

The Washington State Part C System Improvement Project
Stakeholder Meeting
April 2010

Current Structure

During the stakeholder meeting, participants were provided an overview of the various approaches used by states around the country as the basis for their Part C Infrastructure. The PowerPoint handout (State Structures for Part C Service Provision and Implications for Accountability) is available on the SIP website: www.del.wa.gov/development/esit/system.aspx

Following this presentation, participants were asked to identify the strengths and challenges of the current system through a large group discussion with facilitators. Participants were asked to identify which strengths of the Part C system align with desired system improvements, and which aspects of the system might impede progress towards improvement. Participants were then asked to make suggestions for improvements to the current service structure in order to create the alignment needed to create system improvement. This document is a summary of the activity, and represents the collective feedback of the participants in attendance.

Strengths

- The current structure allows for local design of service systems that are responsive to the communities they serve. Local control allows access to local funding streams, and promotes better understanding of the community's culture and of providers' specific needs for training and technical assistance.
- Strong leadership at the state level has created a feeling of cohesiveness across the state and of better connection to the federal Part C.

Challenges

- There is inconsistency in the funding of Part C services across the state, which is complicated by different administrative structures and tracking systems for the same types of funds.
- There is a need for consistent and clearly stated policies and procedures from the state about funding structures and service delivery approaches.
- The current service structure is confusing, complex and disjointed.
- Clear requirements for local lead agencies and service providers to ensure accountability are missing.

Questions or comments about the content of this document may be directed to Kathy Grant-Davis, Program Consultant at the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers program, at kathryn.grant-davis@del.wa.gov.

- Given the many diverse local lead agencies, there is a need for clarity and consistency in practice across the state. Each lead agency has a different perception of its role in providing services and of the role of the Family Resources Coordinator.
- There is not a certification and endorsement structure in the state that directly supports early intervention. The closest certification is preschool to grade 3 for special education, and there is a lack of personnel preparation that allows a focus on early intervention.
- Participants advised caution and careful planning in any systems change, since similar efforts in other states, and in Washington, haven't always gone smoothly. Unexpected costs, ineffective service delivery structures and ill-planned transitions have created problems in other systems.

Recommendations/Suggestions to Improve Structure

- There need to be clear policies and practices for local lead agencies, with clear expectations that support the local lead agencies' ability to be successful, strong partners with ESIT.
- There need to be clear written policy and practices for accountability to which local lead agencies are held to ensure statewide consistency.
- DEL and ESIT should consider what they want and need local lead agencies to do and then provide support through training and technical assistance to strengthen the partnership between LLAs and the state and increase consistency across the state.
- Create change in a way that's systematic, well thought through, and with attention to cost, personnel preparation and consistency across the state. Above all, keep the children receiving services at the center of decision making.
- Enhance the relationship between ESIT and OSPI to enhance Part C services.
- There needs to be a common application process and funding process for DDD, Medicaid, and school districts. Not just funding, but an application and qualification process. Funders need to have a clear understanding of policies and practices as well (e.g., school districts, county DD agencies)
- There is a need to examine the number of local lead agencies and the funding distribution among them.

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