

MARCH 2011

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING FOR EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, in cooperation with the Massachusetts Interagency Coordinating Council, will hold a hearing on the Commonwealth's application for 25th year funding under Part C.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND OF THE HEARING

This hearing is being held for the specific purpose of discussing the Department of Public Health's 25th year grant for funding under Part C, changes to eligibility and the bifurcated model. **Note: changes will only be implemented at the level needed to address a funding shortfall and will occur only as a last resort once all other options have been exhausted.**

The following is a description of the proposed changes:

Program Eligibility:

- **Current Eligibility:** A child must exhibit a 30% level of delay or 1.5 standard deviations in one developmental area to be eligible for program services.
- **Proposed Eligibility – Bifurcated Eligibility Model:** The DPH proposes to establish two parallel service systems. The **Federal EI** program would have stricter program eligibility, (e.g. 50% level of delay in two or more areas of development or have an established condition.) The **Federal EI** program will be supported by Part C funding and must follow all federal laws and regulations articulated under Part C.

The **State EI** program would have broader eligibility (e.g. 30% level of delay or 1.5 standard deviations in one developmental area.) The **State EI** program will not be supported with Part C funding and therefore is not required to adhere to all of the federal laws and regulations articulated under Part C. Waiting lists may exist for access to services and service intensity would potentially be limited.

During the hearing the Department welcomes testimony regarding the changes to eligibility, due process rights, access to service based on insurance coverage and potential out-of-pocket expenses for families, and any other aspects of the grant.

Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, P.L. 108-446, provides funds to assist states in providing services for infants and toddlers with disabilities. The hearing is about Massachusetts' grant application for 25th Year funding under Part C and is open to families, service providers, and professionals serving young children and families.

ASSURING SERVICES TO ALL ELIGIBLE FAMILIES

In the application the state must include assurances demonstrating to the satisfaction of the federal Secretary of Education that:

All eligible children shall be identified and their families offered an evaluation. If eligible for

the Federal EI program, the child and family shall be entitled to the development of an Individualized Family Service Plan and to the early intervention services described in that plan. All families and children shall have procedural safeguards throughout this process.

for more information or if you need assistive devices/services to participate in the hearing. The number is: Voice (617) 624-5901(Voice) and (617) 624-5992 (TTY).



This law also lists the components of a statewide system and requires that the state application include the state policies and procedures to assure all components.

WHO SHOULD TESTIFY?

Members of families with young children, professionals who serve young children and families, and officials from any state agencies with responsibilities for services to children and families are encouraged to come and speak on the issues outlined in this notice or on any other related concerns.

WHEN IS THE HEARING?

March 29, 2011

Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel & Trade Center
181 Boston Post Road West
Marlboro, MA
10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Written comments may be sent until 4/29/11 and should be addressed to:

Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Early Intervention Services
250 Washington Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02108 – 4619

Attn: Ron Benham, Director, Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition

The hearing site is accessible and sign language interpreters will be present upon request. Please call Early Intervention Services at the Department of Public Health