

The Reduce The Wait Project



What is the RTW Project?

The Reduce the Wait project is a federally funded research study that will provide **autism evaluations** to over **1,000 children** enrolled in the Illinois Early Intervention program.

The problem: Long waitlists for autism evaluations for children enrolled in EI

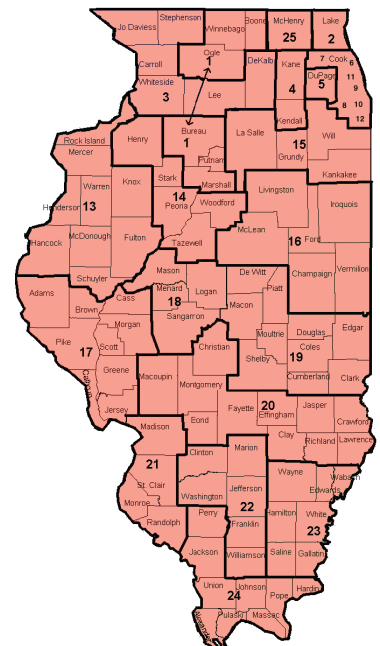
Our goal: To find new and quicker ways to diagnose autism in young children. We want to make the autism diagnostic process *efficient, accurate, and supportive* for families of children enrolled in Early intervention (EI).

Our approach: Increase the number of people qualified to provide an autism diagnosis (for example, early intervention clinicians, like speech and developmental therapists).

How will we do this?

We are launching a 4-year research study (outside of EI services) to train 100 Developmental Therapists and 100 Speech-language Pathologists already working within the Illinois EI program to provide **virtual autism diagnostic evaluations to families enrolled in EI**.

In addition to training EI providers on the virtual diagnostic process, a "specialist team" with years of experience diagnosing autism will also review all evaluations. Teams will then come to a joint decision as to whether the child has autism, does not have autism, or needs further testing.



early intervention
RESEARCH GROUP

Northwestern

What will caregivers do and receive?

1. Caregivers will complete 3 virtual (zoom) appointments as a part of the autism evaluation process (at no cost).
2. Caregivers will receive:
 - a. A written report of the team's evaluations and suggested next steps.
 - b. A diagnosis that is recognized by insurance. This is possible because the specialist team includes a clinical psychologist.
 - c. \$50 for completing a survey about their experience with the diagnostic process.



What will providers do?

Providers will work with the research study team for 6 months and do the following:

1. Complete a research/human subjects training (5 hours)
2. Complete a free self-guided CEU course over 4 weeks to learn the autism diagnostic measures (caregiver interview, child observation) (~20 hours)
3. Complete temporary employment hiring paperwork to be a part of the research team (~2 hours)
4. Complete 3 diagnostic appointments per family for 12 families over a 15-week period
5. Provide evaluations during three specified times so that they can see three different families a week at the times below (times include preparation and scoring). Providers will be on a **"daytime team"** or an **"evening team:"**
 - a. **2-hour Caregiver Interviews:** Mondays: 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.
 - b. **1-hour Child Observation:** Wednesdays: 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.
 - c. **1-hour Family Feedback:** Thursdays: 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.
6. Make their best clinical estimate (autism, needs further evaluation, not autism) using all the collected information
7. Attend a weekly (1-hour) community of practice meeting to discuss cases for CEU credit on Tuesdays (morning or evening)
8. Draft the diagnostic report

What will providers get?

1. Free CEU credits (~30 hours)
2. Clinical support and feedback from peers and the specialist team
3. Compensation at the current EI evaluator rate (3 hours/family)
4. Research experience with the Northwestern EIRG research team (resume booster)



What will the “specialist” team do?

1. A clinical psychologist and research reliable Developmental Therapist and Speech-language Pathologist will watch all videos to:
 - a. Make their own best clinical estimate (autism, needs further evaluation, not autism)
 - b. Compare their best clinical estimate to the EI team
 - c. Come to an agreement if there are differences

How do I participate?

Text the word Change to 847.750.3440

How do I refer families?

Text the word Enroll to 847.750.3440

Text us:

847.
750.
3440

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Do I need to be an EI evaluator? **No.**
2. How do I get paired with a DT or SLP? **We pair you based on availability.**
3. Do I only see families on my caseload? **You cannot see children on your own caseload. You will see other children.**
4. Do I only see families in my CFC? **No, you will see families from the entire state.**
5. Do I need any special equipment or prior training? **No. We provide everything!**
6. How will you support families who speak a language other than English? **We will eventually be including interpreters.**

The Reduce the Wait (RTW) study is led by Megan Roberts, CCC-SLP and approved by the Northwestern IRB (STU00217310). This work is funded by a federal grant through the Institute of Education Sciences.

