

**Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) on Early Intervention
Laws and Regulations Workgroup
Monday, September 18, 2023
Zoom Conference
Time: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

Welcome and Attendance

Robin Millar, ICC Community Representative/Workgroup Lead, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. Zoom instructions, ASL interpreter instructions, and meeting etiquette were reviewed.

Review of Agenda

Meeting agenda was reviewed, and the following change was made – Ms. Millar motioned to add the topic of Workforce Initiative offering Direct Service Professionals a training stipend of up to \$1,250 when approved online training courses are completed. Workgroup members approved the motion.

Julie Rems-Smario, ICC Community Representative, commented that the agenda looked good and just wanted to take the opportunity to remind those participating in the meeting about the importance of being mindful of ableism and audism in this system of work. Ms. Rems-Smario added that this is especially important for the work that the ICC does and to have this present as the group works through the agenda.

ICC Guidelines and Mission

Hilda Jimenez, DDS, reviewed the mission and vision of the ICC as well as provided an overview of the ICC guidelines. Ms. Millar added that part of the role of ICC Members and Community Representatives is to make recommendations and advise the Department of Development Service (DDS).

Continue Workgroup Discussion from ICC meeting on July 20, 2023

Research Requirement Issues with the Department of Consumer Affairs

Ms. Millar provided an overview of the topic and mentioned that a Community Representative, in the Laws and Regulations Workgroup, had brought to the attention of the ICC that there is a waiting period of 16 weeks (or longer) for the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) to issue licenses for speech and language pathologists (SLPs). Ms. Millar walked the workgroup members through the different 2021-2022 fiscal year data on the DCA website (https://www.dca.ca.gov/data/annual_license_stats.shtml) to search for annual licensing statistics. She noted that SLPs and SLP Assistants had an overall increase when compared to the last fiscal year and when compared to other therapeutic domains such as occupational and physical therapy. Ms. Millar also pointed out that the available data does not capture how many licenses are focusing their skills and training on young children and at this time, the workgroup would need to gather further data and information to determine if the DCA would be the best entity to approach with concerns for SLP license delays.

Elena Bramble, Community Representative, commented that from her recollection and previous workgroup discussions around the topic, it seems to be the case that DCA takes longer than usual to issue SLP licenses once education has stopped. Ms.

Bramble mentioned that statistical analysis data on the DCA website seems to indicate that there are many pending SLP licenses and perhaps there could be a way to expedite this process or issue temporary licenses.

Ms. Millar thanked Ms. Bramble for her comment and presented the workgroup with the recommendation of having the ICC seek support from DDS to request that a representative from DCA provide an in-service or general overview of their process for issuing licenses at the next ICC meeting. Ms. Millar added that the workgroup would need to collect additional information about the statistical analysis for some of the other disciplines to have a better comparison. The workgroup agreed to the recommendation.

Discuss Supports/Education Needed for Providers to Use the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT)

Ms. Millar provided an overview of the topic and mentioned that EPSDT is a national program that provides comprehensive and preventive healthcare services for children under age 21 who are enrolled in Medicaid. EPSDT is key to ensuring that children and adolescents receive appropriate preventive, dental, mental health, developmental, and specialty services. The workgroup discussed the EPSDT program and determined that it is best to recommend that DDS work with a subject matter expert or connect with another state to learn if there is a federal waiver for the 0-3 population to access via EPSDT. In addition, the workgroup mentioned that there should be some education for providers about the EPSDT program because providers may be able to service children in their community through the EPSDT program.

Ms. Rems-Smario commented that she agrees that ongoing education about the different available programs is needed for providers. For instance, many providers do not know that there are other programs such as Lead-K Family Services which helps connect families with their local school district, Early Start home visit teachers, parent mentors, Deaf coaches, and other supports as outlined in an Individualized Family Support Plan.

Nathaniel Taleon, DDS, commented that he recalls the workgroup previously discussing the different types of federally funded waivers and he was able to identify a state that uses target case management to receive some federal reimbursement. Mr. Taleon provided the following link for additional information: <https://hcpf.colorado.gov/early-intervention-manual>.

Discuss the Possibility of a Loan Forgiveness Program for ES Professionals and Workforce Initiative

Ms. Millar provided an overview of the topic and mentioned that the current California Trailer Bill was approved, which will allow direct service providers to receive money if they take certain courses to further their education or knowledge. Although this is not total loan forgiveness, it is great for all providers to take advantage of and receive an incentive. Ms. Millar also added that Kern Regional Center and Lanterman Regional Center are running a pilot program geared towards increasing the Early Start workforce. As a workgroup suggestion, perhaps it will be a good idea to ask someone from the regional center or the Special Needs Network to speak at the next ICC and provide an overview of the activities they are doing as well as have an opportunity to learn from this pilot.

Ms. Bramble commented that providers can have their loans forgiven through the Federal Government if they have a total of 10 years working in a non-profit agency. However, there are agencies that are not non-profit, and the providers would not qualify for loan forgiveness. The workgroup discussed alternatives for all service providers to take advantage of loan forgiveness and a recommendation to the ICC is to have DDS inquire about federal funds that might be available to California to enhance the field of early intervention professionals.

Ms. Rems-Smario mentioned that she enjoyed the different topics of conversation and something to consider for next time is exploring different ways to expand and grow the profession of Deaf Coaches and Deaf Mentors. This is important because there many families who need support with navigating the system for a child who is deaf. There is also the Lead-K Family Services program, which is new, and perhaps recommending an in-service from the program would be a good start for the ICC to learn more. Ms. Rems-Smario provided statistics about the number of children referred to Lead-K for services and the growing support for this program.

Finalize "Next Steps" for Action Plan

An action plan with recommendations was drafted to present at the October ICC meeting.

Member Assignment

No member assignments were conducted.

Public Input

There was no public input.

Adjourn Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 1:42 p.m.

Community Representative Present

Elena Bramble
Julie Rems-Smario
Robin Millar

Community Representative Present

Nancy Sager – Excused
Patricia Salcedo – Excused
Pablo Velez – Excused
Scott Turner – Excused
Suzanne Sherinian – Excused

Interpreters

Deanna Fischer
Abel Cosentino

DDS

Anne De Medeiros

Hilda Jimenez
Juliana Margil
Nathaniel Taleon
Ryan Digman

WestEd
Ross Adams