



State of New Jersey
Department of Human Services
Division of Medical Assistance & Health Services

NEWSLETTER

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TO: Physicians, Psychologists, Advanced Practice Nurses, Home Care Providers, and Managed Care Organizations (MCOs)– **For Action**

SUBJECT: Provision of Developmental, Individual Difference, Relationship-Based Model (DIR)

EFFECTIVE: July 1, 2020

PURPOSE: The Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services (DMAHS) has launched additional services to support families with children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). ASD is the name for a collection of neurodevelopmental disorders characterized by communication challenges, repetitive behaviors, and limited social skills. For the purposes of eligibility, these services are available to any NJ FamilyCare (NJFC) Medicaid eligible child, under the age of 21, who has been diagnosed with ASD, as defined by ICD-10 diagnosis codes F84.0 through F84.9, by a qualified healthcare provider.

BACKGROUND: States are required under the Federal government's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit to provide comprehensive service and furnish all medically necessary services needed to correct and ameliorate health conditions for NJFC Medicaid recipients under the age of twenty-one. To meet the needs of the NJFC Medicaid population, NJFC has expanded existing ASD services to offer a wider array of services designed to offer a combination of therapies, each targeting a different set of skills that will support a child's development. In addition to existing therapies, NJ FamilyCare shall now reimburse for Developmental, Individual Difference, Relationship-Based (DIR®) therapies.

ACTIONS: Effective July 1, 2020, DIR services shall be available to any NJFC Medicaid eligible individual under the age of 21. For individuals enrolled in a NJFC Medicaid managed care plan, the plan shall be responsible for providing all autism services through their managed care network contracted providers. For all individuals enrolled in NJFC Medicaid, but waiting to be enrolled with a MCO, the State shall be responsible for coverage of all medically necessary autism services through the NJFC Medicaid Fee-For-Service (FFS) program.

Claims for any DIR services billed to a MCO shall report the procedure codes identified in this Newsletter. For those providers who are already a MCO network provider, the provider need only seek authorization to provide and bill for these services from the child's

managed care plan. For providers not under contract with a managed care plan, the provider must request a “single case” provider agreement from the plan. This agreement will allow the provider to continue to provide these services and ensure continuity of care.

What is DIR?

DIR provides the foundational framework for understanding human development and the critical role of social-emotional development. This development begins at birth and continues throughout the remainder of the lifespan. It allows providers to understand how each person individually perceives and interacts with the environment that surrounds them. The key components are how emotional connections and established relationships contribute to the individual’s unique development and most importantly, how understanding how an individual interacts and develops their relationships can be used to promote healthy development and increased fulfillment of the child’s potential.

Determining the need for DIR services

The need for DIR services must be determined by a Qualified Healthcare Professional (QHP) capable of making a diagnosis of autism. ***QHPs include licensed health care professionals, who are qualified by education, training, or licensure/regulation (when applicable) to perform a professional service within his/her scope of practice.*** Once a child has a diagnosis of autism, a QHP must assess the child to determine the need for DIR therapy and to develop a treatment plan. It is not uncommon for one QHP to make the diagnosis (such as a physician) and a separate QHP to develop and supervise the treatment plan. In order for a QHP to complete a treatment plan based on a specific DIR service, the QHP must have specialized training and endorsements related to that service, including, but not limited to:

- DIRFloortime® Advanced Practitioner
- NJAIMH – Level II and IV Infant Mental Health Endorsed – Alliance for IMH
- Clinical, Developmental Models of Autism Intervention- DMAI
- Certificate of the Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health
- Early Start Denver Model (ESDM)
- Relationship Development Intervention (RDI)

Provision of DIR Services

Once an individual is properly diagnosed with ASD, the MCO shall authorize a QHP to assess the child for the development of a proposed treatment plan. Qualified individuals must be a NJFC Medicaid provider or work for a NJFC Medicaid provider. Providers must be licensed by New Jersey, certified by a nationally accredited credentialing body or by a recognized provider of continuing education. Licensed/credentialed disciplines include, but are not limited to, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), a licensed Occupational Therapist, a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT), a Licensed Associate Counselor (LAC), a Licensed Social Worker (LSW), a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC), a Masters Level or a Baccalaureate degree under the supervision of a licensed independent practitioner.

Examples of DIR specialties, qualifications and credentialing requirements are listed in the table below.

Provider Specialty	Qualifications	Credentialing Requirements
DIRFloortime® Advanced Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DIR 203: Coaching Caregivers, Teachers or Other Care Providers 	Interdisciplinary Council on Development and Learning (ICDL)
DIRFloortime® Expert Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DIR 204B Becoming an Expert DIRFloortime® Provider 	Interdisciplinary Council on Development and Learning (ICDL)
Developmental Models in Autism Intervention (DMAI) Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 15 Graduate Credits through the College of Education and Human Services, Department of Early Childhood, Elementary and Literacy Education 	Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health
Certified Autism Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Master’s degree ▪ Two years experience ▪ 14 CE hours ▪ Autism Competency Exam 	International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (<u>IBCCES</u>)
Early Start Denver Model	<p>May be the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychologist • Behavior specialist (BCBA) • Occupational therapist • Speech and language pathologist • Early intervention specialist • Developmental pediatrician <p>And requires</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attend a training workshop ▪ Submit video showing them using ESDM techniques in therapy sessions ▪ Demonstrate they can use these techniques correctly and reliably 	ESDM Certified

Level III Infant Mental Health Specialist Level IV Clinical Mentor	Multiple levels of degrees and certified individuals with training requirements and testing. Multiple years of experience required	NJ AIMH Endorsement
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DIR services shall be provided and billed using the following CPT procedure codes:

2020 Health Behavior Intervention Services	Description
96156EP	Health behavior assessment or re-assessment
96158EP (30 mins)	Health behavior intervention, initial 30 mins
96159EP (additional 15 mins)	Health behavior intervention, each additional 15 mins
96164EP (30 mins)	Health behavior intervention, initial 30 mins
96165EP (additional 15 mins)	Health behavior intervention, each additional 15 mins
96167EP (30 mins)	Health behavior intervention, family, initial 30 mins
96168EP (additional 15 mins)	Health behavior intervention, family, each additional 15 mins
96170EP (30 mins)	Health behavior intervention, initial 30 mins
96171EP (additional 15 mins)	Health behavior intervention, each additional 15 mins

DIR services shall be provided in 15 minute or 30 minute units by the allowable provider specialties only. EPSDT services are provided to meet individual medical necessity and do not allow for the denial of services based on preset limitations. The following limits are for guidance purposes only and must be overridden when medically necessary based on individual need.

Code	Unit Description	Suggested Daily Limits
96156EP	Per diem	1 unit
96158EP	30 minutes	1 unit
96159EP	15 minutes	30 units
96164EP	30 minutes	1 unit
96165EP	15 minutes	22 units
96167EP	30 minutes	1 unit
96168EP	15 minutes	14 units

96170EP	30 minutes	1 unit
96171EP	15 minutes	14 units

Service Provision

- **Code 96156EP** is to be used for billing for development of the initial assessment and development of a treatment plan as well as reassessment and progress reporting by the QHP. Allowable activities include face-to-face time with the patient and/or caregivers to conduct assessments as well as non-face-to-face time for reviewing records, scoring and interpreting assessments, and writing the treatment plan or progress report.
- **Codes 96158EP-96159EP** are billed for behavior treatment by protocol, administered by, or under the direction of, a QHPI, face-to-face with one patient.
- **Codes 96164EP-96165EP** are billed for group-led sessions, by or under the direction of a QHP, for a minimum of 2 individual patients to a maximum of 8 individual patients. Billing is made for each child in the group session.
- **Codes 96167EP–96168EP** are billed for guidance services provided by, or under the direction of, a QHP to a family with an autistic child with the child present. Family members/caretakers are taught to apply the same treatment protocols and interventions to reduce unwanted behaviors and reinforce appropriate behavior. The provider may bill for each set of parents/caregivers. In the event of two autistic children with the same parents/caregivers, you would only allow billing for the parents or caregivers once.
- **Codes 96170EP–96171EP** are billed for guidance services provided by, or under the direction of, a QHP to a family with an autistic child without the child present. Family members/caretakers are taught to apply the same treatment protocols and interventions to reduce unwanted behaviors and reinforce appropriate behavior. The provider may bill for each set of parents/caregivers. In the event of two autistic children with the same parents/caregivers, you would only allow billing for the parents or caregivers once.

Location of DIR Services

DIR services may be provided in the therapist’s office, a community setting or a child’s home.

NJFC Medicaid FFS rates: The following FFS rates were determined based on the hourly rate for a licensed psychologist certified to provide DIR. Other DIR certified professionals are eligible to contract with Medicaid managed care plans and shall be reimbursed based on educational level and training.

CPT Procedure Code*	NJFC Medicaid Maximum Fee Allowance
96156EP	\$200.00

96158EP	\$42.50
96159EP	\$21.25
96164EP	\$11.20
96165EP	\$5.60
96167EP	\$50.00
96168EP	\$25.00
96170EP	\$50.00
96171EP	\$25.00

Prior authorization

Effective July 1, 2020, providers are required to contact the child’s NJFC managed care plan to request authorization to provide DIR services. For children covered under the NJFC FFS program, no prior authorization is required for DIR services.

Provider enrollment

Those providers currently providing DIR services who wish to become a NJ Medicaid provider must complete the **DIR Provider Enrollment Application** which may be found on the www.njmmis.com website by selecting Provider Enrollment Application and Provider Type to download a copy of the application.

If there are any questions regarding coverage of DIR services, please contact the DMAHS Office of Customer Service at 609-631-4641 or, for questions regarding claims processing, the DXC Technology Provider Services Unit at 1-800-776-6334.

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