

Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) on Early Intervention
Thursday, January 18, 2024
Zoom Conference Call
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

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

Opening

Dr. Marie Kanne Poulsen, ICC Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. Dr. Poulsen expressed gratitude for all council members, WestEd, Alta California Regional Center, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), and community members for their attendance.

Housekeeping Items

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

Roll Call

The roll call was conducted by Mr. Tomko.

Review Agenda

Dr. Poulsen reviewed the agenda. No changes were made to the agenda.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion to approve was unintelligible but acknowledged by Chair. Doug Erber seconded.

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 Family Guided Early Intervention.

Part C Literacy

[Mediating Parent Learning to Promote Social Communication for Toddlers with Autism: Effects from a Randomized Control Trial](#), by H. Schertz, S. Odom, K. Baggett, and J. Sideris

This publication provides evidence regarding the effectiveness of parent-guided social communication in enhancing targeted outcomes of toddlers with autism - in their capacity for eye gaze to initiate and respond to engagement with others and in their capacity to return smiles, take turns, imitate, and point to an object.

Dr. Poulsen spoke on the research that provides evidence that autism intervention's success for babies and toddlers is most effective when provided through family-guided intervention. A major concern is that thorough language evaluations including pre-verbal social communication may not occur until 18-24 months, although best practice is to provide a thorough language evaluation during infancy. Dr. Poulsen invited programs who are doing early assessment to share their experiences with the Council.

DDS Updates and Information – Maricris Acon and Reyna Ambriz

DDS Updates

Ms. Acon shared data on Early Start caseloads and referrals. The number of children referred to Early Start has decreased by about 16% since this time last year, though it is still higher than pre-COVID referral numbers. In Southern California we saw an increase over 30% compared to November 2022. Early Start caseloads have doubled over 10 years with Hispanic/Latino children representing 45% of all children receiving Early Start services. Asian children represent the largest growth in racial groups receiving Early Start services with an increase of 80% over the last decade. Additionally, the number of children served per month has increased by 13% compared to November 2022, and the average age of children receiving Early Start services is 27.3 months.

ARPA Updates

Ms. Ambriz reminded the Council that DDS received American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for regional center pilot projects to promote service access and equity in Early Start. Pilots are ongoing until November 2024. Ms. Ambriz shared the following updates about ongoing pilot projects:

- Alta California Regional Center's pilot program focuses on recruiting providers and increasing the availability of the provider network that reflects cultural and language needs. Alta representatives provided an in-depth presentation on this pilot at the July ICC meeting.
- Lanterman Regional Center is also focusing on recruitment. In collaboration with the Special Needs Network, the pilot program focuses on training, targeted outreach and recruitment efforts, and engaging community partners to facilitate job placement of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) Early Intervention providers.
- DDS is developing an interactive map of early childhood resources to better connect families with resources in their zip codes. After additional feedback and additional recommendations, we intend to launch the application and make it available on the DDS website.
- San Andreas Regional Center and Central Valley Regional Center are piloting a technology lending library to increase delivery of services to families who do not

have technology equipment and/or reside in rural communities. Currently they're serving 145 families and more incoming referrals are expected until November of 2024.

Additionally, Ms. Ambriz made two announcements:

- The Early Start January 2024 newsletter has been published on the DDS website here: <https://www.dds.ca.gov/services/early-start/early-start-publications-resources-and-program-guidance/online-resources/>.
- The Early Start Partners Symposium (ESPS), a professional development event for Early Start personnel, is taking place from July 17-18, 2024, in Berkeley, CA. Dr. Valerie Williams, Director of the Office of Special Education Programs, will be the keynote speaker.

Questions:

- Rennie Saltzman, Easterseals in Sacramento, asked what specialties are being recruited for the internship program.
 - Ms. Ambriz will provide that information.
- Yvette Baptiste, Executive Director of the Eastern Los Angeles Family Resource Center, asked if DDS has a plan to address delays in children and families receiving assessments to determine eligibility for services under the Lanterman Act at age three.
 - Ms. Acon responded that this is a priority for the Department. There is a change in state statute that would standardize the way intakes are processed across the state, which they hope will improve transition processes.
- Marty Omoto, a dad and a family member, and also CDCAN CA Disability Community Action Network California, asked if there will be an update on the proposed governor's budget and its impact on Early Start.
 - Dr. Poulsen replied that DDS Director Nancy Bargmann will be presenting on this tomorrow during the council reports.

DDS Quality Incentive Program – Leslie Morrison

Ms. Morrison provided a background summary of the Quality Incentive Program (QIP). From July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024, through the QIP, regional center vendors receive \$300 incentives for each initial intervention service for children less than three years old and their families that starts within 31 days of the purchase of service (POS) authorization. DDS will instruct regional centers to issue incentive payments for each eligible service every quarter directly to the vendor. LEAs are not included in this program, only vendors in the rate study going through the adjustment process.

Questions:

- Julie Mole asked if this program is just for services with an 805 service code.
 - Ms. Morrison replied that this program applies to all intervention services provided to children and families under the age of three.

- Pablo Velez asked how to handle regional centers who “lump” services together in a purchase of service (POS).
 - Ms. Morrison responded that DDS will be starting with each service that was delivered if the authorization meets the requirements – in other words, multiple services on one authorization will be picked up by the data system. When data was tested, 90% of services are starting within 31 days.
- Ms. Morrison reviewed the focus area and how success measures were developed. DDS will be providing trainings and developing FAQs for vendored service providers.
- Yvette Baptiste asked how this program can be sustained after the funding ends.
 - Ms. Morrison stated they hope to continue this program through the implementation of the rate adjustment process and improvement measures.

Presentation: Autism in the DDS System – Dr. Lauren Libero

Dr. Libero from DDS provided an overview of individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) within DDS programs. ASD accounts for 49% of all Lanterman diagnoses and has only increased since 2016. ASD will soon overtake intellectual disabilities as the largest diagnosis served. DDS has seen a 157% increase in total ASD caseload since 2013 especially among individuals under 22. Individuals who are Hispanic comprise 41% of ASD cases. Reviews the statistics of autism caseload by race/ethnicity, 11 percent are Asian, seven percent are African- American, 41% are Hispanic, 26% are white, and 15% are “Other”.

Dr. Libero then provided statistics on system entry:

- 1 in 5 children in Early Start will require lifelong services.
- 50% of children with ASD served by regional centers previously participated in Early Start.
- 60% of those transitioning to Lanterman services have an ASD diagnosis.
 - This indicates that California is doing much better at identifying ASD in Early Start services.

Dr. Libero described the role of the newly established Autism Services Branch (ASB) of DDS as being to build statewide capacity and expertise to meet the needs of those diagnosed with ASD. ASB engages in research, policy, programming, outreach, training, technical assistance, and community engagement. Dr. Libero introduced the five members of the branch.

Questions:

- Dr. Paulsen asked: what percent of Early Start infants have ASD diagnoses?
 - Dr. Libero estimated around 10% that transition to Lanterman.
 - Dr. Paulsen commented that she would like to see more robust pre-verbal social communication assessments for babies under 1 year old.
- Pablo Velez asked: if the children that are being diagnosed with autism are being tracked and mapped to identify relationships with environmental concerns. He asked why the population is rapidly increasing each year.
 - Dr. Libero responded that there are trends by catchment area and recommended a presentation from a UC Davis research team that is looking more at environmental factors.

Presentation of Certificate of Appreciation for Virginia Reynolds

Dr. Poulsen presented a certificate to Ms. Reynolds upon her retirement to honor her thirty years of caring support for infants, toddlers, and families and for her support of the ICC since its inception.

****BREAK****

Presentation: Annual Performance Report (APR) – Nathaniel Taleon

Mr. Taleon gave an overview of the FY 2022-23 APR, which is due to OSEP in February. He gave definitions of key terms found in the report and provided data for the performance indicators in the report.

Questions:

- Lisa Schoyer asked for clarification of what “timely notification to the local educational agency (LEA)” means for Indicator 8B in the chat.
 - Stefanie Callori replied in the chat clarifying that this refers to the regional center notifying/sending a referral to the LEA where the child resides.
- Michelle Oliver asked whether there is a penalty for not providing timely services if the POS hasn’t come in. Ms. Oliver also commented that communication to families about the transition process needs improvement.
 - Mr. Taleon clarified that “timely services” means services beginning within 45 days from consent for services. He mentioned resources available through DDS to further clarify for staff and families.

Voices from the Field

- ***Infant Development Association of California (IDA) – Fran Chasen***
Ms. Chasen shared that IDA's ninth annual policy update will occur on Monday January 22, 2024, to educate families and providers on the budget process. IDA will then develop next-step strategies on critical issues.

On May 20, IDA is hosting a webinar about the California budget revision process. Ms. Chasen reminded all present of the March 5 statewide election.

- ***The Arc of California – Jim Frazier***
Mr. Frazier was not present.
- ***California Disability Community Action Network – Marty Omoto***
Mr. Omoto encouraged participation in the development of a master plan for developmental services. He commented that this plan should address concerns of families, individuals, and providers of services to people with disabilities. Mr. Omoto also shared that there are two state budget hearings on January 23 and a hearing on the proposed Medicare waiver amendment that is open for public comment with public hearing on January 29. For more information on the Medicare waiver amendment go to <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/provgovpart/Documents/Cont-Coverage-for-Kids-1115-Amendment-1-8-24.pdf>. Mr. Omoto explained that SB 805, signed by the Governor on October 8, expands criteria for qualified autism professionals. Mr. Omoto suggested that ICC members work with DDS to make sure their voices are heard in developing those regulations.
- ***Family Resource Centers Network of California (FRCNCA) – Yvette Baptiste***
Dr. Baptiste introduced Ana Seda, the new executive director. Robert Rochin serves in a new role as manager of the Education and Training Division. Dr. Baptiste introduced Victoria Berrey, Director of Family Focus Resource Center at Cal State University Northridge, who is facilitating parent leadership training to get more parents involved with ICC.

Review of Public Input Guidelines, Followed by Public Input

DJ Tomko invited comments first from in-person attendees.

Pablo Velez commented on the continued rise in the cost of living in California which is impacting service provision. He would like DDS to explore enabling asynchronous or telehealth intervention sessions to provide more flexibility for parents and families.

Patty Moore voiced a concern about referrals from pediatricians and other healthcare providers coming in far too late. Another concern is a trend for families who are resistant

to developmental screenings or acting on referrals or assessments. There is a need to address the communication and messaging around developmental screenings and Early Start.

Dr. Libero from DDS commented to follow up about delays in receiving services. If a family experiences a delay of 60 days or more in receiving medical services, the regional center is authorized to pay for that service per Welfare and Institutions Code 4646.5.

Ann England shared about the California Autism Professional Training and Information Network (CAPTAIN), a 400-member, multiagency entity that promotes research-based, evidence-based practices for autism. CAPTAIN partners with UC Davis MIND Institute and represents California at the International Autism Conference.

Jacqui Knudsen reviewed results of a survey of caregivers whose children had a new specialty care appointment. 227 respondents reported that wait times for applied behavioral analysis (ABA) therapy is more than six months, which significantly impacts those children and their families. Survey results will be used for advocacy efforts.

****LUNCH BREAK****

Presentation: Five Public Policy Arguments for Parent-Implemented Autism Intervention Models: From Clinical Practice to Research to Statewide Implementation – Dr. Richard Solomon

Shana Wirth, training director, co-presented with Dr. Solomon. They presented an autism-specific model for providing early intervention services which is play-based, relationship-based, parent-implemented, and supported by public policy.

The presentation began with statistics on autism prevalence in 2024 and the need for intensive intervention for young children with ASD, which ideally begins as soon as signs of ASD appear (e.g., around 18 months old). The presentation also defined parent-implemented models (PIM) and shared research to support these models.

The PLAY Project Model trains a global network of pediatric professionals and child development experts (“consultants”) to provide parent-implemented, autism-specific intervention. Consultants coach parents to use daily PLAY methods and techniques during regular daily routines as well as play time. Dr. Solomon concluded by sharing the research into PLAY Project over the course of several years. As compared to control groups, PLAY participants report improved child-parent interactions; less depression and anxiety of caregivers; improved attention, persistence, involvement, initiation, and compliance outcomes; and a decrease in the severity of autism symptoms.

Questions and comments:

- Michelle Oliver appreciated the clarification of how much parent time is required and noted that early intervention requires more than an hour a week of intervention.
- Yvette Baptiste offered a parent perspective that some providers do not implement approaches with fidelity.
 - Dr. Solomon agrees that fidelity is important, and this model provides transparency about consultants getting feedback on their coaching.
- Elena Bramble asked how one can get trained.
 - Dr. Solomon provided details about training on the website (<https://playproject.org/>). The next intensive workshop is online from February 7 to 28, 2024.
- Michelle Dove, Head Start Child Development Director, commented this would be a powerful model in Head Start.
 - Dr. Solomon agreed and shared that there is a training program for teachers.
- Pablo Velez supported incorporating this model statewide to address the lack of early intervention supports for Hispanic families for whom ABA doesn't work.
- Reyna Ambriz reminded everyone that PLAY Project training is eligible for reimbursement by regional centers for completion by service providers, through the Early Start Providers Training Initiative.

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 was adjourned at 2:12 p.m.; committees met separately.

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