Pennsylvania Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Support Rate Study

PA Early Intervention (EI) Rate Study

Time Study FAQs

2/5/2024

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TIME STUDY PROCESS

1. What is the time study?

A time study measures the amount of time spent performing direct service and administrative activities. For this time study, participants will record 10 scheduled working days within a six-week time period.

2. Why are we doing a time study?

The time study will allow PCG and BEISFS to allocate costs based on service activities performed by practitioners and capture necessary administrative services that can be included in rate calculations.

3. Who should participate in the time study?

All practitioners who provide service coordination and direct early intervention services, including salaried staff and independent contractors working for multiple agencies.

4. I perform two roles at my early intervention provider agency; I am a secretary, and I also am an interpreter. Do I have to participate in this time study?

Yes, if you wear "two hats" and one provides direct service, you'd participate as an interpreter but not as a secretary, because that role is administrative. Only those who provide direct service need to complete the Time Study Tool. We will be capturing the amount of time spent by admin/support/leadership staff through the Personnel Rosters. If you have someone who serves both admin/support/leadership AND direct service roles, that person should complete the tool for the time they spend in their direct service role.

5. Does the time study also apply to Temp or on Call Employees?

Yes, all staff and contractors who provide direct early intervention services and evaluations, and service coordination, should participate in the time study.

6. Where can I find the Time Study Materials?

Here is a link to the PA BEISFS Rate Study website: www.paeiratestudy.weebly.com

The website houses all the resource materials for the time study. Click on the Time Study tab to access the Time Study Resources:

- Time Study Tool Training PowerPoint (PDF)
- Time Study Instructions,
- Time Study FAQs (PDF
- Time Study Tool (Excel)

Click on the Training Recording tab to access the Time Study recordings.

7. When is the Time Study Period?

The six-week period between Monday, February 5, 2024 – Friday, March 15, 2024.

8. How many days during the time study period should I record my time?

Ten (10) consecutive scheduled working days in the six-week period between February 5 – March 15. The specific days for which you record your time will depend on your normal schedule.

- Schedule A: you work a traditional Monday-Friday work week. If you have this type of schedule, please pick two back-to-back sets of weekdays to record your time (total of 10 days).
- Schedule B: you only work Tuesday/Thursday. If you have this type of schedule, please record five weeks of the Tues/Thurs you work during the data collection period.

9. What should I do if I am on PTO/vacation during the middle week of the time study period and therefore am not working 10 consecutive days during the time study?

If you are on vacation in the middle week of the data collection period, you should record your work time the first week before you leave and then the third week once you are back. You will be submitting 2 weeks of time study data over a 3 week period.

10. What should I do if I only work for an agency one or two days a week?

Please fill out the time study for the days you DO work for the agency. In this example, it might only be 3 or 6 days completed over the 6 week time study period.

11. What if I take time off (a day, a week) during the time study?

Please avoid full days that you were on PTO (Paid Time Off) and complete the time study tool for 10 days that you did work.

12. How long will it take to record my time?

It should take you an average of 10-15 minutes over the day or at the end of the day (if you have completed on paper throughout the day) to enter their day's activities into the Time Study Tool. If it's taking more than 30 minutes, please pause and consider if you are adding too much detail, Overall, this amounts to about 2.5 hours over the course of 10 working days, though some may be faster or slower.

13. I work for multiple agencies, should I fill out more than one Time Study Tool?

Provided you have cases with each of the agencies, please complete a separate tool for the time you work to support and provide services for each agency during the time study period. However, you will only record 10 working days over the six-week period across both agencies. (You will have less than 10 days per agency but 10 days total)

We will be tying them together during the analysis, so please make sure to use the same name/spelling in each tool.

14. I often write reports, enter documentation, and offer make up sessions on my days off. Should I record that time in the Time Study Tool?

Yes, please complete the time you are working on any day (up to the 10 days) even if a day you do not typically work if you are being compensated for that work.

15. Should new employees who are onboarding during the time study complete the Time Study Tool?

No, only practitioners currently providing and supporting direct services should participate.

16. How do I log into the Time Study Office Hours sessions?

Time Study Office Hours are listed below. Click on the link embedded in the date to attend one or more of the Office Hours.

- Tuesday, February 6, 2024, from 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM EST
- Tuesday, February 13, 2024, from 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM EST
- Wednesday, February 21, 2024, from 2:30 PM – 3:30 PM EST
- Tuesday, February 27, 2024, from 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM EST
- Wednesday, March 6, 2024, from 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM EST
- Wednesday, March 13, 2024, from 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM EST

23. Will the time study tool work in anything other than Microsoft Excel?

The tool will also work in Google Sheets (free, web-based, compatible with Chromebooks) and Apple Numbers, though the formatting is best in Microsoft Excel.

Google Sheets will work to open Excel files and is web-based so you do not need to download anything. You will need a Google account if you do not already have one.

How to Create a Google Account: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2FQq6-Rt1cE

How to Open a Microsoft Excel XLSX in Google Sheets:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZIoe3kWX4ok

The time study must be saved back as an Excel document prior to submission

24. Can I print the Time Study Tool?

We recommend printing the Time Study Excel version so you can reference the lists of choices in the drop-down menus and to jot down notes throughout the day. Keep in mind you'll still need to enter your notes into the electronic Excel version before submission.

25. The tool is saying it's Read-Only and that I need a password to enter information. Where do I enter this?

If you have not already done so, you will need to save your own copy of the tool to your desktop or cloud files to make it editable/no longer Read-Only. Once you've done that, you do not need a password to complete the tool. However, if you attempt to change the worksheet structure or a cell that has a protected formula in it, you will receive an error message "The cell or chart you're trying to change is on a protected sheet. To make a change, unprotect the sheet. You might be requested to enter a password." **Please make sure you are attempting to enter data in a cell that allows data entry**. The cells with color filled in them are generally locked for editing.

26. Why is the tool not letting me enter my name at the top of the daily tabs?

If you complete the Cover tab, the Agency name, Program Name (if different), Participant Name, and Primary Role will automatically populate onto each of the date tabs. You do not need to enter it on the daily tabs.

27. What is the difference between the different employee relationship types on the cover page (Rows 67-71)?

Relationship With Agency	Description
Full-Time Salaried Employee	Salaried employee who is eligible for benefits and works a full-time schedule for an agency and receives a W-2.
Part Time Salaried Employee	Salaried employee who is eligible for benefits and works a part-time schedule for an agency; receives W-2
Part-Time Employee	Employee who is paid hourly, works part-time schedule for an agency, and receives a W-2
Hourly or Per Diem Employee	Employee that is paid for the work that they do, usually on an as needed basis.
Independent Contractor/ Subcontractor	Subcontractor who receives a 1099 tax form

28. How should I calculate the number of hours for the Cover Page if I work a different number of hours each week?

If you work a different number of hours for your agency each week, please give your best estimate of the average number of billable hours per week.

29. What are some examples of EI experience? Do we count personal experience with EI or just professional? Should I count time I spent working in EI in another state?

In this case, please limit it to professional experience, though of course personal experience informs your work.

Yes, please count your experience from the other state.

30. Does every hour of each day need to be documented in the Time Study Tool?

No, the activities recorded each day do not have to and often will not add up to a full workday. We understand the flexible nature of this work and that providers do not always work with the BEISFS program exclusively. You should record the activity for any part of the day you are compensated.

31. How do we document our time when we are multi-tasking?

There are two ways you can do this. Either determine the main activity you are doing during that time and record the total time as that activity or, if the two tasks really were divided evenly, please split the time you were multi-tasking between the two activities. If you were eating lunch while you were driving to another session, though, please record that as travel to a session, not lunch.

32. Do I need to list the county in which my agency is based, or should I list the two counties in which I work?

On the cover page, you will select multiple counties in which you work/ serve clients. I the daily tabs please list the county where that activity occurred.

33. How do we identify the county for travel time if we are traveling through multiple counties?

You will only need to indicate the county where the direct EI service takes place, not where the indirect activities take place.

34. What is the difference between a Direct and an Indirect Service (early intervention tool)?

Direct Service is time spent with the child/family, either in person or virtually, and other billable EI activities. Indirect services are all the other activities (not-billable) you must complete to adequately serve children and families.

35. If the provider delivers the service via TELE-INTERVENTION (Location), do we list the county where the family lives or the county where the provider is located.

For a Tele-Intervention please record the county in which the family is located.

36. If the provider meets with the IFSP team (Service Type) via Tele-Intervention (location), what county should be listed for the County Where the Service was Provided (Column O)?

When participating in a virtual IFSP meeting or other IFSP Teaming, participants should list the county in which the family is located for County Where the Service was Provided

37. Should we have someone to record time in the time study tool if they are in training

The new staff / contractor should only enter time is they a assigned a caseload and are providing services (early intervention, evaluations, service coordination).

38. Should participants who are attending full-day training course during the time study period count those days towards the 10 consecutive working days we're being asked to track?

If training days or Paid Time Off occur during the time study period please skip these days and enter time for a more typical work day.

39. If my first activity of the day is a visit, would traveling from my home to the visit be considered commute or travel time?

Yes travel time from a home office to visit a family should be recorded – however travel time to you organization's office is consider commute time should not be recorded as travel time.

40. Do we document the time we spend working after finishing visits for the day?

Yes, if after you finish visits, you spend time emailing families and other staff, writing reports, invoicing, etc., then you should log each of those activities as Indirect/ Not Billable/ Other Activities and mark the start and end time of each one.

41. Do supervisors complete the Time Study Tool?

Participants who only provide supervisory or administrative functions do not complete the Time Study tool. However, those who provide direct service activities as well as supervisory or administrative functions will be asked to complete a Time Study Tool.

42. Sometimes a session runs over because a parent has further questions than what we can cover in the 60 minutes. Will I be penalized for recording more than the 60 billable minutes?

If the service runs over 60 minutes but is still EI, then enter in the time study as such. But, if it is coordination/scheduling that is Indirect/Other Activities, please enter that time as an indirect activity.

43. How do I record a missed or cancelled session from a family due to illness, or another reason?

If it was a No Show/Missed Session because the family was not home or did not show up for their visit please first choose "Indirect/ Other Admin Activity" and choose "No Show/Missed Session - Client/Family" for any time you were waiting. If you were able to conduct other indirect / admin activity e.g. texting / emailing of families, documentation then please record the activity you conducted.

If it was a cancellation ahead of time, please record the time you spent communicating about the cancelled session by first choosing "Indirect/ Other Admin Activity". Then choose "No Show Missed Session-Client/Family"

44. How do I record a cancellation when I fill the cancelled slot with another family for that very same time?

There are three different actions to the scenario below:

Family A cancelled day-of, via text, at 9am for a 1pm session. The practitioner confirms the cancellation with **Family A** (takes five minutes, discussion over at 9:05) and then scrambles to slot in **Family B** for 1pm that day. At 1pm, the practitioner delivers the direct service to **Family B**.

- When the cancellation *actually* took place with **Family A**, at 9am, you'd record the time you spent communicating about the cancelled session by first choosing "Indirect/ Other Admin Activity" in **Column K**. Then choose "Cancellation - Client/Family" in **Column T**. Be sure to enter the time you began and the time you ended the communication in columns B-H as well. You can put a short note about the reason for the cancellation in the Comments/Notes field (**Column V**).
- When the scheduling/rescheduling **Family B** took place, from 9:05-9:20am, you'd record the time you spent communicating about this with the **Family B** by first choosing "Indirect/ Other Admin Activity" in **Column K**. Then choose "Schedule/Reschedule Session" in **Column T**.
- From 1pm to 2pm you'd record the direct service that took place for **Family B**. You can note that it was a rescheduled session in the notes/comments fields if you want to provide that extra detail, but you've already captured the cancellation and subsequent rescheduling time in the previous two entries.

45. How do I record the time I spend waiting for a family to show up for a session? What about the time spent waiting for them to log onto Zoom?

Please record the time spent purely waiting (no opportunity to complete another activity) as an Indirect/Other Activity under the task called "Other Admin. Activity" in **Column T**.

46. How do we document bi-lingual administrative (Indirect) activities?

Please denote bi-lingual/non-English administrative (Indirect) activities, such as when interpretation and translation is used, document as "Providing Interpretation" (**Column T**).

47. How do I record the time spent filling out the Time Study Tool?

Please mark the time you spend filling out the time study tool as “Time Study” in **Column T** under the Indirect/Other Activities section.

48. How can I log a staff meeting?

- If it was a team meeting regarding a direct service, please choose the type of direct service it was for in Column M and then choose the Method "IFSP Teaming" in **Column P**.
- If it was a staff meeting where you were going over a new agency policy, it’s the Indirect task “Staff Meeting” in **Column T**.
- If it was collaborating with teammates where you were working on something not specific to any one client/family (e.g., planning an upcoming event that all your families will partake in), it’s the Indirect task “Staff Meeting” in **Column T**.

49. How do I record the time traveling between sessions?

Please record the time you spent travelling to/from a session by first choosing “Indirect/ Other Admin Activity” in **Column K**. Then choose “Travel to/from Sessions” in **Column T**.

50. I’m an independent contractor, and I see kids from 2-3 different agencies in a day. How should I log my travel time between sessions if it involves clients from two different agencies?

Please spread out the travel across agencies as best you can. If you start from the office and go to see Kid 1 from Agency 1, and then go directly to Kid 2 from Agency 2 and then back to the office, split the travel time between agencies.

51. I see some children multiple times a week. Should I submit all the time that I work with each child or just summarize it to just one total time?

Please enter all the time that you work with each children the day and time it occurs over the course of multiple days, not as a lumped sum at the end of a week.

52. I often contact families via text message to schedule and confirm appointments. These text threads often run on throughout the day. How would I log time for these contacts? Should I use the start and end time of each text message?

Logging the start and end of each text would be the most accurate way of recording that conversation, but in lieu of that, adding the cumulative time you spent texting a family to the end of the day will suffice.

53. How do I show I’ve provided a Remote EI session versus an in-person session?

In Column N, “Location,” on the daily tabs, there is an option to select “Tele-Intervention” please use this to show a virtual session.

54. If I provide individual developmental instruction via Remote EI, how do I record it within the Time Study Tool?

Tele-Intervention will be captured as a LOCATION so you can indicate “Tele-Intervention” in **Column N** on the daily tab.

55. Should we be rounding times to the nearest 5 minutes or recording precise times (e.g., 9:03-9:30 a.m.)?

The more accurate the times are the better, but it’s OK to round slightly to the 5 minute if that’s easier for you.

56. What should we do if we are not sure we coded an activity correctly?

Please document the activity based on how you think it should be recorded and leave a comment or question in the Comments/Notes field (**Column V**).

57. There always needs to be a service coordinator at the MDE (initial and annual evals). Should therapists then always code co-treatment?

No, this is not listed as co-treatment or joint in the Time Study Tool as cotreatment is for ongoing EI services not evaluations.

58. Would paperwork for a 3,6,9 month monitor just be indicated under "other?"

This would be considered IFSP Team Collaboration unless an IFSP Revision occurred, in which case it would be IFSP teaming as a direct service.

59. We completed the Cost Report and Personnel Report on FY 22-23, is a contractor that started in FY 23 supposed to complete the Time Study?

The Time Study Tool is for all staff and contractors who will be providing EI services, evaluations, or service coordination between February 5, 2024, and March 15, 2024 and is not connected to the personnel roster.

60. Please explain the “multi-sibling” drop down? We only typically see one child at a time.

The Multi-Sibling Drop down is used when a provider sees two or more children in a session at the same time. This does not apply if you are seeing two or more children but at separate times.

61. Can you explain the “Joint/Co visit”?

A joint/co-visit is one where two or more EI providers are serving the child and family simultaneously. This does not apply to multidisciplinary evaluations.