**Autism Commission Birth to Fourteen Years Old**

**Subcommittee Meeting**

September 9, 2022 11:00am-12:00pm

Via Zoom

Present on Zoom : Co-Chairs Russell Johnston and Michele Brait, Nikki Santos, Erin Sherman, Shari Krauss, Molly Gilbridge, Moses Nhati, Julie Kelly and Carolyn Kain.

Dr. Russell Johnston called the meeting to order and welcomed all members of the Birth to Fourteen Year Old Subcommittee. Minutes from the August subcommittee were approved.

**Review of Proposed Subcommittee 2022 Autism Commission Recommendations**

 Dr. Johnston advised the subcommittee that the purpose of the meeting was to continue to review the proposed recommendation list that was discussed at our August subcommittee meeting, to finalize our recommendations to be submitted to the Autism Commission.

1. **DESE IEP Project:** The subcommittee decided this has ongoing work and should remain an active recommendation. There will be feedback and input opportunities for our subcommittee on the new electronic IEP going forward.  **The 2022 Recommendation**: That the Birth to 14 Subcommittee will collaborate with the Dept of Elementary and Secondary Education on its development of a new IEP to address issues related to students with Autism Spectrum Disorder focusing on considerations of culture, race, linguistics, gender identity, and socio- economic status.
2. **Access to AAC Devices:** The subcommittee decided to modify the current recommendation, changing the focus from obtaining information from Mass Health to expanding the request to review all available data and information on dedicated and non dedicated AAC devices, and to include language to examine assessments, training and implementation of the devices across all environments.  **The 2022 Recommendation**: That the Birth to 14 Subcommittee will address barriers to obtaining and fully implementing dedicated and nondedicated AAC devices for students with autism spectrum disorder by assessing available data from state agencies or other sources. They will review such data and determine next steps to improve equitable access and implementation (including assessment, training and effective use of AAC devices across all environments. )

3. **Inclusion for students with ASD:** The subcommittee decided it would still be important to keep this as a recommendation, to get updated data from DESE for the year not only for inclusion data but other placements as well, adding next steps to improving opportunities for inclusion.

**The 2022 Recommendation**: That the Birth to 14 Subcommittee with review statewide data on level of inclusion ( full/partial/sub separate) for students with ASD disaggregated by race, language spoken in the home, and determine next steps toward improving opportunities for inclusion.

4. **Age of Diagnosis:** The Subcommittee decided they would like to keep this on our list of recommendations, with some modification in wording. DPH may have some available data. The Health Care subcommittee is also doing some work in this area, to try to ensure children get an evaluation and diagnosis before transitioning from early intervention.

**The 2022 Recommendation:** That the Birth to 14 Subcommittee will review available information relate to the age of diagnosis for children with autism spectrum disorder, particularly focusing on accessibility of assessments and wait times and cross reference information with other subcommittees as appropriate .

**5. Coordinated State Agency Support:** The subcommittee agreed to add this new recommendation as written.

**The 2022 Recommendation:** That the Birth to 14 Subcommittee will invite members from the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Developmental Services, and the Department of Mental Health to participate on the subcommittee so that the subcommittee can continue to support the coordination of state agency services.

**6. Transition from Early Intervention:**  The subcommittee discusses various concerns to address in this new potential recommendation, including examination of timelines and service transition, the referral process and related service gaps, staffing issues and how it relates to service delivery on the IEP, pre and post covid data changes, lack of achieving IEP goals/ regression due to not getting assessed in a timely manner once in the schools.

**The 2022 Recommendation :** That the Birth to 14 Subcommittee will examine available information (with as much emphasis on pre and post pandemic data as possible) 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.

A motion to approve these 6 2022 Birth to 14 Subcommittee recommendations to the Autism Commission was made and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 11:45am.