

## **January 31, 2020 Meeting Updates on Birth to 14 Subcommittee Priorities**

### **1. Access to AAC Devices**

- Carolyn is awaiting response from MassHealth about existing data.
- She will request data broken down by race and demographics going forward.
- Next steps discussed by subcommittee -
- Information campaign or DESE advisory to educate and assist schools and families.
- Looking closer at the implementation of providing devices.
- Exploring how MassHealth can further help families with obtaining devices.
- Considering using the IEP process to help with race and language barriers to access.
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### **2. Level of Inclusion of ASD Students**

- Subcommittee identified data to request, broken down by race, language, age, diagnosis, outcome, and type of placement at each level of inclusion.
- Russell brought request to DESE.
- Next steps discussed by subcommittee-
- Review and discuss data for further recommendations.

### **3. Children with ASD in DCF Care**

- Carolyn spoke with DCF and updated committee. DDS and DCF will work together on trainings on case by case basis.
- Next steps discussed by subcommittee-
- Carolyn will request a person from DCF come to speak with us at a future meeting about students in DCF care.
- Explore obtaining data from DCF about numbers of children with ASD in their custody and care, and outcomes to determine future recommendations.

### **4. Collection of Age of Diagnosis Data broken down by Race**

- Carolyn will follow up with MassHealth and DPH to determine what current information exists and what could be collected on the go forward.
- Joan shared that she requested similar data for children in EI and will find out if she can share it with the subcommittee.
- Next Steps discussed by subcommittee-
- Review and discuss the data obtained for further recommendations.

### **5. The New Electronic IEP**

- Russell advised the "Is Special Education the Right Service" document was in development.
- DESE would like input from our subcommittee on the new IEP document in defining the ASD disability category, the regulations document for guidance clarity, changes in effective progress in the flow chart, and with the medical vs. educational diagnosis of ASD language.
- A process guide will be developed next and DESE will be seeking assistance in technical writing around the IEP .
- Next steps discussed by subcommittee-
- Provide subcommittee input as requested by DESE.

### **6. Addressing the Shortage of ABA Providers**

- Four potential issues were identified by subcommittee to explore: Licensure for BCBA, grant leveraging to manage caseloads, clarification of roles, and global practice guidelines for ABA specialists.
- Russell shared that pursuing Licensure at this time would be very challenging. Some hold back federal funding could be used as grant leverage. DESE will have some new regulations which may assist with clarification of roles.

- Zac offered to get input from BCBA's to help create guidance documents.
- Russell needs to see if DESE would be willing to put its name on a potential guidance document to clarify BCBA roles for districts.
- Next Steps discussed by subcommittee-
- The subcommittee voted on a motion to pursue BCBA guidance for School Districts.

## **September 11,2020 Meeting Updates on Birth to 14 Subcommittee Priorities**

### **1. DESE update on current status and School Reopening Plan for Students with Disabilities**

- Russell highlighted key concepts for guidance for districts, including all services to be delivered regardless of model, parent engagement focus, primarily synchronous learning supplemented by asynchronous work, and in person learning for the highest need students in schools, homes or community .
- A compensatory service document will be developed to look at needs.
- DESE is focusing on technical support to districts and families and will put out further guidance documents in this regard.
- Other agencies provided updates for children in EI and students in the DDS waiver program and Boston Public Schools.
- Barriers to getting students educated were discussed by the subcommittee.
- Technology issues, parent engagement, access and equity were concerns.
- Subcommittee suggestions to assist parent engagement were generated.
- SEPAC 's could work with FCSN to inform members and share information.
- Community organizations with existing relationships with families could be utilized to reach out to families.
- ASD specific issues that need to be addressed were discussed by the subcommittee.
- Behavior issues, regression, lack of home services and family supports, need for choice around education options and building trust with families were concerns raised.
- Distributing fact sheets about COVID research and steps taken to reduce the spread, guidance from districts on day to day planning in parent letter or video, small steps to in person learning with an extended transition phase, and providing information about how IEP services will be delivered in each model may build trust and confidence in families.
- Next Steps discussed by subcommittee-
- DESE will expand its mailing list to other agencies and put factual information in parent friendly language. The subcommittee will review the list for further suggestions .
- Joan and Sarah will share DPH and DDS resources to help develop practices that are endorsed and can be put out as guidance.
- A compensatory letter will be developed and translated by DESE to go to community organizations to share with families.
- Our subcommittee will continue to explore and discuss how to support families.
- Ongoing engagement and listening, and sharing information to build confidence will be a focus as well as looking at the whole family in addressing ASD specific needs.