

**New York State Department of Health
Bureau of Early Intervention (BEI) Electronic Mailing List
Vision Services in the Early Intervention Program**

10/20/2026

Dear Colleague:

In June 2026, the New York State Department of Health Bureau of Early Intervention (Department) announced the release of four documents related to the use of qualified personnel in the Early Intervention Program. The intention of this communication is to provide slight revisions and clarifications to these documents, specifically related to vision services in the Early Intervention Program.

While historically, Teachers of the Blind and Partially Sighted, Teachers of the Blind and Visually Handicapped, and Teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired, have been allowed to provide and be assigned “vision services” as a specific service type, this does not align with our Early Intervention Program Medicaid State Plan Amendment (SPA). The SPA is specifically written to address medical vision needs provided by low vision therapists, orientation and mobility specialists, vision rehabilitation therapists, physicians, and optometrists, all requiring a script or written order for vision services.

Starting April 1, 2027, Teachers of the Blind and Partially Sighted, Teachers of the Blind and Visually Handicapped, and Teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired will no longer be able to be authorized or bill for “vision services” as a specific service type. Service authorizations must align the service type and teacher profession by authorizing “special instruction” services with vision listed as the methodology or technique.

To effectively transition active service authorizations, effective immediately, all newly created initial Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) utilizing these specific teacher certifications, should authorize special instruction services with vision as a methodology. For existing IFSPs with “vision services” authorized and delivered by a teacher, at the child’s next IFSP review or IFSP annual meeting, whichever comes first, the service authorization should be updated to reflect special instruction services with vision as a methodology. The teacher who is working with the child does not need to change! The service type authorized simply needs to be corrected to align with this guidance.

The Department does not recommend providers complete an IFSP Amendment to make these corrections. Providers are strongly encouraged to begin making this correction at regularly scheduled IFSP reviews and annual IFSP meetings currently taking place, thus making the process easier, and avoiding the need for IFSP Amendments later. Billing for dates of service April 1, 2027, and beyond authorized inaccurately, will result in billing challenges. If service authorizations are not updated

prior to April 1, 2027, to align with this requirement, an IFSP Amendment will be required.

The Qualified Personnel Matrix (QP Matrix) document has been updated to reflect this change and is located on our website. Please see attached QP Matrix for revisions.

Questions regarding this communication may be sent by email to the Bureau of Early Intervention Provider Unit at Provider@health.ny.gov.