



Budget

The Governor’s proposed budget adds enough money to cover the rate increases that went into effect 1/1/07 and, adds back all preemies under 1000g (and 28 weeks gestation or less) and children with significant speech delays paired with biological risk factors. It also adds in children with mild and unilateral hearing loss. The total increase for next year is approximately \$2m over this year. On 2/23 at the Appropriations Committee hearing, Birth to Three was prominently on the agenda because we are part of the “Results Based Accountability” initiative between the Early Childhood Cabinet and the Appropriations Committee. The committee seemed interested in possibly expanding eligibility beyond these three groups and asked us to come to the March 5th subcommittee meeting with possible plans, including information about changing the sliding scale for parent fees.

ICC members Myra Watnick and Joe McLaughlin testified at the appropriations public hearing on 2/23 and Rita Esposito submitted written testimony. The Commission on the Deaf testified in support of including children with mild and unilateral hearing loss and audiologist Patricia Lake submitted written testimony. Merva Jackson from AFCAMP and Eric Darcy, a parent from McLaughlin & Associates were also scheduled to give testimony.

FY07 Expenditures (incurred) for contracted programs

	<i>Net invoices (insurance subtracted)</i>	<i>Includes Supplemental payments of:</i>	<i>Insurance Revenue</i>
July	\$2,182,674	\$111,864	\$177,201
August	\$2,190,517	\$133,491	\$255,640
September	\$2,114,342	\$127,886	\$248,667
October	\$2,242,064	\$168,290	\$314,453
November	\$2,295,000	\$157,790	\$234,093
December	\$2,190,831	\$113,670	\$240,572

Parent Fees-FY07

	<i>Gross</i>	<i>Net (collection costs and fees subtracted)</i>
July	\$62,351	\$55,598
August	\$57,415	\$50,737
September	\$54,860	\$48,050
October	\$68,900	\$61,908
November	\$51,985	\$44,983
December	\$64,835	\$57,885
January	\$61,375	\$54,456
February	\$52,165	\$45,193

Enrollment – FY06- FY07

	All Programs		
	<u>Data from data system</u>		<u>Data from invoices</u>
	<i>New Referrals</i>	<i>Eligible Children</i>	<i>Children Served</i>
July, 2005	533	4,744	4,206
August	615	4,660	4,152
September	665	4,521	4,136
October	603	4,536	4,050
November	643	4,476	4,015
December	538	4,409	3,875
January	736	4,382	3,914
February	612	4,338	3,857
March	665	4,426	3,953
April	578	4,430	3,936
May	619	4,457	3,999
June	742	4,501	4,006
July, 2006	614	4,533	4,058
August	688	4,566	4,129
September	683	4,499	3,968
October	684	4,540	4,010
November	696	4,484	3,985
December	555	4,462	3,932
January	810	4,504	Not yet Available

The service and support office has been monitoring the names of children waiting for assignment to a program for initial evaluation daily. As of February 22, 2007:

Region	Number waiting	Waiting the Longest	Town
North	123	January 29	Newington
South	8	February 20	Bozrah
West	48	January 22	Wolcott

TheraCare was selected as the new program in Southwest Connecticut and they began accepting referrals on February 14, 2007 in the Norwalk/Stamford area. They have one eligible child and 18 pending. The Wheeler Clinic, which began accepting referrals December 1 in the greater Hartford area, is now serving 12 eligible children with 4 pending. We will be meeting with the North region providers in March to see whether they can address this capacity issue or whether we should issue another RFP.

Personnel Standards

We have heard from enough programs that would like us to add a new category to the personnel standards that we will be making that change effective 7/1/07. The new category, to be called “Developmental Specialist,” would allow staff with BA degrees in related fields (many of whom are certified teachers in special education or elementary education) to be used as full early intervention professionals IF they can show that they have taken 3 courses in infant/toddler, have at least 300 hours of experience with infants and toddlers, and obtain a Birth to Three credential by demonstrating that they know how to

write an IFSP, perform and report on an evaluation, and pass a multiple-choice test of knowledge about early intervention. It's certainly not every early intervention associate who will be able to obtain this level and it's totally up to each program whether they choose to even use this level of professional.

Personnel Updates/Office Locations

Our research analyst, Tom Shepherd, has resigned as of 3/1/07 to take a job in the private sector. We will be refilling that position. Our new secretary is Jeannie Joseph. She begins 3/2/07.

Early Childhood Cabinet

The Cabinet presented to the Appropriations Committee on 2/13. DMR Commissioner Peter O'Meara participated and gave part of the presentation. The Cabinet and its various subcommittees and work groups will continue to meet. The Cabinet can point to an \$83m increase for early childhood programs across the two years of the Governor's budget, a remarkable feat.

Although we don't know if it is going anywhere, one of the Cabinet groups looking at services to infants and toddlers has proposed that in terms of coordinating such services across the state, perhaps the ICC could be expanded in membership and broadened in responsibility to serve that function. Initial reaction at the last full cabinet meeting from SDE was not particularly supportive.

The Governor will be declaring April "The Month of the Young Child". As a result, Eileen McMurrer is chairing a committee to plan an event at the Legislative Office Building on April 12th from 5:00 – 7:00.

IDEA

Annual Performance Report – due Feb. 1, 2007

Our revised state performance plan and annual performance report was submitted on time. The reports are now both on the website and the data is displayed by program. The APR provides most of the information that OSEP requested in their December follow-up letter to their verification visit in August. These were primarily around the issue of ensuring that all systemic non-compliance with the IDEA is corrected no later than 12 months after identification. We will also be submitting revisions to our Quality Assurance Manual to them by April 1.

Federal Application – due April 20, 2007

The Federal Application was officially "published" on February 15, 2007 and is out for a 60-day comment period. It is posted on the Birth to Three website and copies were sent to all programs, ICC members, parent groups, and independent living centers. There is also a copy at the Service and Support Office.

The only change is the federal application is the revisions to the "Evaluation for Eligibility" procedure that reflects the Governor's budget. Children with speech delays and biological factors and all preemies under 1000g or 28 weeks gestation or less would be eligible. Children with mild or unilateral hearing loss would be eligible. We would eliminate "List 2", since over the past three years we have only 2-3 children per year eligible and it seems to confuse evaluators and we would eliminate qualifying children for follow-along visits after

7/1/07, but we would continue to provide those visits for all children that qualify prior to 7/1/07 (although at that point, we expect that most of them will be eligible for enrollment.) We've asked our medical advisor, in consultation with other physicians, to take one last look at the "List 2" conditions to determine whether any of them should be elevated to List 1 prior to submitting the application.

The projected budget is based on the amount we received this year. Congress has not yet finalized a budget for FFY07 which is the money we would receive July 1. The President's proposed budget for FFY08 has a 5% reduction in the overall Part C appropriation. Therefore, the amount we will actually receive in July is unknown. The distribution of the budget is approximately the same as last year, although the new format puts some costs in different places than before.

Dispute Resolution Activity FY07

Complaints (No new activity since the last meeting)

One formal written complaint was received at the beginning of August. The complaint alleges that the Early Connections North program improperly obtained medical information. Even though the parent had signed consent. No IDEA or FERPA violation was substantiated.

One formal written complaint was received at the beginning of November. The complaint was that Rehabilitation Associates proposed to reduce services and the parents disagreed with the reduction. The complaint response is in process.

One formal written complaint was received at the end of November. The complaint alleges that Early Connections South is not addressing the oral/motor needs of the child. The complaint response is in process.

Hearings

We had a request for a hearing in mid-February. A family currently enrolled with Rehabilitation Associates (after transferring from Reachout) does not agree with the IFSP that was offered and is also requesting compensatory reimbursement for the services of a private therapist. The hearing is scheduled to begin on 2/26/07 and three days have been set aside.

Quality Assurance

Changes are being made to the Biennial Performance Report to be rolled out in the Spring. Anna Gorski has been tracking the correction of non-compliance for programs that were in the first group to complete their BPRs. Alice Ridgway has prepared focused monitoring data for the ICC to select the next programs to receive on-site inquiry visits.