

# **LOCAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT**

Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit  
Columbia/Montour/Snyder/Union/MH/MR

And

Pennsylvania Department of Health

In conjunction with the

Central Susquehanna Valley  
Local Interagency Coordinating Council

Danville Head Start

Columbia/Sullivan Head Start

SUM Head Start

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July 1, 2007- June 30, 2008

## **LOCAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT**

After review of the plan specifications, the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, Columbia, Montour, Snyder, Union MH/MR Program and Pennsylvania Department of Health, in conjunction with the Columbia/Sullivan Head Start Program, Danville Head Start Program, SUM Head Start and the Central Susquehanna Valley Interagency Coordinating Council establish this working document as the Local Interagency Agreement.

The signatory agencies of the Interagency Agreement have each established a mission or philosophy statement that reflects the specific nature of that organization's funded mission to the community. All of the agencies' missions reflect a common underlying philosophy of collaboration and family/community based services. A proactive stand on parent involvement is paramount. The focus throughout this agreement is to encourage and facilitate parent involvement in all possible aspects of agency and ICC activities. There is a strongly held respect for the diverse nature of the area encompassed by the Central Susquehanna Valley Interagency Coordinating Council that is reflected in the planning process for all activities involving the group and agencies. In coordination with these philosophies the signatory groups collaborating as the local ICC have established the following mission statement and objectives.

### ***The Mission Statement of CSV-ICC***

A team of parents and agencies working together to create opportunities for all children to fully participate in the community with the supports they need. Our purpose is to inform, train, address needs and look for solutions and resources.

(Please see Appendix A for agency mission statements.)

This plan will be reviewed annually, at a regularly scheduled meeting of the CSV-ICC in April or May. Revised or amended copies of the agreement will be forwarded for review and signatures to the designated agency representatives. Designated agency representatives for the 2007-2008 agreement are:

Columbia Montour Snyder Union MHMR: Phil Keating  
Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit: Jan Salwocki  
Pennsylvania Department of Health: Jessica Bower  
Danville Head Start: Susan Blake  
Columbia Sullivan Head Start: Gail Menapace  
Snyder Union Mifflin Head Start: Sharon Koppel  
Central Susquehanna Valley LICC: Becky Laubach

## **BEST PRACTICES**

The signatory agencies of the Local Interagency Agreement have long been committed to best practices in the provision of early intervention services for children birth to school age entry. Signatory agencies are committed to providing services to children in natural environments and the least restrictive environment and utilizing routines based intervention. Families are actively involved and participate in the MDE, IFSP and IEP processes. A long history of collaboration amongst and between agencies has resulted in collaboration being the norm, not the exception. All signatory agencies are committed to utilizing community resources to enhance service provision whenever possible. Please refer to the attached work plan.

## **TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

The signatory agencies of the Local Interagency Agreement have long been committed to collaborative methods of training. To this end, trainings have been provided in the community for all EI participants in a wide variety of settings on a wide variety of topics. Wherever possible, information has been shared across agencies and efforts made to include parents and outside agency staff. MHMR and MAWA agencies solicit input from service providers in order to develop community-training plans. Additionally, training topics are related to newly developing community trends or needs. Input from the LICC is solicited in the development of annual training plans.

The undersigned agencies, in collaboration, will continue to assist and encourage parents and families in accessing training opportunities. Wherever possible trainings are offered at no cost to participants. All families receiving early intervention services are notified of local ICC training programs. On-site childcare is typically available and assistance with transportation can be arranged. Multiple training sites throughout the four county areas are used. Local families are encouraged to attend any appropriate state meetings and a budget category has been established to assist with expenses. Where families are eligible through other funding streams, there is a commitment to access those funds to provide additional training dollars.

Partner agencies will bring all training opportunities to meetings in order that the information can be shared with other agencies. Each agency will, in turn, share training opportunities with parents. Whenever possible, and with family permission, agency staff will attempt to assist parents who are attending a conference to coordinate with other parents or agency staff who may be attending the same conference.

Of real value to our community has been the commitment of our families to assist our staff in understanding the challenges families face on a daily basis. Parent volunteers have presented panel discussions on a wide variety of topics and will continue to share their expertise with the community in a variety of ways including the

sharing of issues at in-service programs for both the intermediate unit and MH/MR. Please refer to the attached work plan.

## **CHILD FIND PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES**

The signatory agencies agree to a collaborative effort in child find activities. All agencies are provided with information on eligibility requirements for all programs and all appropriate referrals are made. The appropriate Act 212 guidelines are used for populations identified for both direct and tracking services. There is a link from the birth to three to the three to five populations with names passed on with permission and continued contact to those children and families to ensure a seamless transition system. Agencies are currently able to surpass the regulations in that referred infants and toddlers who are not eligible for services are, with permission, transitioned to the IU preschool program at age three. They are screened at that point and then the determination made as to whether services are provided or dismissal is appropriate. This service closes a possible gap. Some children may be eligible for re-screening at a later date upon agreement between the CSIU staff and the parent. These procedures exist between CMSU MH/MR, Department of Health, the CSIU and local Head Start and provider programs.

Child identification of eligible young children and families and of children meeting tracking criteria is also a collaborative effort between the Department of Health, Head Start, MH/MR, the CSIU and other screening agencies which may include child care providers, foster placement agencies, county Children and Youth agencies, the Columbia County Family Centers and physicians offices . The following are samples of these efforts:

- Coordination of existing agencies for tracking and identification
- The Geisinger Medical Center Department of Neonatology makes referrals with family permission on all children who require NICU care, are born prematurely, or are born with less than a birth weight of 1500 grams to the local Early Intervention system. The CMSU MH/MR Program offers service coordination and tracking services to all eligible children and families residing in the four county joinder area.
- The Department of Health identifies children and families who are considered to be in need of home-based early intervention services. Among those identified are children and infants with confirmed elevated lead blood levels. These children are also referred to early intervention programs and follow-up testing is provided in a collaborative manner with a Department of Health nurse serving as part of the multidisciplinary process of early intervention services.
- The Columbia/Sullivan Head Start, Danville Head Start, and SUM Child Development Programs all share information with the IU. Efforts are made to ensure that all eligible children are identified including younger siblings of children enrolled in Head Start.

- The Children's Fair at Susquehanna Valley Mall is an annual event sponsored by the mall and local agencies to focus on young children and available services of all types. Vision, hearing, and speech screenings may be provided. Referrals can be made and questions answered.
- The Children's Fair at the Columbia Mall is an annual event to focus on young children and provide information on available services.
- Local Health Clinic screenings

All local agencies have produced brochures to distribute to the public identifying their services. These are distributed in a wide variety of manners including school district newsletters and family physicians. Annual public notification as required by regulation takes place in local newspapers. Radio is also used. (See Appendix B for brochures.)

## **PUBLIC AWARENESS**

The signatory agencies are committed to public awareness activities. A wide variety of activities have been included to reach both the served and non-served population with information on the need for and availability of early intervention services but it is felt that more attention and planning needs to be directed to this area.

Brochures and pamphlets are distributed at local health fairs, the Children's Fair at Susquehanna Valley Mall and Columbia Mall, through school district newsletters and physician's offices. Newspaper articles and advertisements have been run in local newspapers. A plan to formally distribute early intervention information to local agencies, medical practices, grocery stores, community bulletin boards, churches, etc., on a twice-yearly basis has been established.

Any interested community member can receive information on request. A newsletter format has also been established to share information from agencies and the ICC in a user-friendlier format. All families accessing early intervention services are asked to sign a release to permit their name to be added to the ICC mailing list. We will continue to participate appropriately in the Central Directory.

The signatory agencies will continue to advertise ICC meetings in accordance with the Sunshine Law in two papers.

## **TRANSITION**

The Columbia/Montour/Snyder/Union MH/MR Program and Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit have established a policy governing the transition of children between their agencies in accordance with the provision of Public Law 212 that has been reviewed by the LICC. A copy of the transition policy is included in the resource file (Appendix C). The Head Start member agencies have established transition agreements with the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit and the local school districts. Additionally, a policy has been established between the Central

Susquehanna Intermediate Unit and the local school districts in accordance with Public Law 212 to govern the transition of children below the age of beginners. This has additionally been reviewed by the CSV-ICC.

Information on transitioning children is shared at MDE meetings. Each agency has permission to share information regarding the child from the parent or legal guardian. The parent, as well as any relative or caregiver of the child when identified (i.e., grandparent, babysitter), is invited to participate. The legal guardian or a representative of the legal guardian (i.e., representative from Children & Youth) is also invited. Collaborative planning for each child begins at the child's second birthday or at the entry point to services if the child is identified at a later age. A representative from the MAWA agency attends the meetings on a regular basis and the transition is regularly explained to help ease the process for families.

At school age transition, meetings occur with school district personnel as identified by the individual district. Releases are obtained so that appropriate information can be shared at the MDE/MDR meeting. Parents are encouraged to attend with parent choice of early intervention or district placement to be carefully considered. The transition process begins in January of the year of fall kindergarten eligibility. Parental contact with the district is strongly fostered. Parents are encouraged to include any support people that they feel should be included.

While recognizing that change is a challenging process, the signatory agencies are strongly committed to easing the transition process to the best of their abilities. It is additionally recognized that differences in the philosophical basis of service provision and funding eligibility changes are unavoidable in the transition process. We continue to work to enhance the process. To assist in this, the signatory agencies consider family input in identifying possible solutions.

A creative resolution committee has been established as a collaborative effort between the Local Task Force and the LICC to assist families with transition and other issues if the collaborative teaming process would break down.

The CSV-ICC's role in transition is in helping to foster the common philosophy that supports collaboration throughout the community. This organization fosters the continued discussion and support to families and agencies as they work through the process.

## **ENHANCEMENT AND COLLABORATIVE ISSUES**

The signatory agencies in conjunction with the CSV-ICC are committed to collaborative efforts to ensure that resources are expended in an efficient manner to best support children and families' needs. A wide variety of activities have been supported through the signatory and participatory agencies. The group established a committee that wrote and obtained an inclusionary grant through the Family Focused Early Intervention System. The focus of the proposal was to further the establishment

of inclusive environments within our community. Community members work at establishing inclusionary environments and practices year round. Support through training and networking is available to help achieve this goal.

Both MH/MR and the Intermediate Unit have established lending libraries of written information and videos that are available to families. Attempts are made to provide information to families in manageable doses over time not on a hit or miss basis.

The signatory agencies are additionally committed to collaborative programs such as Parent to Parent and Special Kids Network. These programs connect families to other families and resources that are available within the state and local area.

CMSU MH/MR and the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit will continue to commit funds for the establishment of a budget for the local Interagency Coordinating Council. All of the signatory agencies will continue to commit staff members to continued active participation in the LICC. There will continue to be a strong commitment to fostering cooperative and collaborative models of service throughout the early intervention and early childhood community.

## **LICC COMPOSITION**

LICC meetings are scheduled at least bi-monthly, and more frequently as needed. Meetings are regularly scheduled in a community location. Parents are encouraged to participate at a level convenient to their schedules: phone contact, meeting attendance, or written correspondence.

Voting parents are identified annually. Community agencies providing services to children are regular participants in the LICC, including Family Centers, Snyder, Union, Mifflin Child Development, Danville Child Development Center, Special Kids Network, EITA and local legislative agencies. Signatory agencies regularly participate. MHMR and the MAWA provide adequate fiscal and administrative support for successful functioning. Our greatest success is continued collaboration evidenced by a shared commitment to serving the best interests of the children in our community.

## **DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

Signatory agencies have a long history of collaborative and cooperative working relationships. In the unlikely circumstance of disputes related to this agreement or interagency activities in our EI community, the CSV-ICC will facilitate meetings with the signatory agencies to work out compromises acceptable to all. Relationships amongst signatory agencies are based on a long history of open and honest dialog and respect, and these relationships exist at the highest level within the agencies. These relationships assure that dispute resolution is attainable. Additionally, a Creative Resolution Committee may be identified to facilitate dispute resolution.

## **EVALUATION AND MONITORING**

Signatory agencies will participate in the monitoring and evaluation of the early intervention system as required by Act 212. As needed, the signatory agencies will address issues through collaboration and creative resolution in conjunction with other LICC members.

## ***WORK PLAN FOR THE 2007-2008 YEAR***

Outreach efforts will continue to both agencies and parents. New collaborations shall be pursued with other agencies or programs within the early childhood community. Efforts with the international population at local universities as well as with the medical community shall continue.

Efforts to expand participation and membership for parents and partners within the early childhood community shall also continue. This year marks the beginning of a collaborative effort with Northumberland County LICC in utilizing more efficiently the resources within the 5 county area. Some suggested efforts include identifying topics of interest for parent training and offering playgroups during meeting times.

As CMSU 0-3 Early Intervention is due for a self-assessment, a small committee shall participate in a review; suggested areas to consider: use of progress monitoring data in determination of services and to support services continuing, incorporation of family routines and activities, and use of consult. The review shall be completed within a short time frame as information will be used in the development of the Technical Assistance Plan.

A Task Force is being formed to look at developing an integrated model for behavioral support for children ages 3-21. In reviewing how behavioral disorders are presently being identified and addressed, discussions between CMSU and CSIU have led to the conclusion that present means are not effective in addressing behaviors resulting in increased misidentification, increased numbers of children needing intervention and that little is done from a preventative standpoint. The LICC recognizes the need and is willing to participate in the Task Force. Once additional information is gathered regarding the Task Force, a committee from the LICC shall participate in the Task Force.

# Signature Page

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Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit

Date

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CMSU MH/MR

Date

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Pennsylvania Department of Health

Date

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Central Susquehanna Valley  
Local Interagency Coordinating Council

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