

Interagency Coordinating Council

April 9, 2007
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
Anita Cella
Parent
Elizabeth Daly
Office of Protection and Advocacy
Dona Ditrio
New Opportunities Early Head Start
Rita Esposito
REACHOUT, Inc.
Linda Goodman
Dept. of Mental Retardation
Mark A. Greenstein, M.D.
Pediatrician
Clara Gutierrez
Parent
Jeanette Haines
BESB
Moira Herbert
Insurance Department
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
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: Rita Esposito, Moira Herbert, Cindy Jackson, Dr. Robert LaCamera, Louis Tallarita, Elayne Thomas, Myra Watnick, Jeanette Haines, Robin Tousey-Ayers, Maria Synodi, Joe McLaughlin, Tim Bowles, Dr. Mark Greenstein, Lolli Ross, Linda Goodman, Elise Minor, Melissa Van Buren

ICC Members Absent:, Clara Gutierrez, Elizabeth Daly, Dona Ditrio, Anita Cella, Diane Wixted, Rep. Jack Thompson

The meeting began at 9:25 AM.

Introductions: Lolli Ross, ICC Chair, welcomed everyone to the State ICC meeting. Council members and seven members of the public introduced themselves.

Approval of December Minutes

Robin Tousey-Ayers made a Motion to approve the minutes as written. Elayne Thomas seconded. The Motion passed unanimously. The meeting in February was not an official meeting thus minutes were not taken or approved. Notes were taken on February 26 and Cindy Jackson felt that the title Developmental Specialist misrepresents the function of the position.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Housekeeping

1. Lolli Ross asked remaining two members to write quotes for website as to why serving on the ICC is meaningful to them.
2. The ICC will follow the Rocky Hill Public School District as far as inclement weather. If the school system is closed there will be no meeting, if there is a one hour or ninety minute delay then the meeting will be delayed by the same amount of time.

Lead Agency Update

Please refer to the "Lead Agency Update posted on the B23 website- <http://www.birth23.org/State%20Council/default.asp>".

Linda explained the Birth to Three budget. There will be no further information than what was in the Governor's proposed budget until the middle of April when the first draft of the Appropriations Act is released by the Appropriations Committee. There are program capacity issues in the North. A new RFP was issued for several of the towns in the Northern part of the state. The bidder's conference will be held April 11th.and proposals are due May 11.

A question was posed as to whether families who are waiting for their children's eligibility evaluations receive any information. It was offered that families receive a postcard with Birth To Three Service and Support office contact information a week after the referral is made.

2007 Legislative Bills 1220, 6723, 683, and 7144 were discussed.

"Ten Years and Counting" celebration will be held at the Legislative Office Building on April 12th from 5:00 – 7:00pm. ICC members, families, program directors as well as legislators, and providers are encouraged to attend.

IDEA-Annual Performance Report – due Feb. 1, 2007

No feedback has been received yet on the annual performance report (OSEP has until the end of May to respond). Based on this information, by July 1, OSEP will be making "determinations" about how well each state is implementing IDEA requirements.

The federal Part C allocation for Connecticut is down \$93,000 from last year, while the bottom line of the total allocation stayed the same due to a continuing resolution.

Proposed changes to the evaluation procedure were discussed in terms of using informed clinical opinion to determine eligibility. Discussion amongst members ensued. One member felt that motor quality issues do not show up on standardized tests. Another member expressed that sensory issues are not addressed in standardized tests and utilizing clinical opinion allows the evaluator to recognize these issues. There was debate on how standardized tests limit eligibility and that it may take two visits to adequately determine eligibility. There are a few cases in which evaluators are unsure about whether a child is eligible or not and they think an additional visit would help them to make a decision. The idea of putting in an allowance for extended evaluation was raised and it was decided because of time constraints to continue the discussion during committee work. An addition to the list of risk factors for children with delays in speech was recommended to try to capture children at-risk for autism.

Dispute Resolution Activity FY07

A due process hearing was held. The program involved was Rehabilitation Associates (although the child had transferred from Reachout following mediation in 2006) and the issue was over type and quantity of services. Myra shared her experience with members; she felt that providers do not have fair representation of both medical and legal expertise. The Attorney General's office will not sign a contract for Birth to Three to purchase these services and continues to insist on providing legal representation by their staff attorneys. The ICC offered to get involved and share their opinion by writing a letter to the Attorney

General's office. A member stated that for IDEA-Part B hearings expert witnesses are called in and often strengthen the defense. There is little Part C case law as a precedent.

Determinations

Alice Ridgway spoke on quality assurance. The revised Biennial Performance Report (BPR) measures will be posted on the shared drive by the end of April for providers to review. Alice explained how Connecticut Part C would be receiving a determination rating by OSEP and how the state makes determinations on programs. Alice distributed handouts, which describe the determination process. Twenty-seven programs were found to meet requirements and six were identified as needing assistance. A question was raised as to what the enforcement actions are for programs not meeting requirements. There are sanctions that can be enforced such as withholding referrals and ultimately terminating or non-renewal of contracts.

Update by Jennifer Carroll (CT Family Support Network and Council)

Jennifer explained the purpose of the council is to help families connect with resources and to educate legislators about meeting the needs of families. They advocate for state budgets to support funding for Birth To Three, high school graduates-DMR program as well as other programs that serve families. The Family Support network offers support groups, IEP tips, and teaches families to act as advocates. FSN is supporting legislative bills #246, #1324, #7176, and she distributed handouts. Their website is www.ctfsc.org and the site offers a link to a calendar which contains upcoming forums and trainings. Jennifer has spoken with a number of families and offered positive feedback about the Birth to Three system and specifically how supportive program staff are to parents.

Continuing Community Playgroups funded by Birth to Three

The purpose of these grants is to provide support to community agencies to provide inclusive recreational settings for children with developmental delays. Last year, the ICC funded seven community-based playgroups. There was discussion regarding what the most effective way to build capacity in communities to support the inclusion of young children receiving Birth to Three services. Opinions were expressed, such as this being a very valuable service, and these groups being a good service to the community. It was offered that playgroups that partner with a Birth to Three program provide a stronger service. Mark Greenstein made a **Motion** to have the ICC distribute the money through all the Birth to Three programs to be used to build capacity and encourage community based involvement. Louis Tallarita seconded the motion; one member abstained, with the remaining votes unanimously in favor of this motion.

Family Surveys

2200 surveys were distributed in 2006 to families who had a child enrolled in Birth to Three for at least six months. 712 families responded and the results were discussed.

Eileen McMurrer was recognized for her outstanding service and support to the ICC and was presented with a plaque and card.

The Council took a lunch break.

Committee Reports

Legislative Committee members include: Joe McLaughlin (chair), Louis Tallarita, Moira Herbert, Tim Bowles, Robin Tousey-Ayers, Myra Watnick, Diane Wixted, and Bob LaCamera.

Joe reported that this Committee is planning to send a letter of support to the Appropriations Committee in favor of substitute bill #1220. It was felt that as a result of this bill, referrals to Birth to Three might not increase however the percentage of children that are eligible will increase. The Birth to Three System will have one year to implement the necessary changes. It was suggested that scholarships should be offered to college students to encourage them to pursue careers in OT/SLP/PT as there are no state schools that offer programs for occupational therapists. Joe made a **Motion** to send a letter of support in favor of bill #1220 from the ICC. Cindy seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Joe will be writing the letter. Joe also made another **Motion** to write a letter from the ICC encouraging the Attorney General to allow outside counsel to handle Birth to Three cases and to provide more comprehensive training on IDEA-Part C to hearing officers. Rita seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Lolli Ross and Myra Watnick will write this letter.

Quality Services Committee members include: Cindy Jackson (chair), Melissa Van Buren, Mark Greenstein, Rita Esposito, Elayne Thomas, and Kathleen Bradley.

Cindy reported there was a question as to what kind of follow-up other than Ages & Stages is available to ineligible children. Child Development Infoline places a follow-up call in two months if the parent agrees at the time of referral that they would like this service. Help Me Grow is offered as another program parents can utilize if their child is ineligible. Cindy questioned what the system is doing to address the recommendations of the autism consultant who reported options to the system for improving service delivery to children with Autism Spectrum disorders. Linda provided two answers; first Birth to Three administrators met with the Regional Education Service Centers (RESC's) to explore the possibility of them performing Autism evaluations. They are considering this and Linda is waiting to hear back from them. Second, when current Birth To Three programs were asked if any were interested in becoming specialty programs, they asked if they would get a special rate, Linda said the system was not interested in separate rate, but wanted programs to reconsider this now that the new rates with a 42% increase became effective on January 1, 2007.

Communications Committee members include Elise Minor, Lolli Ross, Anita Cella, Jeanette Haines, Maria Synodi and Eileen McMurrer. Lolli reported that the ICC needs to recruit three parents and 1 senator chair. The ICC resource manual has been started and is currently under construction. The committee looked at interagency agreements and discussed a brochure for the ICC with a mission and vision. They offered to share this information with the ICC at a future meeting.

Reports and Announcements

OSEP's annual national early childhood conference will be held in Arlington, VA this year from December 2 -6, 2007. Intended participants include ICC members and the CT ICC would like to send one or two representatives to this important event. Members were directed to please contact Anna Gorski if interested.

Linda announced ECO/MSIP-early childhood outcomes/management and general supervision conference in the last week of August in Baltimore, MD. The ICC may also wish to send someone to the last two days.

Robin Tousey-Ayers announced Dept Public Health has replaced "Keeping it all Together" with "Directions: Resources for Your Child's Care" a binder of comprehensive resources for

childcare. *Directions* was created for a parent of a child with special healthcare needs. It can help parents plan and coordinate care for their child.

A motion to adjourn was made by Lolli and seconded by Elayne. The meeting ended at 1:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

NEXT State ICC MEETING

Monday, June 11 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@po.state.ct.us

FUTURE MEETING DATES:

August 13

October 15

December 10

Please plan to attend.