One fee is assessed per family, even if more than one child is enrolled in the Early Intervention Program.

What if I can't afford my Family Fees?

You may request that your family fee be re-assessed at any time if your income or family size changes. You may also request exemption from fees if current medical expenses or other expenses due to disaster such as fire, flood or tornado exceed 15% of your gross annual income. Your service coordinator can help you with this.

You should request a re-assessment or exemption in writing. Changes to your family's fee may only be applied prospectively. This means that the portion of your fee that has accrued up to the time you request a re-assessment or exemption cannot be changed. Therefore, it is important that you notify your service coordinator as quickly as possible when a re-assessment or exemption is needed.

Family Fee Statements

If your family has been assessed a fee, you will receive a monthly invoice, like the one below, from the Early Intervention Central Billing Office (CBO).



**Early Intervention
Central Billing Office
P.O. Box 409168
Chicago, IL 60640**

Family Fee Invoice

Parent or Guardian of : TERRY TESTCASE
712 SOME DRIVE
SOMETOWN, IL 60002

EI Child's Name	TERRY TESTCASE			
960746	000960746/01	CB900283	July 2003	08/25/03
IFSP Period		Current Charges	Minimum Payment	Account Balance
05/01/03 – 04/30/04		100.00	53.00	100.00

SUMMARY OF ACCOUNT ACTIVITY	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>
Total Due From Last Statement	.00		
Charges This Month:	100.00		
Account Balance:	100.00		

MINIMUM PAYMENT CALCULATION

1. Total CBO services paid to date	53.00
2. Total payments to date:	200.00
3. Difference if line 2 is less than line 1:	.00
Minimum due:	.00
(lesser of line 3 or Account Balance)	

EI Child's Name	
TERRY TESTCASE	
Child's EI Number	960746
Account Number	000960746/01
Invoice number	CB900965
Date Due	08/25/03
Account Balance	200.00
Enter Amount Paid	

Family Fee Invoices are mailed during the first week of every month. Payments are due to the State on the date shown on the Invoice. Families with more than one child in EI should receive one Family Fee Invoice. If your family has more than one child in EI and is receiving more than one invoice, contact your service coordinator and notify him/her of the problem.

Understanding Your Family Fee Invoice

These definitions may help you understand your Family Fee Invoice. You may refer to the Sample Family Fee Invoice (see page 2) to see how these items are arranged on the Invoice.

Billing Month: The month for which your level monthly fee amount is being billed. For example, February's Invoice will be billing for January's level monthly fee amount.

Payment Due Date: The date that payment is due to the State.

IFSP Period: The IFSP period for the child whose fee account has been designated as primary.

Current Charges: The level monthly fee amount. This amount is calculated for your convenience in budgeting your family's fee.

Minimum Payment: The amount paid by the State during the IFSP period for the family's services subject to fees, minus the family payments to date or the Account Balance, whichever is less.

Account Balance: The level monthly fee amounts (Current Charges) that have accrued minus the family payments to date. The Account Balance tells you how much you could have to pay in fees if the State pays for an equal or greater amount of services subject to fees. **NOTE: You will not be required to pay more in fees than the State pays for your family's services subject to fees.**

Payment Options

What are my payment options?

You will be required to pay at least the Minimum Payment amount listed on your family's fee invoice. However, if your Current Charges (remember, that's your level payment plan amount) are more than your Minimum Payment amount, you have two payment options. You may:

1. Pay the Current Charges as indicated on your fee invoice (this is the recommended payment option because it is the only way to make sure that your monthly payment is never higher than the level payment amount); or
2. Pay the Minimum Payment amount as indicated on your fee invoice.

The Minimum Payment amount is based on how much the State has paid your EI service provider(s) for services subject to fees. This amount may vary by month because providers have up to 9 months to bill for EI services. This means that the State may not pay anything for your family's services subject to fees for several months and then – when your provider's claims start arriving – the State will begin making payments.

If you do not pay the Current Charges, and instead wait to pay until the State incurs some expense on behalf of your family, you may be required to pay an amount much higher than the level payment plan would have required. For this reason, families are usually encouraged to select the level payment plan by paying their Current Charges every month.

What if my insurance pays for some of all of my EI services?

Only EI services subject to fees that are paid for by the State are used to calculate the Minimum Payment amount. This means that you will not be charged for EI services subject to fees that are paid for by your private insurance. If you are certain that your private insurance is going to pay for ALL your EI services subject to fees, it may benefit you to select payment option #2 above.

Delinquency and Reconciliation

What happens if I miss some payments?

If a Minimum Payment amount becomes three or more months overdue, EI services subject to fees, including Assistive Technology devices, will be discontinued with written prior notice to you. Services not subject to fees may continue.

Nine months after the IFSP has ended (or earlier if possible), the State will verify that you have not paid more in fees than the State has paid for your services subject to fees. This is called *reconciliation*, or *reconciling* your account. If you have overpaid and one or more children remain in the EI Program, your account will be credited. If you do not have any other children in the EI Program, your overpayment will be refunded.

The State will not automatically refund an overpayment before your account is reconciled. You may request such a refund in writing. However, you will be required to obtain written documentation from your EI service provider(s) verifying that they have been paid in full and will not be billing the State for any other authorized EI services. Your written request and the written statements from each of your EI service providers must be submitted to **Susan Verardi, CQuest America, Inc., EI CBO, 225 South College Street, Suite 200, Springfield, IL 62704-1815.**

Understanding Your Rights

What if I don't agree with the fee assessment?

If you do not agree with the fee your family has been assessed, you have the right to dispute the assessment. The booklet titled, State of Illinois: Infant/Toddler and Family Rights Under IDEA for the Early Intervention System has information about filing an individual child complaint. Complaints must be submitted in writing to the Department of Human Services no more than 30 days after you receive your family's Early Intervention Family Fee Report that tells you your fee amount.

More Information

If you have questions about your fee statement, you may contact the Early Intervention Central Billing Office at 800/634-8540.

If your income and/or family size has changed and you wish to request a re-assessment of your family fee or you are experiencing excessive medical or disaster expenses and wish to request a fee exemption, you may contact your service coordinator.

If you would like more information about the Early Intervention Program, you may visit the DHS Early Intervention website at www.dhs.state.il.us/ei/ .