**Meeting Minutes:**

Massachusetts Early Intervention Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC)

General Session

Thursday November 18, 2021

9:00 am - 2:00 pm

**8:30 - 9:00 Networking (optional)**

**9:00 am - Welcome & Land Acknowledgement** (ICC Co-Chairs Michelle Grewal and Johan de Besche):

The co-chairs welcomed the group noting that the goal is to have all voices included to advise and assist the EI Division. The co-chairs created space to acknowledge the the history of the land we are on. Participants are encouraged to follow the link to learn which land they are currently on: <https://nativegov.org/our-story/the-land-we-are-on>. The co-chairs each shared a personal story about their commitment to this work and the importance of storytelling to center families’ unique experiences.

**9:15 am- Early Intervention Division Director’s Update** (Dr. Emily White, Director of Early Intervention)

Dr. White presented the Lead Agency report and emphasized that the child and family are at the center of the EI system. The goal is that Part C is a high-quality system that provides effective services to every eligible infant and toddler. Dr. White presented current EI data showing that more children are being referred into the EI system as compared to prior months however of those referred into EI, only 60% were evaluated. This suggests that children are referred but are not getting in the door. This is one possible area where a charge could be set to ensure that we make EI more accessible for all children across the Commonwealth. Timely transitions are another area for improvement where a charge could be set to explore opportunities to increase supports to ensure that potentially eligible toddles receive transition services into Part B. Lastly, there was an increase in the number of children not receiving any services in August. When looked at by race/ethnicity, Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino children are disproportionally affected by services not being provided to them. The EI Division is conducting additional data analysis to explore this further. The ICC should consider how we can use these data to ensure our system provides equitable and effective services to all infants and toddlers.

**09:35 – 9:40 Break**

**9:40 am- Finish 2021 - 2022 Charges** (ICC Co-Chairs Michelle Grewal and Johan de Besche):

During the ICC retreat the group began the process of establishing charges for the year which the group further refined today. The group previously agreed on the following charges:

* Fiscal Committee will work to increase funding for interpreter services, with input from the EI Division
* The Racial Equity Task Group will research strategies to promote diversity in providers, with input from the EI Division
* (Draft statement from last meeting) Re-Engagement Task Group will work to create a resource for best practice for strategies to reduce gaps in service delivery, with input from the EI Division

Participants discussed ways to refine these charges. There was a suggestion to broaden the fiscal committee charge to cover more than just interpreter services. The group discussed the pros and cons of this approach and ultimately decided to update the charge to also include: “The fiscal committee will explore new and revised funding mechanisms for EI, with input from the EI Division.” The Steering Committee will revisit this charge when they meet next to finalize exact language.

The group discussed the draft Re-engagement charge which is focused on how EI returns to in-person home visits. The group discussed the importance of workforce issues and the need for support around recruitment and retention in order to meet the divers needs of children and families in EI programs. There might be a way to collaborate with the Racial Equity Task Group to address some of this. The group discussed the data presented during Dr. White’s presentation nothing that this could also be an opportunity to discuss how the system is not reaching certain families.

**10:45 – 10:50 Break**

**10:50 – 11:45 Next Steps for Subcommittees** (ICC Co-Chairs Michelle Grewal and Johan de Besche):

The group resumed the conversation surrounding finalizing the charges. Participants suggested that re-engagement could focus on hiring given that the workforce shortages contribute to the current “gaps in service” delivery given that it will be challenging to accomplish much without a strong workforce. The group expressed the need for data surrounding reengagement to have a clearer understanding of the gaps. Dr. White noted that the new DPH interactive database will be available in the coming year so the group can use it down the road while she continues to share information as applicable. Dr. White noted that the EI Division had recently engaged with parents regarding their perspectives on re-engagement efforts and that results would be coming soon. This information could inform the Re-engagement Task Group’s work, and the Task Group could help establish a dissemination plan for these findings. Ultimately the group decided that the Re-engagement Task Group would: “Work to gather further information from families on reasons for discrepancies for service delivery and, refine data on discrepancies in service deliver (and/or identify need for further data).”

The Family Engagement group is looking for a new co-chair to continue with last year’s charge. There was good progress made last year on helping families with self-care and resource development so the group will continue on this path.

**11:45 - 12:15 Lunch**

**12:15 - Orientation & Chair Update**

The co-chairs briefly presented slides showing the structure of the ICC noting that there is a role for everyone in this work.

**12:30 - Subcommittee Breakout Time**

Attendees were sent to breakout rooms based on the Committees and Task Groups to identify a Chairperson and plan for the year.

**2:00 Adjourn**

The co-chairs thanked the group for their candor during breakouts. Co-chairs thanked Helena, prior co-chair, for her commitment to her work leading this group.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, January 13, 2022 9:00 AM-2:00 PM**