

Ohio Early Intervention Comprehensive System of Personnel Development



A comprehensive system of personnel development (CSPD) ensures that infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities and their families are provided early intervention (EI) services by knowledgeable, skilled, competent, and highly qualified personnel and that enough of these professionals are available in the state to meet service needs.

As the lead agency for Part C Early Intervention, the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) works to ensure there is a clear analysis of their workforce capacity to provide timely, consistent, evidence-based services. This written plan for the CSPD is a way to frame activities and initiatives, identify gaps, and document achievements.

"A CSPD is a framework to improve the quantity, quality, and effectiveness of the early childhood intervention workforce who provide services and interventions to facilitate the development and learning of infants and young children with disabilities and their families."

Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC)

How does Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) define a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development?

[\(IDEA, Sec 303.118\)](#)

Each system must include a comprehensive system of personnel development, including the training of paraprofessionals and the training of primary referral sources with respect to the basic components of early intervention services available in the State. A comprehensive system of personnel development

(a) Must include:

1. Training personnel to implement innovative strategies and activities for the recruitment and retention of EIS [EI service] providers;
2. Promoting the preparation of EIS providers who are fully and appropriately qualified to provide early intervention services under this part; and
3. Training personnel to coordinate transition services for infants and toddlers with disabilities who are transitioning from an early intervention service program under part C of the Act to a preschool program under section 619 of the Act, Head Start, Early Head Start, an elementary school program under part B of the Act, or another appropriate program.

(b) May include:

1. Training personnel to work in rural and inner-city areas;
2. Training personnel in the emotional and social development of young children; and
3. Training personnel to support families in participating fully in the development and implementation of the child's IFSP; and
4. Training personnel who provide services under this part using standards that are consistent with early learning personnel development standards funded under the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care established under the Head Start Act, if applicable.

Early Intervention Service Providers

As established in the Ohio Early Intervention rules, "Early intervention service provider means an entity that, or an individual who provides early intervention services under part C, and may include, where appropriate, the department and a public agency responsible for providing early intervention services under part C." This document applies that definition, which includes many professionals, including EI service coordinators, interventionists, supervisors and those working in intake and support roles. In addition to this broad term, "primary service provider" and "core EI team" members are referenced as more specific EI service provider subsets.

- **Core EI team** minimally consists of a developmental specialist, occupational and physical therapist, speech/language pathologist, and service coordinator. Disciplines represent the most commonly available, frequently referred for, associated with parent priorities, or required by Part C of IDEA.
- **Primary service provider** means the core EI team member from a multidisciplinary team selected to serve as the lead interventionist for a family, with support from the team.

CSPD Advisory Committee

DODD convened an advisory workgroup in the fall of 2021 to assist with the evaluation of current systems, identify potential areas for improvement, and recommend methods to improve the current systems.

The stakeholder workgroup consists of parents who have received early intervention (EI), EI service providers, EI administrators, and partners from institutes of higher education (IHE), central coordination, and early care/education. Five meetings took place from February 2022 to August 2022 resulting in the development of the mission, vision, goals, and objectives outlined within this document.

Vision

Ohio Early Intervention, through collaboration with state agencies, higher education, and community partners, will recruit and maintain personnel in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of families seeking and receiving early intervention. These professionals will be skilled, respectful, and representative of the diverse children and families served.

Mission

Ohio Early Intervention will provide high-value professional development opportunities to increase the professionals' competence and confidence in serving young children and their families.

Four Year Plan

Recruitment & Retention

Since becoming the lead agency for EI in 2016, DODD has focused on ensuring that every child and family, regardless of where they live in the state, have access to a core early intervention team as well as other needed services and supports.

State and federal funds are used contractually to fund early intervention service coordination as well as evaluations and assessments not provided through other public or private sources. County boards of developmental disabilities employ most early interventionists, including developmental specialists, and occupational, speech, and physical therapists. DODD contracts for vision and hearing interventionists as well as system of payments providers not available through the publicly funded county boards of DD or other community partners.

Innovative recruitment and retention activities include:

- a. A partnership formed between DODD and the Southern Ohio Council of Governments (SOCOG). Using state and local resources, the SOCOG hired occupational, physical, and speech therapists to provide EI services in seven historically underserved counties in southeastern Ohio. These interventionists provided services in-person as well as virtually. Data indicated that service delivery looked comparable to the state as a whole in the pilot counties. In addition, the number of children served increased in these same counties. The SOCOG worked with Hopewell Health Centers of Athens, Ohio to develop a sustainable system of service delivery for SE Ohio. Hopewell now is a system of payments provider, employing multiple EI providers (nutrition, infant mental health, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and psychological services) and providing services in a number of counties in the southeastern part of the state.
- b. DODD and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

(OMHAS) established a partnership to provide early childhood mental health consultation (ECMH) for every early intervention team in Ohio through June 2023. The initiative provides early childhood mental health consultation to primary service providers on early intervention teams, including family and child level consultation using the Ohio ECMH model. The ECMH consultant works directly with the early intervention primary service provider, providing supports such as reviewing Devereux Early Childhood Assessment results or collaborating to incorporate interventions to meet an individualized family service plan (IFSP) outcome. The purpose of this support is to increase the early interventionist's confidence and competence in assessing the child's social-emotional strengths and needs and providing supports to the child's family and caregivers through the IFSP. The grant includes increased opportunities for early intervention teams to receive annual training on trauma, infant mental health, and the use of the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment tool. DODD plans to increase the availability of early intervention evaluators with expertise in social-emotional and behavioral development by contracting with OMHAS.

- c. In Ohio, DODD certifies developmental specialists (DS) who provide the early intervention service of special instruction. The certification rule for DSs was revised in 2021. The rule maintains two certification levels: 1-year and 5-year. The 1-year certification is aimed at those who lack the required educational requirements for obtaining the 5-year certification and allows Ohio's EI system to balance the need for flexibility in hiring with the skills needed to provide high-quality EI services. The rule requires that all 1-year certificate holders complete twelve (12) months of coaching from an evidence-based practice coach. The rule also allows some portion of an evidence-based coach's time spent coaching to count toward ongoing professional development requirements for the 5-year certification. The rule contains expanded opportunities for obtaining the 5-year certification for candidates with certain educational or professional backgrounds. The Department can more easily provide a 5-year developmental specialist certification to those who have been certified by another state's EI system to provide special instruction.

DODD recognizes that there are areas of the state that struggle with recruitment of early intervention core team members. And at any given time, for a number of reasons, an employing entity may struggle to fill vacancies or add additional staff. But as DODD does not directly employ EI service providers, data are needed from employers to understand the EI service provider needs, as well as diversity of the EI service provider field.

Goal 1: Ohio Early Intervention will increase the diversity and number of professionals working in early intervention.			
Objectives	Activities to meet objective	Partners and resources	Projected completion date
A. Develop recruitment and retention tools and initiatives based on needs data.	1. Gather data to determine the number, diversity, and geography of core EI professionals working in the field and where there are difficulties with filling vacancies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Program Reporting for EI Service Coordination Grant - Ohio Association of County Boards (OACB) member survey - Ohio Childcare Resource and Referral Association (OCCRRA) data - Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) - ECPC national survey 	Start September 2022 and complete by December 2023
	2. Evaluate EI professional retention rates and factors impacting retention from providers and employers, including average salaries for EISCs and DSs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OACB (member survey) - EI service coordination contract manager survey - Local entities, such as chambers of commerce - ECTA 	Start June 2023 and complete by January 2024
	3. Research innovative strategies used nationally to increase recruitment and retention, including possibility of establishing mentoring program for new core EI team members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Infant Toddler Coordinator Association (ITCA) - ECPC - Zero to Three - OCCRRA - ECTA - Head Start/Early Head Start 	Start November 2022 and complete by December 2023
	4. Using obtained data, contract with subject matter expert (SME) to develop recruitment tools and recruitment/retention initiative plan focused on identified needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bright Beginnings - Division of Early Childhood 	Start November 2023 and complete by December 2023
B. Develop materials and methods to increase public awareness of the EI professions.	1. Develop materials and protocols for making high school students aware of and interested in EI professions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bright Beginnings - Ohio Higher Education - Ohio professional organizations that have links to high school - Educational Service Centers (ESC) - High school vocational programs 	Start November 2023 and complete by December 2024
	2. Develop materials and protocols for making college students aware of and interested in EI professions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bright Beginnings - Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) - Professional organizations including student chapters of Council for Exceptional Children/Division of Early Childhood 	Start November 2023 and complete by December 2024

Inservice Training

The state's lead agency for Part C of IDEA transitioned from the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) to the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) in July 2016. DODD has focused on foundational level training offerings to ensure personnel has the knowledge and skills to provide Part C EI in accordance with IDEA and state requirements, as well as recommended practices. These foundational pieces of training are now written into certification/credential rules as requirements for developmental specialists, early intervention service coordinators/EISC supervisors as well as DODD requirements for contracted EI service providers.

DODD and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) jointly developed professional development on the transition requirements for children leaving EI, including those potentially eligible for Part B (preschool special education). This training includes the roles and responsibilities for facilitating, coordinating, and carrying out transition activities, best practices in implementing the transition process with families and supporting agencies, and local Interagency Agreements. DODD has worked extensively with partner agencies (Ohio Association of County Boards, Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and the Ohio Center for Autism and Low-Incidence) to provide professional development on a variety of topics including evidence-based early intervention practices, social-emotional development, and trauma. DODD has also been responsive to professional development needs arising from public health issues, such as supporting families impacted by the opioid crisis and ensuring ongoing service delivery via tele-intervention in the midst of the COVID pandemic.

DODD provides training for referral sources such as physicians and children's services staff (Help Me Grow Overview for Public Children Services Agencies, Introduction to Early Intervention for Physicians). DODD provided input and funding for the development of an online, asynchronous infant/toddler development training for early care and education professionals; this training includes information about how to make an EI referral for suspected delays. Stakeholders have indicated that DODD should continue to focus on supporting professionals new to early intervention, ensuring consistent orientation training and experiences across disciplines. Stakeholders would also like advanced-level professional development opportunities that include a focus on leadership and fidelity to evidence-based practices.

Goal 2: Ohio Early Intervention will use a data-driven decision-making process to plan and provide ongoing and advanced-level professional development opportunities addressing the needs of the system and participants.

Objectives	Activities to meet objective	Partners and resources	Projected completion date
<p>A. Establish training standards to ensure professional development offerings which: (a) match adult-learning principles (b) are led by qualified and effective trainers (c) have a positive impact on child/family outcomes; and (d) reflect current evidence.</p>	<p>1. Contract with subject matter expert for the development of protocols and standards to be used to establish advanced level PD (as specified in objective).</p>	<p>- TBD based on RFP</p>	<p>Start (draft RFP) December 2022; contract work complete by October 2024</p>
	<p>(a) Include review of DODD current training processes and recommendations for revisions.</p>		
	<p>(b) Include measurement tools for child, family, and practitioner impact.</p>		
	<p>2. Implement recommendations with a focus upon the principles of the adult learning cycle.</p>		
<p>B. Establish mechanism to collect data to inform training topics and method of delivery based upon system goals, system needs, and the interest/needs of providers.</p>	<p>1. Establish procedures for data collection and for frequency and timing of information solicited.</p>	<p>- TBD based on RFP</p>	<p>Start (draft RFP) December 2022; contract work complete by October 2024</p>
	<p>2. Implement a fidelity rating system to measure adherence to evidence-based practices by early intervention teams and to inform training needs.</p>		<p>Start by January 2025; complete by December 2025</p>

C. Enhance knowledge and skills of EI team leaders in the areas of reflective practice and fidelity to evidence-based practices.	1. Identify tools/resources needed for effective EI team leaders and house those resources on the Ohio EI website.	- Stakeholder Input - Family, Infant, and Preschool Program (FIPP) - Zero to Three - ECPC - Ohio Early Childhood Inclusive Leadership (OECILF) - OACB/Children and Family Supports	Start December 2022 and complete by July 2023
	2. Identify/provide professional development for EI team leaders:	- DODD	Ongoing
	(a) Reflective Supervision Learning Community	- Dr. Gallen - Ohio Center for Autism & Low Incidence (OCALI)	Complete by July 2023
	(b) Ohio Early Childhood Inclusive Leadership Fellowship	- Ohio Department of Education (ODE)	Complete by October 2025
	(c) Fidelity in Practice Certification Training	- FIPP	Complete by July 2023
	(d) Community of practice for evidence-based practice (developmental specialist) coaches	- OCALI	In operation; Ongoing
D. Identify needed changes to personnel standards for the provision of EI services as one of the disciplines recognized under IDEA.	1. Research personnel standards across disciplines in other states.	- DODD	Start January 2023 and complete by April 2023
	2. Review of credential requirements to ensure rigor and flexibility in preparation for EISC rule revision.	- Stakeholder input	Start January 2023 and complete by June 2023
	3. Review of certification requirements to ensure rigor and flexibility in preparation for rule revision (DS).	- Stakeholder input	Start January 2024 and complete by June 2025
	4. Evaluate the possibility of accepting early childhood professional licenses for the provision of special instruction.	- Stakeholder input - ODE	Start June 2024 and complete by June 2025
	5. Explore foundational training in evidence-based early intervention for all early intervention personnel, including cross-discipline, EI endorsement.	- Stakeholder input	Start January 2023 and complete by April 2023

Preservice Education

The early intervention service coordinator (EISC) is the foundational provider in early intervention. However, there is no specific “degree” or career track that prepares this key person for the position. At this time, all requirements for becoming DODD credentialed as an EISC are specified in [OAC 5123-10-04](#).

The developmental specialist position is key in early intervention; this provider’s course work and professional development (as specified in [OAC 5123-10-05](#)) is tied expressly to the provision of special instruction to the families of children under the age of three with developmental delays and disabilities, and the requirements under Part C of IDEA.

At this time, DODD accepts the Ohio licensure for the service providers listed in [OAC 5123-10-02 Appendix B](#). While the educational requirements for the related service providers (i.e., physical therapists, occupational therapists, social workers) to obtain licenses may include a very small amount of information about Early Intervention under IDEA, many do not address or recognize the field or the responsibilities under this law. However, all of the DODD EI foundational trainings are available to these professionals.

With the passage of Ohio SB 216 and the broadening of the Ohio Department of Education licensure bands for teachers, representatives from colleges and universities report difficulty in continuing to include a sufficient amount of early childhood and especially early intervention content in their educator degree programs. According to the Early Childhood Personnel Center, there are 29 colleges/universities within Ohio that offer early childhood special education degrees. Most of the offerings focus upon coursework leading to obtainment of the Ohio Department of Education licensure for early childhood intervention specialists, focusing upon ages 3-8. There are two university listings that specify educational tracks specific to early intervention. Reviewing certification data from 2021, DODD issued 42 DS certifications. Of those, only nine were 5-year certifications, indicating that most developmental specialists enter the field still needing coursework in key competency areas.

Numerous studies indicate that having representation in the educational workforce that mirrors the demographic served is beneficial to students. We can surmise that the same is true for children and families in the early intervention system. Studies show that when a child’s identity and culture are affirmed, there is a positive effect on parent engagement and child and family outcomes. Having service providers who racially and culturally match families served is one affirming practice.

Goal 3: Ohio Early Intervention will work with institutes of higher learning to develop educational pathways to increase the number and diversity of personnel prepared to pursue careers in early intervention.

Objectives	Activities to meet objective	Partners and resources	Projected completion date
A. Partner with at least one college/university within each of five regions of Ohio to develop or enhance curricula so that students graduate with the coursework requirements to obtain a 5-year developmental specialist certification.	1. Identify interested faculty to collaborate on training/curriculum and promoting internships.	- IHEs	Ongoing; Complete by April 2024
	2. Identify curricular options at each partnering college/university, including possibilities for "micro-credentialing" and developmental specialist minor (2-year).	- IHEs	Start April 2024 and complete by August 2025
B. Identify the programs in 2 or 4-year colleges that can be enhanced to support curriculum targeting EI service coordinators.	1. Research college course topics/curricula that will prepare students to serve as EI service coordinators.	- IHEs	Start January 2023 and complete by August 2025
	(a) Identify career tech/college credit plus programs that align with the EI field of service coordination.		
	2. Identify interested faculty at 1-2 colleges to collaborate on training/curriculum and establishing EI internships.	- IHEs - Local EI programs	Start June 2023 and complete by December 2024
C. Identify standards for occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, and social workers to determine the current amount of inclusion of EI principles and practices in degree programs (to inform future professional development opportunities, including observations and mentoring).	1. Research national standards to determine coursework requirements for related service providers.	- IHEs	Start July 2025 and complete by August 2026
	2. Determine any Ohio-specific required curricula tied to licensure for related service providers.	- Professional organizations representing core EI team members - State of Ohio licensure boards for core EI team members	Start July 2025 and complete by August 2026
D. Identify programs (federal, state, public/private) that could be used to incentivize the application for and completion of educational tracks for EI core team members by underrepresented populations.	1. Research opportunities for: (a) Loan forgiveness (b) Tuition assistance (c) Supplies/material assistance, etc.	- Federal Office of Special Education (OSEP) - OCCRRA - "TEACH" early childhood education compensation - IHEs	Start August 2023 and complete by January 2026
	2. Identify mechanisms for sharing incentives and supports with target groups for focused recruitment at colleges.	- OSEP - OCCRRA - IHEs - Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) - Ohio Dept of Higher Education	Start February 2026 and complete by August 2026

CSPD Advisory Workgroup Recognition

DODD would like to acknowledge the contribution of the CSPD Advisory Workgroup members in the development and implementation of the plan. The Ohio Early Intervention (OEI) personnel development system is made strong and robust due to the efforts and contributions of each agency, leader, provider, and family.

Member	Role	Agency
Michelle DeAngelis	Parent/Caregiver	Wayne County resident
Karen Lohnes	PT	Riverside/Miami County BDD
Marta Gonzalez	OT	Cuyahoga CBDD
Erin Redle Sizemore	SLP/Higher Education	Mount St. Josephs University
Keely Kirkbride	DS	Muskingum County BDD
Cecilia Johnson	EISC	YMCA of Central Ohio/Franklin
Pheetta Wilkinson	EI Administrator	Hamilton CBDD
Elisa Bechtel	EI Administrator	Montgomery CBDD
Carrie Beier	EI Administrator	Erie CBDD NC
Jill Squires	EI Administrator	Hocking CBDD
Stephanie Trachsel	EI Administrator	Union CBDD
Liz Miller	EI Administrator	Lake CBDD
Julie Litt	EI Administrator	Richland CBDD
Katie Parker	EI Administrator	Cuyahoga CBDD
Jenny Remeis	Provider for Low Incidence Diagnosed Conditions	Statewide Coordinator Early Intervention Vision Services Ohio State School for the Blind
Jen Newton	Higher Ed	Ohio University
Heather Hatchett	Higher Ed	Cincinnati State
Karen Mintzer	Central Intake and Referral	Bright Beginnings/Statewide
Laura Maddox	Early Care/Education	OCALI/Statewide
Susan Jones	Ohio Association of County Boards	Statewide
Beth Popich	Ohio Association of County Boards	Statewide
Stacy Pettit	HR Administrator	Riverside/Miami County
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Allan Kisner	DODD OEI	Statewide
Traci Keese	DODD OEI	Statewide

Resources/References

1. [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association State Contacts and Licensure Information](#)
2. [Bright Beginnings](#)
3. [Division of Early Childhood Position Statement: The Role of Special Instruction in Early Intervention \(2014\)](#)
4. [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center](#)
5. [Grissom, Jason & Kern, Emily & Rodriguez, Luis. \(2015\). The "Representative Bureaucracy" in Education: Educator Workforce Diversity, Policy Outputs, and Outcomes for Disadvantaged Students](#)
6. [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - Section 303.118](#)
7. [James, CEMERÉ & Iruka, Iheoma. \(2018\). Delivering on the Promise of Effective Early Childhood Education for Black Children: Eliminating Exclusionary Discipline and Concentrating on Inclusion](#)
8. [OCALI](#)
9. [Office of Special Education \(OSEP\) Attract, Prepare, Retain: Effective Personnel for All](#)
10. [Ohio Association of County Boards](#)
11. [Ohio Department of Education](#)
12. [Ohio Early Intervention](#)
13. [The Family, Infant and Preschool Program](#)
14. [The Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association](#)
15. [UCONN Center For Excellence in Developmental Disabilities: The Early Childhood Personnel Center](#)
16. [Zero to Three](#)
17. [T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® OHIO Overview](#)