**Birth-14 Subcommittee**

**Massachusetts Autism Commission**

October 8, 2025

**Emily White (DPH) & Iraida Alvarez (DESE)**

**Agenda**

* Attendance
* Welcome
* Vote Minutes
* Icebreaker
* Review Current Charges
* Recommend Charges for March 2026-March 2027

**Vote on July 23, 2025 Minutes**

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| **Cameras:**  Camera should be on throughout,  but **required** for roll call & voting |
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| **Voting Responses**: Please respond either "**Yes", "No", or "Abstain"**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Attendance July 23, 2025** | | | | **Iraida Alvarez** | **Stephanie Coburn** | **Eileen Crehan** | | **Mary Kate Haswell** | **Zachary Houston** | **Emily White** | | **Carolyn Kain** | **Dianne Lescinskas** |  | |

**Overarching Objectives**

* Discuss complex and emerging interconnected issues affecting families of children diagnosed with autism
* examine available information related to the transition of children with autism spectrum disorder from early intervention to special education, with a focus on the timeliness of this transition and the continuity of support
* facilitate the sharing of resources that might be available for communities, schools and individual households to improve safety for students with autism spectrum disorder, particularly aimed at addressing concerns such as wandering, bolting, accidental drowning, psychosexual health.

**Icebreaker**

* What is one thing you’ve noticed since we last met that could affect children diagnosed with autism and their families?

**Systems Coordination & Access**

* How can we strengthen the coordination between Early Intervention, public schools, and healthcare systems to ensure that children diagnosed with autism experience seamless transitions across services?
* Where do families still encounter the greatest barriers to accessing early intervention, and how can our policies or partnerships reduce those barriers (e.g., eligibility confusion, long waitlists, inconsistent referrals)?
* What strategies can help ensure that autism screening, diagnosis, and service referrals are equitable across racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic groups?

**Family Engagement & Support**

* **What feedback are we hearing from families about their experiences navigating diagnosis, access to services, and advocacy?**
* **How do we ensure that family perspectives directly inform policy and funding recommendations?**
* **How can we build stronger, culturally responsive family engagement strategies that empower caregivers to participate actively in treatment planning and system improvement?**

**High-Quality Outcomes & Data**

* How can we use data more effectively to communicate the value and return on investment of early identification and intervention?
* How can we improve the validity, reliability, and timeliness of data used to assess program performance and policy impact?
* What data do we currently collect about outcomes for children with autism birth-14, and what key indicators are still missing?

**Safety, Health, & Community Inclusion**

* What statewide strategies can reduce safety risks for children with autism, including wandering, drowning, and unsafe interactions in the community?
* What emerging areas of concern (e.g., psychosexual health education, digital safety) could the commission address through public awareness or resource development?
* How can we promote community inclusion and positive social participation for children with autism and their families across everyday environments?

**Review Subcommittee Priorities**

**Transition from Early Intervention to Special Education**

* + The Birth to 14 Subcommittee will examine available information related to the transition of children with autism spectrum disorder from early intervention to special education, with a focus on the timeliness of this transition and the continuity of supports.

**Child Safety**

* + The Birth to 14 Subcommittee will facilitate the sharing of resources that might be available for communities, schools, and individual households to improve safety for students with autism spectrum disorder. Areas of focus include wandering, bolting, accidental drowning, and psychosexual health.