

Early Intervention Advisory Council
November 7, 2023
Columbus Developmental Center, Columbus, Ohio

Attendance

*Jody Beall, *Carrie Beier, *Tracey Chestnut, *Elisha Cangelosi, Cindy Davis, *Denielle Ell-Rittinger, Maggie Gons, *Kathy Greenawalt-Cherry, *Pam Hamer, Arley Hammons, *Johni Hayes, Lisa Houseworth, *Bonnie Hubbard-Nicosia, *Nick Johnson, Grace M. Kolliesuah, Julie Litt, *Lori Mago, *Jennifer Ottley, *Jenni Remeis, Beth Schearing, *Erin Simmons, Allyson Vanhorn, Erica Wallace

Department Updates

Nathan DeDino began the meeting at 10:00am. DeDino asked the council members to introduce themselves.

DeDino provided updates from the department. The Early Intervention program will be transitioning to the Department of Children and Youth (DCY), which will serve as the new lead agency. This transition will occur on the tentative date of July 1, 2024. Diane Fox has accepted the position of Deputy Director of Training, Technical Assistance, and Practice at DCY. DeDino has accepted the position of Deputy Director of Performance Data at DCY, but he will continue to serve as the Part C Coordinator during the transition. Regional contacts will remain the same for the Early Intervention field. The first department-wide DCY meeting will be held on November 9, 2023.

The existing arrangement with Bright Beginnings for Central Intake and Referral Processing will come to an end in June of 2024. A request for proposals will be issued in the beginning of 2024.

As part of a statewide rebranding effort, there is a new state logo and branding scheme. In accordance with this, there will be some changes to Early Intervention branding that will be communicated when finalized.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has announced that Ohio Part B and Ohio Part C will be a part of the fourth cohort that will begin review in Fall 2026. OSEP completed their site visits for the first cohort and released the reports online. OSEP has increased its focus on compliance and monitoring, and we are reviewing the released reports and analyzing our existing processes for compliance.

DeDino also updated the group on progress with grants with councils of governments (COGs). Starting October 1, COGs were able to provide EI services under the grant. Additionally, DODD and the NEON COG had entered into a grant agreement.

DeDino reviewed recent accomplishments of the Early Intervention team. In the State Fiscal year 2023, 34,925 referrals were received and 28,450 children were served. The 2023 Family Questionnaire received responses from every county in Ohio, with significant improvement in response rates from urban counties. Ohio Part C received "Meets Requirements," which is the highest category determination, from OSEP for the 7th consecutive year.

Part C Rules and Forms

Katrina Bush reviewed proposed changes to Part C rules and forms. These forms and rules will be made available for public comment and will go through the clearing process. The goal is to finalize all rules and forms in Spring 2024.

Appendix C

Due to serving more children than have been served in recent history, significant expansion to eligibility indicators is not proposed. Although the Center for Disease Control adjusted their guidance regarding blood lead levels, Appendix C will continue to indicate 5 µg/dL as the minimum for eligibility.

Upon reviewing stakeholder feedback, it was determined that several groups wanted more clarity regarding the diagnosis categories on Appendix C, but they liked the flexibility the categories provided. To address this, we kept the categories on the form, but added parentheticals to address frequently occurring questions. We have engaged with Dr. Sorg and the CHAMPS group of pediatricians who will assist in developing a guidance document to accompany Appendix C that defines each diagnosis. This will be available in 2024.

Service Coordinator Credentialing Rule

The education requirements needed to become a service coordinator will be simplified in this rule revision. In this proposal, prospective service coordinators must hold any associate's degree or have earned at least 60 college credit hours. They also will be required to complete the mandatory training modules within one year of employment. Additionally, the education requirements to become a service coordinator will be simplified to require any bachelor's degree or graduate-level degree.

Advisory Council members asked questions regarding semester vs. quarter credit hours, credentials being obtained by individuals in high school, and transition credentials. Our proposal will continue to be edited to elaborate on these points.

EI-03

Form EI-09 and Section 3 of Form EI-04 and will be combined to create the new EI-03 form. This will address the space that overlaps between the two areas to eliminate redundancy. This will also eliminate the need for any child to undergo redetermination of eligibility. The new form draft incorporates a clearer statement of eligibility and will use checkboxes and date spaces to ensure continuity.

Group Activity

The Advisory Council divided into smaller groups to discuss the proposed changes to rules and forms, including prompts regarding clarity, needed edits, additions, changes, and points to consider when preparing to implement these rules and forms in the field. During the report out of the small groups, members of the Advisory Council shared concerns about ensuring that service coordinators know when and when not to fill out certain sections of the forms and small changes to the language on the forms to reduce confusion.

Department of Children and Youth Presentation and Feedback Session

Chief of Staff at the Department of Children and Youth (DCY), Jeffery Van Deusen, addressed the Advisory Council regarding the new state agency.

Van Deusen provided an overview of DCY, including Governor Mike DeWine's vision for the new agency and the table or organization. The principles of DCY are transparency, accountability, focus and prioritization, and local structure. The goals of DCY are to reduce infant mortality, reduce learning gaps, and reduce involvement with child welfare. DCY will be comprised of 15 child-serving programs, from five legacy state agencies, divided into the three branches: Identification, Early Education, and Support. Van Deusen reviewed the building blocks for DCY: Central Intake and Referral Infrastructure, Licensing Alignment, Early Childhood Education Expansion, Step Up to Quality Early Access, and Home Visiting Expansion.

Van Deusen reviewed the family and stakeholder engagement feedback and then elicited feedback from the Advisory Council. Members of the Advisory Council shared feedback regarding assisting families that are not yet in crisis, respite care, creating

stronger communities, families' navigation of the programs, and potential Early Intervention transition issues.

Annual Performance Report

Taylor Hammond shared the State Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Performance Report (APR). The APR will not be posted for public comment, but will be shared on the Ohio Early Intervention website. Hammond walked through each of the indicators, explained the data, pointed out performance relative to the targets that Advisory Council had set, and answered questions. At the end, the Advisory Council members voted unanimously to submit the APR as their report to the administration.

Adjournment

The Advisory Council Meeting Adjourned at 2:00PM.