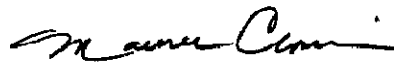


COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

TO: Birth-5 Early Intervention System Participants:
Counties, MAWAs, Private Practitioners,
Local Interagency Coordinating Councils,
State Interagency Coordinating Council Members



FROM: Linda Rhen, Special Education Bureau Director
Department of Education



Maureen Cronin, Early Intervention Division Director
Department of Public Welfare

RE: Early Intervention Fiscal Study
Notice of Upcoming Surveys

The Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education, the Department of Public Welfare, Office of Child Development and the Governor's Budget Office are working together to coordinate an analysis of Pennsylvania's Early Intervention services for children from birth to 5 years of age. As the Steering Committee for this effort, we endorse the analysis and have dedicated resources to accomplish a comprehensive review which will lead to recommendations that strengthen the Birth to 5 Early Intervention service systems statewide. The purpose of this message is to inform all programs and agencies about the sequence of activities in which many of you will be involved and to solicit your full cooperation.

FISCAL STUDY PURPOSE

- To review the Birth-5 Early Intervention system costs and services and the relationship between individual program components and the fiscal resources that support them.
- To provide a solid rationale for early intervention budget requests.
- To provide a mechanism for planning and managing operations.

SOLUTIONS Consulting Group, LLC, national experts in Early Intervention financing, has been retained to conduct a comprehensive fiscal study composed of topical studies including: cost, revenue, salary, and time/utilization. Results of these studies will assist the Commonwealth in both long and short-term systems planning, greater efficiencies in the access and utilization of all resources, and improved services for families and very young children. You will recall that SOLUTIONS recently conducted the Commonwealth's Birth-5 Early Intervention Demographic Study which has been of tremendous value to state and local planning.

In addition, to further analysis, the Steering Committee is gaining input from a cadre of key informants from the Commonwealth's Early Intervention service system through participation in the Stakeholder Advisory Group.

SOLUTIONS Consulting Group will select participants so that information may be used to represent the Commonwealth as a whole. The survey instruments to be used for the studies are being customized for Pennsylvania's Early Intervention system. The overall approach has been refined by SOLUTIONS Consulting Group through similar work in as many as a dozen other states. All source documents submitted by survey participants will be kept confidential by the consultants, and all data will be presented in a de-identified manner. No data collected through this fiscal study will be used for monitoring purposes. All questions and communication about the surveys will be managed directly through the consultants. Technical assistance will be provided by the consultants to assure consistent results across the Commonwealth.

The fiscal study is comprised of a series of surveys to include an IFSP/IEP, time/utilization, salary, cost, and revenue with the following estimated timelines:

1. Planned Service Information obtained through the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) /Individualized Education Program (IEP).
 - Preschool (3-5) IEP: Request for IEP summary page from randomly selected participants will be initiated on or around 10/18/2006 with a return date of 11/09/2006.
 - Infant/Toddler (Birth -3) IFSP: A verification form will be sent from SOLUTIONS Consulting Group to the (Birth-3 Coordinators) sometime before 10/23/2006 with a requested completion date of 11/9/2006.
2. The two week time /utilization survey is expected to be 12/3/2006 -12/16/2006. Informational calls about the process will be scheduled for 11/29/2006 and 11/30/2006, with supervisors selecting the call most convenient for them.
3. A Salary Survey, which will be targeted to time/utilization survey participants, will be requested after 11/17/2006.
4. Cost & Revenue Initiate 11/1/2006 with support calls through November and a due date of 12/15/2006.

At all levels of involvement from the Steering Committee to individual providers, the commitment to successful completion of this fiscal study has been steadfast. It is essential at this important juncture that, if asked, every person and organization be prepared to participate fully. We want to ensure that the results of the fiscal study are representative of the Commonwealth.

The project will be on a fast track in order to collect and analyze the data and produce a summary of findings and recommendations which will be helpful in our deliberations with the Legislature during the next session.

This fiscal study provides the opportunity to obtain objective information about a program that is significant for Pennsylvania's families and children. Thank you in advance for your participation. It is an invaluable contribution to strengthen the foundation of the Early Intervention system for the long term.

If you have any questions about the overall study, the analysis or the upcoming survey activities, please contact Carl Beck at cabeck@state.pa.us. Information and updates about the study are posted to the following web site: www.solutionsofmaine.com/pennsylvania.

Again, we sincerely appreciate your time and attention to all aspects of this fiscal study and look forward to a fine result.

cc: Office of Child Development
Bureau of Special Education Staff
Early Intervention Technical Assistance/PaTTAN