

Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) on Early Intervention
Thursday, July 20, 2023
In-Person Meeting with Zoom Conference Call Option
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Link to Zoom Recording: [July ICC Meeting - Day 1 - Zoom](#)

Opening

Dr. Marie Kanne Poulsen, ICC Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

Housekeeping Items

Zoom instructions, ASL/Spanish interpreter instructions, and meeting etiquette were reviewed.

Roll Call

The roll call was conducted.

Review Agenda and April Meeting Minutes

No changes were made to the agenda. Suzanne Sherinian, with the California Department of Managed Healthcare, noted a needed correction to the April meeting minutes on pages 19 and 28 of the Day 2 minutes. Instead of the sentence reading “10 days” it should read “10 business days.”

Michelle Dove moved to approve the meeting minutes as corrected; Suzanne Sherinian seconded. All members present approved.

Review of ICC Mission and Purpose, and Theme of Meeting

DJ Tomko reviewed the mission and vision of the ICC; the theme of this month’s meeting is Family Outcomes.

Part C Literacy Article

[Maternal Depression Can Undermine the Development of Young Children](#) by the National Scientific Council on Developing Child and the National Forum on Early Childhood Policy and Programs

The Part C Literacy Article presented by Dr. Poulsen highlighted how chronic and severe maternal depression has potentially far-reaching harmful effects on families and children and its impact on the future prosperity and well-being of those families. Dr. Poulsen noted that fundamental to the emotional, social, and cognitive development and well-being of babies is the mutual responsiveness between a mother and her child, including mutual smiles, mutual vocalizing, mutual snuggling, and eye contact. It comes easily to the mother when she is physically and emotionally healthy and has sufficient economic and social resources and a history of good relationships. It also comes easily and naturally when the baby is healthy, nourished, and alert. Moreover, the ‘serve and return’ interactions between mother and child build and strengthen connections in the child’s brain that support the development of communication and social skills and serve as a foundation for learning, behavior, and health that follow.

The healthy development of the architecture of the brain is in jeopardy if the mother has difficulty initiating or responding to interactions. Dr. Poulsen added that maternal depression is particularly worrisome because of its prevalence. About 20% of mothers experience depression at some point in time. Almost 10% of mothers will experience major depression in their child's first year of life and it will be higher for mothers with previous histories of depression and those experiencing other stressors such as financial hardship, racial discrimination, conflict, social isolation, and having an infant in the NICU. Lastly, Dr. Poulsen added that recent data indicates that in households below the federal poverty threshold, one in four mothers of infants experience moderate-to-severe levels of depressive symptoms. When infants and young children interact with brash or neglectful caregiving, they tend to produce higher levels of stress hormones, such as cortisol which can make them overly sensitive to the world around them and over-reactive in response. Evidence-based dyadic treatment for infants & toddlers effected by mother's depression is available for Medi-Cal families in many communities through community Departments of Mental Health services funded by the Mental Health Services Act.

Dr. Poulsen posed the question: How many of our Part C mothers are screened for social, emotional, and mental health well-being?

DDS Updates and Information – Alina Rahman, Sara Grijalva, Ernie Cruz, and Erin Paulsen Brady

Service Access & Equity Grant Program

Ms. Rahman and Ms. Grijalva presented on efforts made to improve access to Early Start services, resources, and education for diverse, underserved, and marginalized communities. The presenters discussed:

- Grant projects and Early Start initiatives
- Language Access and Cultural Competency Plan Implementation Program
- Tribal Outreach and Engagement
- Department of Developmental Services (DDS) efforts to implement implicit bias training and to engage diverse communities.

Samantha Hebermehl asked about access to Deaf Coach services and how to escalate access.

- Ms. Grijalva recommended working through the family's service coordinator as well as the Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA).

Regional Center Performance Measures

Mr. Cruz provided background information for the development of regional center performance indicators and benchmarks, a requirement that was added to the Welfare and Institutions Code with the Budget Act of 2021-22. The presentation focused on two Early Start performance measures:

- *Child Find and Identification*: Eligible children to be identified and enrolled in a timely manner.
- *Timely Access to Services*: Children and families to have timely access to Early Start

services to minimize the impact of developmental delays.

Committee members commented on the importance of the 45-day timeline and problems with families waiting 60 or more days for services. Mr. Cruz provided the following link https://www.dds.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/RCPM_handout_12132022.pdf to the regional center's Performance Measures for additional information.

DDS Updates

Ms. Paulsen Brady, on behalf of Maricris Acon, reported a 12% increase in the number of children served by Early Start in the last month and a 10% increase in referrals throughout the state since June 2022. She also invited ICC members to send DDS ideas or resources to share in the quarterly Early Start Newsletter.

Reyna Ambriz reported that DDS received supplemental Part C funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which is being used for funding pilot projects and initiatives focusing on the impact of the pandemic and the effectiveness of services. Ms. Ambriz also reported that in June, DDS hosted the first in-person Early Start Partners Symposium (ESPS) since 2019.

Voices from the Field

- ***Infant Development Association (IDA) – Fran Chasen***

IDA's 50th anniversary is coming up. The Vivian Weinstein Leadership Day will be held on October 16, 2023. Ms. Chasen also commented on legislation:

- [House of Representatives \(H.R.\) 4519](#) calls for full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); Ms. Chasen urged ICC members to contact their congressional leaders to express support.
- Hearings for Senate Bill (S.B.) 326, reducing funding that supports the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), will be in August.
- S.B. 365 on children having access to hearing aids is currently in appropriation.

IDA is focusing on multiple important issues, including:

- Timely access to Early Start;
- Importance of speech and language assistants and clinical fellows;
- Quality assurance measures and rate implementation; and
- Reported increases in cancellation/absenteeism.

- ***The Arc of California – Jim Frazier***

Mr. Fraser introduced himself as the new public policy director for the Arc.

- ***California Disability Community Action Network – Marty Omoto***

Mr. Omoto was unable to attend July's ICC meeting and was excused.

- ***Family Resource Centers Network of California (FRCNCA) – Robert Rochin***

Mr. Rochin discussed recent trainings for FRC staff, including certification sessions on the Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support. The FRCNCA attended ESPS 2023, shared information about the Family Resource Centers (FRCs) and their ARPA-funded pilot project, and held its annual Directors Forum, which focused on reflective supervision. The FRCNCA has also been providing guidance for

the 21 lead FRCs in each of the regional center catchment areas for the Community Navigator Program.

The FRCNCA is partnering with the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health on a study about barriers to pediatric specialty care. Researchers plan to add a question about the issue of health plans' provision of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and behavioral intervention services in a timely manner. Members of the ICC who are familiar with standards for timelines for these types of services to contact Mr. Rochin.

DDS Updates and Information – Maricris Acon

Ms. Acon shared background information on the rate reform, including the rate study and the timeline for implementing the rate reform. Full implementation is expected to be completed on July 1, 2024, with the following two components: a base rate of 90% of the model and 10% tied to the Quality Incentive Program (QIP). Rate study information can be found at <https://www.dds.ca.gov/rc/vendor-provider/rate-study/> and implementation information can be found at <https://www.dds.ca.gov/rc/vendor-provider/rate-study-implementation/>.

Ms. Acon reviewed the key rate model assumptions specifically for Early Start. The rate model for Infant Development Programs and Early Start Specialized Therapeutic Services rates varies by regional center, setting, ratio, and discipline. DDS is looking into ways to communicate these changes to the field, exploring operational changes, and discussing bundling services.

Comments and questions:

- Ms. Chasen commented that the code for initial evaluations might also need to be reviewed as it has also been given multiple rates depending on the regional center.
 - DDS is tracking the assessment codes with the intent for all rates to be consistent with pay with the cost factors of the regional centers. The study focused on the services where DDS sets the rate; initial evaluation rates are paid for differently.
- Shan Chan asked why intake evaluation or evaluation was not included in the rate study and whether ongoing services get approved after evaluations are done.
 - The study could only be done for services with rates set by DDS. Services get authorized and approved as agreed upon in the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- Julie Loe (via chat) asked for information about the benchmarks for the 10% incentive.
 - DDS will be sharing information/guidance on the QIP soon.
 - Ms. Chasen shared that IDA will host a webinar on the QIP. Additional information regarding the webinar can be found at https://idac.memberclicks.net/index.php?option=com_jevents&task=icalevent.detail&evid=227.

Presentation: Family Outcomes Overview – Kathleen Hebbeler, SRI International Senior Researcher

Ms. Hebbeler presented information about the Annual Performance Report Indicator C4, the Family Outcomes Indicator, including background information, why and how it is reported,

and what is measured. Ms. Hebbeler also reviewed:

- Data from 2016 through 2021, both overall and by regional center
- Quality of the data
- Implications of sampling and the low survey response rate
- Next steps for DDS including:
 - Additional analysis to understand who is and who is not returning the surveys and ways to increase response rate
 - Working with a technical assistance center
 - Using the data to improve programs

Questions and comments from attendees:

- Dr. Poulsen commented that increasing funding for family navigators could greatly help the work that needs to be done.
- Ms. Hebermehl had the following questions and comments:
 - Do families of children supported by Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) complete the survey?
 - DDS works with the California Department of Education (CDE) to distribute the surveys to families served through LEAs.
 - What system is used to randomly sample the families?
 - DDS requests data from its data department using specific parameters and uses an equation to determine the sample group.
 - How is the preferred language of the families determined for the survey? What does DDS do about homeless families?
 - The survey is mailed out with a Quick Response (QR) code that leads families to an online version of the survey available in eight different languages. DDS also advertises the distribution of the survey to the FRCs every year. DDS welcomes ideas and comments on how they can further address the sampling issue.
 - It would be beneficial to add a question that distinguishes between a family knowing their rights and knowing how to use their rights, especially when a translator or navigator is not present.
 - DDS is using a family-centered model. Families should be able to reach out to their service coordinator or FRC to ask questions.
- Julie Rems-Smario (via chat) commented that the family survey should include questions for families with Deaf and Deaf-plus children if they received S.B. 210 language milestones and language services for ages 0-5. Ms. Rems-Smario added that it is a good idea to discuss how to make the language for the survey more relevant and relatable.

Presentation: Supporting Family Outcomes – Yvette Baptiste and Robert Rochin, FRCNCA

Dr. Baptiste gave an overview of the Family Survey questions that target parents' needs regarding their ability to support their children by using information, referrals, and resources. FRCs actively work to support families on the outcomes in Indicator C4, through outreach work and community events/activities. The presenters shared a video to illustrate the work of the FRCs to support families. Link to the dashboard referenced in the presentation is <https://www.dds.ca.gov/services/early-start/early-start-local-performance-materials/>.

Comments:

- Dr. Poulsen reminded viewers to focus on strengths rather than vulnerabilities.
- Dr. Baptiste commented connecting families with promise for their child and with other families is transformative for families in Early Start.
- Shari Farinha reaffirmed the importance of making the survey simpler for families and emphasized the importance of connecting with community-based organizations that have expertise working with families. Ms. Farinha added that NorCal Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing can partner to help make the survey more accessible for families.

Review of Public Input Guidelines, Followed by Public Input

Pablo Velez commented that, due to the recent influx of new service coordinators due to changes in regulations, training and awareness about cultural sensitivity and the family-centered model for existing and new service coordinators is needed. Dr. Poulsen noted that WestEd may have offered training for service coordinators previously which may be worth looking at and updating.

Michelle Oliver commented regarding the confusion and barriers that families face when it comes to the Deaf mentoring program: Guidance is needed either from CDE, DDS or both. Mr. Olive requested that the ICC bring the issue to the forefront and support getting a resolution. Dr. Poulsen responded that the ICC will follow up.

**** LUNCH BREAK ****

ARPA Initiatives Updates

Culturally & Linguistically Sensitive Services Initiative – Alta California Regional Center (ACRC)

Jennifer Bloom and Lynn Arner described their pilot program, an ARPA initiative, seeks to expand culturally and linguistically sensitive Early Start services by supporting vendored providers with stipends and expanding recruitment and outreach for providers. Incentives are for vendors that hire new therapists to provide services to families in their native language; stipends are for providing services during non-traditional working hours and in remote and underserved areas. Presenters discussed the relationship of this program to family outcomes and noted success of the strategies.

Questions and comments from attendees:

- Dr. Poulsen: Are there plans to disseminate this work to other regional centers?
 - The project is still in its pilot phase. ACRC is regularly reviewing data and making improvements. They hope to make recommendations at the end of the project.
- Ms. Chasen asked whether ACRC has identified a way to make the incentive part of the current provider rate, and recommended reading through the California Employment Rules to ensure that things like working outside of non-traditional hours

are possible.

- ACRC is looking for ways to sustain the funding and are hoping that providers will be fully invested in continuing to provide the services. She invited additional input.
- Patty Salcedo asked about building relationships with training programs.
 - ACRC is raising awareness by reaching out to vendors about recruitment.
- Robin Millar asked how does the claim process work, particularly for areas of high need?
 - Vendors complete a claim form, then ACRC cross checks the area of service and if it is a remote area, it counts as one claim. The stipend is not meant for services already being provided in an area but to expand the provider's capacity.

Family Wellness Pilot – Far Northern Regional Center (FNRC)

Melissa Gruhler and the FNRC team presented on their pilot program focused on improving access to mental health services for families of children with disabilities or delays. Presenters shared a testimonial video from participants. Chere Sullivan described the project's implementation strategy and information collected on outcomes for the families who participated in the counseling and training sessions. Survey results indicate that the more sessions the families participated in, the greater benefit they received. Ms. Sullivan shared next steps, which include conducting final sessions in two counties. They would like to collect longitudinal data on participants to track the long-term results.

Questions and comments from attendees:

- Dr. Baptiste asked what tools were used to measure wellness. She suggested talking to families receiving a diagnosis from the perspective of adjustment rather than grief.
 - They used the Parent Relational Scale.
- Ms. Ambriz noted that DDS received one-time funding for these initiatives but is looking into ways to sustain these programs and hopes to have recommendations in the future.

Announcement of Committee Composition and Goals

Mr. Tomko reminded participants of the committee composition and goals and advised that DDS and WestEd staff will be in each committee meeting for support.

Committee Meetings

The following ICC Committees met for breakout sessions:

- Improving Systems
- Communications

Meeting of the whole adjourned at 2:14 p.m. ICC committees met separately.

**** END OF DAY 1 ****