

# Interagency Coordinating Council

February 25, 2008  
9 AM – 1:30 p.m.

CAFAP  
2189 Silas Deane Highway  
Rocky Hill, CT

## Minutes

**Laurel Ross, ICC Chair**  
*ARC, Greenwich*  
**Elayne Thomas ICC Vice Chair**  
*Parent*  
**Timothy Bowles**  
*Dept. of Social Services*  
**Deborah Pagano**  
*Parent*  
**Jose Centeno**  
*Office of Protection and Advocacy*  
**Dona Ditrio**  
*New Opportunities Early Head Start*  
**Rita Esposito**  
*REACHOUT, Inc.*  
**Linda Goodman**  
*Dept. of Developmental Services*  
**Mark A. Greenstein, M.D.**  
*Pediatrician*  
**Clara Gutierrez**  
*Parent*  
**Jeanette Haines**  
*BESB*  
**Richard Fisher**  
*Dept. of Insurance*  
**Cynthia Jackson**  
*Children's Therapy Services*  
**Robert LaCamera, M.D.**  
*American Academy of Pediatrics*  
**Joe McLaughlin**  
*McLaughlin and Associates*  
**Elise Minor**  
*Parent*  
**Kathleen Bradley, PhD**  
*Dept. of Children and Families*  
**Maria Synodi**  
*State Dept. of Education*  
**Patrick Ruddy**  
*Parent*  
**Louis Tallarita**  
*SDE- Educ. for Homeless Children*  
**Rep. Jack W. Thompson**  
*CT legislator*  
**Robin Tousey-Ayers**  
*Dept. of Public Health*  
**Melissa Van Buren, alternate**  
*A.J. Pappanikou Center for Excellence*  
**Myra Watnick**  
*Rehabilitation Associates, Inc.*  
**Diane Wixted**  
*Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired*

ICC Members Present: Tim Bowles, Rita Esposito, Richard Fisher, Dr. Mark Greenstein, Clara Gutierrez, Cindy Jackson, Dr. Robert LaCamera, Joe McLaughlin, Deborah Pagano, Lolli Ross, Patrick Ruddy, Elayne Thomas, Robin Tousey-Ayers, Myra Watnick, Diane Wixted

ICC Members Absent: Kathleen Bradley, Dona Ditrio, , Linda Goodman, Jeanette Haines Elise Minor, Maria Synodi, Louis Tallarita, Rep. Jack Thompson, Melissa Van Buren,

The meeting began at 9:20 AM.

### ***Introductions:***

Lolli Ross, ICC Chair, welcomed everyone to the State ICC meeting. Council members and ten members of the public introduced themselves. A warm welcome was made for the ICC's newest members, two parents- Patrick Ruddy and Deborah Pagano.

### ***Approval of December Minutes***

Dr. LaCamera inquired on Christina Rao's public comment at the December ICC meeting and suggested that pediatricians are not aware of all of the services that Birth to Three provides. Dr. Greenstein made a motion to approve the December minutes as written. Cindy Jackson seconded the motion. The Motion passed unanimously.

### ***Housekeeping***

Lolli Ross will be stepping down as the ICC Chairperson. Dr. Mark Greenstein has offered to become ICC Chairperson. For future Chairperson appointments, the ICC would like to revisit the by-laws and the process of selecting a new Chairperson.

## ***Public Comment***

Wendy Wein, from Easter Seals of Meriden discussed safety of the communities for Birth to Three providers. Programs are struggling to provide services in communities that are unsafe. Wendy gave examples of unsafe situations her staff has been involved in such as, an OT had a gun flashed at her, a teacher had left 15 minutes before drive by, suspicious men following staff through neighborhoods and most recently a teacher's car stolen while completing an evaluation. Wendy stated that it is hard to provide services in natural environments because of the risk to staff safety, and would like the current home-based model to be reconsidered.

Discussion ensued around alternatives such as meeting in libraries, nurseries or play groups. Some Birth to Three programs have found meeting with certain local police departments to be helpful, while other police departments have not been as receptive. Lolli contacted Carl Kemper of DCF to follow-up on their policies regarding going into suspicious homes. DCF did not have any policies in place. Transportation issues were also raised. Cindy made a **Motion** to make a recommendation to the lead agency to develop a task force made up of family members, police representatives, community providers, ICC members, Birth to Three representatives, and other state agencies involved in providing services in unsafe urban areas and the lead agency representative to evaluate services to this population and develop policies and procedures accordingly. Tim Bowles seconded the **motion**. The Motion passed unanimously. The community safety issue was deferred to the Quality Committee for further consideration.

## ***Resource Manual***

The Connecticut Interagency Birth-to-Three Coordinating Council resource manuals were handed out to all members. Please contact Anna Gorski with any changes or edits.

## ***Lead Agency Update***

Please refer to the "Lead Agency Update posted on the B23 website- under State Interagency Coordinating Council

Peggy Boyajian, accountant in the Birth to Three system presented the FY08 accrued expenditure for contracted programs as well as referrals and eligible children. Parent fees and insurance were raised. It was suggested that Linda Goodman, and Richard Fisher should prepare a proposal and set up a meeting with OPM to discuss raising the insurance limit to \$5,000.00. An issue that presents a barrier to the programs are self-funded plans (ERISA) which do not have to follow State insurance laws.

The Governor's proposed mid-budget adjustments do not include a COLA for contracted human service providers. That will obviously be a focus of the budget negotiations between the legislature and the Governor's office when it is time to finalize the budget. The department's budget hearings were held February 15<sup>th</sup> (full appropriations committee) and February 19<sup>th</sup> (health and hospital subcommittee of appropriations). The Birth to Three data was reported as part of the legislatures Results Based Accountability initiative and legislators are most impressed by the child outcome data as well as the data that shows 63.6% of the children that had received Birth to three services and were attending Kindergarten in September , 2007 did not require special education services. This data was based on children in Kindergarten who had IEP's in Sept 2007 and does not include children covered by 504 plans.

An RFP for general programs to serve towns in the Northeast and Fairfield County was posted on February 21, 2008. Proposals are due April 30 and the bidders conference is being held March 14. Start-up will be July 1. This will be followed in late March by another RFP for autism-specific programs to serve towns in central and eastern Connecticut. Start up will be by September 1.

### Personnel and Office Reorganization Update

Lana Raymond (secretary at the Service and Support Office) left to take a job at Eastern Connecticut State University in January. Pat Edwards left in January to take a job with the Department of Environmental Protection. Tom Coakley is retiring as of March 1, 2008. On the plus side, we have just refilled Molly Cole's position. Aileen McKenna will be joining our staff February 29, 2008 to act as the primary contact person for all family issues. Aileen has an MSW and is about to complete a Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Health Studies. She most recently worked in Kalamazoo, Michigan overseeing a local early intervention program, a parent-to-parent program, and a fatherhood renewal program. Her direct telephone line will be 860-418-6136.

The toll-free support line number (866-888-4188) has been relocated to our office in Hartford. With Tom's departure, we will be closing the Service and Support Office in Rocky Hill and those functions will be assumed by staff in our Hartford office. Our plan is to reclassify and refill Tom's position as an assistant director for Birth to Three and to have that person be the primary contact for all provider and LEA issues. We are in the process of reclassifying and refilling Pat Edwards' position as an assistant accountant and hope to be able to have someone hired by the end of March. In the meantime, Peggy Boyajian and Kathy Granata have been hard at work keeping up with the bills.

We have established a new position in our IT Division that will be funded 50% by Birth to Three and 50% by state general funds. That person will act as back-up to Sandy Booth in managing the Birth to Three data system and will hopefully be able to assist in the routine data reporting that is now performed by Alice Ridgway. We already have applicants to be interviewed and that new hire should begin in late March.

### Provider Input

We held a meeting on January 9, 2008 for all of the Birth to Three program directors and supervisors to give us their input in four areas: data system, personnel development, quality assurance, and child find (particularly the delays in initial evaluation). As changes are made, they are communicated to programs via an electronic Provider Update that is issued following each staff meeting. If ICC members who are not providers would like to be added to that e-list, please let Anna Gorski know.

A suggestion was made for the Birth to Three website that the LEA list needs to be updated or removed.

### Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

The next federal application is due May 7<sup>th</sup> and must go out for public comment since the budget has been slightly revised. The latest allocation is .2% less than last year, although that could still change if OSEP receives revised Census Bureau data before July 1.

Please review the application's budget section (there are no changes in any other section) and give any feedback either today or any time before April 30, 2008.

## Monitoring and Accountability

The Annual Performance Report was submitted by February 1 and is posted on the website. Data by program will be posted on the website in March, as required by OSEP. Determinations about each program will also be made in April, although not posted on the website.

## **Birth to Three Guideline on Infant Mental Health**

The Connecticut guideline on infant mental health is being updated; the task force headed by Margret Holmberg has been meeting and making revisions. An outline of the guideline was presented to the ICC. The outline includes:

1. Introduction
2. Definition of Infant/Early childhood mental health
3. Social/Emotional development
4. Approaches to Infant/early childhood mental health
5. Evaluation, assessment/screening
6. Services and resources
7. training
8. Family vignettes
9. Appendices

## **Focus Monitoring Update**

Alice Ridgway, Manager in the Birth to Three system, gave an update on a FM visit based on child find in December where the team found the program to be using “skeleton IFSP’s”.

In January, a transition focused monitoring visit found the program was providing smooth transition, except for one school district where transitions were not as smooth.

In the beginning of February, a data verification visit was made to another program and the findings are still being considered.

## ***Update: CT Family Support Network***

Lisa Sheppard, Southeastern FSN Coordinator, provided an update on FSN activities statewide. The Family Support Council (FSC) legislative breakfast is being held on March 5, 2008 at the LOB, everyone is invited. The FSC legislative priorities will be discussed at the breakfast and include 1) healthcare-access, financing, providers 2) Workforce- capacity, quality, incentives 3) ensure availability of a coordinated, integrated system for children. FSC is voting to support the Catastrophic Relief Fund which is being presented to legislators this year by the Children with Special HealthCare Needs Collaborative, a group of people advocating for children’s healthcare – related needs, led by Commission On Children and Office Child Advocate. The idea is that all employers would pay one dollar annually per employee, and the money would go into a pool called the Catastrophic Relief Fund. It could be designed to benefit children only or all citizens and would be used to offset expensive medical costs.

Deborah Pagano volunteered to be the ICC representative for the Family Support Council meetings and Cindy Jackson agreed to be her back-up.

The Council took a lunch break.

## **Committee Reports**

**Legislative Committee:** Joe reported meeting with UCONN to develop a collaborative effort to train Speech and Language Pathologist's to work with children with Autism. The psychology department at UCONN is also very interested in the effort. The committee also discussed raising the insurance maximum benefit to \$6400.00. The committee proposed a meeting with Birth to Three, OPM, Office Child Healthcare Advocate, and Insurance dept. along with healthcare insurance companies to discuss adding a universal suffix or alpha to be added to the insurance number to identify self-funded plans.

**Quality Services Committee:** Cindy reported increasing the number of professionals going into Birth to Three by pursuing universities to develop an intersession course in which UCONN and Southern students can get credit, classroom time, and connect with programs to get on-site experience. The recommendation to the lead agency to develop a task force made up of family members, police representatives, community providers, ICC members, Birth to Three representatives, and other state agencies involved in providing services in unsafe urban areas and the lead agency representative to evaluate services to this population and develop policies and procedures was discussed. The option of including a justification page on the IFSP for services provided in a natural environment was another alternative discussed.

**Communications Committee:** Anna reported the committee is looking to develop a mission and vision for the ICC as well as a brochure. The committee will be researching other Councils by-laws to look at their process for choosing a Chairperson and amend the current ICC by-laws. The ICC will be reviewing MOU's to see what needs to be updated.

## ***Reports and Announcements***

**Raised Bill No. 276-** AN ACT EXPANDING INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR HEARING AIDS FOR CHILDREN. Each individual health insurance policy providing coverage of the type specified in subdivisions (1), (2), (4), (11) and (12) of section 38a-469 delivered, issued for delivery, renewed, amended or continued in this state on or after October 1, [2001] 2008, shall provide coverage for hearing aids for children [twelve] eighteen years of age or younger. Such hearing aids shall be considered durable medical equipment under the policy and the policy may limit the hearing aid benefit to one thousand dollars within a twenty-four-month period.

**Raised Bill No. 303-** AN ACT CREATING A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FROM BIRTH TO AGE FIVE. The Departments of Social Services, Education, Public Health, Children and Families and the Children's Trust Fund shall enter into a master contract to promote improved child outcomes and the integration of services for families and children from birth to five years of age in the areas of maternal and child health, literacy, family support and early care and education. The master contract shall include research-based practices, align categorical funding streams, adopt common population outcomes for program implementation and establish protocols to work collaboratively with local communities and providers. The master contract shall

promote collaborative management across departments and agencies and promote work with local communities to implement strategies that focus on families and children in an outcome-based system. The contract shall include monitoring and evaluation of outcomes in a results-based accountability model.

A motion to adjourn was made by Myra and seconded by Patrick. The meeting ended at 1:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anna Gorski

***NEXT State ICC MEETING***

**Monday, April 14, 2008** at CAFAP, 2189 Silas Deane Highway, Rocky Hill, CT  
Please RSVP to Anna Gorski at 860-418-8716 or via e-mail at: [anna.gorski@ct.gov](mailto:anna.gorski@ct.gov)

***FUTURE MEETING DATES:***

***June 9, 2008***

***August 11, 2008***

***October 20, 2008***

***December 8, 2008***

***Please plan to attend.***