

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
Between
The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and
The Department of Rehabilitation Services

I. **WHEREAS**, the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) has been designated under 17a-248 of the Connecticut General Statutes as the lead agency for the development and implementation of a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary and interagency program of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);

II. **WHEREAS**, the infants and Toddlers with Disabilities Program of IDEA includes among the responsibilities of the lead agency:

- a. the identification and coordination of all resources within the state from federal, state, local, and private sources; and
- b. the development of interagency agreements that define the responsibility of each agency to ensure meaningful cooperation and coordination;

III. **WHEREAS**, under Connecticut General Statute 10-295 the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) serves all residents of the state regardless of age who, because of blindness or impaired vision require special educational programs and who shall, on the signed recommendation of the - Commissioner of DORS be entitled to receive such instruction for such length of time as is deemed expedient by said Commissioner;

IV. **THEREFORE**, the OEC and DORS hereby agree to the following terms of an interagency agreement specific to young children under the age of three with visual impairments that include:

A. State Interagency Coordinating Council

1. The IDEA, Part C, under 34 CFR 303.141, 303.600, and 303.601 outlines the State requirements to establish a State Interagency Coordinating council for the purpose of advising and assisting the lead agency in matters pertaining to: policy development and implementation; coordination and cooperation of public agencies; resolution of policy disputes; implementation of a statewide system; and provision of appropriate services to eligible children.

2. The DORS will recommend one staff member to the Governor's office for assignment as a representative of DORS on the State Interagency Coordinating council.

B. Public Awareness

1. The IDEA, Part C, under 34 CFR 303.164 and 303.320 requires the lead agency to develop and implement a public awareness program focusing on the early identification of children who are eligible under this part including the preparation and dissemination of informational material.
2. The DORS and the OEC will coordinate and collaborate on the dissemination of Birth to Three public awareness materials and information to the public.

C. Child Find

1. The IDEA, Part C under 34 CFR 300.128 and 303.220 requires the identification, location, and evaluation of all children birth through two who have disabilities or who are at-risk of having a disability.
2. The OEC and DORS will coordinate and collaborate with regard to "child find" activities so that the families of all children under the age of three who are directly referred to DORS (with an eye report confirming visual impairment) will be made aware of the Birth to Three System at the time of application for DORS services and will be referred to the OEC Birth to Three System, subject to parental consent.
3. Birth to Three service coordinators will inform parents of DORS Children's Services Program within the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB) if their child is identified as having a visual impairment, legal blindness or deaf/blindness. The Birth to Three program's service coordinator will assist the family in applying for BESB services and obtaining the necessary documentation of the visual impairment.

D. Program Operation

1. For children enrolled in Birth to Three programs who are also eligible for DORS services through the BESB Children's Services Program, BESB will provide vision services. So that families are fully informed, BESB will provide services in the family's native language or preferred mode of communication, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so. The services may include:
 - a. Vision, independent living or orientation and mobility services performed by DORS staff or subcontractors
 - b. Purchase of assistive technology devices as authorized by DORS statute, regulation or policy
 - c. Ongoing assessment with instruments developed specifically for children who are deaf/blind, blind, or visually impaired.
2. These services will be written on the child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) under *Early Intervention Services and Supports*, if the service is a required Birth to Three service, or under *Other Services* on the IFSP if the service is offered by DORS but it is not a required early intervention service under Part C of IDEA. The Birth to Three service

coordinator will be responsible for coordinating all services across agency lines and serving as a single point of contact in helping parents to obtain services and assistance from DORS and other required Birth to Three service providers. No later than the 15th of each month, the DORS staff person providing services in conjunction with a comprehensive program will mail, e-mail, or fax the attendance information (dates and location of service) and contact or service notes for the previous month to the Birth to Three program.

V. Duration of this agreement

The length of this agreement will be from date of signatures executing this MOU below and will remain effective unless either OEC or DORS terminate or modify the agreement, in writing.

VI. APPROVALS AND ACCEPTANCES:



Amy Porter, Commissioner
Department of Rehabilitation Services

Date Signed 10/28/16



Linda Goodman, Acting Commissioner
Office of Early Childhood

Date Signed 10/24/16