

MINUTES

June 14, 2007

Worcester, Massachusetts

Members Present: Robin Adair, Pat Cameron, Darleen Corbett, Peggy Freedman, Jen Greco, Jack Harris, Karin Lifter, Ann Marsh, Neal Michaels, Sara Miranda, Anita Moeller, Judith Nest-Pasierb, Kathy Patisteas, Nancy Phillips, Barbara Prindle-Eaton, Ronna Schaffer, Joanne Williams, Amy Young.

Members Absent: Zulmira Allcock, Richard Breault, Sandra Daly, Pam Kuechler, Mary Lutz, Therese Murphy-Miller, Kimber O'Connell, Stanley Potrude, Kathy Rose, Tanya Wheeler, Pam Wildnauer.

Non-Voting Committee Chairs in Attendance: Margaret Mahoney, Tom Miller, Alden Wood.

1. Welcome: Co-Chairperson Barbara Prindle-Eaton welcomed the group. She thanked MEIC – the Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium – for providing Talking Points used in ICC testimony at the recent Regional Forums convened by Department of Public Health Commissioner John Auerbach. The Commissioner chose Early Intervention for his only program visit prior to the forum held on the Cape. He asked insightful questions and his Chief of Staff requested follow-up data on staffing shortages; that material has been sent.

Approval of Minutes: The Minutes of the ICC meeting held March 8, 2007, were approved with these corrections: Remove Margaret Mahoney's name from Members Present; remove Ronna Schaffer's name from Members Absent. Correct spelling it Karin *Lifter* under Members Absent.

2. Director's Report – Patti Fougere for Ron Benham: Patti made the following announcements: The Focused Monitoring Stakeholders' meeting originally scheduled for today will be held in August because Sharon Walsh is at the hearing on the IDEA Notice of Proposed Rulemaking being held in Washington, DC. The Massachusetts allocation of federal Part C dollars will decrease by approximately \$370,000 based on July, 2006, U. S. Census data just released. Providers recently received an email about the revised parent participation fee structure that goes into effect July 1, 2007. The \$1,000 top category was eliminated and there are moderate increases in all the other categories. A "Statement of Annual Income" is being designed; families that decline must submit this to the Department. No other documentation of income is being required at this time.

Family Outcomes Survey: Massachusetts will continue to use the NCSEAM – National Center for Special Education Accountability and Monitoring – indicators. Programs are being asked to have Service Coordinators deliver surveys to families at the time of each child's six-month IFSP update, with a return envelope pre-addressed to the survey firm that will do the data analysis. Service Coordinators are asked not to help families complete the survey, because during the pilot study families said they were not comfortable having program staff present. By early July, programs will receive packets of surveys for the number of children approaching six-month updates according to EIIS data. Ten percent of packets will be in Spanish; translation into other languages awaits additional funding. Families could be encouraged to ask a family or community

member to translate if needed. Operational Standards require programs to do an annual family satisfaction survey; the NCSEAM survey would meet that requirement.

3. Draft Part C Regulations: Two handouts were distributed: *Draft Part C Regulations – Infant Toddler Coordinators Association (ITCA) Update*; and *Review of Selected Regulatory Changes Proposed in Part C NPRM*, dated May 21, 2007. Darla Gundler shared her own testimony; she spoke as a parent representing the Early Intervention Family Alliance. With a strict 5-minute time limit, she covered three major talking points: 1) Changes in the 45-day timeline – in the new wording, the 45-day clock starts when the family gives signed permission for assessment, rather than when the initial referral is made; 2) the removal of phrases such as “family directed assessment” from the text; 3) the diminished role of parent representatives on the federal ICC because the new regulations state that a parent employed by an EI program cannot serve. Darla cautioned that, because these documents present a national perspective, they may not always accurately represent our own state’s primary issues at this time.

Amy Young described the current status of the Early Intervention Family Alliance. Business cards and these three documents were distributed: A press release dated April 16, 2007: *Parent Voice Strong for IDEA Part C*; *EIFA Summary Statement regarding the Proposed Part C Regulations*; and *Side by Side Comparison of Proposed IDEA 2004 Part C Regulations*, dated June 3, 2007. Amy reviewed major points. ICC members are urged to review the documents on the EIFA website, www.EIFamilyAlliance.org. and email Darla or Amy with questions or comments. Barbara Prindle-Eaton encouraged everyone to take the opportunity to be heard individually, at the Federal level, on the regulations. The deadline for written comments is July 23, 2007. In addition, Amy Young asked ICC members to send comments directly to her at quamyjim@verizon.net, so that the ICC can prepare a comprehensive response on behalf of the whole group.

4. Part C Determinations – Patti Fougere: A handout was distributed: *Part C Determinations – Presentation to ICC June 14, 2007*. Patti reviewed that the Department is responsible for a six-year plan that is to be updated annually in the state’s APR – the Annual Performance Report. Ours was submitted in February, 2007, and a response from IDEA is expected before the end of June. “Determinations” are conclusions based on available data, as drawn by OSEP – the federal Office of Special Education Programs – as to whether individual states *meet requirements, need assistance, need intervention, or need substantial intervention*. Patti reviewed the slides in the handout. States must make an annual determination on the performance of each local EI program using the same four categories OSEP uses. While there is no specific timeline in the statute, determinations should be made soon after issuing an annual report so that individual programs can take timely action if improvement is needed. Patti, with Jean Shimer, has developed three report formats that are posted on the website. Local determinations involve conversations with individual programs and development of corrective action plans when indicated. It is important for the ICC to understand the process. No enforcement procedures have yet been discussed; however, an appeals process will be developed this summer and brought to the ICC in the fall. This is critical because data always lags by about nine months, so a program might have improved or fully complied before the determination was even made. Full implementation is scheduled for spring, 2008. **Discussion:** The Focused Monitoring process will give programs useful information to help them design improvements. It will be important to update the EIIS system to add fields’ relevant data to assist programs in monitoring their own performance. Transition at age three is one area where this is badly needed. Eunice Shishmanian is already involved in a plan to reactivate the Data Advisory Group. This and other working groups might be included in the ICC Retreat scheduled for October 3 and 4, 2007.

5. Committee Reports:

- **Personnel Preparation Committee – Margaret Mahoney:** The committee continues to focus on interaction with the higher education community about ways to increase the supply of potential EI staff. In addition, the committee will survey programs on best practices for staff orientation and training, including ways to train and supervise part-time staff.
- **Program Planning Committee – Joanne Williams:** The committee is planning a presentation at the ICC Retreat in October on social-emotional wellbeing and relationship-based practice.
- **Specialty Services Committee – Tom Miller:** Tom distributed notes from the April committee meeting and an updated list of Children’s Specialists at the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The committee is working on *Starting Points for Service Coordination for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders*. Perkins update: A Teacher of the DeafBlind has been hired to work with schools on behalf of children with multiple issues so that schools will have less need to cobble together services from two different specialties.
- **Fiscal Committee – Miriam Lasher for Peter Woodbury:** Federal updates are now the first agenda item at every committee meeting. The committee continues to track collections of FFP – Federal Financial Participation. FFP reimbursement expected in July will enable payment of remaining FY 06 bills. The system now includes 46% developmental specialists; 40% of EI children have MassHealth. Both of these represent recent increases that help Massachusetts generate more FFP. There may be a budget shortfall for FY 08 related to anticipated continued growth in number of children served. There is an operating assumption that numbers will grow as long as providers retain the ability to determine the amount, type and location of services children receive. The new insurance law has already generated a 2.5% increase in the number of children who have MassHealth and this trend may continue. Discussion continues regarding the need for sustained funding of Early Intervention Partnerships Programs and Regional Consultation Programs.

6. Member Updates.

- **Barbara Prindle-Eaton** suggested that ICC members carefully follow the progress of the Department of Early Education and Care and potential formation of an Education Cabinet covering birth through higher education.
- **Karin Lifter** reminded ICC members that the Council for Exceptional Children is meeting in Boston in April, 2008 and it will be important for EI to have a presence there. Massachusetts is one of only a few states that do not have a chapter of CEC’s Division for Early Childhood. DEC meets in Toronto in October, 2007 and there may be a move to establish a Massachusetts Chapter during that meeting.
- **Pat Cameron** announced that Part B and Part C are both participating in a conference on inclusion in July which will encompass infant-toddler, preschool, Head Start and child care programs. Proposed new child care regulations have been posted for comment on the DEEC website. Compliance with transition and other requirements is being reported district by district on the website; to date, 74 out of over 200 districts meet the requirement to implement an IFSP on the child’s third birthday.
- **MEIC Updates:** Tom Miller stated that information is being requested from EI programs on best practices in collecting family participation fees. Margaret Mahoney announced that the Zero to Three website now includes a federal legislative update; this would provide good background for the ICC’s advocacy work.

- **DPH:** Darla Gundler announced that, at the Department, Jade Carlson is the new Coordinator of Collaboration, and Lynn Taylor is the new Training and Education Coordinator.
- **Barbara Prindle-Eaton** announced that this is her last ICC meeting as Co-Chairperson; she is stepping aside after six years as Co-Chair. Barbara thanked current ICC members along with all the parents, former Chairs, and many individuals who have worked in leadership roles and behind the scenes to make this extraordinary collaboration successful.

7. The ICC meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE: WORCESTER HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTER HAS CLOSED. THE NEXT ICC MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2007 FROM 10:00 AM TO 3:00 PM AT THE BEST WESTERN ROYAL PLAZA HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER IN MARLBORO.

MEETING SCHEDULE FOR NEXT YEAR

Thursday, November 8, 2007

Thursday, January 10, 2008

Thursday, March 13, 2008

Thursday, May 1, 2008

Thursday, June 12, 2008