

# *Early Intervention Advisory Council and Stakeholder Meeting*

Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2020

## **I. Call to order**

DeDino called the meeting to order at 12:30 PM

## **II. Open issues**

### **a) Introductions and DODD updates**

*COVID-19 Updates:* DeDino explained that our focus at DODD recently has primarily been on COVID. He indicated the ODH website is the main place to go for coronavirus related information, but that different agencies, including DODD, have put links regarding their programs on their websites, as well. He mentioned that a page has been added to the EI website that exclusively contains COVID-related information, including a 40-page document outlining different resources available around the state. Information related to coronavirus has also been shared in the EI program updates, which we have been sending weekly instead of bi-weekly during the pandemic.

DeDino reported that almost everything in EI has been transitioned to technology, from evaluations to services and that it speaks to the dedication of local partners how quickly they made the transition. It only took a few days to a couple of weeks to go from doing little to nothing via technology to doing everything via technology.

DeDino indicated that as teams have transitioned, there has been a need for additional resources, and this is going to be with us for many months to come so we need to make the needed adjustments to continue to support and serve families and bring new families into EI. He mentioned that DODD has put out some guidance related to COVID around evaluations, assessments, and re-determination of eligibility. In doing so, the primary goals are to protect parent rights/maintain procedural safeguards but continue to serve families.

Another thing DODD has done and is adjust the EI monitoring schedule, as DODD understands it is difficult to get access to records at this time. We are looking at some further adjustments we can make to the schedule while still fulfilling our federal reporting requirements. We know local EI systems are facing many burdens right now so we are simplifying things where we are able.

DeDino acknowledged that there have been a lot of questions locally about transition from Part C to Part B as well as the recommendations US Education Secretary Betsy DeVos made a few weeks ago. The most salient recommendation that seems to have caused some confusion is in regard to continuing to serve children in EI past age 3. DeDino reiterated that this is just a recommendation and in order for it to go into effect, Congress would need to act on it, choose language, make recommendations, and the president would need to sign that into law. Some have thought this was a directive but DeDino clarified that, as of now, nothing has changed and EI still ends on a child's third birthday. He explained that we are monitoring any developments

on that on a federal level and depending what that federal language ultimately looks like we will have to make a decision. He also indicated that DODD and ODE will be putting out a joint communication regarding transition.

*SFY21 EI Allocation and Contracts:* DeDino acknowledged that there have been a lot of questions in regard to our SFY21 allocation and other contracts for services for SFY21. He explained that DODD would typically have communicated information about these by end of April. He indicated that OBM is continuing to work through the process, and as DODD receives guidance about what funding levels will look like for EI for SFY21, we will make any necessary adjustments and communicate that to our vendors and SC agencies.

*FFY20 Part C Application:* Our application was due May 1. The application was posted back in February. We were able to note “on file” for many policies this year. The only new information included was in regard to DODD’s new IAA with the Ohio Department of Medicaid.

*Ohio FFY18 APR Submission:* DeDino informed the group that we received feedback on our FFY18 APR through the clarifications process in regard to the targets we had set for FFY19, and requirements for the targets in relation to the baseline.

*Tele-EI:* Diane Fox shared that DODD has put together preliminary info information regarding the survey sent out to gather information about evaluations, service coordination, and service delivery occurring via technology. With 76 of 88 counties have reporting, including all the urban counties, 87% of children are receiving ongoing services via telephone or videoconferencing and 68% are receiving services via video technology.

*EI Referrals and Ongoing Data:* DeDino explained that, like other states, Ohio EI has experienced a decline in referrals over the past two months. Throughout most of this time, we have been receiving about 50% of the referrals we typically receive, but saw these numbers moving in an upward direction last week. About two weeks ago, Bright Beginnings implemented online marketing/advertising via social media platforms directed at parents. He also pointed out that DODD continues to publicize point-in-time referral and child count numbers each month and that these counts, including data through April 2020, can be found on the Data and Monitoring page of the EI website.

#### **b) Comprehensive system of professional development discussion**

Diane Fox presented information regarding Ohio’s system of professional development, including what this is, why we are doing this work, what we have done so far, where the gaps are, and how the EI Advisory Council and stakeholder group can be involved in this work.

#### **c) Annual Performance Report (APR) baseline data discussion**

Taylor Hammond discussed the new SPP/APR package, which will cover FFY20 to FFY25 (SFY21 to SFY26), and that we need to set targets for the performance indicators for each year in this timeframe. In the proposed SPP/APR package, the FFY25 target is required to be higher than the baseline. Ohio’s baseline data are currently from several years ago, and many systemic changes have been made since then, along with changes in data collection and analysis methods.

In order to make sure we have meaningful data comparisons when setting our new targets, DODD is proposing to change our baseline data:

- Indicator 2 – Services in Natural Environments
  - Current baseline year: FFY 2005; Proposed baseline year: FFY 2010
  - In FFY10, the method for determining primary location was changed from simply using what the EISC indicated was the primary location to calculating primary service location based on planned service time as listed on the IFSP.
- Indicator 3 – Child Outcomes
  - Current baseline year: FFY 2008; Proposed baseline year: FFY 2018
  - The COS process was integrated into child and family assessment process/the IFSP form in January 2015, along with changing the collection mechanism to include statements rather than scores. By FFY16 nearly 90% of children, by FFY17 almost all children, and by FFY18 all children had entry and exit COS ratings completed using the new method.
- Indicator 4 – Family Outcomes
  - Current baseline year: FFY 2006; Proposed baseline year: FFY 2015
  - Several versions of the Family Questionnaire have been used over the years, but the most recent version, including specific open-ended questions, was first introduced in 2016, which was used for the FFY15 reporting.
- Indicators 5 & 6 – Birth to 1 and Birth to 3 Child Counts
  - Current baseline year: FFY 2005; Proposed baseline year: FFY 2013
  - ODH gave guidance in early 2012 to exit children from caseloads when they no longer needed services (at the time most children stayed on caseloads until age three). Additionally, new rules were implemented in the fall of 2012, including more stringent eligibility requirements and the introduction of Need for Services as a standalone component of the IFSP process. Child Count numbers decreased steadily and evened out at the end of 2013/throughout 2014.

DODD will send a follow up email including the information regarding the proposed new baseline data and a proposal for FFY20 through FFY25 targets, based on conversations the group had regarding target setting throughout 2019.

#### **d) Closing and partner updates**

Local EI system partners and families shared different perspective regarding how EI is going during COVID – tele-services, etc.

### **III. Adjournment**

DeDino adjourned the meeting at 2:15 PM