

LOCAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT

Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit

Columbia/Montour/Snyder/Union Behavioral
Health/Developmental Services

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

July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019

LOCAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT

After review of the plan specifications, the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, Columbia, Montour, Snyder, Union Behavioral Health/Developmental Services 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.

This plan will be reviewed annually, at a regularly scheduled meeting of the CSV-ICC in 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 2015-2016 agreement are:

Columbia Montour Snyder Union BH/DS: Rich Beach
Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit: Terri Locke
Pennsylvania Department of Health:
Danville Head Start: Linda Marshall
Columbia Sullivan Head Start: Cassandra Weaver
Snyder Union Mifflin Head Start: Jane Campbell
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. CMSU and CSIU 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 CSIU and CMSU. 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. The Office of Child Development and Early Learning provides a quarterly listing of children who are potentially eligible for 3-5 early intervention beginning in April of each calendar year. Agencies are currently able to surpass the regulations in that referred infants and toddlers who are not eligible for services are, with permission, referred 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. Children may be screened or evaluated. If found eligible for services, the child will receive early intervention services as determined by the IEP team, including the child's family. 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 BH/DS, Department of Health, the CSIU and local Head Start and provider programs. In addition, collaborative efforts in child find activities occur with other community agencies such as Columbia County Family Centers, Early Head Start, and Pre-K Counts. These efforts help to insure that families are informed of other agencies that may also be of interest or of benefit to them. When

developmental concerns are identified, referrals are made to the appropriate early intervention age group with consent of the family or guardian.

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, BH/DS, 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 physician 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 statewide directory, Connect. The CMSU BH/DS Program offers service coordination and tracking services to all eligible children and families residing in the four county joiner 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, who are referred to Early Intervention.
- The Columbia/Sullivan Head Start, Danville Head Start, and SUM Child Development Head Start 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 Fairs at the Susquehanna Valley Mall and the Columbia Mall are annual events sponsored by the malls 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.
- Local Health Clinic screenings

All local agencies use the statewide EI brochure, "Watch Me Grow," to distribute to the public identifying their services. Other participating agencies may choose to use their own brochure that highlights their program (Head Start, Nurse Family Partnership, and so on). These are distributed in a wide variety of manners including school district newsletters and family physicians. Additionally, www.brainybyfive.com, a website of early childhood resources and events for families and others in the early care and learning community, lists contact information for the Infant Toddler and Preschool EI Programs.

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. Information is shared with child care settings, libraries and other sources as identified and upon request.

www.brainybyfive.com, a website of early childhood resources and events for families and others in the early care and learning community, lists contact information for the Infant Toddler and Preschool EI Programs.

Any interested community member can receive information on request. All families accessing early intervention services are asked to sign a release to permit their name to be added to the ICC mailing list. CONNECT, the state's central directory for early intervention referrals, distributes referrals to both CMSU and CSIU.

TRANSITION

The Columbia/Montour/Snyder/Union BH/DS 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 and OCDEL Announcement EI-13#01 Transition of Toddlers to Preschool or Other Community Services. The policy has been reviewed by the LICC. A copy of the transition policy is included as an attachment. The Head Start member agencies have established transition agreements with the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit and the local school districts. Additionally, a procedure has been established between the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit and the local school districts in accordance with Public Law 212 and OCDEL Announcement EI-09#19 Transition of Preschool Children to School Age Programs that governs 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 around 27 months of age or at the entry point to services if the child is identified at a later age. A representative from the CSIU attends the meetings on a regular basis and the transition process is regularly explained to help ease the process for families. When children are exiting the 0-3 early intervention, information is shared with families regarding available community programs such as Head Start, Pre-K Counts and other preschool programs. Families are encouraged to contact the programs directly but 0-3 early intervention makes referrals upon request by the family.

At school age transition, meetings occur with school district personnel as identified by individual district and held in a school district location by the end of February each year. At these meetings Preschool EI coordinators introduce the transition process and the school districts talk about their programs and meet with each individual family to discuss transition options specific to their child. Parents are encouraged to attend with parent choice of early intervention or district placement to be carefully considered. The transition process begins in December of the year of before fall kindergarten eligibility when Preschool EI Coordinators schedule the February meetings with the district and begin to identify the children eligible to transition. Following the February meetings, districts will begin the re-evaluation process to determine school age eligibility for services. Parents will be invited to attend MDE/IEP meetings in the spring. 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. Annual training on transition occurs within 0-5 early intervention that helps to further understanding and knowledge of

the transition process that occurs at age 3. Also, the signatory agencies consider family input in identifying possible solutions as well as in tailoring trainings for staff.

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 BH/DS and the Intermediate Unit have established lending libraries of written information, equipment, 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 BH/DS 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.

There continues to be a strong collaborative relationship between all the agencies and community groups that focus on early learning. The ICC continues to be committed to enhancing present collaborative efforts as well as looks for additional ways to build collaboration. Collaborative efforts are routine within the region. For the past several fiscal years, the CSV LICC and the Northumberland LICC have joined together for combined meetings and planning activities. As this collaboration continues, it allows for additional collaborations to occur between other groups within the five county area.

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 Nurse Family Partnership, Snyder, Union, Mifflin Child Development, Danville Child Development Center, Parent Child Home Project, EITA and local legislative agencies. Signatory agencies regularly participate. CMSU and CSIU 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. If systems disagreements should arise regarding any of the components on this document and/or interagency activities, the lead signatories will convene to bring resolution to the dispute. If this cannot be accomplished in a productive, timely fashion, the local ICC will request the involvement of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL). In no case will any of the participant organizations/agencies be asked to act in a way that is outside of their authority.

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 2018-2019 YEAR

1. The group will focus on various aspects of child find including child keep for all programs. While child find/child keep have been discussed over the past fiscal year, the group would like to review how child find occurs, how current demographics and changes in ethnic groups influence the outcome of child find and child keep. This activity will also correlate to the LICC Child Find Plan.
2. Calendars will be distributed to other agencies/program and physicians making referrals as a thank you and a reminder to make referrals.
3. Determine if the local programs are meeting families' needs as indicated through the annual family survey. The group will brainstorm what information should be included on an initial survey sent to families enter programming. As Head Start completes a community assessment which could be beneficial the LICC group in determining family needs.
4. Develop a statement on collaboration with early childhood partners regarding the implementation of the Reduction of Expulsion and Suspension in Early Childhood Programs in Pennsylvania announcement issued by the OCDEL. Continue to work with child care programs on implementing the announcement.
5. Coaching – programs will continue to work in implementing coaching.
6. Additional activities may be identified by the group through the year.

Signature Page

Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit

Date

CMSU BH/DS

Date

Pennsylvania Department of Health

Date

Central Susquehanna Valley
Local Interagency Coordinating Council

Date

Danville Head Start

Date

Columbia/Sullivan Head Start

Date

SUM Head Start

Date