

El Services Subcommittee

8-18-10

Minutes:

Present: Holly Major, Margaret LoMurray, Stephen Olson, Suzy Heise, Naomi Heinrich, Keith Gustafson, Dorothy Larson, Rebecca Helm, Nancy Skorheim, Alison Dollar, Deb Balsdon, Carol Johnson, Jill Staudinger

Margaret – good summer

Stephen – just finished 3rd annual autism camp – 9 campers

Jill – influx of many new individuals to the area

Keith – effective 7-1-10, ACC has become the fiscal host for the 4 programs/remodeled the lake cabin this summer

Dorothy – been gone awhile, back again

Nancy – been mowing lawn all summer, going to go to rock

Deb gave an update on new provider in Region VII (Three Speed), and then the status of Region 1. The state office is working with 2 different providers to provide infant development services in Region 1. They are working on resolving some issues with administrative costs. Deb also discussed the update on move to Therap which is a web-based data system for Early Intervention. There will be statewide training starting in October. The system will be rolled out in 2 phases with the transfer of all historical data and function from ASSIST and Lotus Notes to Therap. In Phase 2 of implementation they are looking at increasing the function for expansion to use by other populations such as other providers and families. There is also work starting on a new data base for Right Track providers. This will be accomplished through ARRA funding. There is hope that while the data systems between DHS and DPI do not talk directly that perhaps information can be shared through a Master Client Index Project.

Deb reported that Dawn Pearson with the state office has been finalizing the Early Intervention Guidelines and that these will be out for public comment in mid-September.

The Early Intervention Crossroads Conference will be held Sept. 27, 28, 29. Topics to be held: Acumen, Early Intervention Guidelines, OAE/Tymp refresher, Functional Vision Refresher, Autism Waiver, Early Literacy, Early Communication Predictors for Right Track staff, Discipline Specific Topic Tables, Therap demo, Virtual Consultation in Home Visits, Oz Data Base, Technology Play Room, Update on the billing (i.e. rates, training incentive dollars, etc.), NICU binders.

Keith asked a question about RT : wondering if programs are up for renewal. Political subdivisions just have to give intent each year, but non-political entities have to do a proposal every 5 years.

Roxane announced that this year's annual Buddy Walk – walk for Down syndrome awareness will be September 18th. She also asked us to keep three little boys with Down syndrome who will be starting preschool this fall as we begin the work on transition.

The minutes were reviewed from April 8th and there were no changes made.

Report on federal program determinations: ND is in a Needs Intervention (NI) category, primarily due to C8, which is the indicator pertaining to transition. In regards to local program determinations in ND: 2 programs fell into NI primarily due to timely closure of findings. A question was asked about who's going to provide the support to the state and then to the regions. State has met with the Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center and been having calls with state contact at DOE. In regards to ND's local programs: both the state office and MTAC are continuing to work with programs to get their findings closed. We have 2 years to get back to Meets Requirements. Deb noted that advice that we've gotten is to go ahead and hold the transition planning meeting without the district so that we make compliance. Also feel like we need to pull a broader sample of cases where transition activities are occurring to review.

Roxane had provided the data from Indicator B12 (Children will have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthday) and the action steps from Indicator C8 (Children will have a transition plan in place by their third birthday).

Alison and Nancy reported that ND had been in Needs Intervention for Part B of IDEA from the 2005 data due to indicator B12. Presently they are at about 98%.

The question was asked if it's considered out of compliance to complete eligibility at 2-9 and then hold the IEP 30 days after (which is the time allotted in between eligibility determination and IEP development). The answer is "yes" when you consider that many of the details in the IEP are what tells a family what type of service will be in place.

It was noted that often children who are not transitioning to Part B often get lost to the school district. This happens if a family chooses that they don't want a Part B determination made or the child is transferring to Head Start. Currently all children in Part C are considered as "potentially eligible" for Part B. All children who turn 2 or enter after 2 into EI should be included in a notification to Part B. The complicating factor is that not all of these children proceed to an eligibility determination and Part B doesn't know what happens to them. Only those children where a release of information is obtained and further information is released to the district are known to the district.

This is where data sharing would be helpful. In the 2008-2009, DPI reported that there were 310 children referred for a Part B eligibility determination prior to 3. Of those 36 refused a determination and 65 were not found eligible. Of the 207 children that were found eligible only 6 children had IEP's that were not timely. We need to pay attention to children that are referred eligibility but chose not to continue with the process, follow-up on Head Start or community referrals and children that are not referred at all.

We currently need a standardized way of notifying the LEA. The survey that was sent out to Part C providers indicated that there are a variety of methods that are being used across the state. Alison and Nancy noted that they still need a statewide list at the state level because they can't compare the data from the units. They don't know who is missing.

There was some discussion about children who have articulation concerns. It was noted that there was a change in the rubric that is used for determining eligibility for children with articulation errors and that a determination cannot be made prior to 3. Nancy will check into this.

Jill described her current practice in Region VIII. She sends a memo every month to each LEA/Special Ed Unit that has all children who have turned 2. There is a tracking component built into the report that she sends so the units know what has happened with every child they have received information on.

Roxane pointed out information that was provided on the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center's site. See www.nectac.org/topics/transition/ectransitionta.asp

Deb noted that we also have to point out to our Part B staff that we may have children in Part C that have a DD Program Manager only and may not have Infant Development involved.

There was a discussion about what "date of referral" is needed on the spreadsheet that is requested by DPI. The correct date should be the date when the child is referred to Part C to appropriately track those children that are coming into the system post-90 days. Suggestion to fix this so both the referral to Part C and Part B are reflected.

Assessment/Evaluation for purposes of Part B eligibility determination: it was noted that the districts were more willing to participate in the assessment process. There continues to be concerns about the significant differences in eligibility differences between the districts. It was suggested that statewide training on both Part C and Part B eligibility criteria would be very helpful. There was a discussion about the use of the non-categorical delay category. It was noted that not all districts use this category.

A discussion was held about the appropriate tools needed for picking up children with articulation errors/social-emotional concerns.

Extended School Year: It was noted that it's difficult to use the current criteria available through DPI for children who are transitioning. The way that the guidance is written is that it leaves a lot of room for local interpretation. It was noted that it is practically impossible to determine how the lack of ESY would result in a loss of FAPE (Free and Appropriate Public Education). There are some districts that determine that all three year olds are at a critical stage of learning (which is one of the ESY criteria). It was noted that we have to understand that ESY is not necessarily a program or a location. It may be helpful to have training on the definition of "critical stage of learning" when it comes to 3 year olds.

Response to Intervention: This was included in the agenda as we are currently unsure on how the development of RTI may impact transitional planning. Nancy noted that primarily RTI is used in relationship to a learning disability. RTI may be used as a way to monitor children that are not found eligible for Part B. May be helpful to outline "best practices" or helpful suggestions.

Autism Waiver: We will need to add training for the teams (including Part B) the information about eligibility for the waiver, continued involvement by Infant Development providers, roles of Part B providers, etc.

A comment was made that it would be helpful to have all of the training coming out of DPI/DHS coordinated as it was when the state had a Comprehensive State Personnel Development Grant.

Referrals Received to EI 45 days or less Prior to 3rd Birthday: The federal FAQ primarily gives Part C the option to hand off the referral directly to Part B. The statewide survey showed that in a lot of situations Part C is also going ahead with their own processes as well as making the connection with Part B. It was noted that in some cases, we have been able to assist families with some minimal supports that are helpful to the family through Part C supports. Need to evaluate this more closely.

Training: It was decided that we may want to bring the regional transition teams together initially, but that we may be able to put together a series of webinars/conference call sessions to follow-up on certain topics that we feel need further attention. The discussion topics that we prioritized to be discussed included:

- Handling 45 days or less referrals
- Date of referral clarification on 90 days or less referrals
- Autism waiver
- The federal FAQ in an abridged form
- Notification of potential eligibility: get agreement on what we want for date of referral
- Clarification on who and when children are being entered into TIENET
- Eligibility criteria for both systems – discussion about wondering if we have the data to know which districts have more stringent eligibility systems. May want to address those through targeted training. It was suggested that we may want to add some information to the targeted questions being asked for monitoring purposes.

Next meeting will be held Monday, November 8th from 1:00 – 5:00. We will attempt to meet in person.