



***STATE SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN
MEETING FOR CONSTITUENCY GROUP A***

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: 05/14/24

Meeting Location: Zoom

Approval: Department of
Developmental Services

(DDS)

Recorded By: WestEd Staff

1. ATTENDANCE

Name	Stakeholder Group Categories	Present/Absent
Ginger Elliott-Teague, PhD Senior Researcher and Technical Assistance Specialist, SRI International	Facilitator Technical assistance provider	Present
Kathy Hebbeler, PhD Senior Principal Education Researcher, SRI International	Facilitator Technical assistance provider	Present
Diana Maffei	Parent representative	Present
Jessica Haro, Autism Specialist for Westside Regional Center	Regional Center Parent representative	Present
Samantha Hebermehl	Parent representative	Present
Carla Casteneda	Parent representative	Present
Terra Edwards	Parent representative	Present
Yvette Baptiste, Chair of FRCNCA, Executive Director of Eastern Los Angeles Family Resource Center	Family Resource Center	Present

DDS: Nathaniel Taleon, Maricris Acon, Ashley Lambert

WestEd: Rebecca Halpern, Jennifer Driver

2. MEETING LOCATION

Online, Zoom

3. AGENDA

• Welcome and Introductions

- Nate Taleon introduced the purpose of the constituency groups: to gather feedback on the SSIP.
- Ginger provided housekeeping information for participating via Zoom and after the meeting.
- Ginger defined SSIP and the focus of these group discussions.
- Ginger conducted a roll call via chat.

• SSIP Definitions and History

- Ginger provided definitions critical to SSIP:
 - OSEP: U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs
 - SiMR: State-identified measurable results
 - Phases: analysis, design, implementation
- California is currently in Phase 1: gathering constituent feedback.
- Reviewed California SSIP history from 2015 to present.
- Provided timeline of SSIP revision, ending on November 15, 2024 when new SSIP will begin implementation.

• Roles and Responsibilities

- Ginger defined the various constituent groups who are providing feedback and insight to DDS SSIP Leadership team.
 - Parents and advocates
 - Regional centers and service providers
 - State agency and community partners
- Ginger defined constituent roles.

• Identify Improvement Focus

- Ginger asked, where should California Early Start focus its improvement efforts?
- Reviewed the 3 child outcomes and 3 family outcomes identified by OSEP in SSIP reports.
 - Child Outcome A: Positive Social-Emotional Skills
 - Child Outcome B: Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills
 - Child Outcome C: Use of Appropriate Behaviors to Meet Needs

- Family Outcome A: Know Their Rights
- Family Outcome B: Effectively Communicate Child's Needs
- Family Outcome C: Help Their Children Develop and Learn
- Samantha Hebermehl asked, is this meeting building off the 2022 SSIP task force, or are we starting from scratch? Nate provided context that those meetings contributed to where we are now. The results of that task force prompted DDS to begin this process.
- Diana Maffei asked, how are these outcomes measured? Ginger will answer this later in the meeting.
- **Discussion of SSIP Data – Child Outcomes**
 - Child outcomes are measured by 1) the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by program exit and 2) the percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in each outcome by program exit.
 - Ginger presented child outcomes data submitted by DDS to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), comparing California with national trends.
 - Social emotional development outcomes: outcome 1 is now in line with national average; outcome 2 is substantially higher. Neither outcome is hitting targets, and both are gradually declining.
 - Knowledge and skills outcomes: outcome 1 is above national average; outcome 2 is above national average. Neither outcome is hitting targets, and both are gradually declining.
 - Meeting needs outcomes: outcome 1 is far below national average; outcome 2 is slightly above national average. Neither outcome is hitting targets, and both are gradually declining.
 - Jessica Haro asked, is there a standardized assessment tool used to collect data? Ginger answered there are 13 allowable tools in California and each regional center chooses their own tool. Jessica asked, how we can be sure each regional center is measuring the same outcome if every center is using a different tool? Nate acknowledged this is one of the reasons we're revisiting this work and DDS is deciding how to address those variations.
 - Samantha Hebermehl asked, what work is needed to standardize an assessment tool across the state? Nate provided context that this would be a large-scale and comprehensive project that would need more discussion.
 - Yvette Baptiste asked Nate to provide some history on efforts taken to create standardized tools. Nate explained that there is a lot of disagreement and requires a lot of effort to get organized. Ginger reminded the group that part of the SSIP process is infrastructure improvements, and standardizing assessment tools could be something California decides to embark on because of this process.
 - Samantha asked, is there an organization or best practices from other states that can help us evaluate our assessment tools? Ginger responded that the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) has a lot of guidance on best practices for early childhood development assessment tools. Kathy Hebbeler added that this conversation opens up many more conversations

because tools may not be appropriate for every child and practitioners should not be tied to only one, but there are processes to translate assessment scores among different tools.

- Jessica Haro asked if downward trends occurred before the pandemic began in 2020? Ginger responds that these trends are present before 2020.

- **Discussion of SSIP Data – Family Outcomes**

- Ginger presented family outcomes data from DDS comparing California with national trends. Data collection is through family reporting, such as surveys.
- California uses a sampling plan to collect family outcomes data. California's plan is approved by OSEP and the survey response rate is 10-13%.
 - Parents Know Rights outcome has met or exceeded our target but is well below national average.
 - Parents Communicating Needs of Children outcome is close to national average.
 - Early Intervention Helping Family Help Children outcome is below national average.
- Diana asked, when looking at national averages, is there any accounting for the fact that California has such a diverse population? Ginger responded, no. All states and territories are included in national averages, so there is quite a bit of diversity represented.
- Yvette asked, is there accounting for variability in types of diagnoses? Ginger responded that one thing we are trying to do is look at data across regions, race, gender, income, etc. Nate responded that this is a data collection issue and that the DDS current system does not track diagnoses consistently.
- Samantha asked about family outcome 1 (Parents Know Rights), are survey questions focused on procedural rights and safeguards? Ginger responded, yes and the exact question is available on the survey sent to families. Samantha shared that in her experience as an Early Start parent, being given a piece of paper consistently is different from someone actually sitting down and explaining rights to families. In her experience, it is very rare that parents' rights are sufficiently explained.

- **Group Discussion**

- Ginger asked, where should California Early Start focus its improvement efforts?
- Jessica Haro suggested family outcomes, as often services continue after age 3 and those outcomes have long-lasting effects.
- Diana Maffei preferred child outcomes because she doesn't put as much faith in survey results as in assessment data.
- Yvette Baptiste wanted to work on getting more consistency in data for child outcomes. However, she was excited about the opportunity to work on family outcomes through FRCNCA, particularly around improving response rates.
- Samantha Hebermehl recommended the social-emotional outcome for child outcomes because she still sees impacts from COVID. She suggested a strategy to standardize assessment tools.

- Ginger shared results from advisory group polls:
 - 9/14 respondents prefer social-emotional, where 7/8 constituents did
 - 9/14 respondents prefer family outcome related to helping families help their children

4. NEXT STEPS

- Advisory group discussion in May and June
- Constituent group discussion in July