

September 2026

First Friday Focus



Understanding the KEIS Payment Process

KEIS values the work of providers and understands how important timely payments are to agencies. With more than 300 agencies participating in KEIS, each payment cycle involves a detailed series of reviews, verifications and approvals designed to help ensure that payments are accurate and securely processed.

While most payment cycles proceed as expected, an issue identified at any point can cause a delay. Understanding the steps involved can help explain why a payment file cannot always be corrected and resubmitted immediately.

Step 1: Preparing Agency Payment Information

Every two weeks, KEIS runs a payment cycle for agencies. KEIS State Office (KSO) staff begin by pulling a master agency invoice report for agencies with completed visits. This report does not contain banking information.

KSO staff review the report and determine the reimbursement amount due to each agency. Before processing continues, the payment amounts are reviewed by two additional KSO staff members to help ensure accuracy.

Step 2: File Verification and Formatting

Once the payment amounts have been reviewed and confirmed, KSO staff complete the necessary formatting for the payment file.

The file is then placed in a designated folder on the state server, where it is picked up by the Commonwealth Office of Technology (COT). COT verifies that the file is properly formatted for processing and returns it to the KSO staff.

This is an important technical step that helps ensure the file can be successfully accepted by the state's financial system.

Step 3: Uploading to the State Accounting System

After the file is returned, KSO staff upload it into the state's accounting system, eMARS.

During this process, internal eMARS verification processes compare the payment information with the information associated with each agency in the Vendor Self Service (VSS) system. KSO staff monitor the process and address any issues that arise.

If the required verifications are successful, the payment file can continue through the approval process.

When an Issue is Identified

Occasionally, an error may be identified during processing. One example is a discrepancy or issue involving an agency's banking information.

When this occurs, the payment cycle may need to be paused while KSO staff manually identify the agency associated with the issue. Once the issue is identified and addressed, the payment file will need to be removed from the accounting system, and the process will be restarted.

This means that the delay is not simply a matter of correcting one item and pressing "submit" again. Depending on where the issue occurs, several earlier steps, including file preparation, verification, formatting and system processing, may need to be repeated to ensure the integrity of the payment process.

Step 4: Additional Review and Approval

Once the initial KEIS and eMARS verifications are successfully completed, KSO staff submit the payment file for supervisory approval.

The file then moves to the Department for Financial Services for the next level of review and continues through the required processes within the Finance and Treasury functions before payments are deposited into agency accounts.

These additional reviews provide important checks to ensure payments are accurate, authorized and processed appropriately.

Why Restart Can Cause Additional Delays

Some parts of the payment process occur at designated times during the business day. If an issue requires a payment file to be removed and restarted, the corrected file may miss the processing window for one or more steps.

When that happens, processing must wait until the next available business day or processing cycle. The file may also be subject to required state and federal intercept verifications before payment is released.

An intercept is a legally required process that may redirect a portion of a payment to satisfy certain outstanding obligations, such as delinquent taxes or other qualifying debts owed to state or federal entities. These verifications are part of the broader financial processing requirements and are not controlled by KEIS.

A Shared Commitment to Timely Payment

KSO staff are committed to processing provider payments as efficiently as possible while maintaining the accuracy and safeguards required throughout the process. With more than 300 agencies in the payment system, a single issue can sometimes delay the processing of an entire payment file.

When delays occur, they are often the result of the multiple steps and required verifications involved in moving a payment from completed services to an agency's bank account. Each review serves an important purpose; helping ensure that agencies are paid accurately, securely and in accordance with state financial requirements.

We appreciate providers' patience and partnership as KSO staff work through this process and continue looking for ways to support timely and accurate payment.

KEIS in the Community



We're excited to celebrate a recent LEX 18 news feature highlighting the important work of the Kentucky Early Intervention System (KEIS) and the impact early intervention has on children and families.

The story, "Lexington nonprofit helping families access early intervention services for children," shines a light on the importance of connecting families with the supports and services they need during a child's earliest years.

[See the full LEX 18 story](#)

A special thank you to New Vista, Angie Casey, BG POE Manager and Erin Waller, BG/LT SC and KEIS parent, for representing KEIS and sharing their perspectives so beautifully. Their participation helped showcase not only the value of early intervention but also the dedication of the people who make a difference for Kentucky children and families every day.

We're proud to see KEIS represented in our communities and grateful to all our providers, service coordinators, POE Managers, DCES and partners who continue to share the story of early intervention.

Have something to celebrate?

We'd love to highlight your community's KEIS successes, events, partnerships, media features or other promotional opportunities in future newsletters! If something exciting is happening in your area, please send it our way. We'd love the opportunity to celebrate your work and share it more broadly with the KEIS provider community.

Together, we can continue to raise awareness about early intervention and the difference KEIS makes for Kentucky families.

Early Screening Makes a Big Difference

September is Newborn Screening Awareness Month!

Every baby deserves the opportunity for a healthy start. Newborn screening is one of the ways Kentucky helps make that possible. These targeted tests, administered in the first days of life, can identify health concerns that may not be visible at birth, giving families and health care providers valuable information when time matters most.

For Kentucky's Early Intervention System (KEIS), newborn screening can be an important first step in connecting some of our youngest Kentuckians with support. When a condition identified through newborn screening meets Kentucky's established risk criteria, a child is eligible for KEIS service coordination. Early identification helps families access appropriate follow-up, resources and support for the condition as early as possible.

Want to learn more about Newborn Screening in Kentucky? Click here: [Newborn Screening Program - Cabinet for Health and Family Services](#)

Coaching for Confidence: Moving from Answers to Empowerment

Telling may seem more efficient, but coaching is transformational. Rather than providing answers, coaching helps caregivers make meaning of their experiences, strengthen their awareness, and build confidence in supporting their child throughout daily routines. This shift can be as simple as moving from “*Try doing this...*” to “*What have you noticed works during this routine?*” This approach promotes caregiver insight and ownership. Grounded in intentional curiosity, coaching involves observing, asking, listening, affirming, and guiding practice rather than directing every step. The goal is to never assume, but instead to partner with families to discover what works best for them in their day-to-day lives. While coaching may feel slower in the moment, it empowers caregivers to become confident, independent thinkers, creating meaningful

learning that continues long after our conversation ends. Ask yourself at the end of your visit, ***what will this caregiver be able to do tomorrow because of our interaction today?***



Making Every Conversation Count



When an interpreter is needed, thoughtful planning and communication can help ensure families receive the information and support they need while also making the best use of system resources.

Please remember to communicate cancellations as soon as possible. If a family or provider cancels a visit, and the interpreter is not notified, the interpreter may still arrive or reserve time for the scheduled service. In these situations, interpretation services may still be billable. To help make the best use of resources and avoid unnecessary charges, please notify the interpreter as soon as possible whenever a visit needs to be canceled or rescheduled.

Need help reaching a family? Service Coordinators have access to *InterpreTalk*, a telephone interpretation service that provides real-time language support when professionals and families do not share the same language. *InterpreTalk* can assist with phone calls for scheduling, sharing information and other communication needs.

Family members and interpreters serve different roles. Families may choose to have a family member help with communication, and their preferences should be respected. However, providers should avoid relying on children or younger family members to interpret. Children should be free to participate in conversations and family interactions rather than being responsible for communicating information between adults, especially when information may be complex or sensitive.

For assessments and evaluations, an interpreter is required to ensure meaningful participation and accurate communication. KEIS covers interpreter services; there is no charge to providers.

Using interpreters thoughtfully supports family choice, strengthens communication and helps ensure families can fully participate in the early intervention process.

Stay Informed: DEC Policy Coffee Chats

With so much happening in Washington, it can be difficult to know where to find reliable information about decisions that may impact early childhood and early intervention. The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) hosts free Policy Coffee Chats to share information and help the early childhood community understand current federal policy developments.



These non-partisan conversations are open to anyone and provide an opportunity to learn, ask questions and stay informed. When there is uncertainty, having accurate information can help replace worry with understanding.

Interested in joining? [DEC Coffee and Policy Chats - Special Edition](#)

