

Combined meeting for the Central Susquehanna Valley (CSV) and Northumberland County Local Interagency Coordinating Councils
(LICC)
Sept 27, 2007

Attending: Patty Edwards (Snyder Union Mifflin Child Development (SUM CD) Head Start and Early Head Start Director), Pam Miller (Parent Child Home Project), Brenda Miller (Parent Child Home Project), Delle Moyer (Columbia/Sullivan Head Start Health & Disabilities Coordinator), June Young, (Parent to Parent (P2P), Northumberland County), Kellee Rumbough (parent), Jan Salwocki (Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU), Preschool Supervisor), Jessica Bower, Department of Health (DOH), Special Health Care Needs Consultant), Susan Zeiders (Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA)), Diane Roman (Northumberland County Early Intervention Coordinator), Tom Spock (Northumberland County Early Intervention Supervisor), Gayle Schlesinger (Northumberland County Head Start) and Becky Laubach (Columbia/Montour/Snyder/Union (CMSU) Early Intervention Supervisor).

Agency Updates: 1) The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) has submitted for legal review two documents that combine 0-3 & 3-5 early intervention evaluation reports and individual plan reports. The combined documents have gone through Department of Public Welfare (DPW) legal review and are presently in Department of Public Education (PDE) legal review. Once approved, the plans will be piloted in 3 programs across the state with each age group having a pilot (a total of 6). Planned statewide implementation is set for July 1, 2008. It is noted that a committee comprised of parents, providers, county mental health/mental retardation (mh/mr) administrators, school district, state, 0-3 service coordinators, and 3-5 staff met throughout the past year to develop the combined document. 2) Early Childhood Accountability in Pennsylvania (ECAP) resumed July 1, 2007. The federal government requires each state to provide documentation on the progress of children in its early childhood community. Early intervention programs were the first phase of collecting the data on 3 indicators of child progress. PreK counts programs begin in October 2007 with the rest of the early childhood community rolling afterwards (timelines not known). The federal government requires data on 3 indicators of child progress: a) positive social skills b) acquisition and use of knowledge and c) use of appropriate behaviors to meet needs. Data is required at entry, exit and beginning in January 2009 annually for children enrolled in early childhood programs. Beginning July 1, 2008 the Work Sampling (ages 3-5) and the Ounce (0-3) will be required in collecting the data. Both tools are tools designed to measure progress.

3) 0-3 early intervention is required to obtain third party insurance denials in order to bill services to medical assistance (the state wants to insure that all reimbursement is occurring appropriately.) The state has arranged with Leader to obtain insurance denials and to make this listing available to counties. Once an insurance company has given denial, appears on the list, the providers can bill medical assistance for services. It is anticipated that this will begin in the near future and billing is not to be retroactive. 4) At present time, there are no mini-grants available through the Department of Health (DOH). 5) The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) is switching to a two year focus monitoring cycle beginning July 2008. They are doing a two phase pilot process this fiscal year. 0-3 programs will not be monitored until 2008-2009 fiscal year. 0-3 is now required to use state mandated monitoring

tools for their service coordination and for their contracted providers. In addition, the 3 year self assessment piece is under revision by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL). While it is being revised, counties still need to complete a self assessment.

Community Updates: 1) The Bloomsburg Family Resource Network has planned for October's meeting estate planning and in November will cover vision services through the Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BVS). Other topics for the coming year include medical assistance, music therapy, escape planning (for children who are prone to leaving their homes or family in group settings without the family's knowledge) and participating in the local Right to Education Task Force meetings. Handouts were given to those present on: Section 504 Resources for families living with irritable bowel disease, Pennsylvania Families Incorporated (an advocacy group), Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BVS) offerings for children, a website listing and resource listing at St. Luke's Church (where the group meets). Flyers were given out for the "Estate Planning for Individuals with Special Needs" (Oct 26th; to register call Carol Zosh at 1-800-451-9720), free concert featuring Irv Ball & Friends (Nov 3rd; RSVP to Ruth Ann at 800-433-9015 or rahess@pa.metrocast.net by Oct 25th) and Hike the Trail to Autism Awareness at Montour Preserve on Oct 6th (to register call Shirley at 570-523-1155 x2205 or sbastian@csiu.org). 2) The Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) of Northumberland County is doing an AMP program (no one knew what AMP stood for) at St. Luke's Church in Bloomsburg on Friday nights. It's a drop off program for kids ages 12 & up. It has just started and is going well.

Discussion: 1) The group talked about PreK counts, a new initiative in the early childhood community aimed at providing 3 and 4 year olds who are at risk for academic difficulties with quality programming to reduce that risk. Programs will operate in school districts, Head Starts, child care (Stars 2 or higher rating) and nursery schools. 9 counties including Union and Snyder did not apply for PreK counts. While Union and Snyder school districts and Head Start looked into it, they report that they had no space to provide for the classrooms and that the school boards expressed the concern that the money provided for PreK counts in this year's budget would not continue in future years. Northumberland County will host three PreK counts programs – Milton, Shikellamy and Line Mountain. Montour County will have one site at Busy Little Beavers and Columbia County will have one program in Berwick. It was reported that PreK counts program will look different across the state depending on who will be operating the program. It may shift the focus of service delivery of 3-5 early intervention and a ripple effect has already been seen in Head Start. PreK counts pays more than Head Start and Head Start programs are seeing staff leaving which affects their ability in staffing. In addition, kids being considered for PreK counts programs are being drafted from Head Start waiting lists which Head Start is required to have. It was noted during the discussion that those knowledgeable of PreK counts feel that it will be a beneficial program in the long run. 2) The group discussed at length ways to increase parent participation. Some topics included providing a play group (which could be staffed by college students) while meetings are occurring, having topics of interest for parents as part of the meeting and doing door prizes for parents. The focus of parents will be parents within the early childhood community. The group agreed to use next month's meeting as a planning meeting for developing the playgroup as well as parent topics. 3) Jan presented some information regarding a task force that is forming regarding an integrated model for behavior in children ages 3 -21. Phil Keating, Columbia Montour Snyder Union Mental Health

Mental Retardation (CMSU MH/MR) Administrator and Stephanie Hackenberg, Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU) social worker have spear-headed addressing concerns with increasing numbers of children with behavioral difficulties requiring intervention at school age as well as the concern with a more effective approach beginning with the younger ages. The task force is in the early stages of development so there is not a lot of information available yet. Jan posed the question to the group about participating in the task force. After some discussion, the group agreed that is very interested in participating. Phil and Stephanie will be alerted to the group's interest. 4) The group also discussed meeting particulars. The group felt that several measures could be put into place that would allow for more effective use of everyone's time. First, that updates could be shared ahead of time when the meeting minutes and agenda are shared (usually two weeks prior to the meeting). Second, that by meeting monthly, there would be fewer updates or perhaps less time needed on updates since the group is meeting frequently and; that by meeting monthly, more could be accomplished throughout the year. Third, the group agreed to rotate meeting sites. It is believed that this will encourage greater participation for both parents and agencies.