

MINUTES
January 12, 2006
Worcester, Massachusetts

Members Present: Robin Adair, Zulmira Allcock, Pat Cameron, Darleen Corbett, Sandra Daly, Peggy Freedman, Jen Greco, Jack Harris, Pam Kuechler, Julie Leahy, Karin Lifter, Anne Marsh, Sara Miranda, Anita Moeller, Judith Nest-Pasierb, Kimber O'Connell, Kathy Patisteas, Nancy Phillips, Barbara Prindle-Eaton, Kathy Rose, Ronna Schaffer, Erin Ward, Pam Wildnauer, Joanne Williams, Amy Young.

Non-Voting Committee Chairs in attendance: Margaret Mahoney, Tom Miller, Alden Wood, Peter Woodbury.

1. Welcome, Announcements, and Approval of Minutes: Co-Chair Barbara Prindle-Eaton welcomed the group, noting that 2006 is the 30th anniversary of the first pilot Early Intervention programs that began in Massachusetts in 1976. Barbara welcomed Kimber O'Connell, newly-appointed ICC Parent Representative from the Central Region.

Approval of Minutes: The Minutes of the ICC meeting held November 10, 2005, were approved as written.

2. Director's Report – Katharine Thomas for Ron Benham: Katharine explained that Ron Benham is attending a New England-wide ICC meeting related to establishing a New England Resource Center for IDEA. It is an opportunity to institute stronger technical assistance on early childhood issues so that the region can wield greater impact on infant-toddler needs and budget on the national scene. To date the regional ICC has been more oriented toward Part B issues. Updates:

1. House One, the Governor's budget, will be released in about two weeks. The Department expects to see an overall increase for EI. The Department remains committed to working with the Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium (MEIC) on its Workforce Initiative.
2. Katharine distributed Department of Education Fiscal Year 2006 Congressional Action, dated January 4, 2006. The overall Part C allocation is reduced by 1%.
3. The Massachusetts Part C State Performance Plan was submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in December as required. We were notified that we have passed the Phase One Review though we could still be asked for additional information. Katharine extended thanks to the ICC for their participation in the process; for every indicator, reference was made back to the input given by the ICC's November 10, 2005, meeting.
4. Katharine distributed the Legal Notice of Public Hearing dated December 28 as published in the Boston Globe, noting that this Part C hearing will take place in Boston on February 15, 2006, at 10 a.m. at One Ashburton Place, 21st Floor.
5. Katharine also distributed Draft Summary Description of the Use of Funds – Preliminary 20th Year Part C Budget. The 20th Year Application is basically a checklist in which the state affirms that it has all required documents in place. Part C Regulations have not been finalized; further changes to Operational Standards may be required whenever that happens.
6. Ron Benham has been elected Vice President of the Infant-Toddler Coordinators' Association, which means he is the President Elect who will take office in 2007. This is the nationwide group of Part C Coordinators who are in positions similar to Ron's across the states.
7. Katharine distributed Highlights of GAO-06-26, with the headline, Education Should Provide Additional Guidance to Help States Smoothly Transition Children to Preschool

(<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0626.pdf>), noting that concern about transition from Part C to next-step services exists across the country.

8. Katharine announced that she will be leaving the Department at the end of January to assume the position of Assistant Director at the Institute for Health and Recovery. She extended personal thanks to the EI community and especially to ICC members for all that has been accomplished and for the very thoughtful way in which the ICC has given input at every step along the way.

Barbara Prindle-Eaton thanked Katharine for all her work, and highlighted the importance of the very positive Phase One response to our Annual Performance Report.

3. Presentation – OSEP Conference Attendees: Nine participants including Department staff and ICC members attended the OSEP (Office of Special Education Programs) national conference in Washington, DC, in early December: Ron Benham, Mary Dennehy-Colorusso, Suzanne Gottlieb, Darla Gundler, Jack Harris, Julie Leahy, Barbara Prindle-Eaton, Joanne Williams, and Amy Young. **Amy Young** described a reflection period on the last day of the conference in which all parents came together to share experiences. While ADA, the Americans with Disabilities Act, is hailed as a milestone, IDEA – the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – was initiated 30 years ago and is twice as old. The conference was an opportunity to review how much further we still have to go, brought home by the fact that even some keynote presenters are not fully aware what early intervention is and why it is so important. Next steps: Amy urged conference attendees to bring input to all ICC committees.

Jack Harris, a first-time attendee, said the conference helped put the various pieces of IDEA together. He attended a gathering of fathers; he commented that fathers – males – don't generally make up a big part of what we are doing, even around this ICC table. He welcomes the chance to bring his voice to the table on behalf of fathers and parent advocacy in general. Jack learned more about the Focused Monitoring process, and suggested we look for ways that programs that are doing well can, in a non-competitive way, mentor those viewed as having room for improvement. **Joanne Williams**, also a first-time attendee, was gratified to discover so many people all working for the same goals. She particularly enjoyed a workshop on teaming that defined four roles of team members: contributors, collaborators, communicators, and challengers. Joanne is considering how attendees can relate all the information from the conference to their roles on the ICC. **Julie Leahy** presented with Darla Gundler and Evelyn Hausslein on the Hausslein Parent Leadership Awards in Massachusetts and her own experience developing *Kids with Trachs* with a Hausslein award. These small monetary awards encourage parents to have high aspirations. As a second-time attendee, Julie feels she understood IDEA much better this time. She noted a new emphasis on allowing children choices amidst increasing pressure to achieve outcomes.

Suzanne Gottlieb described the work of various technical assistance centers funded by OSEP, highlighting the Center for Challenging Behavior and the Center for Social-Emotional Development, and a good website: www.challengingbehavior.org. **Barbara Prindle-Eaton** also emphasized the volume of studies and useful material available at the conference. She referred ICC members to the NECTAC website (National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center) www.nectac.org, which has information on measuring child and family outcomes. Barbara attended a presentation by Delaware, Kentucky and New Hampshire, three states that use multiple assessment tools; they are working with publishers to crosswalk results in order to be able to measure outcomes across tools. Among the 13 states including Massachusetts that have progressed to the second level in Focused Monitoring, every one has designated transitions as a focus; several have chosen service coordination. Barbara also noted growing frustration across the states that Part C does not get adequate attention. She had occasion to describe our Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium (MEIC) which began in 1978. Other states have little understanding of what this very strong provider organization does. Massachusetts needs to strengthen connections to federal efforts where so many studies are being designed and implemented. IDEA

Regulations will probably not be final until the spring of 2007; federal officials say they will not begin to really look at Part C Regulations until Part B is finished. Meanwhile, we need to influence the process.

Discussion: Discussion focused on ways Massachusetts differs from most states in administration of Part C. While we have 61 self-contained programs, a coherent state administrative structure, and multiple well-established funding streams, many states use centralized intake and assessment functions that refer to hundreds of different individual providers for services. This means there is no mechanism to convene providers, family members and advocates together to bring about change. Members suggested that Massachusetts could present our model at an OSEP conference. Robin Adair asked if there could be dialogue about how other states inform primary care physicians about EI. Suzanne Gottlieb noted that there is a large ongoing study of how EI and primary care settings communicate with one another. The “Medical Home” concept is slow in gaining traction in Massachusetts; the name is confusing and the requirement to embrace all eight components is a deterrent. Robin indicated that the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics wants to include early intervention in the curricula for medical personnel. She noted “It’s not a vaccine; you have to do it over and over again.”

4. Presentation – Standards Committee – Alden Wood: Barbara Prindle-Eaton noted that today’s discussion is an opportunity to respond to recommended changes in the EI Operational Standards that will be voted on at the March 9, 2006, ICC meeting. The committee has done a huge amount of work and there have already been many chances to influence the process; even when the ICC votes, there will still be a chance to recommend amendments. Alden Wood, Chair, thanked the members of the Standards Committee: Zulmira Allcock, Darlene Corbett, Lynne Deschamps, Katee Duffy, Valerie Gibbemeyer, Sue McCarthy, Faith Piaggi, and Colleen Wellman. Alden also thanked MEIC for facilitating electronic communication of revisions as they were unfolding over this year-long process.

Alden distributed two documents: (purple) *ICC Standards Committee – EIOS Review – Summary of Received Feedback, January 2006*; and (green) *Summary of Key Changes as of December, 05*. He explained that the cut-off date for submitting all changes is February 24, to allow time for one final committee meeting. The final recommended version will be posted on the website by March 6, 2006. Alden clarified that the standards will not contain any specificity as to billing regulations; these will be in the Billing Manual which is also being revised, so it cannot yet be referenced. Barbara recommended that standards include a general statement about child and family outcomes with an appendix to the ongoing work of ECHO – the Early Childhood Outcomes Center.

Discussion: Concern was expressed about removing the experience requirement for RNs who have completed two-year nursing programs. The committee chose consistency, believing that individual programs’ hiring practices should govern whether to require higher standards. However, some members of the ICC felt that there should be a consistent level of best practice across the system. This matter is referred back to committee for further deliberation. In the Health and Safety section there has been much discussion about whether all providers need both first aid and CPR training. Programs find it very difficult to require this of independent contractors who may see only one or two EI children. Considerations include liability exposure, the difference between “training in” and formal certification, and families’ varying expectations for what they want providers to do. A number of suggestions were made that will be referred back to the committee. Alden urged participants to attend committee meetings if they have specific ideas or concerns about revisions to the standards.

5. Committee Reports. Personnel Preparation – Margaret Mahoney: The committee will meet with higher education programs that have EI fast track training programs to gather their perspectives on workforce issues with the goal of developing a joint project. Two committee members attend MEIC Workforce Initiative meetings. The committee will also be meeting with the state higher education

institutions that prepare occupational and physical therapists and speech-language pathologists, to be followed by a meeting with the Chancellor of Higher Education. The workforce recruitment brochure is being re-distributed, and a list is being developed of all the institutions in- and out-of-state that train allied health professionals.

Program Planning – Amy Young for Erin Ward: Two-thirds of all EI programs returned needs assessment surveys regarding training on social-emotional development. The Department has revised its portion of the Transition Manual. Steering Committee has requested that Program Planning discuss the impact of impending changes in billing regarding community screening.

Specialty Services – Tom Miller: Tom distributed *Specialty Services Committee Notes – 12/19/05*. The committee is discussing the proposed Massachusetts Part C budget as it relates to assistive technology funds, and is working with Rob Seymour on this. Sandra Daly clarified that the limited amount of flexible family support money in the Commission for the Blind budget is for the entire age span, birth to death. A request for funds to assist an individual EI child has to be directly tied to a child's IFSP goals and competes with all other requests regardless of the age of the client.

Fiscal Committee – Peter Woodbury: Peter reviewed the status of claims across three fiscal years, FY 04 (still dealing with pending Blue Cross Blue Shield claims), FY 05 (final deadline for claims submission with the exception of Blue Cross is March 10) and FY 06 which is approximately on track. Programs are receiving information from Blue Cross about children covered under out-of-state insurance plans in which some but not all EI services may be covered. Providers should examine individual claims carefully; otherwise the Department could be payer of last resort for claims Blue Cross should pay. The Governor's FY 07 budget request will not contain the additional funds needed to reach salary parity. MEIC and its legislative advocate have begun the huge task of achieving an 8% increase per year for the next three years. **Data Advisory Committee:** Practice management systems and some larger EI programs have been invited to an all-day rollout of the newly designed web-based Enterprise Invoice Management and Enterprise Services Management systems. Though they will not be operational for at least another year, this will be a big improvement in the way providers are able to do business with the state.

6. Member Updates: **Peggy Freedman** announced that the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council will hold its annual legislative reception at the State House on March 1, 2006. **Anita Moeller** announced that Head Start reauthorization has not yet come before Congress because of the "charitable choice" provision which stipulates that a Head Start program in a church would be allowed to hire based on religious preference. A 1% cut of federal funds is anticipated. Head Start is expanding its cluster training on vision and hearing problems to include preschool personnel. Other cluster trainings include how to run infant-toddler socialization groups, and working with parents on oral health. **Zulmira Allcock** announced that the dates of the annual MEIC Conference are May 10-11, 2006. **Suzanne Gottlieb** announced that the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project is looking for a Training Coordinator. Parents in the Boston, Southeast and Northeast regions are invited to apply. **Robin Adair** suggested that the various notices and fliers mentioned at ICC meetings be posted on a bulletin board for easier viewing during the meeting. **Julie Leahy** questioned whether First Aid and CPR could be offered as workshops at the MEIC Conference.

6. The ICC meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

The next ICC meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2006. The Operational Standards will be voted on at that meeting.

