



The Update:

News and Information for MA Early Intervention Providers

July 2009

Welcome to the Summer Edition of "The Update." This is a periodic newsletter focusing specifically on issues and information in MA Early Intervention. This issue will highlight important information and upcoming trainings and opportunities.

Overview of Focused Monitoring: FY 2009



Four Early Intervention Programs were chosen for onsite Focused Monitoring Visits in FY 2009 based on the Local Determinations process. These programs fell in the "Needs Intervention" category based on performance in one of the following priority areas:

- Timeliness of services
- IFSP meetings within 45 days
- Transition
- Timely Correction of Noncompliance

Onsite protocols and activities were individualized based on the priority area, available data and information gathered from the Desk Audit based on the following three questions:

- What do we know now about the program (current program demographics)?
- What do we want to look at before the visit (policies, procedures, trends, etc.)?
- What do we want to learn onsite and how do we obtain this information (onsite activities including file review, interviews, etc.)?

The FY 2010 onsite selection on performance differs slightly from FY09. The selection includes the following four performance areas as reported on Local Program Determinations:

- Timeliness of services
- IFSP meetings within 45 days
- Transition
- Timely and Accurate Data

Programs that are low performing or had no improvement processes in place at the time of the annual determinations have been chosen for a Focused Monitoring onsite visit. The onsite selection process will allow the DPH staff to more efficiently utilize its resources and to provide the additional technical assistance and support to programs to attain compliance and improve performance.

The DPH Focused Monitoring Team (which consists of the Regional Specialists, the Focused Monitoring Parent Coordinator and a Parent Team Member) will continue to work in partnership with programs to identify strengths as well as areas of concern in the performance area and to assist in the development of a corrective action and/or technical assistance plan.

NCSEAM Family Survey



The DPH would like to thank you for your ongoing support in implementing our Early Intervention Family Survey. In FY 08, over 2300 surveys were returned, and as of the end of June 2009, over 1000 have been received.

The collection of Family Outcomes data is an evolving process. The DPH has been working with providers to develop a more effective tracking system for the Family Survey. Currently, we know how many Surveys each program receives and how many are returned on an annual basis. What we don't know is the exact number each program actually distributes to families.

Over the course of the past year, many providers have suggested different ways to implement the distribution of the Survey. After putting the question to the community, and in order to fulfill Federal Reporting requirements, we will continue with the same dis-

tribution method - a NCSEAM Survey given to every family at their six month IFSP review until December 1, 2009. Programs will receive a new shipment of NCSEAM Family Surveys in mid-August.

Effective January 2010, programs will disseminate the NCSEAM Family Survey during two months of the year. These months will be **March and October**. Programs will distribute the Survey to all families whose children have been enrolled in their programs for at least six months. The DPH goals are to simplify the dissemination process, encourage the Service Coordinators to distribute and explain the importance of collecting Family Outcome data, better track the number of surveys distributed, and ensure a better return rate. Additional guidance about the change in implementation will be coming over the next few months.

Certification for Early Intervention Specialist (CEIS) Review Process



Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 requires that each state develop and implement a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD), or plan for personnel development. In Massachusetts, a process for Certification for Early Intervention Specialists (CEIS) is in place to ensure that all personnel

working in EI achieve a set of core competencies. The MA CSPD requires that policies and procedures for certification as Early Intervention Specialists be reviewed and updated every three to five years. The CEIS portfolio was last reviewed and revised in 2003.

To begin the current review process, the Department of Public Health from January 2008 through January 2009 supported a community-wide process to review and revise the competency indicators on which the portfolio process has been based.

This resulted in 53 newly worded competency indicators in 8 areas; previously there had been 69 competency indicators in 9 areas.

To continue the review of the certification process, the DPH is convening a community-wide CEIS Stakeholder Group. This group will make a recommendation as to how the new competencies will be met in the CEIS process. The goal of the review process is to review and revise the CEIS process so that it continues to:

- Embody core values of MA Early Intervention
- Provide an opportunity for applicants to demonstrate competency in all 53 revised competency indicators
- Provide the applicant with an opportunity to highlight their work by means of an equitable submission and review process
- Provide documentation of the applicant's service coordination practice.

The CEIS Stakeholder meetings are scheduled for the third Wednesday of each month, beginning September 2009, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Below are the dates:

September 16, 2009

October 21, 2009

November 18, 2009

December 16, 2009

January 20, 2010

February 17, 2010

March 21, 2010

Additional information regarding the location of the meetings and a tentative agenda will be available later this summer.

The Department has been pleased with participation by the broader early childhood community in the competency review process and is ready to move forward in collaboration with all interested parties to simplify and improve the CEIS process.

If you are interested in participating in this process please contact Holly Newman, CSPD Coordinator, at 617-994-9815 or holly.newman@state.ma.us.

Massachusetts Smoke Free Families Initiative



The *Massachusetts Smoke-Free Families Initiative* for home visiting programs is funded by the Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program. The Institute for Health and Recovery (IHR) is partnering

with the DPH to incorporate systemic messages about secondhand smoke into agency policies, assessments and practice. Several Early Intervention Programs in targeted communities have participated in staff training to raise concerns about addressing tobacco, gain understanding of the rationale for doing so, and learn and practice tools for talking with clients. Programs who have participated in this initiative have expressed high satisfac-

tion with all of the great trainings on secondhand smoke, have appreciated the opportunity to participate in the initiative, and will incorporate the information into ongoing service delivery.

There is limited space available for new programs to participate in this free and exciting opportunity in FY 10. If you are interested in participating in this valuable opportunity please feel free to contact me at patti.fougere@state.ma.us or Liz Hartman at lizhartman@healthrecovery.org. Information on secondhand smoke and smoking cessation materials can be ordered for free at www.macleavinghouse.com.

Comments and questions to:

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