



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
IDEA Part C Office
4126 Technology Way, Suite 100
Carson City, Nevada 89706
Telephone (775) 687-0587 • Fax (775) 687-0599

MINUTES

Name of Organization: Nevada Early Intervention Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC),
Developmental Specialist (DS) Certification/Endorsement
Subcommittee

Date of Meeting: August 8, 2014

Meeting held at: Nevada Early Intervention Services, Southern Region
1161 South Valley View Blvd., Conference Room
Las Vegas, Nevada

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Dr. Catherine Lyons called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and quorum was established.

Members Present: Dr. Ann Bingham; Robin Kincaid; Christine Riggi; Diane Ross; Martha Schott-Bernius; Caroline Taylor

Member Absent: Theresa Hagerty; Marnie Lancz; Johnette Oman; Fatima Taylor

Part C Staff: Brenda Bledsoe; Thomas Kapp; Edie King

Public Attendees: Sally Cannon, Vice-President of Early Intervention at the Foundation for Positively Kids; Nicole Atwell, Therapy Management Group (TMG); Dr. Lois Pribble, Western Regional Coordinator for the Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC); Dr. Jane Squires, Professor at the University of Oregon in Early Intervention and Co-Director of ECPC

II. Public Comment:

No public comments were given.

III. Approval of the Minutes from the May 28, 2014 and June 18, 2014 Meeting

Dr. Lyons asked for any corrections to the minutes. With none being offered, Dr. Lyons asked for a motion to approve the minutes of May 28, 2014.

MOTION: Approve the minutes of May 28, 2014 as presented.
BY: Christine Riggi
SECOND: Nicole Atwell
VOTE: **PASSED**

Dr. Lyons requested a motion to approve the minutes of June 18, 2014. Dr. Ann Bingham noted a correction to the spelling of the name Lynn Kay on page 2; it should be Lynne Kahn.

MOTION: Approve the minutes of June 18, 2014 with corrections as noted.
BY: Christine Riggi
SECOND: Caroline Taylor
VOTE: **PASSED**

IV. Introduction of Strategic Planning Facilitators

Dr. Lyons introduced Dr. Jane Squires and Dr. Lois Pribble.

Dr. Squires began by providing an overview of the Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC) and explained they are funded by a national grant from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). One of the focus areas of the ECPC is to help states make sure their standards are aligned with national professional standards. ECPC works with early childhood education in some states, but the focus for Nevada will be on Part C and to help ensure there is coordination between pre-service and in-service. With the Western Region the charge is to help states make decisions about personnel, help facilitate and do some problem solving. Dr. Squires stated their website is ECPCTA.org and further in depth information about the ECPC could be found there.

Dr. Lois Pribble explained the ECPC provides general targeted technical assistance (TA) and intensive TA. In Nevada, it is to provide targeted TA on the two areas Dr. Squires noted earlier. The ECPC can help in several ways, but today it is to help facilitate the meeting to come up with a mission and vision statement and determine other ways to help Nevada while working to strengthen the state's Early Intervention (EI) certification process and services system.

V. Review Alternative Endorsement Processes from Other States to Determine the Shared Vision for Nevada

Dr. Squires explained there are certain useful background steps required to be followed. These steps are a process used in each state. One step is to focus on what a vision is for this group and then what the mission would be. Each can be short term for today, for the next couple of meetings or for the long term. The starting point begins with highly qualified personnel which is essential for maximal child and family outcomes. This is a general value statement from which to start from. Nevada wants the very best personnel in the state dealing with young children and families that have disabilities. The philosophy of the mission statement would address what is to be done to support the value statement. An example of this might be "to create a viable endorsement process and to assure high quality practitioners working with families and children". A comment was made to include family driven or family friendly in the vision. Dr. Bingham

asked if we should use family centered versus family focused which implies including the family versus thinking about the family. Dr. Squires added that at the University of Oregon they call it family guided early intervention. The following vision and mission statements were proposed.

- The vision is to have highly qualified personnel who have family centered practices essential for maximal child and family outcomes.
- The mission is to create a viable endorsement process to ensure high quality practitioners are working with children and families.

Sherry Halley asked if we are highlighting the word “endorsement”, are we still keeping that or are we adding to that? It was stated any changes to the endorsement that are recommended have to go through an approval process. The Professional Commission on Standards has to agree on the change and how it affects the people who work with children from the age of zero to seven. The endorsement is on early childhood. It was suggested at the prior meeting, that we were not looking at alternatives; we were looking at the endorsement and how to better meet the needs of the community. The overall group disagreed with that statement. Edie King added the word endorsement does not just mean something from the University. It means endorsing an endorsement of the process to make sure there is qualified staff to provide services. Dr. Squires explained this is about creating a viable endorsement process and the process can be a more general term.

Dr. Pribble stated each state is unique in how it looks at early intervention licensure and who the lead agency is. The examples provided are of early intervention certification alternatives to Department of Education (NDE) certification. She explained many states have early intervention programs through their Health and Human Services. In general, some were created to ensure all Part C practitioners were trained within the specific birth to three practices whether they had a teaching license or not. Many states are becoming more rigorous in the requirements for what is considered highly qualified personnel and are grappling with how to move forward in making sure professionals are getting the training they need and the training set up in a way that is doable for the professionals in the field.

A comment was made that physical (PT), occupational (OT) and speech therapy have national associations and have standards that need to be met. It was suggested a national certification process should be looked at so standards are equal across states and then reciprocity would be less of an issue. Dr. Pribble stated that it is a huge vision for the field, but it is much more complicated. For PT, OT, and speech therapists their licensure is birth to death making it completely transferable but then the issue becomes why some states are doing more of the early intervention focus.

Dr. Pribble said reciprocity is something other states are currently looking at. It was mentioned in Nevada the NDE licensing board will review portfolios, transcripts or experiences of a person. However, reciprocity has not been practiced very well. The person from NDE taking that phone call from somebody calling from another state does

not really have an understanding of how to match up the course work for what that person took. Therefore, they give it to the University and there may be some review from them. It was explained some people take courses from colleges online, but after they have paid and completed the classes they find out the courses do not transfer because they were not pre-approved. Thomas Kapp stated he called Dena Durish at the NDE for a person to speak with that could attend this meeting. He was not put in contact with anyone. It was also stated that NDE is very knowledgeable with the K-12 which is the concern for birth to three, because there has not been anyone who has been orientated to the course work. One of the challenges NDE has had in trying to do reciprocity is validating their experience especially when it comes to working with children who have special needs. The reciprocity process can be complex, not just looking at course work but looking at experience which has to be validated.

Dr. Pribble stated states are looking at early intervention and how many professionals work with early intervention not just teachers. Thinking about what are those core standards for working with young children that every professional working with Part C and Part B services would need to know and the training they may not receive in other programs.

VI. Discuss What Components are Needed to Have a Comprehensive and Accessible Endorsement Process

Dr. Pribble stated core standards are needed across professions and are being reviewed by many states because they are finding early intervention practitioners need foundational training. The certification process is an alternative to the NDE certification or national certification. It is in addition to because the practitioner may have great training in one area, but it is necessary to see if they have core foundational skills specific to IDEA Part C birth to three services.

It was explained the Nevada early intervention policy on personnel does not specify pediatrics just that they need a state license. In reality therapists are getting a really good training across the board then choose a focus area but they may never have learned how to do an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). One of the big pieces in early intervention is working with families and that is not covered as much in certain realms. Training is available and is mandated for all Developmental Specialists (DS) to attend, but when programs are paying a PT or OT \$100 to \$150 an hour they are not as willing to send them to trainings.

A critical component is the need for mentoring. After classes have been taken a good mentor, who is doing the hands on work, is priceless in the development of new personnel. It was noted Nevada Early Intervention Services (NEIS) South has an excellent mentoring process in place. The State of Nevada has public service intern positions which give them the opportunity to work directly with a DS.

Ms. Bledsoe inquired if the University system is working toward an early intervention certification program.

Dr. Lyons stated it is not so much the University as it is within the department. The problem is a student in the endorsement only route is not assigned a faculty advisor and committee. They tend to flounder when trying to determine what they need to do and what courses are needed then seek assistance only when they need supervised field experience. A certification process is being looked at but Dr. Lyons is not sure what this will look like or when it will begin. Dr. Bingham added UNR has the EIECSC certificate for the early intervention endorsement only students. They work directly with her to determine what credits they need to complete the certificate and at completion get advisement on what is still needed to obtain their endorsement. The advantage to this process is they are getting advisement as well as having their certification on their UNR transcript. They are also making progress towards credits that could be applied to a Master's Degree if they wish to pursue that. There is also the issue of course costs. When looking at options questions arise such as accepting the certificate as opposed to them going to the next step or granting them with three or four years to complete what they are lacking for the endorsement. Thomas Kapp stated he has requests for exceptions and was waiting for this meeting to see what would be recommended to the ICC. Exceptions have happened with the previous coordinator, but the problem is there is no longer a process in place.

Ms. Bledsoe explained when looking at policy it is either people have the endorsement or certification approved by the IDEA Part C office. The IDEA Part C Office would have to set up the long term formal process including a class schedule specific for early intervention but in the meantime, how do you define that approved process through our office. Things that could be part of the approved process for the early intervention system would be:

- Accept the completed certificate from the University without the next steps of the endorsement.
- Set up timelines and criteria for extensions. This is not going to be endorsed by or supported by the NDE, but it is a process for early intervention to have immediate steps in writing. There would also have to be some type of formalized list documenting what is expected or
- Mr. Kapp noted rural area staff shortage is an exception and it is in the federal regulations. However, a ratio would need to be established to determine how the term shortage is defined.
- Determine a process for giving credit for work experience.

Dr. Bingham stated there is not a way to provide credit for work experience outside the University system. Ms. Halley stated there are people who have the experience that need to go back to school to get the endorsement and their view is why go back for the endorsement if they go back they could just work towards their OT or PT which provides better pay. Many of those people in this category are dedicated, and should be the exception, but it needs to go along with the bigger picture of experience.

VII. Formulate a Recommendation to be Presented to the ICC Which Focuses on How to Best Support Nevada’s Early Intervention Staff in Their Effort to Earn Their Endorsement and/or Master’s Degree in Early Childhood Special

Dr. Pribble will get the reciprocity, mentoring and portfolio information so it can be included along with Nevada’s reciprocity issue that is currently practiced. They would have to send in their transcripts showing what their Master’s Degree is in or they need to provide the endorsement in Early Childhood Special Education and one year of verifiable employment after completing the course work. Graduating with the degree is not sufficient for the endorsement. There are multiple steps.

MOTION: The recommendations for the ICC will be to review the information that has been received, making them aware of the next meeting, how much further discussion needs to continue and who we need to get on board to get our questions answered before we can actually present to the ICC.

BY: Christine Riggi

SECOND: Caroline Taylor

VOTE: **PASSED**

VIII. Identify Next Steps for Subcommittee

Determine who is going to take the next step in working with the NDE as far as the application process and the reciprocity issues are concerned because these items address the barriers.

IX. Consider Agenda Items for the Next Meeting

- Review the Mission/Vision Statement
- Invite a Department of Education (NDE) discussion on Licensure and Reciprocity
- TFA and Video conferencing
- Look closer at portfolio and panels
- Policy for release/caseloads
- Exceptions

X. Schedule Future Meetings

It was suggested the next meeting be a video conference. Dr. Lyons requested an email survey be sent to members to determine which date at the end of September would be the best for everyone.

XI. Public Comment

No public comments were given.

XII. Adjournment

Dr. Lyons adjourned the meeting.