

Early Intervention Advisory Council and Stakeholder Meeting

Meeting Minutes
November 9, 2021

I. Call to order

Nathan DeDino called the meeting to order 10:05 AM.

II. Roll Call

Jody Beall, Carrie Beier, Julie Brem, Kim Christensen, Cindy Davis, Nathan DeDino, Christine Dobrovich, Diane Fox, Kathy Greenawalt-Cherry, Taylor Hammond, Arley Hammons, Kelsey Hopkins, Bonnie Hubbard-Nicosia, Julia Jackels, Lindsey Jay, Susan Jones, Allan Kisner Jr, Megan Kloss, Grace Kolliesuah, Tiffany Madden, Laura Maddox, Lori Mago, Beth Martin, Henry Matthews, Karen Mintzer, Cheree Nelson, Jennifer Ottley, Jenni Remeis, Jamie Roe, Jamie Sanders, Erin Simmons, Jessica Smith, Allyson Van Horn, Kristin Wheeler

III. Approval of minutes from last meeting

The minutes from the August 17, 2021 meeting were approved with no changes.

IV. Open issues

a) DODD Updates

Virtual service delivery. DeDino discussed guidance around virtual evaluations. He told the group that DODD had provided some in-person safety reminders to the field. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) confirmed that consent needs to be in writing. Initial and annual IFSPs also must be in person, which is a federal requirement; however, OSEP has temporarily waived that requirement.

Supplemental service coordination grant funding. DODD made more funding available to counties. Looking at the first nine months of 2021, the number of referrals is almost identical to the first nine months of 2019. DODD made \$750,000 available to counties that experienced a higher number of referrals in 2021 compared to 2019. DODD also reserved \$250,000 for counties that did not receive funding due to having a higher number of referrals. These counties could apply to access the \$250,000. DeDino explained that these supplemental funds are in addition to American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) counties received.

2021 EI family questionnaire. DeDino explained that OSEP is putting greater focus on states increasing the response rates to their family questionnaires. In Ohio, the response rate was almost 21% in 2021 compared to 12% in 2020. Although Black and African-American respondents continued to be underrepresented in 2021, it was considerably improved compared to recent prior years. In 2021, DODD, for the first time, e-mailed the survey link directly to families. Two reminders were also sent while the survey was opened, which seemed to increase responses.

EI outreach. Bright Beginnings will give a presentation at the first meeting in 2022. DODD is working at the state level to boost referrals for children who have neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), elevated lead levels, and families who are harder to engage. DODD is also exploring the creation of outreach materials that are disability or delay specific. Dr. Sorg, the Medical Director

for DODD, did a video about the dangers of lead poisoning, which is posted on the Help Me Grow website.

Federal budget implications for Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). President Biden proposed to increase the federal allocation to states for Part C EI by about \$250 million per year. This is almost as much as the one-time ARPA funds that were distributed by the same formula. This means that Ohio could receive an additional 6 to \$7 million, which would be a significant increase. The administration is also making several policy changes. One stipulation is that states would not be able to charge families fees. In Ohio, DODD would not be permitted to require families who are able to pay to fund their EI services past the first 55 hours as is required in our current system of payments rule. In addition, 10% of each state's federal grant would be set aside to address an equity plan in the state. There is also a provision that would require states to give 24 months notice before narrowing eligibility and a provision giving states an extended Part C option for just the summer.

EI data. DeDino shared that 2021 referrals increased significantly compared to 2020 and provided a month-by-month breakdown of referrals and child counts. DeDino also shared the EI SFY 21 Data Summary. Outside of child counts and referrals, few measures have changed significantly during the pandemic.

TA topics. Diane Fox shared data from September 2021. Program consultants are spending considerable time on issues related to fiscal issues, including ARPA and the supplemental funding. ARPA budgets are due on November 19. DODD has supported a number of counties about how best to use ARPA funds.

DODD will hold a webinar where to discuss results from the first EI service coordination grant program report. That webinar is scheduled for December 16. DODD will discuss information reported about the state's EI evaluators, local outreach, and local EI oversight.

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD). Tiffany Madden provided updates regarding CSPD. DODD is working on an online training that informs people about new certification rules. DODD is working with OCALI to develop an enhanced training search for the Ohio EI Training website. We also developed a Trainer Guide for Subject Matter Experts to help them understand DODD's EI training development process. DODD EI staff are beginning to work with the DODD training team to have a "one-stop shop" for all EI professional development. We want to house the certification and the feedback of the trainings on the same site.

Madden invited external stakeholders to help get involved with the CSPD. The overarching goal of the CSPD plan is to ensure that our workforce is able to meet the needs of all families served in the state's EI system, and to ensure that the state's EI service providers have the knowledge and skills to provide high quality, evidence-based support to children and families. The CSPD plan will cover six focus areas. There will be a kickoff meeting in February 2022 and quarterly meetings afterward.

b.) EI data, Annual Performance Report (APR), Target Finalization

SFY EI Data Summary. Taylor Hammond presented data on SFY 21 compared to prior years. Ohio had the highest number of EI referral in SFY19 compared to other recent years. There was a drop off due to the pandemic, and in 2021, Ohio surpassed 30,000 again in total referrals for EI. The breakdown of referral sources remained fairly static across the past several years, with the highest percentage of referrals coming from families directly and then hospitals. Ohio saw significant declines in the child counts over the last two years due to COVID. However, Hammond explained that we are anticipating by the end of SFY 2022, we will arrive at pre-pandemic numbers. We have seen a significant change in eligibility reasons for EI. Typically, the majority of children are eligible for EI in Ohio due to a significant delay. In SFY 2021, there was a large jump in children that remain eligible due to an informed clinical opinion (ICO) which was 32% in 2021 vs 11% in 2020. This reflects the temporary adjustments to the evaluation process where many evaluations were occurring virtually. Exit reasons were similar in SFY21 vs SFY20.

Annual Performance Report. Hammond then walked the group through FFY20 APR indicator by indicator. For each indicator, Hammond explained the indicator, highlighted the state's percentage, and discussed any questions from the group. During the discussion of Indicator 3, Hammond mentioned that recent declines may be more indicative of increased data quality rather than a true decline given the extensive technical assistance DODD has provided about child outcomes summary (COS) ratings. During the discussion of Indicator 4, Hammond flagged that the percentages were somewhat lower than prior years, but the response rate was considerably higher and the data were more representative. At the end of the APR discussion, the group voted unanimously to submit the state's APR as the Council's annual report to the governor.

Target finalization. DeDino then led the group in a discussion to finalize targets for the APR. He reminded the group that DODD had posted the draft targets from the August meeting and sought public comment. He shared the comment that DODD received about the targets. During the course of the discussion, the group agreed to use SFY21 as the baseline for the indicators. The group then agreed to set the targets at a 5% increase for each of the Indicator 3 components. The group discussed the desire to continue to review data regularly over the next five years in case there were declines in these indicators that might be related to increased data quality or other factors. The group agreed to somewhat more aggressive target setting for the child count targets in Indicators 5 and 6 in light of the fact that current numbers are somewhat depressed because of the COVID-19 pandemic and because Ohio expanded eligibility in 2019. Historic family outcomes baseline data have been very high. Notwithstanding the recent dip, the group agreed to keep targets high for the three components of this indicator. Similarly, the group also decided to keep the targets for Indicator 2 high to stay consistent with the existing high baseline data.

V) Adjournment

DeDino adjourned the meeting at 12:05 PM.