

# ***Early Intervention Advisory Council and Stakeholder Meeting***

Meeting Minutes

February 23, 2021

## **I. Call to order**

Nathan DeDino called the meeting to order at 10:35 AM

## **II. Roll Call**

\*Meredith Alexander, \*Jody Beall, \*Carrie Beier, Julie Brem, \*Maria Breno, Cindy Davis, Nathan DeDino, Diane Fox, Taylor Hammond, Arley Hammons, \*Kim Hauck, Lauren Holland, Kelsey Hopkins, \*Bonnie Hubbard-Nicosia, Susan Jones, Megan Kloss, \*Grace Kolliesuah, \*Sarah LaTourette, Julie Litt, Laura Maddox, \*Lori Mago, Beth Martin, Henry Matthews, Najma Mohamoud, Caley Norton, \*Jennifer Ottley, Katie Parker, Beth Popich, Stefanie Post, \*Jennifer Remeis, Jessica Smith, Allyson VanHorn, \*Susannah Wayland, \*Kristen Wheeler

## **III. Approval of minutes from last meeting**

The minutes from the November 10, 2020 meeting were approved with no changes.

## **IV. Open issues**

### **a) DODD updates**

*Part C application and maintenance of effort:* DeDino informed the group that the Part C application will be posted soon for 60 days, with public comment accepted for 30 days. DODD has not yet received the state's allocation from OSEP so we will move forward with last year's numbers. Last year was the first year we have had a fully approved application due to having all needed policies all in place.

DeDino also indicated that a brief update was sent to county boards of developmental disabilities (CBDDs) around maintenance of effort (MOE). He explained that DODD had a site visit from OSEP shortly after becoming the lead agency for Part C. At the time, OSEP informed DODD that more information was needed regarding the contribution of CBDDs to EI, as both state and local contributions need to be part of the state's MOE. DeDino explained that DODD worked internally to add a new spreadsheet to collect information on prior year expenditures and the current year's budget in the same folder where CBDDs are already completing expenditure reports. DODD communicated this in early February and the spreadsheets are due to be completed March 1.

*SFY22-23 budget:* DeDino indicated that Governor DeWine introduced his proposed SFY22-SFY23 budget recently. The governor's recommendations around EI are to keep funding at the level we have been at the past couple years.

*Lead RFP:* DeDino informed the group that DODD currently has an request for proposals (RFP) up around content for a training DODD will be developing about EBPs for children in EI who have EBLs. DODD and ODH worked on a training DODD required EI service coordinators to

complete by the end of 2019 covering the sources of lead, the testing system that's present in Ohio, and available options for abatement. The RFP is for additional training and DODD is seeking experts in practices to serve children with this diagnosis as well as how that fits in with EI.

*PCSA form and training:* DODD and ODH have been working with ODJFS over the past couple years regarding whether changes are needed to Public Children Services Agency (PCSA) form. A new PCSA form and training are in progress via a collaborative effort among DODD, ODH, and ODJFS. The training is scheduled for March 10 and is aimed at providing an overview of changes to the PCSA form as well as the Help Me Grow (HMG) system of supports (including EI, home visiting, and Central Intake under the HMG umbrella) to Children's Services caseworkers. County leaders in EI and home visiting have also been invited to participate.

*Central intake and referral updates:* DeDino reminded the group of discussion at the last meeting about the "Act Early" campaign, which includes three outreach goals for EI. One campaign is around supporting early referral to EI to change the "wait and see" culture that exists in the medical community, as well as to promote EI more generally. This campaign got underway in the fall. The other two campaigns are targeted at families with children who have diagnoses of elevated blood lead levels (EBLLs) or Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS). Bright Beginnings has been working with a marketing firm on this work. DeDino explained that EBLL diagnoses are required to be reported to ODH so DODD receives all applicable referrals from ODH each week and wants to better support engagement with these families. This same structure does not exist for NAS diagnoses, so DODD is taking a broader approach and working on both getting these referrals and engaging these families. DeDino mentioned that Bright Beginnings also did a presentation earlier this month around the toolkit.

*EI Data:* DeDino shared referral and child count information from 2018 through 2020, including data tables and graphs. He indicated that referrals seemed to have bottomed out around the end of CY20, and that we received the highest number of referrals in January 2021 that we have since the beginning of the pandemic. He explained that we experienced a fairly steep decline in child counts between April and August that tracks with the decline in referrals, but that these counts also seem to have bottomed out. He explained that the child count numbers going forward will be related to the number of referrals to EI.

*Training and TA Updates:* Diane Fox shared updates about trainings that have been offered and what trainings will be coming soon. She shared that DODD has offered quite a bit of training despite the pandemic and the trainings have been well attended. She shared that one training that was different was a Donuts with Di series on using Assistive Technology during everyday routines and activities. Some other major trainings have included those around child outcome summary (COS) statements and a nutrition-focused Donuts with Di. She also mentioned that throughout the wide variety of trainings offered, evidence-based practices are either woven into the trainings or the specific focus of the training.

Fox also provided a list of major upcoming trainings which cover the topics of the Newborn Behavioral Observation (NBO) system, supporting families around substance misuse, a self-

paced Principles of Service Coordination (POSC) course, Transition Part 2, an overview for PCSAs, and eligibility.

Additionally, Fox provided an overview of TA contacts with counties over the last few months. She indicated that the majority of contacts were in regard to training and credentials. The next most frequent topic was POSC, followed by fiscal. She indicated that there were some contacts about interesting sub-topics, including functional assessment practices; Central Intake and Outreach; supporting counties on a performance improvement plan (PIP), or in the Needs Assistance determination category; and a number of conversations around IFSP procedures, developing outcomes, and service delivery.

### **b) County Determinations Process**

Taylor Hammond explained how county determinations have been completed over the past several years. Hammond and Dedino indicated that DODD is looking into changing this process, with the goal of making county determinations as meaningful as possible and ensuring we are taking all of the right factors into consideration.

The group split into two smaller groups to discuss the following items:

- How do you use the local determinations?
- What is working well about the current determinations process?
- What could be improved about the current determinations process?
- What should be considered as part of a local program's determination that is not currently part of the determinations process?
- How can we encourage local programs to seek assistance from DODD to resolve issues without appearing to penalize the program?
- Since OSEP is now considering states' family questionnaire response rates and representativeness, how should DODD consider these factors in local program determinations?
- What should DODD consider when communicating changes about the determinations process to local EI programs and other stakeholders?

The group reconvened into the larger group and shared an overview of their discussions. The groups shared that they discussed the potential for changing the Family Questionnaire process including the timing of the survey and/or sending out the survey multiple times throughout the year, as well as analyzing the results based on the length of time the family has been in EI. In regard to encouraging local programs to seek assistance without feeling like they are going to be penalized, the groups shared that the more frequent check-ins during COVID allowed them to build a better relationship with their consultants that made it feel easier and safer to have conversations about issues. They also suggested the possibility for a general anonymous message board where people could ask questions. On the topic of other factors to be considered, particularly those that could be used as "bonus points," the groups mentioned the number of outcomes that have been achieved, tracking children who transitioned without requiring intervention, the number of family outcomes on IFSPs, the diversity of services on IFSPs, and the number of children who are exited from EI prior to age three due to no longer needing support. The groups also discussed the differences between small and large counties and making sure these factors are taken into consideration in the determinations process.

**c) Future state systemic improvement plan (SSIP) efforts**

Ohio Part C has completed the first cycle of the SSIP, along with a one-year extension. DeDino reported that DODD has had conversations internally and with stakeholders regarding the next phase and switching focus to a new State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR). There has been a great deal of interest in focusing on the social-emotional child outcome area.

In light of this interest, DeDino proposed to the group that Ohio update its SIMR to one related to social-emotional development: “Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome A, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 3 years of age or exited the program.” After discussion, there were no objections, and all present voting members supported changing the SIMR.

**d) Partner Updates**

- Susannah Wayland: The Mc Kinney-Vento Competitive RFA is available:
- <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/District-and-School-Continuous-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Elementary-and-Secondary-Education-Act-1/Disadvantaged-Youth/McKinney-Vento-Resources-for-Awareness>
- Caley Norton: Informed the group she is retiring in May, if anyone is interested in the position of EI Director in Licking County

**V) Adjournment**

DeDino adjourned the meeting at 12:27 PM.