

Interagency Coordinating Council

October 15, 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
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
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: Kathleen Bradley, Dona Ditrio, Rita Esposito, Linda Goodman, Dr. Mark Greenstein, Clara Gutierrez, Jeanette Haines, Cindy Jackson, Dr. Robert LaCamera, Joe McLaughlin, Elise Minor, Lolli Ross, Maria Synodi, Louis Tallarita, Elayne Thomas, Rep. Jack Thompson, Robin Tousey-Ayers, Diane Wixted

ICC Members Absent: Tim Bowles, Anita Cella, Melissa Van Buren, Myra Watnick,

The meeting began at 9:20 AM.

Introductions:

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

Approval of August Minutes

Donna Ditrio made a Motion to approve the minutes as written and Rita Esposito seconded. The Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Housekeeping

Members were asked to update their contact information, which will be distributed to members.

The IDEA Infant & Toddler Coordinators Association-October 2007 newsletter was distributed and contained an article of interest on "Occupational Therapy in Community-Based Early Intervention Services".

Lead Agency Update

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

The Birth to Three end of year report was distributed, with special thanks to ICC members for their contribution. The FY08 expenditures (incurred) for contracted programs for July and August was presented along with parent fees.

Medicaid Proposed Regulations

We have, for the past 10 years, been billing Medicaid under what is called the "Rehabilitation Option" of the state plan. The Centers for Medicaid Services recently issued proposed regulation which would, if adopted, seem to redefine "rehabilitation" to exclude teaching anyone skills that they have never had, which they call "habilitation." If adopted, we would probably have a year to figure out some other way to bill Medicaid for early intervention services. Revenue last year was \$4,357,080 to the state general fund.

Enrollment to all programs for FY07 & 08 was discussed as well as the children waiting for assignment to a program for initial evaluation. A question was raised about whether the sub-regions were a good idea.

Proposals for autism-specific programs were received by 10/12. The panel review is being held 10/16 and 10/17.

The Birth to Three system will be conducting a small study this year to determine whether, when the new Part C regulations are issued, it would be worthwhile for the state to routinely screen children who are referred for evaluations. The study will be submitted to the IRB for approval. The results of the study screening would not affect the child's evaluation (and the evaluators would not be told of the results) and we will then be able to compare the screening results with the evaluation results. The Birth to Three system hopes to have the results by Spring, 2008. A concern was raised about including non-English speaking children and children in care of the Department of Children and Families.

2007 Legislation Summary

- The department's name change was effective 10/1/07, therefore the lead agency is now officially the Department of Developmental Services. All staff e-mail addresses now end in ct.gov instead of po.state.ct.us.
- Public Act 07-1 An Act Concerning Clean Contracting Standards passed both chambers during the special session on September 20 and was signed by Governor Rell on October 10th.

Dispute Resolution Activity in FY08

One formal written complaint was received mid-July. The complaint alleged that Therapy Solutions failed to provide an appropriate evaluation and subsequent services. The finding was that the program was out of compliance with the IDEA in providing an accurate, appropriate evaluation/assessment of the child's strengths and needs. The child was transferred to another program where the family is very satisfied. The cost of the evaluation was deducted from the

program's payment and the program implemented an internal quality assurance process for all initial evaluations/assessments.

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Meetings

Linda Goodman was invited (along with Maria Synodi from the Dept. of Education) to attend a national meeting to discuss issues of transitioning children from Part C to Part B. Anna Gorski and Linda Goodman (and Maria Synodi) will be attending the OSEP Early Childhood conference in Washington, DC December 1-5 and Linda and Maria will be presenting with the state of Indiana on the topic of transition.

Quality Assurance

The Biennial Performance Reports were due from 13 of the 14 programs in cohort 1. Official letters notifying programs of any compliance issues that must be remediated as soon as possible but no later than 12 months from identification were sent.

As we've been implementing focused monitoring for the past three years, there is one item on the implementation checklist that was developed by the National Center for Special Education Accountability and Monitoring that we haven't completed. That is a third party evaluation. The Northeast Regional Resource Center, under the umbrella of their fiduciary agency WestEd will be conducting the review for us. We have already submitted their proposal to the department's IRB for either exemption or an expedited review.

The next Annual Performance Report is due to the U. S. Department of Education on February 1, 2008. We plan to have a draft ready for the ICC to review at its December meeting.

Early Childhood Cabinet

The cabinet meets again today (10/15) and has monthly meetings scheduled for the rest of the fiscal year. There will be an infant/toddler "summit" on 10/29 at the Legislative Office Building which will be a ½ day recreation of the summit that was held in Washington in May. Rosa DeLauro is expected to attend. Then, there will be an early childhood summit on January 15th using funds from a grant from the National Governor's Association.

The Birth to Three service guidelines are being updated and new ones are being developed.

Institutional Review Board

Jim Welsh, staff attorney for the Department of Disability Services (DDS) spoke on the purpose of DDS's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The purpose of an IRB review is to assure, both in advance and by periodic review, that appropriate steps are taken to protect the rights and welfare of humans participating as subjects in a research study. To accomplish this purpose, IRBs review research protocols and related materials (e.g., informed consent documents) to ensure protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects of research. The chief objectives of the IRB review are to assess the scientific merit of the research and its methods, to promote fully informed and voluntary participation by prospective subjects who are themselves capable of making such choices and to maximize the safety of subjects once they are enrolled in the project.

Birth to Three system capacity

Discussion ensued around the pending program assignment list and capacity of the Birth to Three System, the availability of qualified staff around the state and lack of public higher education programs to train them. Offering scholarships and loan reimbursement incentives may be a way to encourage students. It was offered that if the ICC has ideas or a plan they can propose them to DDS. Another option discussed was paying graduate students for practicum hours. Next Steps: Joe McLaughlin, Jack Thompson, Cindy Jackson, Rita Esposito, Kathleen Bradley and Deb Resnick volunteered to form an ad-hoc group that will approach higher education institutions who are training potential Early Intervention professionals and educate them about careers in Birth to Three.

Update: CT Family Support Network

Tesha Imperati, South Central FSN Coordinator, provided an update on FSN activities statewide. The CT Family Support Network is a network of families who have children with disabilities who work to help other parents find the supports they need. FSN has several monthly support groups running statewide. Tesha is also involved in disability awareness and advocates for families.

Invited Speaker: Office of the Child Advocate

The Office of the Child Advocate is working with CT Voices for Children along with researcher Deborah List on an independent study of Connecticut's Birth to Three program. The Office of the Child Advocate's mission is to oversee the protection and care of children and to advocate for their well-being. The purpose of the study is to look at strengths and areas needing improvement in the Birth to Three system. The evaluation will be conducted in two phases. The first phase will involve developing an understanding of the structure by looking at historical data and issues such as parent fees, expanded eligibility, natural environments, and serving special populations. The second phase will provide an in-depth look at phase one and offer a final report with strengths and areas of improvement.

The Council took a lunch break.

Committee Reports

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

Joe reported that he will contact the University of Connecticut and Southern Connecticut State University in regard to training potential early intervention professionals and educating them on careers in Birth to Three.

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

- The committee discussed the autism RFPs
- They are recommending that Birth to Three have multicultural guidelines of its own.
- Public comment from June 11th's ICC meeting is addressed in the Natural Environments guidelines
- A top ten list about the Birth to Three System should be developed for families.

Communications Committee members include Elise Minor, Lolli Ross, Anita Cella, Jeanette Haines, Maria Synodi and Eileen McMurrer. Jeanette reported that the ICC resource manual was edited and is currently under construction.

Reports and Announcements

Diane Wixted announced *The Road to Freedom* is a yearlong, 50-State bus tour and photographic exhibit chronicling the history of the grassroots "people's movement" leading to passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). They are in Connecticut at the L.O.B today from 3pm-5pm and are touring the United States to tell the story of the struggle for disability rights, past and present, and to promote educational and economic opportunity for children and adults with physical, mental, cognitive, sensory and developmental disabilities.

Jeanette Haines announced that BESBY pre-school consultants are being educated on the Birth to Three System.

Dr. Greenstein announced that Dr. Zavoski formerly of CCMC joined DSS as its medical director.

Linda Goodman announced a meeting that was held with medical health insurance plans in September 2007 which provided Birth to Three with a contact person for each health plan.

Robin Tousey-Ayers announced that the Dept. of Public Health- Child with Special Health Care Needs Unit- went through a similar evaluation by the Office of the Child Advocate.

A motion to adjourn was made by Linda and seconded by Diane. The meeting ended at 1:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anna Gorski

NEXT State ICC MEETING

Monday, December 10 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

FUTURE MEETING DATES:

February 25, 2008

April 14, 2008

August 11, 2008

October 20, 2008

December 8, 2008

Please plan to attend.