

State Interagency Coordinating Council for Early Intervention Minutes
August 3, 2023 Meeting

Members in Attendance

Dr. Kate McKinnon	Higher Education
Ms. Deb Noel	Office of Child Development and Early Learning
Dr. Kris Bowman	Provider / EIPA
Ms. Lea Sheffield	PA Developmental Disabilities Council
Mr. Jason McCrea	Department of Health, Bureau of Family Health
Ms. Carmen Medina	Department of Education, Homelessness Initiative
Ms. Joan Bradbury	Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Ms. Jameekia Barnett	Department of Human Services, Office of Policy

Members Absent

Ms. Breanna Wilkerson	Department of Human Services/Office of Children's Health Insurance Program
Dr. Michelle Reichard-Huff	Intermediate Unit Representative
Ms. Naomi Galman	Parent
Dr. Sadia Batool	Parent
Dr. Sandhya Iyengar	American Academy of Pediatrics
Ms. Tracy Duarte	Head Start

Guests

Deb Daulton	Early Intervention Technical Assistance
Kim Koteles	Early Intervention Technical Assistance
Melissa Mecke	Early Intervention Technical Assistance
Jen Furness	Early Intervention Technical Assistance
Sue Ann Boyles	Early Intervention Technical Assistance
Joy Polignano	Early Intervention Technical Assistance
Sue Pasquariello	Early Intervention Technical Assistance
Janet Manoledes	Office of Child Development and Early Learning
Staci Kenney	Office of Child Development and Early Learning
Christina Harris	Office of Child Development and Early Learning
Carolyn Green	Office of Child Development and Early Learning
Sarah Holland	Parent to Parent of PA
Bill Erickson	BEISFS
Brandy Fox	PA Key
Lynda Yordy	Schuylkill IU 29
Samantha Weisbeck	SAM Inc.
Angela Dishman	Family Member
Jill McDonald	Butler County Human Services
Heather Kleber	Community Connections of Clearfield-Jefferson Counties
Abby Lunger	Washington County Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
Amy Jacob	Seneca Highlands IU 9
Nancy Stimson	The Arc Alliance Children's Services
Cathy Nelson	Carbon Lehigh IU 21
Mandy Kolb Lyons	Lancaster County EI
Jessica Nemeth	Midwestern IU 4 EI

Jill Glose	Easterseals Eastern PA / EIPA
Emily Madigan	Pittsburgh Public Schools
Ashlee Sydlik	Beaver County Behavioral Health
Jess Przybylski	Erie County
Missi Williams	Armstrong-Indiana Behavioral and Developmental Health
Lisa Unrath	PA Key
Ashley Williams	Luzerne-Wyoming Counties EI
Tracie Southern	Westmoreland Case Management and Supports
Laura Feather	Cumberland/Perry Counties EI
Sharon Richards	Achieva / EIPA
Susan Levi	The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers

Welcome and Introductions – Melissa Mecke, Early Intervention Technical Assistance, introduced herself and welcomed everyone to the meeting. She asked everyone to put their name and agency in the chat box to be recorded for attendance.

Approval of the April Meeting Minutes – Dr. Kate McKinnon asked for any concerns or corrections for the June minutes to be put in the chat box. Heather Kleber informed the Council that her agency was incorrect in the June minutes, and the minutes were updated accordingly. Seeing no other corrections or concerns, the minutes were approved.

Family Story

Prior to the beginning of the family story presentation, Dr. Kate McKinnon expressed gratitude to families on behalf of the State Interagency Coordinating Council for sharing their experiences as they navigate the Early Intervention Services for their child or children. Not only do the family stories help SICC members to support the Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports in providing comprehensive delivery system of integrated early intervention programs and services to Pennsylvania children and families, but they also serve as a resource and source of inspiration and motivation for professionals and family leaders in Pennsylvania’s early childhood systems.

Ms. Angela Dishman, a parent from Perry County, shared her family story. Ms. Dishman and her husband have six children, the youngest of whom has received multiple Early Intervention services since he was three months old. He is medically complex with a primary diagnosis of Spina Bifida. Beginning with physical therapy, their son reached each of his milestones until age three. He also benefited from occupational therapy and working with a dietitian and transitioned to the IU while receiving speech and behavior therapy. He now receives physical and occupational therapy through the IU in his Head Start classroom.

Ms. Dishman is grateful for Early Intervention services and the consistent, dedicated providers who supported her family every step of the way. She mentioned that while early intervention has been a great experience for their family, there were some communication challenges in the transition process from home-based services to services through the IU. These were resolved at their child’s annual IEP meeting, and they are excited for the upcoming year.

Ms. Dishman also shared that participating in C2P2 EI was an amazing opportunity. C2P2 taught her how to navigate the state system and IEPs and gave her the skills needed to advocate for her child. She also enjoyed connecting with other families and continues to stay in touch with some of her C2P2 peers.

Following Ms. Dishman's family story, SICC member Dr. Kris Bowman asked Ms. Dishman for suggestions to improve communications as she went through the transitions to preschool and preschool early intervention. Ms. Dishman suggested more one to one communication with the family during the transition process.

Dr. Kris Bowman and Dr. Kate McKinnon thanked Ms. Dishman for her suggestion.

Local Interagency Coordinating Council Presentation

Ms. Lynda Yordy, Early Intervention Supervisor for Intermediate Unit 29, and Ms. Samantha Weisbeck, Early Intervention Coordinator and Quality/Compliance Manager for SAM INC, presented on behalf of the Schuylkill County LICC. The Schuylkill County LICC is currently made up of various agencies including Schuylkill IU 29 Early Intervention Preschool, SAM INC Infant/Toddler, ELRC, Parent to Parent, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant, PA Keys, REDco, Geisinger, Bayada Pediatrics, and more.

The LICC and their community partners have been actively involved in many successful Child Find events and trainings for their community including Early Childhood Fair, Understanding Your Child's Development, and more.

Meetings were virtual during the pandemic with increased participation by community partners. The LICC utilized social media to keep up with the needs of community and update families on virtual events/trainings. The LICC reconvened this year and focused on ways to promote the LICC and encourage family engagement. The LICC's goal this year is to increase family participation.

The LICC also announced an upcoming Back to School Fair on Monday, August 7. They are excited to collaborate with their community members to help prepare children for back to school and get them excited for the upcoming year. The Back to School Fair will feature vendors, food trucks, free school supplies, door prizes, free haircuts, free preventative services, screenings and more.

Following the LICC presentation, SICC member, Dr. Kris Bowman asked Ms. Yordy what strategies they use to increase family participation in their trainings. Ms. Yordy shared they try to reach families by giving brief presentations at partner agency meetings. They also send flyers/announcements to agencies, schools, community, and retail establishments.

Preschool Development Grant Update

Ms. Lisa Unrath, PDG B-5 manager, The Pennsylvania Key, and Ms. Brandy Fox, Director of Cross Sector Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Initiatives, The Pennsylvania Key, provided updates on the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5).

The Pennsylvania Department of Education, Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) was recently awarded a Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five. The grant was designed to improve early childhood systems across sectors and will bring in \$16M annually for a period of three years.

The funds will be used to update the current needs assessment, update the comprehensive statewide birth-5 strategic plan, maximize family engagement in the birth-5 system, support the birth-5 workforce and disseminate best practices, support program quality improvement, and provide subgrants.

The PDG Initial Communication Plan includes the development of a PDG webpage with translation on the PA Keys website to include announcements, documents/progress reports, funding opportunities, and stakeholder engagement opportunities.

Following the Preschool Development Grant presentation, SICC member, Dr. Kris Bowman asked Ms. Fox how they determined the sub-activities under each activity. Ms. Fox responded they followed structure and key strategy recommendations from ACF and built on and enhanced what was already in place at OCDEL.

Office of Child Development and Early Learning Communications Update

Ms. Mary Hall, Communications and Outreach Specialist, The Pennsylvania Key, provided communication updates on behalf of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning.

OCDEL provides information in a variety of ways to meet the needs and preferences of audience members and ensure access for everyone. Ms. Hall reviewed the ways OCDEL shares information including websites, newsletters, social media platforms, and Podcasts.

Ms. Hall also shared a list of resources available for professionals and families. She mentioned that PA's Promise for Children website offers hard copy and printable resources for families and professionals. Search by Early Learning Resources on their website to get a list of available resources.

Ms. Hall mentioned that much of the information they share is dependent on their partners in communities throughout Pennsylvania. If your group or organization has information on upcoming events, opportunities, accomplishments, resources, or research to share, feel free to email Mary at marhal@pakeys.org.

More information and resources can be found on the [SICC padlet](#).

Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA) Portal and Training Site Tour

Dr. Jennifer Furness, Consultant, Early Intervention Technical Assistance, provided an update on the Early Intervention Technical Assistance Portal.

The EITA portal is updated every few years to ensure EITA is providing the most current information, design, and functionality to meet user needs.

Dr. Furness provided a tour of the recently updated EITA Portal and highlighted some of the changes people will see when browsing the site. A few of the changes include the addition of highlighted initiatives and trainings, popular resources, brief descriptions for resources and videos, course enrollment options, instructional videos, and more.

Office of Child Development and Early Learning Update

Ms. Deb Noel, Division Chief, Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports provided updates on behalf of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning.

Ms. Noel shared an update from the Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports. The Bureau Early Intervention Advisors completed their FY 22-23 verifications (10 Infant/Toddler verifications and 10 Preschool verifications). A report on the findings from the FY 22-23 verification process will be provided to the SICC at a future meeting. They have started the FY 23-24 verification process and are currently developing the schedule for onsite reviews.

The annual 2023 Early Intervention Family Survey concluded June 30th. Ms. Noel thanked the EI leaders, providers, and early interventionists who helped families get access to and complete the survey. She also thanked families who completed the survey. Ms. Noel was excited to share that 16,786 surveys were

returned: approximate 28% Preschool return rate and approximate 33% Infant/Toddler return rate. They are currently compiling the survey responses and will share the results with the individual programs and the SICC.

Ms. Noel stated that the Early Intervention Rate Study, also known as Infant/Toddler Rate Study project, has been awarded to Public Consulting Group (PCG). PCG will work with stakeholders including OCDEL staff, SICC, Early Intervention Providers Association, Infant/Toddler county staff, service coordination entities, and EI provider to complete a full analysis and provide recommendations regarding the Infant/Toddler early intervention rates. Additional updates will be provided to the SICC as the work continues.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) will be monitoring Pennsylvania's birth to 21 system in 2025. As part of Cohort 3, the SICC and stakeholders will be engaged in this work to review policies, procedures, data, and more. OCDEL has begun their internal planning process and expects to know by October when OSEP will be coming to Pennsylvania. Ms. Noel mentioned that updates will be provided as OCDEL continues to work and plan for the visit.

Department of Health Update

Mr. Jason McCrea, Program Manager, Bureau of Family Health, shared updates on behalf of the Department of Health.

Every five years, Pennsylvania's Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Services Block Grant, which is housed at the Bureau of Family Health, requires they conduct a needs assessment. They will be starting the process in late 2023-24 to be ready to provide their 2025 needs assessment. The Department of Health will be reaching out to their partners, stakeholders, brother and sister agencies, families and service recipients to gather needs information including identifying potential gaps in services.

Mr. McCrea also shared the Bureau of Family Health recently launched a request for applications for a Bullying Prevention and Safe Relationships (BPSR) Program. The program is designed to target youth from 12 through 21 years old with special health care needs and provide education and support to reduce bullying, vulnerability, develop healthy relationships and prevent victimization at younger ages within both friend-based relationships and romantic-based relationships.

More information can be found on the [SICC Padlet](#).

Office of Special Education Programs Conference Update

Dr. Kate McKinnon, State Interagency Coordinating Council Co-chair, and Dr. Kris Bowman, Executive Director of Development and Education, The Amoore Group and Subsidiaries, provided an update on the recent OSEP Leadership Conference.

Dr. McKinnon, Dr. Bowman, Dr. Sadia Batool, and several other SICC members and EITA staff attended the Office of Special Education Programs Leadership Conference that occurred last week. The OSEP Leadership conference provides an opportunity for leaders in early intervention, particularly State ICC members to come together to learn from one another, share experiences, and gather new resources. Dr. McKinnon and Dr. Batool presented a poster session that outlined how our State ICC works with our local ICCs and how they are working together to increase family leadership through activities such as the Family Story, Family Meet and Greets and the role of C2P2. The poster was well received with many questions, and a good opportunity to learn from one another.

Dr. Bowman added that she, Dr. Sadia Batool, Ms. Deb Noel, , Dr. Toni Miguel, EITA consultant, and Sarah Holland, Director, Parent to Parent, participated in a panel discussion on family engagement. They shared the historic perspective of family engagement in PA and the current initiatives around family engagement that are happening in our state. It was a good opportunity to showcase the work that Pennsylvania has been doing on the systems and local levels to help engage families from the beginning of their journey in early intervention all the way through to local state and national leadership opportunities.

State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care Update

Dr. Kate McKinnon, State Interagency Coordinating Council Co-chair provided an update on the recent State Advisory Council (SAC) on Early Childhood Education and Care.

Dr. McKinnon attended the recent SAC meeting as a member. It was a very informative meeting where OCDEL partners shared information about the workings of their departments and how they are linked in the system. More information will be provided to the SICC about the work of this group as it becomes available.

Open Forum: Ms. Mecke shared that the materials from this meeting will be available on the [SICC padlet](#).

SICC- Hand-outs: <https://www.eita-pa.org/state-interagency-coordinating-council/>

Next Meeting Date and Time: October 5, 2023 at 12:30 pm

Meeting Adjournment: Dr. Kris Bowman motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Carmen Medina provided the second.