

MINUTES

January 13, 2005

Worcester, Massachusetts

Members Present: Robin Adair, Zulmira Allcock, Valerie Carbone, Hope Colen, Darleen Corbett, Maureen Flaherty, Peg Freedman, Valerie Gibbemeyer, Karin Lifter, Margaret Mahoney, Sara Miranda, Anita Moeller, Kathy Patisteas, Nancy Phillips, Amy Young.

Non-voting committee chairs in attendance: Tom Miller, Alden Wood.

I. Welcome – Vice Chairperson Hope Colen: Hope welcomed ICC members and other participants. She introduced Robin Adair, MD, physician representative to the ICC. Dr. Adair is a developmental and behavioral pediatrician. She is Director of the Infant, Toddler and Preschool Clinic at University of Massachusetts Memorial Hospital and teaches at U. Mass. Medical School.

Approval of Minutes: The Minutes of the ICC meeting held November 18, 2004, were approved as written, with one correction: Peg Freedman was present.

II. Director’s Report – Ron Benham: Ron distributed a document called “Summary of Changes Made to Part C by IDEA Reauthorization of 2004,” prepared by the IDEA Infant & Toddler Coordinators Association. The new acronym will be IDEIA, Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. Ron stated his disappointment that, in general, the act does not focus much attention on infants and toddlers. A dozen states are now in a position similar to ours: their allocations have actually gone down because, though they are serving more children than previously, their populations are flat. These are a few highlights of the reauthorization:

- Increases attention to children in foster care and homeless children.
- Requires that children be referred if involved in substantiated abuse or neglect.
- Adds teachers of the deaf to the list of specialists who may provide services.
- Allows states to create a parallel system in which families could elect to keep their children in Early Intervention until age five; however, if they do so, they sacrifice the right to FAPE – a free and appropriate public education.
- Requires a “rigorous definition of developmental delay.”
- Clarifies that children be served in natural environments “...unless EI cannot be satisfactorily implemented...”
- Clarifies the process for parent involvement and makes the system more sensitive to the needs of families.
- Provides triggers for increased allocations to states that reach certain thresholds in numbers of children served; however, there is still not sufficient financial incentive to states to serve more children.
- Regarding CAPTA – the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act - the revision seems to create ambiguity about the meaning of “screening” to determine eligibility for a

comprehensive evaluation; the conferees make it clear that not every child will receive a comprehensive evaluation, however screening is not acknowledged as a covered service in the law.

Discussion: The following points were raised or clarified during discussion: In Massachusetts, Title IV-E training funds may be available to help build coalitions between EI and DSS to implement CAPTA. Neal Michaels at DSS is charged with implementing CAPTA; he is contacting Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium leadership in an effort to plan collaboratively. There is significant concern across the country that the transition process is not smooth; the revised act enables starting the process at age 2 years 3 months. There will be opportunities for testimony at hearings including one to be held in Boston, and the Federal Register has invited comment. The Infant-Toddler Coordinators Association is surveying its membership; to date states don't know what they will be required to affirm in their renewal applications. Massachusetts anticipates a lot of change in the coming year related to implementation of the new Department of Early Education and Care, a department that technically does not even exist until July 1, 2005; therefore, our state is not considering implementation of a parallel system for 3-5-year olds. We believe we already do a lot to ease transitions.

Part C Budget: Ron distributed *Draft Summary Description of the Use of Funds – Preliminary 19th Year Part C Budget* for review, noting that we anticipate a reduction of at least \$80,000 in the Massachusetts Part C allocation. He explained that there are no significant changes in this budget other than required salary increases related to collective bargaining agreements.

III. Review of By-Laws Revision: The Draft *Revised Massachusetts Interagency Coordinating Council By-Laws* dated 1/05 was distributed. Comments may be forwarded to Darla Gundler. Specific changes include: The ICC will align itself with the generally accepted national model for ICC governance by having Co-Chairs instead of a Chair and Vice Chair. The name of the “Low Incidence” Committee will be changed to *Specialty Services Committee* to more accurately describe its domain. The new Department of Early Education and Care will be represented on the ICC. There will be a seat on the ICC for a person in charge of the education of homeless children; such a person must be identified.

IV. Member Updates: Peg Freedman – Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council: The Annual MDDC / MARC (Massachusetts Association for Retarded Citizens) Legislative Reception will be held March 16, 2005, at the State House in Boston. **Tom Miller:** The New England Regional Conference for Children with Visual Impairment will be held April 30, 2005. **Anita Moeller:** A national conference, Young Children Without Homes, will be held April 27-29 in Boston. **Sara Miranda:** The Federation for Children with Special Needs Annual Conference will be held March 12, 2005, in Boston. **Zulmira Allcock:** The Annual Conference of the Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium will be held May 11-12, 2005, in Marlboro.

V. Committee Reports. Standards Committee – Alden Wood: The committee is using electronic communication as much as possible, and is discussing how best to elicit feedback from the EI community and its stakeholders as it proceeds to review the Operational Standards. A decision was made to use the Parent Leadership website so that all interested parties can view proposed changes. In December the committee reviewed recent policy changes that need to be

reflected in Standards. Future topics to be reviewed are tentatively as follows: February – Specialty Services; March – Family Participation; April – higher education and personnel preparation. May and June are reserved for internal committee work. Health and Safety will be reviewed next fall.

Personnel Preparation – Margaret Mahoney for Judy Sleeper: In December the committee met with representatives of higher education. Represented at the meeting were the Federation for Children with Special Needs, DPH, the Shriver Center, Emerson College, Northeastern University and Lesley University. It was an excellent opportunity to pull the two communities together; further productive dialogue is anticipated. Margaret distributed the completed EI recruitment brochure, “*Consider a career in Early Intervention – Be there at the beginning!*” DPH has produced 10,000 brochures and a PDF file is available on request. The committee welcomes specific contacts to which brochures should be sent. **Specialty Services – Tom Miller:** Tom distributed Minutes of the committee meeting held 11/22/04 along with a document on collaboration between specialty services and community EI programs. He thanked Tracy Osbahr and all the committee members for their hard work in completing this work. The committee is planning to develop a list of pre-service programs that prepare specialty providers.

Fiscal Committee – Miriam Lasher for Michelle Fagnano: There had been a request that the committee share more detailed information at the ICC; therefore, Committee Notes of the meeting held November 17, 2004, and *Most Recent EI Insurance Issues Update October, 2004 – 1/11/05*, prepared by Steve McCourt, were made available to ICC members. The committee meets monthly in Milford and has a dozen faithful members. It reviews current system expenditures and cash flow issues that may influence the Department’s ability to reimburse programs in a timely way. It tracks service utilization in relation to budget projections. By the end of December, 2004, the system is running just slightly under projections for FY 05. Fluctuations occur related to changes in referral patterns related to eligibility but also to insurance billing problems experienced by programs. DPH staff update committee members on state and federal issues and the progress of the EI budget through the legislative process. In recent months the committee has discussed the formation of the new Department of Early Education and Care, federal CAPTA legislation, and the increased administrative burden on programs due to implementation of HIPAA regulations. Recently the committee requested that Steve McCourt provide a monthly written insurance status update and that has been very helpful. The committee also strategizes about long range solutions to the chronic under-funding of the EI system. The Fiscal Advocacy Subcommittee reports to the Fiscal Committee; it will give a separate report. **Discussion:** In response to questions, Ron explained that House One, the Governor’s proposed budget for FY 2006, will be issued soon. The Early Intervention system anticipates a Supplementary Budget will be issued at the same time, which may contain money that would enable DPH to reconcile some outstanding FY 04 bills. Currently system dollars and units of service are not growing as rapidly as expected. The anticipated 6% growth rate was also designed to protect the system against some presumed future growth due to implementation of CAPTA legislation across Massachusetts.

Program Planning – Hope Colen: The Transition document and workshop plan will be ready to present at the March ICC meeting. Sixteen EI programs have contacted Peggie O’Hare at the Federation for Children with Special Needs to schedule a series of three workshops. Claire Brady from Early Learning Services has rejoined the committee; the Guide to Parents will be distributed in Continuing the Journey Workshops. The committee is developing an Infant Mental

Health needs assessment that will be distributed to programs, and it continues monitoring nationwide developments regarding outcome measurement. Katharine Thomas distributed information about the piloting of a NCSEAM – National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring – Parent Survey, and information about sampling procedures and family surveys completed as of 1/13/05. She explained that while Massachusetts has already exceeded its goal for surveys completed by Caucasian parents of children 2-3 years of age, a lot of work remains to be done to reach goals for other race and ethnicity groups. Massachusetts joined the study very late in the process and had a short time in which to complete 750 surveys; other states had a two-year head start.

Fiscal Advocacy Subcommittee – Amy Young: The committee is collecting information in order to create educational Tip Sheets that members of the EI community can use in advocacy efforts, including how state and federal bills become law. There are three phases: understanding the process, telling your story, and learning about federal issues and financing. Information will be in user friendly form, followed by action steps. **Membership Committee – Amy Young:** ICC vacancies currently exist for Boston Parent and Boston Provider, and for a Legislator. A parent representative must have had a child in EI who is currently under 12 years of age. In addition, Amy announced that she will be ending her term on the ICC in June, 2005, and vacating both her committee roles: Chair of the Membership Committee and Co-Chair of the Fiscal Advocacy Subcommittee. She urged the group to be thinking about replacement of those functions.

VI. Adjournment: The ICC meeting adjourned at 12 noon.