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**CHAPTER 47: EPSDT HEALTH AND IDEA, Part C – EarlySteps**

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**COVERED SERVICES****The Direct Service Model**

The direct service model consists of individual treatment provided to an eligible child and includes the following:

Tracking/monitoring consists of directly observing the eligible child, consulting with parents and IFSP team members, conducting any needed assessments, and interaction between the service provider and the eligible child.

Only direct observation and hands-on intervention is Medicaid billable as a service. Case colleague or system consultation cannot be billed as a service.

- Intervention of an indirect nature that does not directly involve the eligible child/family and service provider is not billable as a Medicaid health service.
- Medicaid reimburses only for direct patient contact services billed as units of time. With the exception of occupational therapy as required by the Occupational Therapy Practice Act, services provided through an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) do not require a physician's order for reimbursement. However, the services must be documented on the IFSP as the authorization for the service to be paid through the Medicaid Program.
- The procedures for all Medicaid-reimbursed evaluations and services, including codes, descriptions, and maximum reimbursements, are listed in Appendix A. The evaluation procedure may only be reimbursed once in a 180-day period by the same provider.

**Audiology Services**

Audiology services are for the identification of children with auditory impairment, using at risk criteria and appropriate audiologic screening, evaluation, and treatment techniques. These services include:

- Determination of the range, nature, and degree of hearing loss and communication functions, by use of audiological evaluation procedures in appropriate sound treated setting as necessary;
- Referral for medical and other services **necessary for the** rehabilitation of children with auditory impairment; and

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- Provision of auditory training, aural rehabilitation, speech reading and listening device orientation and training, and other services.

**Professional Requirements**

Audiology services must be provided by or under the direction of a qualified, licensed audiologist or a physician in Louisiana in accordance with the licensing standards of the Louisiana Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (LBESPA). A qualified audiologist is an individual with a Master's or Doctoral degree in audiology with a current Louisiana license from LBESPA.

Federal regulations also require that the audiologist have one of the following:

- A certificate of clinical competence from the American Speech, Language, and Hearing Association (ASHA);
- Completion of the equivalent educational **requirements** and work experience necessary for the certification; or
- Completion of the academic program and is acquiring supervised work experience to qualify for **the certificate**.

**Audiological Evaluation**

Audiological evaluation is the determination of the range, nature, and degree of a child's hearing loss and communication functions for modifying communicative behavior.

**Occupational Therapy Services**

Occupational therapy services address the functional needs of a child related to the performance of self-help skills, adaptive behavior, play and sensory, and motor and postural development. Occupational therapy services include:

- Identification, assessment, and intervention;
- Adaptation of the environment;
- Selection, design, and fabrication of assistive and orthotic devices to facilitate development and promote the acquisition of functional skills; and
- Prevention or reducing the impact of initial or future impairment, delays in development, or loss of functional ability.

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Medicaid reimburses only for direct, one-to-one patient contact services, billed as units of time, for both physical and occupational therapy.

**Professional Requirements**

Occupational therapy must be provided to a child by or under the direction of a qualified occupational therapist licensed in Louisiana to provide these services in accordance with the licensing standards of the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners. For additional information, refer to La. R.S. 37:2650 – R.S. 37:2666.

Services provided by an occupational therapy assistant certified by the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) who is licensed to assist in the practice of occupational therapy must be provided under the direction and supervision of an occupational therapist licensed in Louisiana. Supervision of assistants must be in accordance with the supervisory requirements of the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners.

Occupational therapy treatment services require a written referral or an initial and/or annually updated prescription by a physician licensed in Louisiana. An initial evaluation may be done without such a referral or prescription.

**Occupational Therapy Evaluation**

Occupational therapy evaluations determine the Medicaid-eligible child's level of functioning and competencies through professionally accepted techniques. Evaluations must include assessment of the functional abilities and deficits as related to the child's needs in the following areas:

- Muscle tone, movement patterns, reflexes, and fine motor/perceptual motor development;
- Daily living skills, including self-feeding, dressing, and toileting (Informal assessment tools may be used);
- Sensory integration;
- Prosthetic evaluation, when appropriate;
- Orthotic (splint) evaluation, when appropriate; and
- Need for positioning/seating equipment and other adaptive equipment.

All evaluation methods must be appropriate to the child's age, developmental level, cultural and ethnic background, medical status, and functional ability. The evaluation method may include observation, interview, record review, and the use of appropriate nationally approved evaluation

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techniques or tools.

Evaluation data must be analyzed and documented in summary form to document the child's status. The specific evaluation tools and methods used must also be documented.

The evaluation must be conducted by a licensed occupational therapist. An occupational therapy assistant may not perform an evaluation.

**Physical Therapy Services**

Physical Therapy Services are designed to improve the child's movement dysfunction. These services include:

- Screening and assessment of infants and toddlers to identify movement dysfunction;
- Obtaining, interpreting, and integrating information appropriate to program planning; and
- Services to prevent or alleviate movement dysfunction and related functional problems.

**Professional Requirements**

Physical therapy services must be provided by or under the direction of a qualified physical therapist in accordance with the state licensing standards of the Louisiana Physical Therapy Board. For additional information, refer to La. RS 37:2401 – R.S. 37:2424.

**Physical Therapy Evaluation**

Physical therapy (PT) evaluation includes testing of gross motor skills and orthotic and/or prosthetic, neuromuscular, musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, respiratory, and sensorimotor functions. These services must include the following:

- Muscle, manual, extremity, or trunk testing, with report;
- Total physical therapy evaluation;
- Range-of-motion measurements and report on each extremity excluding hand; and
- Range of motion measurements and report.

Information methods, including observation of behavior during the evaluation and supplemental testing, may be used.

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**Speech-Language Pathology Services**

Speech-language pathology services are for the identification of children with communicative or oropharyngeal disorders and delays in development of communication skills including diagnosis and appraisal of specific disorders and delays in those skills. These services include:

- Referral for medical or other professional services necessary for the rehabilitation of children with communication or oropharyngeal disorders and delays in development of communication skills; and
- Provision of services for the rehabilitation or prevention of communication or oropharyngeal disorders and delays in development of communication skills.

**Professional Requirements**

Speech pathology services must be provided by or under the direction of a licensed speech pathologist in accordance with the licensing standards of the Louisiana Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (LBESPA). For additional information, refer to La. R.S. 37:2650 – R.S. 37:2666.

Licensed speech-language pathology assistants may also provide services under the supervision of a certified licensed speech-language pathologist. Supervision of assistants must be in accordance with the supervisory requirements of the Louisiana Board of Examiners for Speech Language Pathology and Audiology.

**Speech/Language Evaluation**

A speech/language evaluation includes tests used to determine a child's ability to understand and use appropriate verbal communication, identify communication impairments, and assess:

- Speech Sound Production/Phonology and language;
- Voice and fluency;
- Oral structure; and
- Oral mechanism and functioning.

These services must include the following:

- Oral motor examination/consultation;
- Velopharyngeal examination/consultation;
- Child language consultation; and

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- Observations of feeding dysphagia, when appropriate.

**Speech/Language Therapy**

Speech/language therapy services include the provision of services for the prevention of or rehabilitation of communication, oral pharyngeal disorders, dysphagia disorders, and delays in development of communication. Speech, language, and hearing therapy include the following services, as appropriate and medically necessary:

- Speech/language or hearing therapy;
- Stuttering therapy;
- Speech reading/aural rehabilitation;
- Voice therapy;
- Feeding/dysphagia training; and
- Esophageal speech training therapy.

**Psychology Services**

Psychology services include administering psychological and developmental tests and other assessment procedures and providing psychological counseling for children and families, family counseling, consultation on child development, and family coaching. These services include:

- Planning and managing a program of psychological services;
- Psychological counseling
- Behavior management counseling and treatment

**Professional Requirements**

Psychology services must be provided by a psychologist possessing a Doctorate in Psychology and valid licensure by the State Board of Examiners of Psychologists.

**Psychological Evaluation**

Psychological evaluation includes the following:

- Administering psychological and developmental tests and other assessment procedures;
- Interpreting assessment results; and
- Obtaining, integrating, and interpreting information about child behavior and child and

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family conditions related to learning, mental health, and development.

**Other EPSDT Covered Services**

Medicaid covers all medically necessary diagnosis and treatment services in addition to EPSDT Health Services for Children with Disabilities for recipients under age 21. The Louisiana Medicaid Program may require determination of medical necessity of the services.

**Durable Medical Equipment**

Medicaid-covered services include purchase of medical supplies or rental/purchase of durable medical equipment (DME) and appliances for children with disabilities. These services are only covered if authorized in advance by the Prior Authorization Unit (PAU) at the fiscal intermediary. A licensed physician must recommend the item in writing. Equipment must be medically necessary and not a convenience item. Equipment cannot be investigational or experimental. A Medicaid-enrolled vendor must make the request for payment of the item. The request is submitted to the PAU at the fiscal intermediary on a form PA-01 with appropriate medical documentation attached. The request must be acted upon within 25 calendar days for a non-emergent request or the item is automatically approved.

The DME Provider Manual chapter contains detailed information on items covered, requirements for approval, and request procedures. This manual chapter can be found at:

<https://www.lamedicaid.com/provweb1/providermanuals/manuals/DME/DME.pdf>