

Early Intervention Advisory Council and Stakeholder  
Meeting Minutes  
August 16, 2022

I. Call to order

Nathan DeDino called the meeting to order at 10:00am at the State Library of Ohio.

II. Roll Call

III. Minutes were approved from last meeting without objection

IV. DODD Updates

DeDino explained that Ohio had received its 2022 annual determination from the US Department of Education. Ohio was again “Meets requirements,” an accomplishment the state has now achieved five or six times in a row. Local EI partners are key to the state’s ability to receive this determination. DeDino shared data around referrals and child counts. EI referrals were somewhat elevated in the second quarter, but not at the same level as the first quarter. Because child counts are a lagging indicator, the child counts are now elevated.

DODD provided a 7.5% increase in the SC allocation for SFY23 to help support service coordination agencies dealing with increasing referrals. Due to vacancies at county boards, DODD is also trying to find create ways to support them during this time of increased referrals and shortages of providers. Diane Fox and DeDino met with a group county board superintendents in June to find out the best way to address this and the consensus was to see if there is a way for DODD to support councils of government (COGs). DODD has met with the COGs and will be moving forward with sub-grant agreements with interested COGs to support evaluation and assessment. DODD is also in the process of amending the interagency agreement with OHMAS to allow early childhood mental health consultants to participate in evaluations and assessments.

Statewide eligibility process update. All counties have received county-specific technical assistance about their results for the eligibility assessment that was discussed at the May 2022 meeting. There will be a new hospital-based child find referral form to streamline diagnosis verification and new diagnosis verification guidance for certain referrals from the Ohio Department of Health. DODD will also provide a new eligibility decision tree job aid in the coming weeks. DODD is also working on “EI Eligibility 101” for EISC supervisors, contract managers, and FCFC coordinators and continue to provide ongoing TA through TA and training plans.

Technical Assistance Team. The EI program consultants are focused on providing program technical assistance, while Kelli Lanzot has moved to a new position as a fiscal EI program consultant. She will support counties around the fiscal aspects of their EI service coordination grant. Tracy Millhon was recently hired to support counties in the northwestern part of the state. Fox provided some cross-agency highlights:

- Diverse Learners – Lead: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS)

- Purpose: increase the number of young children with disabilities served in public funded childcare programs
- Early childhood State Leadership Team – Lead: Ohio Department of Education (ODE)
  - Purpose: reduce barriers to access to public funded early care and education programs through the state inclusion policy
- C to B workgroups (2) – Lead: ODE
  - Purpose: to communicate and identify solutions to barriers in order to ensure a smooth transition from C to B (training, guidance document, conference)
- Ohio Early Childhood Inclusive Leadership Team – Lead: ODE
  - Purpose: develop leadership skills for early childhood personnel through a fellowship program
- Head Start Partners – Lead: ODE/HS
  - Purpose: cross agency updates and improve communication between head start and partner programs.

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development updates. Tiffany Madden provided updates around professional development. DODD is exploring ways to boost attendance in the Newborn Behavioral Observation (NBO) attendance has been low. In the coming months, there will be more professional development opportunities coming: 1) Balanced intervention series is facilitated by Dana Childress, author of “Pause and Reflect”. This will include five webinars from Sep 2022 – Feb 2023. 2) Individualizing EI for all Families is a training developed by AnLar and includes asynchronous modules and community of practice for selected cohort. 3) There will be an evidence-based practices reboot facilitated by FIPP. It will address natural learning environments and PSP approach to teaming. There will be multiple dates available between Jul 2022 and Jun 2023. 4) The NBO is a three-day training with online mentoring afterward to prepare for certification. There will also be a 1/2-day training for those already trained on NBO. Dates are still to be determined.

Madden also provided updates around credentialing and certification. Regarding the EI service coordination credentialing, DODD is working on Ohio Professional Registry Dashboard updates. EISC supervisors will have access to their staff registries and can see the expiration date for credentials and progress for their professional development. For the developmental specialist certification, Principles of Special Instruction (POSI) is currently being built. The training team is putting together this course. Unit 1 is completed, and we are working on unit 2. We are planning to release all 5 units together by Jan 2023. Once someone obtains certification under current rule, this POSI course will be required to renew a second time. DODD is also working on Evidence-Based Practice Coaching for developmental specialists. DODD is planning to expand OCALI’s contract so they can assist us with more coaching hours for counties in need. ECMH Consultation will help with participation in Part C evaluation and assessment. Finally, Madden informed the group that the DODD EI training coordinator, Lori Myers, will be retiring August 31. Tiffany Madden and Allan Kisner will be handling her duties while the position is filled.

Taylor Hammond shared an EI data report with the group. In March 2022, the state had the highest number of EI referrals for the period in which DODD has records (at least seven years).

Some of the increase is likely related to catching up from referrals being down due to COVID. However, numbers were also increasing steadily prior to the pandemic. The caregiver remains the largest source of referrals. Other significant referral sources are hospital child find, other medical professionals, and children's services agencies. The age at referral has increased slightly this past fiscal year. Monthly child counts dropped during the pandemic, but, in SFY22, the numbers have been increasing significantly. In one month, the child count increased by close to 600, and they are some of the highest monthly counts that we have seen in years. Children's eligibility data continue to be skewed due to the number of virtual evaluations completed that necessitate the use of informed clinical opinion (ICO). There was an increase in exits of 6% which is due to serving more children. Most children exited because they reached three. Length of stay is comparable to past years.

Family questionnaires should be sent to families in the coming weeks. We updated the questions based on the group's feedback, but we could not make all changes due to the evaluation plan questions in the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP).

The group then broke into small groups to discuss a survey of EI providers that DODD plans to send in the autumn. Members reviewed a draft of the survey, discussed in small groups, and then reported out on highlights. DODD staff collected the feedback. DeDino thanked the group for providing feedback.

Partner updates. A group member shared a save-the-date for October 19, 2022, when the Ohio Association of County Boards (OACB) will have a virtual forum and collaboration with DODD. It is all virtual and Dr. Jessica Foster will talk about the impact of COVID on infants and toddlers. This forum is for all providers for EI in Ohio.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00pm.