

Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) on Early Intervention Meeting Minutes

February 6, 2025

Zoom Conference Call

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Link to Zoom Recording:

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Opening

Maricris Acon, acting Interim Chair on behalf of DDS Director Pete Cervinka, called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. Ms. Acon expressed gratitude to all council members, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), WestEd, and community members for their attendance.

Housekeeping Items

DJ Tomko and Jasmine Suo reviewed housekeeping procedures for participation. Zoom instructions, ASL/Spanish interpreter instructions, and meeting etiquette were reviewed.

Roll Call

The roll call of appointed members was conducted by DJ Tomko. There was no quorum for the meeting today, which prohibited any official voting portion of the meeting including approving the minutes.

Review Agenda

Ms. Acon reviewed the agenda. No changes were made to the agenda.

Review of ICC Mission, Purpose, and Theme of Meeting

Ms. Acon reviewed the mission and vision of the ICC. The theme of this month's meeting is Updates on Early Intervention.

Part C Literacy

The chair's Part C literacy offering for this meeting was [Effective Practice in Providing Family Support](#) by Department of Developmental Services in collaboration with the California Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) on Early Intervention. This was not discussed during the meeting.

Early Start Program Updates – Erin Brady, DDS

Ms. Brady provided the following updates:

- Pete Cervinka was appointed Director of DDS in December.
- ARPA projects have concluded. Those projects focused on child find and outreach, family wellness, technology lending libraries, provider recruitment and training, and transition liaison pilots. A report on the successes of those projects is forthcoming. Two ARPA-funded projects were described:
 - Development of two animated videos focusing on Early Start for children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing: Contract was awarded to WestEd. The first video will be completed end of February; the second, on Language Acquisition, is planned for May.
 - [Early Childhood and Transition Resource Lookup Interactive Map](https://www.dds.ca.gov/services/early-start/childhood/): <https://www.dds.ca.gov/services/early-start/childhood/>. The online tool went live on Wednesday, February 5th and is available at the DDS website. Mr. Tomko provided a demo of the map. The official launch with notification from DDS will be forthcoming.
 - Shanice Orum reminded Council of a similar **map run by CDSS specifically for childcare centers**: <https://mychildcareplan.org/>.

Understanding the Differentiated Monitoring and Support (DMS) Process – DJ Tomko, DDS

Mr. Tomko provided an overview of the DMS process and timelines. DMS is a monitoring process conducted by the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). OSEP visits all states receiving IDEA funds to assess improvement in terms of outcomes and results for children and to ensure compliance with IDEA. The DMS process for California begins in June 2025 and will conclude in March 2027 with the final report sent to DDS 160 days after the visit. DDS then has until March 2027 to correct any issues. Mr. Tomko detailed each phase of the DMS process. Currently, DDS is working to review systems, processes, and data to prepare for the discovery phase.

- Samantha Hebermehl asked what portion of IDEA funds are provided by the federal government and what protections are in place to continue those funds?
 - Ms. Acon answered that Early Start has a \$500 million budget yearly, with approximately \$55 million from federal Part C grant funds and a portion comes from Medicaid. The rest of the funding is provided through California's General Fund.

Voices from the Field

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

Ms. Chasen provided an overview of IDA: a statewide organization that works with providers across a variety of disciplines to develop and share best practices for the service system within California.

Ms. Chasen shared two upcoming events:

1. Vivian Weinstein Leadership Day: an in-person event in Los Angeles on February 24th
2. Empowering Parents of Young Children with Visual Impairments: Strengthening Collaboration, Interactions, and Communication with Families: A virtual event scheduled for March 12, 12-1:30PM

Ms. Chasen acknowledged some upheaval in programs that serve families with young children. IDA is looking at how to put information together for legislators.

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

Mr. Omoto encouraged the Council to understand the impact of the Los Angeles fires on the families in Early Start and service providers who work in Early Start.

Mr. Omoto gave an update on bills for LA fire relief and immigration protections that passed during a special legislative session and is awaiting Governor Newsome's signature. The legislative subcommittee on Health and Human Services (which includes services of DDS) has scheduled budgetary hearings for April 24. Mr. Omoto recommends ICC representation at that budgetary hearing.

- Samantha Hebermehl asked if all homeless Californians have equal access to resources, regardless of the reason for their homelessness?
 - Mr. Omoto responded no and suggests that advocates need to call for improved access to resources available.

- **Family Resource Centers Network of California (FRCNCA) – Yvette Baptiste**

Dr. Baptiste provided some background on FRCNCA. At the community level, parents are experiencing fear and anxiety due to some of the practices of the current administration, preventing some families from engaging in Early Start services and processes.

Dr. Baptiste shared outreach and engagement efforts by FRCs.

- FRCs are engaged in training of family support personnel to become group facilitators.
- FRCNCA presented at the 3rd annual California American Indian Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Symposium in October.
- FRCNCA presented at CalECSE conference in San Diego in October.
- FRCNCA is engaged in Master Plan recommendations.
- FRCs are involved in the Partnerships for Effective Practices in Transition and Inclusion (PEPTI) Project to improve transition resources and systems.

****BREAK****

Annual Performance Review and Budget Updates – Reyna Ambriz, DDS

Ms. Ambriz provided background, common terminology, and explanations of different types of targets in the Annual Performance Report (APR). The APR includes indicators that measure compliance and results (family and child outcomes). The data for the APR came from 10 of the 21 regional centers in California. Ms. Ambriz detailed the state's performance on each of the APR's indicators; details may be reviewed on the DDS Early Start webpage found at this link: [February ICC Day 1 Slides](#).

DDS has been working with federal technical assistance providers to better understand why performance is lower than targets for specific child outcome indicators and meeting monthly with regional centers to assess how data is being measured and input.

Questions:

- Michelle Oliver asked what criteria was used for the measure of how a child reached age expectations for the child outcomes?
 - Ms. Ambriz replied it's a combination of different calculations that are inputted based on the tools that are used to assess children.

ICC Council Reports

Department of Developmental Services – Anne De Medeiros

No report given, as updates were provided earlier in meeting.

California Department of Education, Early Childhood Support Unit – Alberto Orellana

Not present.

Head Start – Michelle Dove

This year marks Head Start's 60th birthday. Ms. Dove provided data on the 2023-24 program report for Head Start programs in California, including demographic data of children enrolled in California Head Start and new performance standards.

- Michelle Oliver asked where she should direct folks at a local level who say Head Start is not required to have 10% of participants with IFSPs?
 - Ms. Dove answered to refer them to their local program specialists.

Department of Health Care Services – Pamela Riley

Not present.

CDE Homeless Education – Heidi Brahms

Regarding the Los Angeles wildfires, CDE is not participating in statewide daily updates, as that is happening at local levels. Ms. Brahms described situations for Los Angeles-area students who have lost homes and/or schools. Ms. Brahms outlined implications for potential loss of federal funds.

Department of Social Services – Shanice Orum

Ms. Orum acknowledged the significant impacts the Los Angeles fires have had on childcare service providers. The emergency response includes waivers of health and safety codes for childcare providers to allow flexibility with response and recovery efforts.

Ms. Orum shared information about the [recent chaptered legislation](#) that impacts families. Ms. Orum provided some details around those pieces of legislation, namely around pool safety guidelines, anaphylactic policies, and drop-in childcare facilities.

Indian Health Care – Susan Ducore

Not present.

Department of Managed Health Care - Suzanne Sherinian

Ms. Sherinian reported:

- DMHC issued a directive to make sure plan members who are impacted by Los Angeles wildfires can continue to access medically necessary services.
- In December the Department fined Anthem BlueCross \$3.5 million for failing to handle member grievances and appeals in a timely manner.
- Help Center has a new Deputy Director, Kristene Mapile.

Ms. Sherinian shared some success stories wherein previously denied claims were reviewed and determined to be medically necessary and thus covered by the insurance provider.

- Sid Gardner asked to what extent denials have to do with disability services?
 - Ms. Sherinian will respond outside of the Council meeting.

Department of Social Services – Karen Chang

Ms. Chang explained executive orders that offer flexibility for subsidized childcare providers who need to close due to fires and to use startup dollars to rebuild from fire damage. Ms. Chang described additional executive orders to alleviate the loss of childcare services in the Los Angeles area: an extension of timeframe needed for documentation for families experiencing homelessness and contractor flexibility related to program quality elements.

The Rate and Quality Advisory Panel is working on subsidized rate structure to move to a new single-rate structure. The next Advisory Panel meets on March 6th, and Ms. Chang encouraged ICC members to attend.

****LUNCH BREAK****

Review of Public Input Guidelines, Followed by Public Input

DJ Tomko reviewed public input guidelines.

Michelle Oliver asked about the Early Start Partners Symposium and advocated for its continuation.

- Maricris Acon responded that nothing is set in stone, and it is being balanced in the budget for activities for the year.

Beth Burt, Executive Director of Autism Society of Inland Empire and parent representative received an equity grant through DDS focusing on Native American and Spanish-speaking foster children. Ms. Burt shared concerns around children with a trauma background and sees a huge need for training of medical professionals, who are often misdiagnosing these children with autism instead of trauma.

Sid Gardner, Director of FASD Now, shared that FASD Now has submitted comments on the Master Plan. Their major concern is the lack of proportional attention in DDS and regional centers to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.

Hannah Michelson shared the concern that public comment time is occurring an hour before it was posted it would be, making it difficult for parent representation during this public comment period.

Dr. Kiti Randall, pediatric neurodevelopmental psychologist, shared that there is an alarmingly high rate of autism diagnoses for children who have experienced trauma. Many evaluations are not differentiating autism and trauma. Could there be some regulatory policies developed for the type of evaluations that are done for children?

Yvette Baptiste, Interim Director of FRNCA, expanded on previous comments about FASD, trauma, and autism, observing that many conditions can be misdiagnosed with an inexperienced evaluator.

Fran Chasen, Director of IDA, sent a reminder about the upcoming IDA Vivian Weinstein Leadership Day on February 24, 2025. *Breakthroughs and Innovations: Early Intervention through Different Lenses* has research presentations relating to identifying trauma and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders: www.idaofcal.org.

Swaranjit Gill, Doctor of Nursing Practice, offered that screenings are particularly difficult for spectrum disorders and recommended an increased number of trained screeners in regional centers.

Rubi Saldana, Integrated Community Collaborative, advocated for children who do have autism but are mis- or underdiagnosed, who do develop other mental health concerns as a result.

- Yvette Baptiste recommended a continued conversation around late and missed diagnoses due to trauma and inappropriate interventions.

Michelle Heid, California Association of Behavior Analysis, shared member's concerns about implementation and interpretations related to rate reform that will lead to decreased access to services and disruptions in care. The vendorization process is too narrowly defined, leaving out many qualified vendors. Ms. Heid expressed concerns around natural environment interpretations.

- Yvette Baptiste commented further about confusion in the regional centers around adaptive skills training. For some young children, adaptive skills training is very necessary.
- Maricris Acon shared that tomorrow's agenda will include a presentation on rate reform.

Lisa Gonzales shared an annual event coming up on March 15 for families with Deaf or Hard of Hearing babies sponsored by Lead-K and NorCal Services for Deaf & Hard of Hearing called the Love & Literacy event. It will take place in seven different locations throughout the state.

Announcement of Committee Composition and Goals

DJ Tomko provided a summary of committee composition and goals. He reminded everyone that only ICC members and community representatives are members of committees.

Subcommittee Meetings

Meeting of the whole was adjourned at 1:33 p.m.; committees met separately.

QUESTIONS?

Contact DDS/Children, Adolescents and Young Adult Services Division

Email: earlystart@dds.ca.gov

Phone: (800) 515-2229

Mailing Address: 1215 O Street, MS 7-40
Sacramento, CA 95814

MEETING ATTENDEES
Thursday, February 6, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT

Heidi Brahms	Maricris Acon	Shanice Orum
Karen Chang	Michelle Dove	Suzanne Sherinian

MEMBERS ABSENT

Doug Erber	Pamela Riley	Susan Ducore
Marie Kanne Poulsen	Sarah Neville-Morgan	

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT

Ana Aragon	Julie Maier	Robert Rochin
Apple Sepulveda	June Ursini	Robin Millar
Debbie Sarmiento	Kathy Angkustsiri	Samantha Hebermehl
Diane Williams	Laurie Jordan	Sheri Farinha
Edyth Gallardo	Lindsay Crain	Stephanie Gomez
Elena Bramble	Marty Omoto	Tara Hester
Fran Chasen	Michelle Oliver	
Gayatri Mahajan	Pablo Velez	
Jonathan Eckrich	Patricia Moore	

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES ABSENT

Amy Hansen	Lisa Schoyer	Season Goodpasture
Christina Nigrelli	Lucero Irizarry	Shan Chan
Diana Maffei	Pam Chueh	Sheri Rosen
Felicia Ford	Patricia Salcedo	Tamara Allen
Felipe Garcia	Penelope Knapp	Tony Anderson
Jazmine Blackman	Rachel Hagans	Wendy Morrison
Jim Frazier	Rosalyn Daggs	
Julie Rems-Smario	Scott Turner	

DDS STAFF PRESENT

Angel Rodriguez	Jane Lee	Mini Nandakumar
Anne De Medeiros	Jasmine Suo	Monica Hudnall

Asami Saito	Jennifer Driver	Nancy Chen
Ashley Lambert	Joni Hasselbring	Rachel Wilson
Breanna Camara	Karen Flores	Reyna Ambriz
Carmen Ruiz-Ochoa	Krystyne McComb	Ryan Digman
Cristina Tsuji	Latonya Harris	Sarah Yang
Daniel Jordan	Lauren Libero	Shannen Cheng
DJ Tomko	Lisa Gonzales	Stephanie Santamaria
Erin Brady	Marc Leyva	Tierney O'Donnell
Esteban Ortiz	Marcy Okada	
Hilda Jimenez	Maria Gonzalez	

INTERPRETERS PRESENT

Diana Orozco (Spanish)	Jessica Mary Aileen Poitevin (ASL)	Yelka Vargas (Spanish)
Elizabeth Vega (ASL)	Richard Haffner (Spanish)	

WESTED STAFF PRESENT

Amy Kaiser	Lilia Rodriguez	Ross Adams
Angela McGuire	Rebecca Halpern	

OTHERS PRESENT

Ana Barranco	Griselda Hernandez	Mei Ye
AnaElvia Sanchez	Hannah Michaelson	Michelle Heid
Angela Ramirez	Hely Chan	Midori Perez
Anh Nguyen	Hugo Arroyo	Mika Harris
Araceli Mendez	Irma Zepeda	Mike Odeh
Becky Lam	Ivon Muniz Diaz	Nicole Olsin
Beth Burt	Janneth Juarez	Paige Richmond
Breanna Gatti	Johana Caicedo	Paula Leonesio
Brenda Lory	Jordin Anderson	Rafael Hernandez-Perez
Brittney Hojo	Julie Lussier	Rennie Saltzman
Caritina Vargas	Kaitlynn Truong	Reyhanak Shafiiha-Taylor
Carmen Silva	Karen Bohall	Rose McDowall
Carolina Arzate	Katharyn Sinelli	Rubi Saldana
Catherine Powell	Kimberly Reyes	Ruth Janka
Cesar Garcia	Kiti Randall	Sarai Marcelin

Christie Null	Larene Pare'	Selene Mercado
Christina Renteria	Laura Stein	Shanda Griffin
Christine Rottger	LaWanna Blair	Sid Gardner
Claudia Rivas	Libby Contreras	Silvia Costichi
Claudia Sotelo	Liliana McDonough	Stephanie Edwards
Crystal Perez	Liliya Mudrenko	Suada Sergio
Diane Storman	Linda St.Angelo	Suz Silveira
Dulce Flores	Linda Tran	Teresa Anderson
E Renae` Antalan	Lisa Flaherty	Thao Tran
Elizabeth Gomez	Lisa Villa-Gomez	Veronica Garcia
Elizabeth Jimenez-Winslow	Lori Molhook	Victoria Berrey
Elizabeth Villanueva	María Cano	Victoria Palacios
Erika Witt	Maria De Jesus Rodriguez	Viktorija Lapteva
Eun Kim	Maria Talavera	Vince Hoffman
Faye Tait	Martha Barragan	Yasmin Herrera-Vilchez
Francelia Mora	Martha Ornelas-Cruz	Yvonne Bruinsma