

**MINUTES**

**June 3, 2004 – Worcester, Massachusetts**

**Members Present:** Zulmira Allcock, Donna Marie Bolden, Kate Campbell, Valerie Carbone, Kathy Dunn, Magalie Eugene, Maureen Flaherty, Peggy Freedman, Valerie Gibbemeyer, David Micka, Anita Moeller, Nancy Phillips, Barbara Prindle-Eaton, Ronna Schaffer, Judy Sleeper, Amy Young. **Voting by proxy:** Lois Aldrich, Darleen Corbett, Mary Jones, Roberta Perry.

**Non-voting Committee Chairs in attendance:** Dan Couet, Michelle Fagnano, Tom Miller.

**I. Welcome and Announcements – Barbara Prindle-Eaton:** The correct date for the November ICC meeting is November 18, 2004, not November 11 as previously announced. The ICC Retreat scheduled for September 22-23 will be held at the Wachusett Inn and Conference Center. Information will be sent during the summer and pre-registration will be required. The September ICC meeting will take place on the second day of the Retreat. The next meeting of the Focused Monitoring Work Group (formerly known as Stakeholders) will be June 29 at University of Massachusetts Medical Center in Worcester.

Two new ICC members have been appointed: Richard Brealt will represent the Department of Mental Health, and Robin Adare is the new physician. Barbara recognized Dan Couet, who is leaving his position as Chair of the Standards Committee of the ICC. Dan has been an effective voice in favor of maintaining the at risk category of eligibility for Early Intervention. His advocacy on behalf of young children and families, and his wonderful sense of humor will be missed.

**Approval of Minutes:** The Minutes of the meeting of May 6, 2004, were approved as written with one abstention.

**II. Director's Report – Ron Benham:** Ron acknowledged Dan Couet's career-long commitment to children and families, stating that he has given freely of his time and good humor through his daily commitment within his own agency, on the ICC and in other statewide forums.

Ron introduced Ellen Kiron (**sp ???????**), newly appointed Director of MECCSPG, the Massachusetts Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Planning Grant. Ellen's previous experience includes working at the Education Development Center and in the Department of Social Services.

Ron also gave these updates:

- The Department has received verbal assurance that its 18<sup>th</sup> Year Part C Application to the federal government has been approved. It is clear that the federal Department of Education will be more concerned about collecting data to demonstrate results or outcomes than it has been in the past. The 50 states and territories each have different data collection methods and levels of engagement, and states do not use common definitions. The trend is toward identifying just three to five evidence-based indicators, and using the same questions and definitions in every state, so that meaningful comparisons can be made. It is especially challenging to accomplish this because, in the field of education, states' rights has always been a dominant influence on decision making and practice.
- Regarding reauthorization of IDEA in Congress, differences between House and Senate versions are currently being worked out in Conference Committee. In general, the politically charged issues pertain more to Part B than to Part C. Reauthorization will probably not take place this year. Advocacy efforts may best be focused on the Appropriations Committee. Rolling out CAPTA – the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act – will have major fiscal implications in many states. Under CAPTA, children under age three in families where there is a substantiated investigation of abuse or neglect must receive a referral for Part C evaluation and services. In Massachusetts, where we already serve children at risk, we believe we could provide full evaluations and necessary services. Many states that do not serve children at risk are considering some procedure for pre-screening; they simply don't have the money to provide full evaluations unless Congress appropriates more dollars.
- President Bush has appointed John Hager to replace Bob Pasternak as Chief of OSERS – the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. Hager is well known to disability groups, less so to those in education.
- In Massachusetts, the Early Intervention budget has moved favorably through the state budget process to date. Both versions contain requested appropriations and an increase in the insurance cap to \$5,200 per child per year.
- The new Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care appeared in both the House and the Senate versions of the state budget, though timelines and governance structure differ somewhat between the two. After a year of planning, the new Department would become effective on July 1, 2005. It will administer programs, services and contracts under the guidance of a Board of Early Education and Care, and an Advisory Board. One challenge for the transition is to assure continuity for programs such as the Massachusetts Family Network and Community Partnerships for Children. The exact relationship of the Early Intervention system and other perinatal programs of the Department of Public Health to the new Department will probably not be known for some time. It is encouraging to note that the Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium is among the constituent groups being named to the Advisory Board. EI is expected to have a role in developing common standards for infant-toddler programs and competencies for providers, and in adopting an environmental rating scale appropriate for use with infants and toddlers.

**III. Committee Reports: Standards Committee – Dan Couet:** Dan announced that Alden Wood will become the new Chair of the Standards Committee in July. Alden will also attend Steering Committee. Two handouts were distributed: *Recommendations for Best Practices of Supervision in Early Intervention*, and *Supervision Survey Summary*. These documents summarize the work of the committee and the input given by programs on a survey of supervision practices. Supervision is seen as a valuable activity in EI that promotes learning and enhances recruitment and retention. The recommendations are a guide pointing the way toward a standard of practice that could be fully implemented only when there is sufficient funding. A career ladder leading to provision of supervision, and core training for new supervisors, are necessary ingredients of best practice. Barbara Prindle-Eaton thanked the committee for its hard work, and commented on the timeliness of the recommendations given the importance to be placed on quality of service and education of providers in the new Department of Early Education and Care.

**Personnel Preparation – Judy Sleeper:** Judy distributed the latest draft of the new recruitment brochure, in which suggestions made at the last ICC meeting have been incorporated. She explained that this brief brochure is meant to be generic; there is currently nothing in print that introduces EI as a career. FY 04 funds have been encumbered with which to print the brochure; the color scheme will be similar to that of the existing EI poster. The committee's next step will be to develop specific letters and supporting documents aimed at various constituencies: college students, people from other fields, etc. **Program Planning – Hope Colen:** The committee has made final edits for the transition documents, *On the Move*, and *Looking Ahead*. These will be mailed to the ICC this summer; approval will be requested at the September ICC meeting. The committee has also been working on its goals related to the ICC Strategic Plan.

**Low Incidence Committee – Tracy Osbahr for Tom Miller:** The committee has revised the *Puzzling Behavior* brochure in order to reflect updated information regarding fees families may be charged. **Fiscal Committee – Michelle Fagnano:** The committee continues to review the status of claims payments to programs and issues regarding reimbursement by specific insurance companies that may require action. The committee is working on its Strategic Plan goals. The committee has also worked on a fee brochure; translations into Spanish, Portuguese and Khmer are in process. The final draft has been forwarded to the Department for review. Michelle distributed *Recommendations to the Department of Public Health through the ICC* regarding annual fee reconciliation. This pertains to situations in which programs have made good faith efforts to collect fees from families but have been unable to recover sufficient dollars to offset the fee assessment assigned to them by the Department.

**Motion: To accept the recommendations from the Fiscal Committee regarding the fee reconciliation process.**

**Discussion:** The vote today is advisory; the Department has responsibility for implementation. It is *recommended* that EI clinicians not collect money from clients. The other items in the handout would be *required*. Regarding payment back to programs that had been assessed more than they

could collect: The intent is for programs not to lose money on fee collection. If they have acted in good faith, and assuming the Department has sufficient funds, reconciliation would take place. The Department acknowledges that assessment is based on a prior year's data; for example, assessment for FY 05 is based on FY 03 numbers, so there could be idiosyncratic variations in individual programs. Concerns were raised about the fact that referral sources tell families EI is a free service. Ron stated that the Department could consider sending something to the pediatric community; it will be reprinting with corrections the brochure called *What Is EI?* and the outreach poster, and the Family Rights packet has already been revised.

**Vote: The ICC voted unanimously in favor of approval of the recommendations regarding fee reconciliation.**

**Membership Committee – Amy Young:** The committee is well along in the process of confirming ICC membership for next year and is doing well in recruiting new members to fill vacancies. **Fiscal Advisory Subcommittee – Amy Young:** Acknowledging that advocacy is a rolling process, the subcommittee is developing its strategic plan and annual timelines for both state and federal advocacy. It hopes to develop a brochure and a power point CD that could be given to programs and parent groups.

**IV. Member Updates: David Micka – Office of Child Care Services:** OCCS has put a temporary hold on EI vouchers pending completion of the FY 05 state budget process.

**Katharine Thomas:** The Focused Monitoring Workgroup is an advisory group that makes recommendations to the Department on how best to implement principles of focused monitoring. Information will be sent to the members of the group. **Darla Gundler – Parent Leadership**

**Project:** The project is being reorganized. The position postings for Training Coordinator and Outreach Coordinator have been re-posted with a new application deadline of June 25; they can be viewed on the project website as [eiplp.org](http://eiplp.org). Darla also reminded members of the ICC and its committees that Retreat information will be mailed in August; the Conference Center will require a firm count of anticipated participants.

**V. The ICC meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.**