

**Regional Interagency Coordinating Committee  
Minutes from 12-01-09**

**Corrections made from 4-20-10 RICC Meeting**

1. Welcome/Introductions:  
Present: Sandy McMerty, Rebecca Helm, Jennifer Restemayer, Joe Elsberry, Teresa Kuhn, Michelle Hougen, Lisa Keidel, Roxane Romanick, Deb Tibor, Lorri Sandal, Cherie Mortenson
  
2. Minutes:  
The Minutes were reviewed from 7-21-09. No changes were made.
  
3. Member Updates:  
Deb Tibor - Morton Sioux Special Education/ECSE:
  - They are very busy. They are working on screenings and testing for preschool special education.
  - She attended a workshop in Minot in November on positive behavioral supports. It was a very good and useful training.  
Joe Elsberry:
  - The Rossetti Training was awesome. Dr. Rossetti said that Russia and the two Dakotas have the most fetal alcohol syndrome babies.
  - Important Childfind tip from Dr. Rossetti: Take a look at your infant mortality rates. Areas where these are the highest are the areas that you should be targeting your childfind efforts.  
Jennifer Restemayer:
  - She finished the CEED (Center for Early Education and Development - <http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ceed/>) prematurity course over the summer. It was a really good course to take. It had a lot of family perspective and videos of family stories. She learned about issues that go along with premature infants.  
Sandy McMerty:
  - Designer Genes has a Facebook page. Joe asked what Designer Genes was. Sandy explained that it's a Down syndrome support network mostly in the Bismarck-Mandan area. There are 125 families on the mailing list.
  - Sandy reported that there were over 1,000 people at this year's Buddy Walk.  
Roxane Romanick:
  - The next H1N1 clinic is this Thursday from 2:00-6:30. Next Thursday it will be at Century High School from 3:30-7:00.

- Carseat checkup is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month between Bill Barth Ford and Stan Puklich.
- We've been tracking the Early Childhood Education Committee at the state level. The committee was developed by legislation that was passed during this year's legislature and also came out of the North Dakota Education Improvement Committee recommendations. The Governor's office announced that one of the parent members is Sandy McMerty. Tyler Hanson, Principal at Centennial Elementary, who is also a parent of a child with special needs, also got chosen on the committee as a principal. The committee has not met yet.
- National inclusive schools week is next week. In honor of that, Designer Genes is doing a viewing on Including Samuel, a documentary on providing inclusive education. The viewing is primarily for school administrators, but it's also open to whoever wants to come.
- Roxane noted that she was able to attend the National Down Syndrome Conference. The most striking movement that's coming out of the conference was the development of a noninvasive prenatal blood test for trisomy conditions.
- Arc of Bismarck is having a holiday dance next Saturday.

Lorri Sandal:

- They hired another DDPM that's going to Ft. Yates. Her name is Jodi Enztel. She used to be with Community Action.
- The Family Subsidy Program is ~~done~~ changed as of January 1<sup>st</sup>. All families will be converted to funding through the Traditional, Self-directed Supports component of the MR-DD Waiver. The family subsidy is available for families of children who are on DDPM and in the hospital or not eligible for waiver services.

#### 4. Update on ND Early Childhood Initiatives:

Roxane Romanick:

- Early Childhood Education Committee - there continues to be an alliance of early childhood personnel at the State called North Dakota Early Childhood Alliance. The group is bringing a lot of early childhood stakeholders to the table. Lutheran Social Services and Childcare Resource and Referral got about \$3 million to do a lot of quality enhancement work for childcare providers.
- Jamestown had a summit on working with children with special needs in a childcare setting and increasing opportunities for children with special needs in a childcare setting. Childcare Resource and Referral is starting-looking to target training on behavioral management for childcare providershire a mental health consultant for children and promote collaboration with families. There's a bigger presence and focus on early childhood at the State level and Governor's office.

5. Program Reports:

- BECEP Right Track
  - Lisa Keidel answered some questions that were presented at the last RICC meeting.
    - They are seeing kids for the first visit around 2-3 months of age.
    - The follow-up visit is every 6 months for kids under 18 months.
    - Handout was distributed on visits by county.
    - Parent satisfaction survey was sent out to everyone that received a visit in August and September. Two concerns were: (1) not seeing families often enough and (2) families would like to be aware of more community resources.
    - Lisa needs to figure out which families need additional resources. She is also putting together a program manual for the Right Track program and there will be a community resources section.
  - Trainings: Right Track consultants attended the Rossetti conference, a speech/language therapist went with consultants on a visit for more hands on training, and there will be a mandated reporting for child abuse and neglect training in December.
- Standing Rock Early Intervention:
  - Rebecca Helm reported on funding issue with BIE:
    - The federal auditors to review the use of the federal BIE funding that Standing Rock receives. They are now required to have a birth certificate and certificate for Indian blood for every child in the program that's not on a plan. Because of that, they are dropping from around 900 families to around 400 now. They have to drop over half of their kids because they don't have the required documentation. This has been an ongoing discussion since the beginning of the program. Sandy asked how do you receive a certificate for Indian blood? Do you apply? Is it tribal? Rebecca said it's tribal. Each person submits a lineage and each reservation is different. Standing Rock recognizes all Sioux blood. They fill out paperwork, send it in and if they say yes you are qualified to be enrolled then it goes to Tribal council and they vote if they're qualified to be a member of the tribe. The document for Indian blood takes a day to fill out because they have to obtain their whole heritage. They have a 90 day timeframe and the birth certificate has to be the one with the North Dakota seal and not the one from the hospital.
      - Roxane asked if they're on a plan then can they maintain involved with tracking? Rebecca said yes. If they are on an IEP or IFSP, then they can maintain them.

- Joe said the process itself is what's holding them back. They have to go to the BIA office to get papers notarized and the lines are always long like the DOT. Rebecca also said it's a difficult process because the BIA is in Ft. Yates so people living in the outlying communities have to figure out how to get there.
- Roxane asked if they can still provide screenings for Right Track. Rebecca said they won't get paid for them. Michelle asked if they can access state Right Track funding. Rebecca said it'd have to come from BECEP. Lisa said we'd have to split the money and we'd have to cut back further with our visits or the state would have to come up with more money.
- Will you get more BIA funding as families get documentation? Rebecca said they have until December 15<sup>th</sup> to get them the number for the year.
- Roxane asked what percentage can't be enrolled? Joe said very few.
- Lorri Sandal reported that referrals from Standing Rock are way down. Rebecca stated that this was because Right Track people are spending time on this above issue.
- Michelle asked if the state should become aware, not just DHS but DPI because DPI is the responsible party for Childfind. It's affecting not just one department. We need to get to DPI also because of what is happening under DHS. It's not an effective Childfind system. We are not able to find kids with the current funding system.
- Roxane asked if a family gets referred to Tribal social services and they call Standing Rock Tracking, would you have to prove that they are enrolled? Rebecca said Child Protection Services would have to get all of the paperwork.
- Roxane said the purpose of Part C's funding is Childfind. Why do you have to prove that someone is Native American? Joe said they do lots of Tribal things through their office too. It's a complex mix. Rebecca said the federal auditor's standpoint is whoever's covering the area for the state would be the ones held responsible.
- Roxane asked if the state office knew about this issue. Rebecca said Jimmy had a meeting with them and addressed it at the state tribal meeting. The other difficult part is they are much bigger than the rest so they

are the only ones required to get federal money so they get federal audits.

- Roxane asked if there was discussion about BECEP starting to pick up some kids in Sioux county again.
- With Joe's hiring they are splitting up job duties in Standing Rock. Dorothy will do the South Dakota side and Joe will be the Special Education Coordinator, including Early Intervention for the North Dakota side.
- Roxane asked where they are at with staff right now? Rebecca said they're at 3 full time home visitors, Susan is a consultant and Ava fills in, and there's always an OT/PT from St. A's.
- Roxane also asked if they are continuing to work with technical assistance with compliance reviews? Rebecca said the plan that they had set up in place, they stopped working on because they didn't know where everything was going to land.
- BECEP Early Intervention
  - Michelle Hougen:
    - In terms of numbers, BECEP continued to see a decrease in the number of kids. We submitted our budget based on 162. That's about where we are now. In looking over the past year and a half, she found that we dismissed an average of 12 kids and added an average of 10 a month and that has continued. A lot goes back to discussion we had months ago about limited number of Right Track visits and not able to do as much Childfind as we can. The problem is that even though our unit rate is higher than last year, based on history and based on projection, we are basing our budget on a lower number because we don't think we'll bring in revenue because we don't have the kids. We're being extremely conservative this year.
    - Another thing is supposedly January 1<sup>st</sup> we're going fee for service. We have had absolutely no direction from the state as to what the unit rates will be. There are 4 areas we'll be able to bill: home visits, evaluations/assessments, IFSPs, and consultations. We have no idea what the procedure is going to be. We have no knowledge of what we're supposed to be doing. Within the last few weeks Infant Development directors across the state got together to write a letter to Deb Balsdon, Joanne Hoesel, and John Bole, saying we need some information and we want a meeting ASAP. So far she has until this Friday to respond. They are getting together again this Friday. Also, an interesting thing at the meeting is that we were the only Infant Development

program in the state that had our unit rate for this fiscal year, which is July 1-June 30. We had gotten our unit rate September 23<sup>rd</sup>. With the exception of Minot, no other Infant Development program in the state had their unit rate.

- Internally we have been in the process of redoing our Early Intervention procedural manual. Recently in October, the North Dakota Early Intervention Guidelines came out, which is the first policy procedure manual in draft format from the state. We went through that and gave our comments to Deb. We'll be integrating a lot of those policies and procedures into the procedural manual. Along with that we're also taking an in-depth look at the QIP, which we haven't revised in the last couple years. A lot of what we're addressing in the QIP is trying to gather and examine data on federal indicators. Here again we're finding that a lot of data we should have from the state which would be very informative but we're not getting this data. We'll have the QIP done by the time we meet next time.
- Half of our staff has continued in coaching training by Juliann Woods, the other half will start training in May. It's an excellent training. They're completing individual tapes on home visits then sending in video for feedback from Juliann Woods. Deb has lined up some really good training for Infant Development people in the last few years.
- Last quarter of referral handout was distributed.
- Sandy asked if the Infant Development programs in the region do not have their unit rate, do they still provide services? Rebecca said yes. They get paid at the previous unit rate. Michelle added this is not uncommon. It was retroactive so we got a check for the difference. Sandy asked if the rate is based on history? Michelle said it's based on a complex formula, inclusive of history - retrospective rate setting.

6. Review of BECEP Procedures:

- Tabled except for the procedure on Home Visitor Safety Policy.

Suggestions:

- Rebecca said you should always park your vehicle on the street and not on the driveway so nobody can block you in.
- Joe added that sage grass smells like marijunia. Some families burn sage grass spiritually so you should familiarize yourself with what that family is doing spiritually and not jump to conclusions about smells.
- Rebecca suggested you ask them what kind of spiritual healing or other healing is being done for illness.

- Lisa added that it's not your job to find out what the smell is, it's your job to report.
- Roxane suggested keeping the cultural stuff in mind.
- Sandy said the second bullet - "If for any reason an Early Interventionist feels uncomfortable going into a home..." How will it be handled? Where does it go? This item should be expanded. Third bullet and last bullet are in direct conflict. If you're concerned about going into the home, you should not even be going. Rebecca said if there's not a reason you feel uncomfortable but you feel uncomfortable, what are you supposed to do? Jennifer said that's the reason why they wrote the last bullet. It's just a gut feeling. Roxane suggested moving that bullet with three or revising it.
- Rebecca asked if the childcare setting is home based, how do you notify the parent that there's a safety concern? Michelle said we will need to address that.

7. Update on Infant Development Funding: See above
8. Status of Quality Improvement Planning for Local and State Programs:
  - We're still working on updating the QIP and will have it completed by the next RICC meeting.
9. Members:
 

We're down to one parent. Anna Bergman will no longer be on the committee. We asked JoAnn Brager as a Head Start connection.
10. Update on West River Head Start Expansion:
 

We held an emergency meeting in June to discuss the possibility of an Early Head Start program for West River Head Start. They did not get the grant but Dickinson did in the state.
9. Adjourn
 

The meeting was adjourned at 11:52am.