

Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) on Early Intervention
Thursday, October 19, 2023
In-Person Meeting (with Zoom Option)
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Link to Zoom Recording: [October ICC Meeting – Day 1 Zoom](#)

Opening

Dr. Marie Kanne Poulsen, ICC Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. Dr. Poulsen thanked staff at San Diego Regional Center (SDRC), the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), and WestEd for supporting these meetings.

Housekeeping Items

DJ Tomko reviewed housekeeping procedures for Zoom and in-person participants. Zoom instructions, ASL/Spanish interpreter instructions, and meeting etiquette were also reviewed.

Roll Call

The roll call was conducted by Mr. Tomko.

Review Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

Approval of July's Meeting Minutes

All members present approved July's minutes.

Review of ICC Mission, Purpose, and Theme of Meeting

Dr. Poulsen reviewed the mission and vision of the ICC; the theme of this month's meeting is Child Find.

Part C Literacy Article

[Return to School Roadmap: Child Find, Referral, and Eligibility Under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) by OSEP

Dr. Poulsen presented this article, which provides best practices for a child find system, referral, and eligibility; ICC is only focusing on the child find aspect for this meeting. Part C requires each state to have a comprehensive child find system for the purpose of identifying and locating infants and toddlers who may be eligible for early intervention/Early Start services.

The authors define a comprehensive child find system as including an outreach program to inform parents about developmental screening through public awareness programs, an approach to coordination with state agencies, written policies and procedures to support on-going effective communication with referral agencies such as neonatal intensive care units (NICUs), and a data system that provides methods for identifying underserved populations. Other recommendations for child find include screening for social and emotional development, in addition to other developmental domains and ensuring that families of those children who are determined ineligible for Part C are provided information about community resources for surveillance.

DDS Updates and Information – Maricris Acon and Reyna Ambriz

DDS Updates

Ms. Acon shared a number of recent regulation changes affecting Early Start, including:

- updating eligibility criteria to lower the threshold for delay, specify “receptive communication” and “expressive communication” as developmental domains, and recognize fetal alcohol syndrome as a risk factor;
- reducing service coordinator caseload ratios to no more than 40 families; and,
- outlining new requirements to support transition from Part C to Part B.

Ms. Acon reported on Early Start caseloads and referrals. Early Start caseloads have doubled from 2013 to 2023, and Hispanic families are the largest demographic represented. The average age of children served in Early Start is 2 years and 3 months and DDS has the goal to lower that average age. Additionally, there has been an overall increase of 68% in referrals year-over-year, and the average age of a child at intake is 22 months.

Ms. Acon also updated the ICC about the distribution of the Family Outcomes Survey used to collect data for the Annual Performance Report. Families may complete the survey anytime and access it on the DDS webpage at <https://www.dds.ca.gov/services/early-start/>.

Ms. Acon also shared updates about the State Systemic Improvement Plan and noted that the Early Start newsletter is posted on the DDS website and is shared with families and professionals on a quarterly basis.

Finally, Ms. Acon shared that Max Turns Three, a video story about transitioning out of Part C services, was developed with feedback from ICC. The video can be found at <https://earlystartneighborhood.org/resources/videos/max-turns-three/> and is available in English and Spanish on the Early Start Neighborhood, with American Sign Language (ASL) and Mexican Sign Language (MSL) interpretation video insets

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Updates

Ms. Ambriz shared that ARPA funding was used for several statewide and local projects dedicated to increasing access and equity in Early Start programs. This funding has been extended through November 2024. Key projects at the state level include updating the *Effective Early Childhood Transitions Guide*, developing videos about navigating the Early Start system for families of children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and evaluating the local pilot initiatives for success and efficacy.

Quality Incentive Program

Shirley Chan, with the DDS Office of Quality Assurance, was joined by Josh Sudarma. Ms. Chan provided an overview of the Quality Incentive Program (QIP), which is designed to improve consumer outcomes, provider performance, and quality of services at regional centers. QIP will transition from making incentive payments in the current fiscal year of 23-24 to becoming part of the vendor rate in fiscal year 25-26. For early intervention, this QIP measure is still being developed.

Ms. Chan provided proposed QIP measures for upcoming fiscal years such as workforce capacity, prevention and wellness, employment access and capacity, informed choice and user satisfaction, and services delivered within 45 days (to be 31 days in 2024-2025).

Questions:

- Pablo Velez asked how incentive programs will take into consideration equity for under-resourced geographic areas and how the rate study can be updated to reflect soaring costs of living since 2019.
 - Mr. Sudarma acknowledged that the QIP still needs to be developed for Early Start and code 805 to determine the best way to implement and operationalize measures. The Rates Team is strategizing how to address the concerns raised. An update will be given at the January ICC meeting.
 - Ms. Acon provides more context on rate models.
- Fran Chasen asked how the “timeliness of service” for quality indicators is defined.
 - Ms. Acon answered that this is still in development.

Voices from the Field

- ***Infant Development Association of California (IDA) – Fran Chasen***
Ms. Chasen reported that IDA conducted a survey of 100 providers on QIP measures, and results indicated that there is still confusion about the quality indicator, particularly around recruitment, the impact of cancellations, and the status of rate implementation. IDA has also received questions about ARPA funding eligibility for providers. Increasing rates and wages is also a critical issue for IDA.

IDA is celebrating its 50-year anniversary, and Ms. Chasen shared details about their celebration event and the January 2024 policy update event.

- ***The Arc of California – Jim Frazier***
Mr. Frazier informed that increasing quality providers is a critical need for Early Start. On the heels of minimum wage increases for healthcare workers and fast-food workers, Mr. Frazier noted the need to organize to raise wages for early intervention service providers.
- ***California Disability Community Action Network – Marty Omoto***
Mr. Omoto acknowledged how much support his son and family received, and how much progress has been made towards equity in the last several years but noted that wages and rates need to continue to improve equity. Mr. Omoto encouraged ICC members to better understand how [SB 805](#), regarding qualifications for autism service providers, impacts families. Mr. Omoto also shared his disappointment about the gubernatorial veto on [SB 635](#), which would have required insurance providers to provide hearing aids to children under 21.

- **Family Resource Centers Network of California (FRCNCA) – Janice Hinton**
FRCNCA is searching for an Executive Director. Robert Rochin has a new role managing education and professional development activities for the organization. Mr. Rochin reviewed some of the trainings and resources provided to the organization from community partners. He also shared that the FRCNCA has been selected as an ambassador for All Children Thrive (ACT) and sits on the Equity Advisory Committee. Jacqui Knudsen shared an overview of the ICC Community Engagement Project to increase ICC capacity and diversity participation. FRCNCA will be launching leadership trainings for parents to serve on statewide and local councils.

**** BREAK****

Presentation: Child Find and Outreach – Margaret Gillis, SRI Education, DaSy Center

Ms. Gillis provided an overview and definition of child find, and the requirements of a child find system. Ms. Gillis reviewed why child find is so critical, especially since COVID-19 impacted states' child find systems and early intervention (EI) enrollment. Widespread outreach is needed to ensure equity in access to EI – particularly for populations that do not have consistent access to pediatricians or healthcare providers.

States are required to report the percentage of children served with individualized family services plans (IFSPs), ages 0-1 and 0-3, and these are considered “results” indicators that are based on state targets. Ms. Gillis reviewed approaches to setting these targets, then shared California’s 2018-2021 data for these indicators as well as a comparison to other states with similar eligibility criteria.

Ms. Gillis concluded by encouraging ICC members to support child find efforts and provided some approaches for how to do so.

Questions and comments from attendees:

- Edyth Gallardo asked why the data is based on children served, and not the children who are referred but for whatever reason never get to the IFSP stage. She asked where that information was collected.
 - Ms. Gillis responded that the state likely collected referral data, which can be compared to IFSP rates.
- Diane Williams asked how therapy services are counted in “service delivery,” and how that can be compared and monitored.
 - Ms. Gillis agreed this analysis needs to be done, but that data is not available on a widespread basis.
- Sarah Neville-Morgan noted the low childcare and Head Start referrals and wondered if there are different trends in other states.
 - Ms. Gillis indicated that DaSy plans to administer surveys to childcare providers to better understand this occurrence.
- Linda Landry encouraged parent mentorship through regional centers and family resource centers (FRCs) to increase referral and participation rates.
 - Ms. Gillis shared that states with similar models show success.

- Mr. Velez noted that that each data point is a child and family, and recommended that California set goals to match Massachusetts, which has the highest rates of EI participation in the country.
- Michelle Oliver reiterated that a big shift has occurred since 2009 when requiring insurance caused early intervention services to shift to a therapeutic model. She wondered whether families are being served by qualified service providers who can act as a primary service provider.
- Mr. Omoto emphasized the need to review family-centered outcomes along with these numbers.
- Apple Sepulveda highlighted partnerships with home visiting programs to leverage Title V funding.

Review of Public Input Guidelines, Followed by Public Input

Dr. Poulsen invited public input from parents.

Lisa Hooks shared instances of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Color) parents opting out of Early Start services because they find the program too overwhelming, or because follow-up calls and/or services didn't happen in a timely fashion. Ms. Hooks emphasized that outreach needs to be culturally sensitive and considerate of the barriers that BIPOC families face.

Dr. Poulsen invited public input from other attendees.

Mr. Velez commented that there is a state of emergency for speech therapy providers because of the barriers for out-of-state providers getting certified in California. The shortage of providers creates very long wait times for accessing speech services.

Dr. Jenna Lu shared some successes of NICU staff making referrals to Early Start, where initial intake occurs while an infant is still in the hospital. Dr. Lu reported that 100% of referred families go on to receive Early Start services.

Lisa Schoyer recommended developing checklists about crisis intervention that service coordinators can give to parents that support health and safety throughout the child's life.

Robin Millar asked if there a list of other states that include at-risk as an eligibility category for Part C, and where California ranks on that list.

****LUNCH BREAK****

ARPA Initiatives Updates

RC-County Screening Partnership – South Central Los Angeles Regional Center (SCLARC)

Kiara Lopez and Erika Bermudez described the Connections Program at SCLARC, which includes nine community partners conducting early developmental screening using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) screening tool and making referrals

directly to the regional center. Ms. Lopez and Ms. Bermudez mentioned that the Connections staff work alongside their community partners to review ASQ results with caregivers, make appropriate referrals, and suggest age-appropriate activities to support development. SCLARC staff also attend resource fairs and provide presentations to the community about the ASQ and early intervention resources.

Questions and comments from attendees:

- Nancy Grosz Sager asked when the regional center decides to refer to the school district.
 - This occurs on a case-by-case basis and is usually dependent on the age of the child.
- Shan Chan asked if the screening occurs when parents ask for an Early Start evaluation.
 - No; if the parent comes to the regional center, evaluation is provided at the regional center, but if the parent is coming from a partner organization or from a community event, the ASQ screening is offered first.
 - Ms. Ambriz confirmed that any child referred to a regional center must be evaluated and assessed.

Outreach and Education – San Diego Regional Center (SDRC)

Representatives from SDRC shared information about their initiative to target outreach activities to families experiencing homelessness and immigration issues. SDRC identified their program leads who coordinate and track activities, contract with Early Start providers to conduct screenings, identify agencies that serve families who are unhoused and/or fearful of accessing services due to their immigration status, and provide information about Early Start to families at community events. The presenters also described the regional center's Tribal Outreach initiative to identify service gaps in Tribal communities and increase the capacity of providers on the unique needs of tribal communities.

Questions and comments from attendees:

- Robin Millar thanked presenters for these projects to promote equity and diversity.

Announcement of Committee Composition and Goals

Mr. Tomko provided a brief overview of the purpose of the subcommittees and provided instructions for the groups to meet.

Subcommittee Meetings

Meeting of the whole adjourned at 2:19 p.m. ICC committees met separately.