

MINUTES

June 9, 2005

Worcester, Massachusetts

Members Present: Robin Adair, Zulmira Allcock, Donna Marie Bolden, Valerie Carbone, Hope Colen, Darleen Corbett, Maureen Flaherty, Peggy Freedman, Valerie Gibbemeyer, Mary Jones, Julie Leahy, Karin Lifter, Margaret Mahoney, Anita Moeller, Therese Murphy-Miller, Kathy Patisteas, Nancy Phillips, Barbara Prindle-Eaton, Ronna Schaffer, Judy Sleeper, Amy Young.

Non-voting Committee Chairs in attendance: Michelle Fagnano, Joanne Sweeney, Alden Wood, and Amy Young.

1. Welcome, announcements, approval of Minutes: Chairperson Barbara Prindle-Eaton welcomed the group. Minutes of the ICC meeting held May 5, 2005, were approved as written.

2. Director's Report – Ron Benham: Copies of “Annual State Application under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as Amended in 2004 – Federal Fiscal Year 2005” were distributed. Ron explained that a Public Hearing had been held in January 2005 and a required second Public Hearing was held May 31, 2005. All states will receive conditional Part C awards. By April 30, 2006, Massachusetts needs to be able to state that it has new policies and procedures in place to bring our state into compliance with new federal regulations. **Motion: It was moved and seconded that the Massachusetts Part C Application be approved as written. There was no discussion. All members voted in favor of approving the application.**

Ron went on to explain that seven public meetings regarding IDEIA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, are being held across the country. The Infant-Toddler Coordinators Association is interested in having a presence at all of these meetings and is doing a lot of advocacy to be sure that Part C interests are being attended to. The state budget for FY 06 is moving through the Legislature. The Department's request is for an additional \$1.6 million. The MEIC – the Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium – is advocating for an additional \$1 million for partial restoration of cost reimbursement contracts to programs. In preparation for FY 07, the MEIC is also outlining a multi-year strategy to address the serious recruitment and retention issues that programs are experiencing. Concerns about the participation fee that some families pay for Early Intervention are being addressed, and plans are in process for a way to prorate fees for families whose children receive less than a full year of services. The Department will also do a survey to determine how fees actually collected by programs compare with the amount assessed by the Department.

Discussion: Issues regarding changes in eligibility requirements were discussed including possible confusion on the part of referral sources since Massachusetts began requiring 25% delay on April 1, 2004. Federal language refers to a “rigorous” definition of delay, but the fact remains that understanding of what that means varies from state to state. Providers stressed that it is important to make referrals rather than trying to pre-determine eligibility, and let the EI program conduct its assessment while engaging the family in a collaborative process leading to a service plan. There is no federal guidance on how services are to be provided. It is concerning when clinical decisions are increasingly driven by what staff a program can afford to hire, that bigger issue will be addressed in a multi-year approach.

3. Celebration of ICC Members and Committee Chairs who are leaving the ICC: Barbara recognized these leaders who are moving on: Mary Jones, Central Region Parent Representative; Valerie Gibbemeyer, Southeast Parent Representative; Margaret Mahoney, Northeast Provider Representative; Judy Sleeper, Metro-west provider Representative; Amy Young, Northeast Parent Representative; Michelle Fagnano, Chair of the Fiscal Committee; and Hope Colen, Metro-west Parent Representative and Vice Chairperson. These parents and professionals have been partners who have played amazing roles on the ICC; they have been active and committed. We hope other leaders will step forward.

4. Committee Reports. Standards Committee – Alden Wood: Alden distributed three sections of the Operational Standards that have already been reviewed: VI. Program Entry; VII. IFSP Development; X. Family Participation. Alden thanked Jocelyn Woog for her work in developing the section of the website where the Standards are posted. A feedback form is posted. Please use a separate form for responding to each different section of the Standards, and note that you can submit comments even though sections have already been reviewed. It will be an open, continuous process right up until the vote next winter. ICC members and regional representatives are urged to let Alden know if there are providers or other groups that have not received the documents. There will be two more four-hour committee meetings over the summer. Changes driven by federal regulation will be incorporated, and these elements that cannot be changed will be color-coded. The goal is to present a final draft to the ICC at its January, 2006, meeting, and to vote in March.

Personnel Preparation – Hope Colen: A survey of social emotional wellbeing practices is being distributed in July. The committee is working on a succession plan, and invites new members.

Specialty Services – Tracy Osbahr: The committee has worked on its strategic plan, and updated brochures on collaboration, puzzling behavior, and hearing impairment. The committee mission has expanded to include children with multiple issues and special health care needs

Fiscal Committee – Michelle Fagnano: Michelle reviewed the status of payment to programs across several fiscal years. The committee has withdrawn its request for a subgroup to work on recruitment and retention issues. The committee continues to monitor issues of insurance reimbursement that impact program cash flow and business processes. Notes of the most recent meeting, the committee's strategic plan, insurance updates, and a Quick Reference MassHealth Directory were made available. **Membership Committee – Amy Young:** Amy announced that Maureen Flaherty will take over as Membership Chairperson. The committee has quite a few vacancies to fill for the coming year.

5. Hausslein Awards Ceremony – Darla Gundler: Darla described a wonderful awards ceremony held in early June. Erin Ward spoke movingly about the work her parent team did to form a support group called TrachCare: A support group for caregivers of children with trachs. After a long period of planning, the work culminated in a power point presentation. A core group of five parents used a collaborative decision making process, worked on branding, and established the group as a 501(c) (3) nonprofit corporation. **Other notable events:** Valerie Gibbemeyer shared with the group that her son presented a letter to seven classmates when he graduated yesterday. Joanne Sweeney described an exhibit called Faces of Wonder which has been hung in the new Riverside Early Intervention building that had its grand opening two weeks ago. The photographs of Riverside EI children were taken and donated by Marcia Dolgin, a professional photographer.

6. FY 2006 ICC Meeting Schedule: The ICC Retreat will be held Thursday and Friday, September 22-23, 2005, at the Wachusett Inn and Conference Center in Westminster, MA. Regular ICC meetings, all on Thursdays, will be Nov. 10, 2005, Jan. 12, Mar. 9, May 4, and June 8, 2006.