

Early Intervention Advisory Council and Stakeholder Meeting

Meeting Minutes

August 5, 2020

I. Call to order

DeDino called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM

II. Roll Call

Meredith Alexander, Jody Beall, Carrie Beier, Julie Brem, Maria Breno, Tracey Chestnut, Cindy Davis, Nathan DeDino, Christine Dobrovich, Jody Fisher, Diane Fox, Kathy Greenawalt-Cherry, Taylor Hammond, Arley Hammons, E Hargett, Kim Hauck, Bonnie Hubbard-Nicosia, Susan Jones, Megan Kloss, Sarah LaTourette, Lori Mago, Beth Martin, Karen Mintzer, Josie Morningstar, Lori Myers, Jennifer Ottley, Jenni Remeis, Beth Rutter, Jamie Sanders, Erin Simmons, Jessica Smith, Allyson Van Horn, Melissa Ward-Brown, Kristen Wheeler, Stefanie Post, Susannah Wayland, Jane Whyde, Julia Jackels, Erin Simmons

III. Review of minutes from last meeting

Meeting minutes were available in the handouts section

IV. Open issues

a) Introductions and DODD updates

Ohio's State Determination: Ohio received the highest possible determination of “Meets Requirements” for the fourth year in a row from the US Department of Education.. DeDino mentioned DODD’s gratitude to local EI programs and emphasized that everyone plays an important role in the state’s determination. We really appreciate the hard work in ensuring we are compliant with the law and that we are using evidence-based practices to make a difference in the trajectory of child development and improve child outcomes

Virtual EI Services: DODD distributed a survey in May regarding virtual evaluations and EI services with plans for a follow up survey sometime in the autumn. Initial results were just two months into the pandemic:

- Almost every EI activity was happening virtually at that time
- About three quarters of evaluations had been completed or were scheduled to be completed
- Almost 90% of families chose to continue to receive EI services via phone, video, etc.
- DODD was excited to learn that inability to receive ongoing EI services was not significantly impacted by a lack of technology/resources

Additionally, OSEP recently put out guidance regarding Early Intervention during the pandemic and DODD did not need to make any significant changes to the protocols we had established.

EI Budget: DODD was not able to get the final county budget allocation amounts out until almost the end of June due to uncertainty around and challenges related to the pandemic. Grant agreements and contracts also went out much later than usual for this reason.

Ultimately, DODD needed to identify \$1.25 million in savings from the overall EI budget. Around a quarter million of this was offset by additional funds received from OSEP. The local outreach funds DODD distributes were cut in half to account for another \$500,000 in savings. However, \$500,000 was still distributed to local programs to go toward local outreach. Additionally, Bright Beginnings receives funds for outreach and outreach materials, so the state was able to retain the core outreach activities. The remainder of the reduction was from payor of last resort (POLR) funding. However, not all of the funding allocated for POLR was used in SFY20, so DODD does not anticipate this reduction having a noticeable effect in SFY21.

Referral and Child Count Numbers During the Pandemic: DODD looks at referral numbers on a weekly basis and continues to post monthly referral and child count data by county on the EI website at the beginning of each month.

DeDino explained that we started to see a decline in referrals in March. Ohio was experiencing between a 25% and 50% reduction in referrals at that time, which was consistent with what other states were experiencing. Referral numbers bottomed out in April, started to increase in May; and started increasing significantly from prior months in June. Referral numbers plateaued in July, averaging around 10% lower than the corresponding month in 2019.

Declines in the monthly child counts, which include the number of children with an active IFSP on the first day of the month, were delayed a few months. The child counts were still above the numbers for the corresponding month in 2019 in March and April. The May child count in 2020 was around the same as 2019, and the numbers started to decline in June and July.

DeDino reminded the group that for the last several years, referral and child count numbers have been increasing fairly significantly, so the decreases over the past several months may seem like a bigger decline than they are if just comparing the percentage decline to the prior year numbers. He also indicated that DODD will continue to monitor these counts and share additional data at upcoming meetings.

SFY21 Grant Agreements: Diane Fox reiterated that there was a very quick turnaround for this year's grant agreements due to state budget delays related to the pandemic. Fox thanks program and fiscal staff, and expressed appreciation to the local programs for their patience, kindness, and feedback throughout the process.

Fox informed the group that earlier this year, EI received results from the Office of Budget and Management's internal audit section. While the results were generally favorable, a few things were required to be addressed, including tightening up the grant process. She indicated that DODD learned many lessons from this year's review, including topics that frequently stood out or needed technical assistance, and that we plan to review these and make improvements next year. One thing DODD plans to do is communicate and post the criteria for the grant, as well as host a webinar to discuss the requirements ahead of the SFY22 grant process.

b) Professional Development Updates

Infant Mental Health Credential: Fox discussed the Infant Mental Health credential with the group. She explained that the purpose of the credential is to utilize existing professionals in the early childhood/early childcare arena. So far, more than 200 credentials have been issued across the three levels and several more are pending.

Other Training Updates: Lori Myers indicated that DODD has had very successful trainings lately. She discussed the nine-part series on Assistive technology that is in progress. She also indicated that DODD is putting on a training on evaluations and assessment that is set up in a talk show format. The second part of this training, which will focus more on assessments, is scheduled for August 18. Additionally, Myers discussed the NAS and Developmental Stages webinars which is being converted into a course.

New Course Evaluation: Myers indicated DODD is developing a new course evaluation survey and wants feedback. The goal of the new survey is to determine how we know the learner is implementing their new knowledge and skills, and how they are applying it to their job. The group asked questions and provided suggestions regarding the evaluation.

c) In- person home visit guidance discussion

Several different state agencies that have programs in the home visiting space, which broadly includes any program where program staff go into a program participant's home, developed guidance regarding conducting home visits safely during the pandemic. In many cases, home visits had been suspended, prohibited, or staff had been strongly encouraged not to do them up until now.

DeDino provided brief overview of the guidance, and then the group discussed it and provided feedback as to whether each section was clear.

d) Annual Performance Report (APR) Target Finalization

DeDino reminded the group we had previously discussed changing the APR baseline and setting APR targets for the next cycle. He provided an overview of DODD's proposal, followed by offering the opportunity for questions. He then asked voting members to provide approval of the proposal and the targets were approved unanimously.

V) Adjournment

DeDino adjourned the meeting at 11:45 AM.