

MINUTES
September 12, 2002
Worcester, Massachusetts

Members Present: Lois Aldrich, Zulmira Allcock, Margrit Bechara, Joan BeJune, Claire Brady, Hope Colen, Kathy Dunn, Renee Duseau, Karin Elliott, Magalie Eugene, Cathleen Farrell, Margaret Mahoney, Sara Miranda, Pat Pellegrino, Roberta Perry, Barbara Prindle-Eaton, Judy Sleeper, Mary Ellen Thompson, Deborah Turiano, Amy Young.

In addition, proxies were received from the following members who could not attend, regarding the vote to be taken today on the ICC By-Laws revision: Mary Jones, Karin Lifter, Therese Murphy, Mark Sandt.

I. Welcome, Introductions, Announcements – Barbara Prindle-Eaton: Chairperson Barbara Prindle-Eaton welcomed ICC members and guests to the first meeting of the year. She announced that Hope Colen is now Vice Chairperson of the ICC, and welcomed the following newly-appointed members: Zulmira Allcock, representing the Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium; Karin Elliott, representing the Head Start State Collaboration Project; Magalie Eugene, Greater Boston Parent Representative; Cathleen Farrell, representing the Office of Child Care Services; and Roberta Perry, representing the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Barbara thanked ICC members for their hard work in accomplishing many things over the past year. These are some highlights: A revision of the Operational Standards that guide service provision in Massachusetts is now in final draft; a 4.2% increase in reimbursement rates for Early Intervention services became effective April 1, 2002, as did legislation making the work done by educators billable to private insurance just as other disciplines already are; a Task Force on Recruitment and Retention was created; The Membership Committee made progress in achieving full participation of members in the work of the ICC; and the Program Committee completed work on the new IFSP Guidance Document.

II. Director's Report – Ron Benham: Ron reviewed the plan for reorganization of the Department of Public Health which was announced on September 3rd. Early Intervention will be in the new Division of Perinatal and Early Childhood Health within the Bureau of Family and Community Health, along with programs such as FIRSTLink, First Steps, and Early Childhood Health, for which Steve Shuman is responsible. The others divisions within the Bureau are Special Health Needs, Primary Care, Youth and Adolescence, Health Promotion, Nutrition, and Injury Prevention. The changes are designed to ensure greater permeability and improve communication between divisions in order to use resources more efficiently. The Early Childhood Working Group within the Department will be reconvened very soon; Sally Fogarty, Bureau Director, is very supportive of this effort.

Regarding federal issues: Re-authorization of Part C, the Infants and Toddlers Program of IDEA, will probably be deferred to the next calendar year. A bill introduced by Representative

Patrick Kennedy of Rhode Island is attempting to address important issues, including the need for more adequate funding for Part C, and the question of whether EI should be lodged in, or under the oversight of state Departments of Education. In its current form, the bill is unlikely to pass, but important aspects of it may be incorporated in the Senate bill that Ted Kennedy is expected to introduce. If EI becomes more like an education program, with FAPE – the right to free and appropriate education – down to birth, then insurance companies would be much less likely to pay for EI services as they now do in this state. Other issues in re-authorization of IDEA include how to preserve the extent of family participation that is appropriate in EI, and how to resolve some of the inherent differences between the IEP and the IFSP.

The Department of Public Health is working on projections for State Fiscal Year 2004. Due to the insurance legislation which became effective April 1, 2002, DPH is now the #2 payer for EI services; private insurance is #1. EI Services ended FY 02 in a break-even position. Thus far, EI has fared well in the midst of the serious cuts in state funding that are affecting other human service programs. Big questions for EI for FY 03 have to do with predicting the rate of continued growth in the number of children served, the increasing cost of serving children with autism spectrum diagnoses, and anticipating the amount of federal Part C dollars that will come to Massachusetts.

A growth rate of 6% in FY 03, and 5% in FY 04, is projected for EI Services in Massachusetts. That would mean that in FY 04, more than 27,000 children would receive ongoing services, and an additional 6,000-7,000 would receive screening and assessment services only. Massachusetts now serves over 5% of the birth to three cohort in EI, whereas based on the December 1, 2001 count, the nationwide average is 1.99%. There is a deep well of support for EI in this state, but there is also a great need to develop a more comprehensive system of care to complement what EI is expected to do.

III. Overview and Orientation for ICC Members: Barbara Prindle-Eaton reviewed the ICC Members' Handbook, challenging members to be fully present and participatory in the work of the ICC. Members are urged to become active on ICC Committees. New members are encouraged to draw on the experience of their assigned mentors, and also to feel free to call Darla Gundler or Barbara with their questions. The various sections of the Handbook were reviewed. Barbara highlighted By-Laws changes on Page 7 that are designed to make it easier for the ICC to do its formal business.

A motion was made and seconded to amend Section 2 to read as follows: “50% of the current members shall constitute a quorum.” The vote in favor of the motion was unanimous.

A motion was made and seconded to amend Section 4, Amendments, to read as follows: “The Council at any regular meeting or special meeting may amend these by-laws by a vote of 2/3 of current members. Proposed by-law changes shall be submitted to the Council at least 15 calendar days prior to the scheduled meeting in which the action is taken.” The vote in favor of the motion was unanimous.

A revised Page 7 of the ICC Members Handbook was then distributed.

Change of meeting date: The corrected date for the March meeting of the ICC is March 6.

Members are urged to contact Darla Gundler whenever they are unable to attend an ICC meeting. This will enable proxies to be secured in preparation for votes to be taken at specific meetings.

IV. Charges to ICC Committees for FY 2003: A document titled “Charges to Committees from Steering for 2002-2003” was distributed to members. Committees are urged to review their charges and submit any recommended changes to Steering Committee for consideration.

All members of the EI community are invited to help recruit additional members for the various committees. Membership on the ICC is not a prerequisite for committee membership. In addition, the following vacancies on the ICC are to be filled, and interested candidates are invited to contact Amy Young, Chairperson of the Membership Committee, or Darla Gundler, ICC staff person at DPH: Boston Provider Representative, Southeast Parent Representative, Parent Representative to Steering Committee, Legislator, Department of Social Services Representative, and one “Other Organization” representative.

V. Committee Reports. Personnel Preparation Committee – Judy Sleeper reporting for Karin Lifter: The Committee met in August to review its goals, based on discussions held during the ICC Retreat. Goals include bringing a draft of revisions of the CSPD – the Comprehensive System for Personnel Development – to the January, 2003, ICC meeting. Responding to questions ICC members asked, Barbara Prindle-Eaton requested that the Committee develop a process by which the EI community could give input prior to presentation of a final draft; this process is to be shared at the November ICC meeting. The Committee will then shift to consider how to increase support for clinical supervision in EI programs; it also intends to follow up on the topic of loan forgiveness for staff working in EI. The Committee is seeking a parent member.

Low Incidence Committee – Tom Miller: Tom thanked Cheryl Soukop, a parent member who is moving out of state, and announced that a new parent member is needed, as well as a member representing the autism community. Amy Young suggested all committees be thinking about alternative ways that interested people might participate, for example, through speaker phone or conference calls, internet chat rooms, or possibly through change of meeting location. **Program Planning Committee – Joanne Sweeney:** A memo dated September 12, 2002, regarding the Final (IFSP) Guidance Document was distributed. Once approval has been given by DPH, the Guidance Document will be produced using the graphic theme of the physician poster. Distribution will be by hard copy, e-mail, and through the website of the Federation for Children with Special Needs. Translation into other languages is planned. Next, the Committee will work on updating the IFSP itself, as well as the IFSP brochure. The Committee is seeking additional members.

Fiscal Committee – Michelle Fagnano: The Committee is finalizing goals and objectives for FY 2003, and continues its ongoing discussion of spending patterns, insurance issues and other fiscal matters that have an impact on providers. Discussion of HIPPA implementation includes consideration of changes which will need to be implemented by the various practice management systems that handle billing for EI programs. **Task Force on Personnel Recruitment and Retention – Kathy Dunn:** The Task Force is reviewing the relevant parts of the CSPD. It expects to be winding down, and has three more meetings scheduled, including a

joint meeting with the Personnel Preparation Committee. The Committee is requesting the opportunity to present its work to the January ICC meeting.

Standards Committee – Dan Couet: Dan reviewed the process the Committee has followed while revising the Operational Standards which govern practice in all certified EI programs in Massachusetts. The Committee reviewed each section, and solicited feedback. Eligibility definitions and the Policy on Early Childhood Transitions, Infectious Disease and Sanitation Requirements, and Due Process procedures have all been revised. A Final Draft will be presented for approval at the November ICC meeting. The entire document will be reviewed for continuity and consistency of language, grammar, and format. *Discussion:* It was clarified that feedback on the current draft is to be given to Dan Couet by early October, following an opportunity for discussion at regional meetings of the Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium. Providers expressed concern that new provisions regarding developmental specialists will increase the difficulty programs already have in arranging for co-treatment while working within billing rules.

VI. New Business and Announcements: Ron Benham reviewed staffing changes in EI Services at DPH: Jocelyn Woag has been appointed as the new staff person for the Parent Leadership Project, and Mary Dennehy-Colorusso is now the Coordinator of Procedural Safeguards. **Claire Brady** commented on the fact that, due to budget cuts, 39 Parent-Child Home Programs have been eliminated in the Department of Education; fifteen of the sites have found ways to keep some activities going by collaborating with Massachusetts Family Network, EI, or Community Partnerships for Children. Project Playgroup programming has ended, and an evaluation is under way. Twenty-five grants have recently been awarded to explore options for children with autism. **Cathleen Farrell** noted that Office of Child Care Services vouchers for EI children have been frozen due to recent budget cuts. **Zulmira Allcock** announced that the Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium Call for Papers and Presentations has been issued. The final deadline for proposals is November 15 for the Conference to be held April 30 - May 2, 2003. **Darla Gundler** announced that the application for Hausslein Parent Leadership Awards is available on the Parent Leadership website at www.eiplp.org. Projects must be parent-initiated efforts, and the team leader must be a current EI parent. Ron Benham announced that applications are being accepted for a new group of Zero to Three Mid-Career Fellows. Questions can be directed to Ron, or to John Lippitt at the Heller School at Brandeis University.

VII. Adjournment: 2:10 p.m.