

**Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) on Early Intervention  
Regional Centers and Vendors Workgroup  
Monday, March 6, 2023  
Zoom Meeting  
Time: 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**Welcome and Attendance**

The meeting was called to order at 3:21 p.m. (The meeting had a late start due to workgroup lead having a scheduling conflict.) Introductions were made and roll call was conducted.

**Review of Agenda**

No changes were made to the agenda.

**Continue Workgroup Discussion from ICC Meeting on 1/19/23**

- The Regional Center & Vendors workgroup of the ICC's Improving State Systems Subcommittee discussed the following items:
  - Staffing shortages are a big issue. DDS has a couple of initiatives aimed at addressing staff shortages and retaining qualified service providers.
  - It is important to bring down the number of cases service coordinators manage.
  - Need to address the shortage of OT/PT/SLP/Child Development Specialists. Also, bilingual therapists are in great need.
  - Need to think of ways to develop a pathway for new students to pursue a career in early intervention.
  - Need to consider changes to the Early Start Personnel Manual (ESPM). The ESPM is not required, just recommended. Consider making it more user-friendly and accessible to all regional centers and local educational agencies. (<https://earlystartneighborhood.org/resources/resources-for-early-start-personnel/>)
  - Compensation is also an issue. Vendors still have limited slots because they don't have enough therapists to meet the caseload demand.
  - Need to do a better job of outreach to the entire child development community.
- The Regional Center & Vendors workgroup also discussed the following questions relating to the force in early intervention services:
  - What programs are in place in CA to promote careers in early intervention?
  - How can regional centers and vendors incentivize students to pursue a career in early intervention? Need outreach to educational institutions.
  - There's a gap in the public in knowing what early intervention is and what it does.
  - Can more internships be developed? Can there be an incentive for vendors to take on interns to attract more students to the field?
  - Can the workgroup develop a sort of cheat sheet for the ESPM outlining the priority requirements?

- How can the workgroup look at existing partnerships to strengthen services? Could a survey be conducted to look at gaps that need to be filled?
- Some of the challenges discussed amongst the workgroup were:
  - The fee-for-service model of payment is also problematic. There's no funding for cancellations. Mileage is also an issue. These challenges are even more apparent now post-pandemic.
  - There is competition with the educational and medical systems for the same qualified personnel.
  - Interpretation for other appointments outside of Early Start is not covered. There's no reimbursement for these services or mileage.
  - There is no funding for vendors for in-service training. The vendor must absorb the costs. Vendors spend a lot of time and money in training their staff members at their own expense.
  - One of the workgroup members mentioned that Special Needs Network has advertised a training initiative. They had over 1K people applied to be part of their fellowship program. Could workgroup use the same sort of advertisement systems to do outreach? See <https://snnla.org/c-o-r-e/>.
  - Another workgroup members mentioned that there will be a training on workforce development and staff retention at Early Start Symposium.
  - All regional centers handle these issues differently.
  - There are also questions about using interpreters and having a centralized way to access interpreters.

### **Finalize "Next Steps" for Action Plan**

The workgroup needs to clarify from the Systems Committee the ideas discussed to determine the workgroup members that will be assigned to do the work suggested.

### **Member Assignment**

The workgroup needs to clarify from the Systems Committee the ideas discussed to determine the workgroup members that will be assigned to do the work suggested.

### **Public Input**

There was no public input.

### **Adjourn Meeting**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:27 p.m.

### **Community Members Present**

Diane Williams  
 Johana Caicedo  
 Liliana McDonough  
 Edyth Gallardo

### **DDS**

Hilda Jimenez

**WestEd**

Ross Adams

**Others Present**

Apple Sepulveda