

# Smart Choice Therapy Inc

Preschool Special Education & Multidisciplinary Evaluation Program

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## SEIT HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to guide SEIT providers with regards to the policies and procedures to be followed by Smart Choice Therapy Inc. We base our practices on New York State Education Laws and Regulations and encourage our therapists to refer to the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education which are available at:

<http://p1232.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/lawsandregs/>.

Providers of SEIT services can register online to receive notifications of new publications and updates pertaining to educational programs for preschool students with disabilities using the following link: <http://p1232.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/register.htm>.

SEIT services are provided on a fee-for-service basis. SEIT providers are responsible to keep their license valid and to complete professional development as required by NYSED.

All forms mentioned in the Handbook may be found on Smart Choice Therapy Inc website at [www.smartchoicetherapyinc.com](http://www.smartchoicetherapyinc.com).

## SEIT Case Assignment/Receipt Procedure

- The SEIT will receive the student's IEP either in person or by an email.
- The SEIT will review the student's Evaluation Summary, IEP Present Levels of Performance, Goals and Related Service Mandate and note child's DOB, frequency and duration of sessions, direct/indirect service, medical alerts and location of service. **SEIT service must be scheduled in accordance with the student's IEP.**
- The SEIT can start services on any day of the week.
- The SEIT will contact the parent/guardian within 24 hours of case assignment to discuss the schedule and IEP Goals.
- The SEIT will submit **First Attend Date Form, Provider Schedule, Emergency Home Contact Form and Parent Introduction Letter** to the SEIT Supervisor/Program Director with their first billing. **The First Attend Form must include the exact location of service provision (i.e., name and address of Day Care Center).**
- Once the SEIT signs First Attend Date Form, he/she is agreeing to service the child for the entire school year.
- The SEIT must submit to the agency by fax or email copies of Consent to Release Information, FERPA Letter to Parent and Emergency Contact Information forms, signed by the parent/guardian, within 3 business days from the start of services and send the originals with the first monthly billing thereafter (keeping a copy of Emergency Contact Information form for his/her records). Updated Emergency Contact Information form should be obtained at the beginning of each school year.
- **The schedule must be followed on a daily basis and should not change frequently.** All schedule changes should be previously discussed and agreed upon with the parent/caregiver. In case of a change in schedule, the SEIT will immediately notify the agency and submit a copy of the new schedule to SEIT Supervisor/Program Director.
- The SEIT shall maintain accurate records to document direct and/or indirect service hours. **If indirect service is mandated on the IEP, the SEIT will document these sessions on a separate session note and will be paid accordingly.**
- The SEIT is the case coordinator and is required to communicate with related service providers on an ongoing basis. Smart Choice Therapy will collect data on SEIT's communication with related service providers as part of quarterly reports.

- On the last day of services, the SEIT fills out the Last Day Attend form and submits the original with the last billing.

## Location of Services

- Location of services should be mirrored from the child's IEP. If a need arises to change the location of services (i.e., the parent removed child from daycare, and IEP specifies location of service as daycare), **the SEIT must notify the agency**. The agency will then correspond with the CPSE administrator to make the necessary amendment to the IEP.
- If the daycare/school is closed for any reason on a working school day (i.e., private school holidays, etc.), the SEIT should make prior arrangements with the agency to contact the CPSE administrator to obtain an oral approval to see the child at any other location for the corresponding period of time.

## Attendance and Absences

SEIT services must be provided between 8:00 am and 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

Student attendance should be recorded daily on the **Attendance Calendar** using the following codes:

- If the session is conducted, indicate the number of **full hour** sessions held (i.e., 2, 2.5).
- The SEIT should fill out all full hour sessions held for the month and calculate the total number of hours; then make a **copy** of the Attendance Calendar, **sign it** and submit with the monthly paperwork. The original Attendance Calendar should be held by the SEIT till the end of the school year and submitted with the June paperwork.
- **If the student is legally absent or late for services, indicate "A" on the Attendance Calendar.** Legal absences as per Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Section 175.6 include: illness, death in the family, impassable roads or weather, required court appearances, religious observance, vacation, attendance at health clinics. For any of the above, **the legal excuse should be indicated on the daily session note and written documentation should be obtained from the parent and submitted with monthly billing.**

- If a student is absent due to illness, SEIT must indicate the reason on the session note and include form of contact with parent (i.e., No session provided - child sick, spoke to parent by telephone at 8:00 am). If the student is sick for three (3) or more consecutive days, written documentation should be obtained from the parent.
- If the teacher is absent from the session, indicate “P” on the Attendance Calendar and include an explanation on a session note.
- If a student misses five (5) consecutive sessions, the SEIT should complete the **Absence Notification Form** indicating the dates and reason for the absence (if known) and immediately submit it to the SEIT Supervisor/Program Director. If reason is not known, SEIT should indicate outreach attempts to parent.
- If a child is habitually missing sessions, the SEIT should immediately notify the agency. The district may choose to reconvene the CPSE to consider amending the child’s services. The SEIT Supervisor/Program Director will reach out to family and CPSE in accordance with RDNA Guidelines.
- In case the SEIT is not able to provide services (i.e., vacation or illness), the agency must be notified in advance or as soon as possible to arrange a substitute teacher.

## Make-Up Sessions

- Make-up sessions cannot be performed prior to the missed sessions.
- If SEIT continues with a student, missed sessions and hence, make-up sessions cannot be recorded prior to the first attendance session during any semester.
- Make-ups sessions have to be provided within any given semester and cannot be rolled over to the next semester.
- All teacher and student absences must be made up as close in proximity to the missed session as possible (preferably not to exceed 30 days or by the end of school year) if extenuating circumstances exist and no substitute was available to conduct the session.
- Make-up sessions must be performed during the student’s two-month or ten-month period of authorization and enrollment.
- Each make-up session should be documented as such in the session notes signed by the parent or caregiver.

- The make-up session may be done on a day the child will be receiving regular SEIT service. However, make-up sessions should be scheduled within the timeframe of a typical school day. The total hours of services per one day should not exceed 5 hours.
- All make-up sessions must be provided to students at the same location as required on the IEP unless agreed upon, in writing, by the parent and CPSE.

## Calendar

Each SEIT provider will receive a copy of Calendar.

Services may not be scheduled or made up on weekends or legal holidays.

No services may be provided on the following legal holidays:

<i>New Year's Day</i>	<i>Martin Luther King Birthday</i>	<i>Presidents' Day</i>
<i>Memorial Day</i>	<i>Independence Day</i>	<i>Indigenous Peoples' Day</i>
<i>Veterans' Day</i>	<i>Thanksgiving Day</i>	<i>Christmas Day</i>

Additional holidays will be observed in accordance with the agency's policy (as indicated in the Calendar).

If the school district closes due to inclement weather conditions or other emergency, the SEIT should verify the agency's policy on whether to provide services that day or to schedule a make-up session.

## Session Notes

- Sessions must be provided in 30 minute increments.
- The SEIT should **submit session notes and related paperwork on the 3rd of the following month.**
- Following each session, the SEIT should complete a corresponding session note.
- Session notes must be written in black/blue ink. White out is not permitted. Crossing outs are not recommended; however, if that is necessary, the SEIT may cross out on text content and initial. The SEIT may not cross out on dates and time of your session.
- There should be no lapse in dates on the session notes.
- Sessions cannot be combined to fewer days unless approval is granted by CPSE.

- The **Start time** and **End time** must be written specifically as the time of arrival and end of service session. AM or PM must be indicated on the daily session note.
- The session note should include at least 2 IEP goals taken exactly from the child's IEP. The SEIT should include all tangible activities used within the session to work on these goals and provide the student's response, level of facilitations, and progress.
- **Session notes must NOT be completed during the session.** The entire session period should be allocated to servicing the child.
- If the session ends early due to parent's requests or a significant child concern, not less than 23 minutes or more of the session are considered billable.
- Once the session note for each session is completed, the parent/caregiver must sign and date the note on the lines provided. Parents/caregivers must be reminded not to sign blank session notes (not indicating date and time of service).
- The SEIT's signature must be included and his/her credentials indicated (MSED).
- **SEIT Service Form must be completed and signed weekly for each child. At least 4 of these forms must be submitted with billing every month.**
- Any material misrepresentation of date, time or extent of services may result in criminal actions.

## Reports

### Quarterly Progress Reports

The SEIT is responsible for writing quarterly progress reports for each of his/her students.

Quarterly reports are completed every 3 months and submitted to the SEIT Supervisor/Program Director using the Quarterly Progress Report forms with SEIT's November, February, May, and August billing (for 12-month cases), on the 3rd of the following month.

The SEIT must review the Quarterly report with the parents and provide them with a copy of this report.

The report should reflect the following:

- Current functioning level of the child
- IEP goals
- Progress the child has made toward achieving the goals

- Target for meeting the goals by the end of the IEP
- Information related to continued eligibility of the child including formal and/or informal testing
- An indication if a new CPSE review needs to be scheduled to change the IEP

## **Annual Progress Reports**

A student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is reviewed at least once each year. Summer is part of the following school year.

The SEIT is responsible for writing the Annual report using the Annual Progress Report form. **The Annual report is due and must be submitted to the SEIT Supervisor/Program Director two months before the end of the child's IEP period.**

Each Annual report will contain progress and deficit comments related to the individual student's IEP goals covering each of the five domain areas:

1. Cognitive
2. Social-Emotional
3. Physical
4. Language and Communication
5. Adaptive

The following will also be included in the report:

1. Summary
2. Suggested modifications to the frequency and duration of services, if any

New IEP goals must be submitted with Annual Progress Reports.

**SEIT must coordinate the timely submission of Annual Reports and IEP pages from Related Service providers.**

## **Age Out (Turning 5) Report**

Age Out reports for aging out students are due and must be submitted to the SEIT Supervisor/Program Director by **January 3<sup>rd</sup> (with December billing).**

Each Age Out Report will contain progress and deficit comments related to the individual student's IEP goals covering each of the five domain areas:

1. Cognitive
2. Social-Emotional
3. Physical
4. Language and Communication
5. Adaptive

The following will also be included in the report:

1. Summary
2. Recommendations for the following school year

## **Billing**

The following documents **MUST be submitted by the 3rd** of the following month of services.

If the 3rd falls on a weekend, paperwork **MUST** be submitted by Monday right after the 3rd.

- Session Notes are to be submitted electronically.
- Original SEIT Invoice, completed in its entirety and signed.
- Original Provider Schedule (if changed from last month).
- A copy of Attendance Calendar. (Final completed original calendar will be due with the end of the school year/summer semester billing).
- At least 4 original SEIT Service forms, one for every week of the month, with physical signatures and dates.

**LATENESS POLICY: Overdue billing will result in late processing of payment.**

- If the SEIT's billing is submitted within a month after the deadline, he/she will be compensated a month later. If billing is submitted 2 months after the deadline, the SEIT will be compensated 2 months later, and so forth.
- If the SEIT is habitually submitting late billing, the case might be reassigned.

## **Supervision**



Individual SEIT observations are conducted at least once a year. SEIT Supervisor will observe SEIT's session and check paperwork. Observations might be done in announced and/or unexpected manner, according to the schedule submitted to the agency. SEIT Supervisor will assist the SEIT in following learning standards, creating individual curriculum, completing paperwork and other areas if needed. The SEIT can request extra observations, if necessary.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, if necessary, in-person observations can be replaced by obtaining periodic feedback from caregivers at home and/or programs (by phone, emails, etc.). Verbal interviews can be conducted by designated staff at least once a year; feedback forms to be filled out and placed in students' files.

## **Service Delivery**

All services are to be provided in person; in case the child's IEP stipulates remote services, SEIT can proceed. If the parents require remote services, they should reach out to the district in order to obtain an approval in writing.

### **SEIT Services - Given in the Mainstream Classroom**

The goal of SEIT services is to enable the child to function and learn within a typical preschool classroom, therefore SEIT services are usually provided in the regular classroom setting. SEIT providers should work in the classroom to facilitate the child's participation in ongoing activities and to encourage the child's engagement with the provided materials and props. Occasionally, circumstances require for the SEIT to work with a child on a "pull-out" basis, outside of the routine of the class. Such circumstances could include: scheduling difficulties, IEP goals that cannot be addressed during the class routine, or a lack of appropriate materials. In such cases, teachers should spend part of their assigned time working with a child in a quiet corner of the room or somewhere nearby (hallway, cubby area, etc.), using their own materials. The SEIT provider must be flexible and adapt the plan for the day to what is going on in the typical classroom (trips, special events, birthday parties, etc.).

### **SEIT Services – Given in the Home**

Sometimes SEIT services are provided in the child's home, as indicated in the IEP. The SEIT needs to provide suitable materials, toys, and activities to the child to work on the IEP goals and objectives. The SEIT should consider working with toys or materials from the child's home in  
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order to teach students how to use their own toys appropriately. The SEIT should closely work with the student's parents/guardians to provide necessary feedback and carryover.

SEIT providers are responsible for reporting any situations of concern in the student's home to the SEIT Supervisor/Program Director immediately. In some cases reporting a situation to ACS may be necessary. SEIT providers should be aware of unsafe conditions in the home, e.g., uncovered outlets, peeling paint, windows without screens, lack of supervision, etc.

### **SEIT Services - Indirect**

Indirect Services include consultation to the child's regular classroom teacher to adjust the environment and/or modify methodology, materials, etc. in order to meet the needs of the student. **Indirect Services are not billable, unless they are mandated by the IEP.** Should the student's IEP mandate Indirect Services, the SEIT will be filling out **Indirect SEIT Session Note** for every session provided.

### **CPSE/CSE Meetings**

#### **Preparation for IEP meetings/Annual Reviews**

SEIT providers must keep track of annual review dates for each student. Annual Review is scheduled one (1) year from the date of the "original/initial" IEP. The SEIT is responsible for informing Related Service providers of the due dates of Annual Progress reports and updated IEP pages, **ten (10) weeks prior to IEP date.** Annual reports and IEP pages should be gathered and submitted at least 8 weeks before the due date.

SEITs are mandated to attend all CPSE and CSE meetings. These meetings and preparation time for them are not billable.

#### **Other reasons for IEP meeting**

Additional meetings may be conducted upon submission of a Request to Amend IEP, at the parent's/caregiver's request or as deemed necessary. SEIT can request to amend frequency of services, request termination of services, additional evaluations or extending to 12-month program. Request to amend IEP should not be submitted until after providing at least 3 month of services to the student. The SEIT should consult SEIT Supervisor/Program Director before submitting the form.

## Behavioral Management Policies and Procedures

It is a given part of the SEIT's role to assist his/her student to develop initiative to control himself/herself and take responsibility for his/her own behavior.

Behavior management is a strategy for managing inappropriate behavior. The SEIT as he/she does her/his session would most likely experience occasional problematic behavior from assigned case/s. It can be one or a combination of the following: non-compliance, destructiveness or physical or verbal aggression to SEIT, the child himself, or to others (children or adults if the service is in a group setting). The troublesome behavior can be short-lived or occurring at brief or prolonged intervals. The behavior problem manifested can be either minor or serious. In whatever way, the troublesome behavior needs to be addressed and if it is not possible to totally eliminate it, at least to be prevented or minimized. Ignoring problematic behavior can escalate it or would send the wrong message that misbehaving can be tolerated and/or allowed. Consequently, teaching would be negatively affected. Even if misbehavior is beyond the child's control, there are ways to contain the problem.

**No matter how challenging the behavior problem is, the corrective action employed by SEITs should be limited to application of positive behavior management techniques.**

**Punishment of any kind is definitely not allowed.** Managing a preschooler's misbehavior involves teaching him/her to act in more socially acceptable ways to communicate his/her need/s or express himself/herself to handle particular situation/s without resorting to crying, biting, screaming or making tantrums. At all times, SEIT has to look at the message behind the inappropriate behavior in deciding for a possible solution. If her/his student is verbal, it is important for the SEIT to prompt the child to use words, phrase or sentence to express his/her need, feelings of anger, sadness or disappointment with appropriate words and tone of voice.

The following list of behavior modification techniques can be used:

- Modifying materials
- Modifying instructions/breakdown tasks
- Modifying given task's length/expectations
- Providing reinforcement
- Following least preferred activity with most preferred activity
- Providing visual support

If challenging behavior is motivated by need of attention, SEIT can exercise the following behavior modification techniques:

- Providing praise, token or material reward
- Offering desirable/favorite toys
- Offering a desired reward for completing a given activity
- Providing a choice of activities (2-3)
- Providing offers of assistance
- Using timer to make known provision of reinforcement

If challenging behavior is caused by transitioning difficulty:

- Providing verbal warning (“5 more minutes. . .”, etc.)
- Providing countdown (count from 20 to 1, etc.)
- Stating the ending activity and the activity to follow (“5 more minutes, then clean-up”)
- Using visuals/pictures/photos to show the next activity

When considering tangible rewards, SEITs should pick something of value to their children (stickers, bubbles, special toys, etc.) accompanied with verbal praise. SEITs should always show excitement and enthusiasm when the child exercises the desirable behavior. Gradually, SEIT should phase out tangible rewards and switch to verbal praise only. To be effective, verbal praise and enthusiasm must be given sincerely.

Other possible causes of a child’s misbehavior that SEIT can consider are the following:

- Ecological causes (triggered by food) - gluten, casein, chocolate and other sweets
- Physiological causes – hunger, pain, allergic reaction, illness
- Activity not being developmentally- appropriate (too challenging/too boring)
- Environmental causes – surroundings being noisy, messy, too stimulating
- SEIT’s lack of preparedness for the session

When encountering more serious behavior problems, SEIT must gather data from different sources about what triggers them considering SEIT's observations, the child’s records, interviewing the student’s family and/or school teachers, etc. Once SEIT gathers appropriate data, he/she can analyze it for possible solutions. Some of the options to discuss with caregivers could include, but not be limited to:

- Switching the child to gluten-casein free diet
- Promoting sensory integration (weighted vests, balls)
- Encouraging auditory integration
- Considering medication (upon consulting the child's pediatrician or other specialist)

SEIT is always welcome to contact the Program Director/SEIT Supervisor for advice so appropriate steps can be undertaken prior to setting up a behavior management plan. Behavioral assessments and behavior intervention plans should be developed by trained behavioral specialists as deemed necessary if all other means of intervention fail to succeed. If a behavior intervention plan is developed for a child receiving SEIT services, the SEIT will likely be required to implement it as part of the provision of services. This implementation must include regular progress monitoring of the behavioral interventions at scheduled intervals as specified in the child's behavior plan and in the IEP. The results of the monitoring must be documented and reported to the child's parents and the CPSE and shall be considered in any determination to revise a student's behavior intervention plan or IEP.

## **Sexual Harassment at Workplace Reporting**

SEITs are mandated to complete Stop Sexual Harassment free online training every year and submit the certificate of completion to Smart Choice Therapy Inc. Please use the link below to obtain your certificate:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/sexual-harassment-training.page>

If you have witnessed or experienced sexual harassment, please inform a manager at your workplace as soon as possible.

Report sexual harassment to the NYC Commission on Human Rights. Call 718-722-3131 or visit NYC.gov/HumanRights to learn how to file a complaint or report discrimination. You can file a complaint anonymously.

## **Incident/Accident Reporting**

The intent of the incident report process is to enhance the quality of care provided to the students in order to protect them from harm, mental and physical abuse or neglect. The primary function of incident reporting is to enable Smart Choice Therapy Inc administrators and supervisors to become aware of problems, to take corrective measures, and to minimize the potential for recurrence of the same or similar events or situations. SEITs are mandated to complete Child Abuse and Neglect training every three years. Additionally, all teachers will be trained in incident reporting procedures prior to their first day of employment.

### **A. Reportable Incidents**

There are three types of incidents. All of them must be reported, reviewed and investigated according to the procedures contained in this document.

### **1. Allegations of Abuse and Neglect**

Incidents in which the maltreatment or mishandling of a student would endanger the physical or emotional well-being of the student through the action or inaction on the part of anyone, including an employee, volunteer, visitor or others, whether or not the student appears to be injured or harmed. The failure to exercise one's duty on behalf of a student also constitutes abuse.

When child abuse or neglect is suspected, a report must be made to the Child Abuse Hotline immediately - 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453). Note that the Child Abuse Hotline will only accept allegations against family members, not employees.

All deaths suspected to be the result of abuse or neglect, suicides, homicides, accidental deaths due to suspicious, unusual or unnatural circumstances must be also reported immediately by telephone to the police. The police will notify the medical examiner.

### **2. Serious Reportable Incidents**

Serious reportable reports include:

- a) Injury to a student when the injury was caused by an act of that person or another which includes the overnight admission to a hospital or emergency room for a treatment or observation;
- b) Injury to a student which was caused by an accident and which includes the overnight admission to a hospital or emergency room for treatment or observation;
- c) Injury of unknown origin which includes the overnight admission to a hospital or emergency room for treatment or observation;
- d) Missing person;
- e) Death;
- f) Restraint: the act of limiting or controlling a student's behavior through the use of any device which prevents the free movement of both arms or both legs;
- g) Hospitalization.

### **3. Incidents Reportable to Smart Choice Therapy Inc**

Significant events or situations that may endanger a student's wellbeing are required by the agency to be reported. Examples of the incidents include but are not limited to:

- a) evacuation - a situation which necessitates the immediate evacuation due to fire, smoke, flood or other condition;

b) behavior which is dangerous to self or others, such as physical aggression by a student or self-injurious or potentially dangerous behavior. Behavior management plan will be developed in such cases;

#### **B. Family/Guardian Rights.**

A student's family member(s) or guardian is to be notified immediately of all allegations of abuse and neglect and all serious reportable incidents. In these situations, the notifications should be made by the agency supervisor or administrator. If the allegation is abuse or neglect against the family/guardian, the agency administration will determine whether or not communication with them is appropriate. The student's family shall be given information during the investigation process and advised of the findings and conclusions. Whenever possible, the communication with families should be done in person or by phone. In providing such notifications, or any additional information regarding a serious reportable incident/allegation of abuse and neglect, the staff shall adhere to confidentiality requirements regarding students and respect the privacy rights of involved parties.

## **Health and Safety Procedures**

During the provision of SEIT services at home, the student should always be supervised by his/her parents or caregiver.

When SEITs provide services at day care/preschool, they should request an orientation at the beginning of the first visit. Specifically, teachers need to know evacuation route, emergency procedures and safety plan of the preschool/day care. SEITs should follow the facility health/safety/emergency procedures in addition to this policy.

### **General guidelines:**

- 1) Wash hands at the beginning and end of each session.
- 2) Wash toys and equipment before using them with another student. Toys and equipment must be disinfected on a daily basis.
- 3) Diapering and toileting needs that occur during a home visit should be taken care of by the parent/caregiver.

- 4) While providing services at daycare/preschool, SEIT should make sure gloves are worn while changing or toileting a student and hands must be washed immediately afterwards.
- 5) Gloves must be worn at all times when teacher works with food or touches the student's mouth.
- 6) SEIT providers must discuss dietary restrictions with the parents/caregivers and adhere to them.
- 7) Food reinforcers should not be used without parents' knowledge and permission.
- 8) SEIT should not enter a building if it does not appear to be safe. SEIT should leave the building if he/she does not feel safe.
- 9) Immediately notify SEIT Supervisor/Program Director in case of any safety concerns.

Caregiver should contact the student's doctor or emergency medical services (911) for help when needed. SEIT should get help **immediately** for a student with any of the following conditions (this is not a complete list; when in doubt, call 911):

1. A temperature of 105 degrees F. or higher
2. A sudden seizure
3. Unequal pupils
4. A blood-red or purple rash made up of pinhead-sized spots or bruises
5. A rash of hives or welts that appears and spreads quickly
6. Breathing so fast or so hard that the child cannot play, talk, cry, or drink
7. A severe stomachache that causes the child to double up and scream
8. Stools that are black or have blood mixed through them
9. Continuous clear drainage from the nose after a hard blow to the head
10. Student looking or acting very ill or getting worse quickly
11. Student experiencing neck pain when his/her head is moved or touched
12. Student acting unusually confused

## COVID-19 Health and Safety Procedures

1. Promoting vaccination
2. Optional/correct mask use
3. Physical distancing
4. Ventilation

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5. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
6. Staying home when sick (isolating) and getting tested
7. Getting tested for COVID-19
8. Quarantine and following up on close contact to a COVID-19 positive case
9. Cleaning and disinfecting

### **1. Promoting Vaccination**

Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 vaccines available in the United States are effective at protecting people from getting seriously ill, getting hospitalized, and even dying. Smart Choice Therapy Inc is no longer required to employ providers with COVID-19 vaccination, as per the applicable DOE & DOH guidelines. If provided, vaccination proof will be stored in providers' files.

To promote vaccination, Smart Choice Therapy providers can:

- Visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find out where students and families can get vaccinated against COVID-19 in the community and promote COVID-19 vaccination locations near the program.
- Encourage students and families, including extended family members who have frequent contact with children in the program, to get vaccinated as soon as they can and get a booster when eligible.
- Remind families that children should get all routine vaccinations to help protect themselves and others from vaccine-preventable diseases in addition to regular well-child visits and preventive screenings, such as screening for autism and lead poisoning. Remind families about routine vaccinations for adults.

### **2. Optional/ Correct Mask Use**

During sessions, Smart Choice Therapy Inc providers can wear a CDC approved, well-fitting mask correctly and consistently, in order to protect others as well as themselves. Smart Choice Therapy Inc program staff can model consistent and correct use of masks for children ages 3 years and older in their care as well as their caregivers.

### **3. Physical Distancing**

Smart Choice Therapy Inc recommends maintaining physical distance of 6 feet during services, if needed.

### **4. Ventilation**

Improving ventilation is an important COVID-19 prevention strategy that can reduce the number of virus particles in the air. Along with other preventive strategies, bringing fresh outdoor air into a building helps keep virus particles from concentrating inside.

### **5. Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette**

Smart Choice Therapy providers should practice handwashing and respiratory etiquette including covering coughs and sneezes to keep from getting and spreading infectious illnesses including COVID-19. Smart Choice Therapy providers should reinforce these behaviors:

- Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

- Remind everyone in the facility to wash hands frequently and assist young children with handwashing.
- If handwashing is not possible, use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol with staff and older children that can use it safely. Hand sanitizers should be stored up, away, and out of sight of young children and should be used only with adult supervision for children under 6 years of age.
- Wear gloves when cleaning and disinfecting, but otherwise proper handwashing is sufficient.

## **6. Staying Home When Sick (Isolating) and Getting Tested**

Children and SEITs who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as influenza (flu) or COVID-19, should stay home and be referred to a healthcare provider for testing and care. Staying home when sick with COVID-19 (which is known as isolating) is essential to keep COVID-19 infections out of programs and prevent spread to others.

The overlap between COVID-19 symptoms with other common illnesses means that some people with symptoms of COVID-19 could be ill with something else. This is even more likely in young children, who typically have multiple viral or bacterial illnesses each year. Although COVID-19 and other common illnesses such as colds, flu, or ear infections have similar symptoms, they are different diseases. Children who have symptoms of infectious illness or certain symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend Smart Choice Therapy Inc programs. Encourage your families to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children:

- Fever, temperature 100.4 °F or higher, or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or stomachache

## **7. Getting Tested for COVID-19**

Smart Choice Therapy Inc recommends that people who were in close contact with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 to be tested 5 days or more after the last close contact, regardless of vaccination status of whether they have symptoms.

## **8. Quarantine and Following up of Close Contacts to a COVID-19 Positive Case**

When someone in a Smart Choice Therapy Inc program tests positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and is a presumed case, it is important to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the setting. Take the following steps to help reduce transmission:

- identify anyone who was in close contact with that person,
- inform staff and families of children who may need to quarantine.

Close contacts are those who were less than 6 feet away from an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinical diagnosis) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. People who are exposed to someone who had COVID-19 and who already completed at least 5 days of isolation are not considered close contacts.

After identifying who was in close contact, Smart Choice Therapy Inc administrators should notify staff and families of children who were close contacts as soon as possible, to the extent allowable by applicable federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial privacy laws and regulations.

If feasible, SEITs should inform close contacts of their potential exposure within the same day of being notified that someone in the program has tested positive.

- Instruct families to monitor children who are determined to be a close contact for symptoms following their exposure. Anyone who develops symptoms should isolate and get tested immediately.
- Educate families about when they and their children should get tested, or when they should stay home and quarantine and when they can return to programs.

#### **Who Should Quarantine:**

Children and SEITs who come into close contact with someone with COVID-19 should quarantine if they have not had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days and are in one of the following groups:

- Infants and young children who are not eligible for vaccination based on age
- Staff and older children who are not up to date with COVID-19 vaccines (have not received all recommended COVID-19 vaccines, including any booster dose(s) when eligible).

#### **Length of quarantine:**

People who are not up to date with COVID-19 vaccines or did not have confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days should stay home and quarantine for at least 5 full days and stay away from other people as much as possible.

- People without symptoms can end quarantine after 5 full days and return to the program if they are older than age 3 and able to consistently and correctly wear a mask while in the program.
- For children and SEITs who are unable to consistently wear a mask when around others the safest option is to continue to quarantine for a full 10 days.

#### **Returning from quarantine:**

SEITs and children returning from quarantine should avoid being around other people who are at higher risk for severe illness as much as possible.

SEITs should keep children who are returning from isolation 6 feet apart whenever possible, while still safely under provider supervision. Consider using additional prevention strategies, such as improved ventilation, particularly when consistent mask wearing is not feasible. Those in quarantine should also get tested 5 days or more after last close contact with someone with COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status. For 10 days after their last exposure to someone with COVID-19, they should watch for fever (100.4°F or greater), cough, shortness of

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breath, or other COVID-19 symptoms. Those who test positive or develop COVID-19 symptoms should follow recommendations for isolation.

### **Who Does Not Need to Quarantine:**

Children and SEITs who come into close contact with someone with COVID-19 do not need to quarantine if they are in one of the following groups:

- SEITs and older children who have received all recommended vaccine doses and are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines.
- SEITs and children who have had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days (tested positive using a viral test).

Close contacts who do not need to quarantine should do all of the following:

- They should get tested 5 days or more after they last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.
  - If they test positive or develop COVID-19 symptoms, they should isolate from other people and follow recommendations in the Isolation section below.
- If they are 3 years of age or older and able to consistently and correctly wear masks, they should wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days from the date of their last close contact with someone with COVID-19 (the date of last close contact is considered day 0).

In addition to notifying SEITs, staff and families directly when someone in the program was a close contact, Smart Choice Therapy Inc can continue to collaborate with state and local health departments, to the extent allowable by federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial privacy laws, regulations and other applicable laws, to confidentially report cases of COVID-19.

### **9. Cleaning and Disinfecting**

In general, cleaning once a day is usually enough to sufficiently remove potential virus that may be on surfaces. However, in addition to cleaning for COVID-19, Smart Choice Therapy providers should follow recommended procedures for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection in their setting such as after a meal or exposure to bodily fluids.

### **DOs and DON'Ts:**

1. Introduce yourself to the parents and caregivers as soon as you start working with a student.
2. Be on time for all scheduled sessions. Inform parents or/and caregivers when you are not able to provide services because of sickness or emergency.

3. Do not accept, solicit or offer anything of value from anyone doing business with Smart Choice Therapy Inc if the gift or gratuity results from your employment activity at the agency.
4. Never provide any confidential information about your students/their families to anybody not involved in providing services to the child.
5. Do not produce copies of IEP to anybody (including the student's school or regular classroom teacher) without the parent/guardian permission.
6. Never make false or misleading statement to anyone as a Smart Choice Therapy Inc employee.
7. Do not stay alone with your student. A family representative must be present at all times when services are provided at home. Caregivers should be able to observe you when you work at preschool.
8. Do not close the door or move to another area of the house without family permission.
9. Do not bring your children, other family members, friends or other non-professionals on a home visit
10. Do not take pictures of the child or their family without written permission from the parent/guardian.
11. Call police immediately, when you come to provide services at home and find a child unattended.
12. Do not drive your students in your personal vehicle.
13. Do not bring food or beverages into the classroom or home for your personal consumption.
14. Turn off/silence your cell phone during sessions and meetings.
15. Do not communicate about the child with teachers and/or parents in front of the child or in public areas.
16. Communicate with parents, classroom teachers, therapists and other professionals in appropriate language and within professional boundaries.

## **Confidentiality Policy**

Smart Choice Therapy Inc is dedicated to protecting privacy and confidentiality of all information relating to our students. As a Special Education Itinerant Services Program, we are required to abide by Federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) policies limiting disclosure of information.

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Teachers must safeguard at all times confidential information that is not intended to be disclosed; this information may only be released to authorized individuals. Smart Choice Therapy Inc personnel are responsible for guaranteeing confidentiality. Confidentiality applies throughout the stages of collection, disclosure, storage and destruction of hard copy or electronic records. Teachers shall not verbally convey information about a child or family without the written parental consent.

Parents or legal guardians have the right to access their child's educational records under FERPA and IDEA. Parents will receive an explanation and interpretation of the student's records if needed; also, parents can have a representative review the requested records on their behalf. When parents or legal guardians want to share the information with other schools, professionals or individuals, they are required to submit written consent. Parents have rights to obtain a copy of the requested record within 10 working days of receipt of the written request (5 working days if the request is made as part of mediation or impartial hearing). Parents/legal guardians will be informed about their rights to access their child's records at the beginning of their services and every year since then.

Child records and other personally identifiable materials may not be released or made available to persons other than those authorized. Records are maintained in a locked file or cabinet at Smart Choice Therapy Inc administrative office. A list of personnel authorized to have access to a student's file will be placed in the front of each file. All individual records have a separate page which documents the date of access, the person who accessed the record and the purpose of the access. Requests for access to a student's record will be kept in the student's file.

Correspondence or record of one child shall not reveal the name of another student or family. Records shall be disposed of by shredding.

Smart Choice Therapy Inc should apply safeguards when communicating by email, fax or other method to keep personally identifiable information confidential. The least amount of identifiable information should be used (e.g. first and/or last initials). Email exchanges with parents and schools should also be copied to SEIT Supervisor/Program Director. Child specific information should be transmitted only if all parties included in sending and receiving are able to maintain confidentiality. It is recommended to use disclaimer when corresponding by email or fax.

## Important Phone Numbers and Contact Information

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# Smart Choice Therapy Inc

Preschool Special Education & Multidisciplinary Evaluation Program

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## Receipt of SEIT Handbook

This is to acknowledge that I have received and read a copy of Smart Choice Therapy Inc SEIT Handbook. I understand all the policies, guidelines and practices of Smart Choice Therapy Inc as a Department of Education contracted agency. I agree to comply with policies as outlined in the Handbook. If I have questions regarding the content or interpretation, I will contact Program Director or SEIT Supervisor.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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FOR OFFICE ONLY

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Interviewer/Manager