

IV. PUBLIC AWARENESS PROGRAM

A. POLICIES

1. The Lead Agency (DMHMRSAS) ensures that Virginia has developed and implemented a *public awareness program that*:
 - a. *Focuses on the early identification of children who are eligible to receive early intervention services under Part C; and*
 - b. *Includes the preparation and dissemination of information by the Lead Agency to all primary referral sources, especially hospitals and physicians, of materials for parents on the availability of early intervention services.* (34 CFR 303.320)

Note: Sample public awareness materials are included in Appendix M.

2. The Lead Agency ensures that the *public awareness program provides for informing the public about*:
 - a. *Virginia's early intervention program;*
 - b. *The child find system, including*:
 - (1) *The purpose and scope of the system;*
 - (2) *How to make referrals; and*
 - (3) *How to gain access to a comprehensive, multidisciplinary evaluation and other early intervention services (e.g., family support services, therapeutic intervention, etc.); and*
 - c. *The central directory.* (34 CFR 303.320(a)-(c))
3. The Lead Agency ensures that the public awareness program:
 - a. *Provides a continuous, ongoing effort that is in effect throughout Virginia including rural areas;*
 - b. *Provides for the involvement of, and communication with, major organizations throughout Virginia that have a direct interest in Part C, including public agencies at the state and local level, private providers, professional associations, parent groups, advocate associations, and other organizations;*
 - c. *Has coverage broad enough to reach the general public including persons with disabilities and traditionally underserved groups, including minority, low-income, and rural families;*
 - d. *Includes a variety of methods for informing the public about the provisions of this part including*:
 - (1) *Use of television, radio, and newspaper releases;*
 - (2) *Pamphlets and posters displayed in doctors' offices, hospitals, and other appropriate locations; and*
 - (3) *The use of a toll-free telephone service.* (34 CFR 303.320, Note 2)
 - e. *Is culturally diverse.*

B. PROCEDURES

1. Local interagency coordinating councils (LICCs) develop and implement policies and procedures (including mechanisms) to plan, organize and distribute information in their communities for the purpose of creating an overall public awareness campaign in coordination with child find policies and procedures. Local policies and procedures must determine responsibilities, content, outcomes and processes to be used for planning, organizing, and distributing public awareness information. All public awareness procedures developed and implemented are consistent with those set forth in State policies and state-level agreements.

- LICCs will adopt and implement for their local public awareness activities, the materials and strategies developed by the state. Neighboring localities are encouraged to collaborate in the development and implementation of an awareness plan that promotes a central theme throughout Virginia.
2. LICCs use the following mechanisms to promote public awareness in their localities:
 - a. Selecting a variety of methods for informing the general public including but not limited to:
 - (1) *Use of television, radio and newspaper releases;*
 - (2) *Pamphlets and posters displayed in doctors' offices, and other appropriate locations; and*
 - (3) *The use of the statewide toll-free telephone service.* (34 CFR 303.320, Note 2)
 - b. Local efforts must be coordinated with statewide public awareness efforts. Materials and activities must be culturally diverse and include:
 - (1) Adapting existing materials to be consistent with statewide public awareness materials;
 - (2) Incorporating local public information with State public awareness materials;
 - (3) Developing materials to augment statewide public awareness materials (e.g., philosophy of child find, screening resources, etc.); and
 - (4) Coordinating local activities with planned statewide public awareness activities (e.g., airing of Public Service Announcements, dissemination of materials).
 - c. Disseminating materials to local agencies and places of business. Local public awareness materials including posters and brochures are requested to be displayed in highly visible and accessible locations. Other materials are requested to be included in agency/company mail outs (e.g., pay checks, newsletters, bills etc.). The following agencies/businesses may be targeted for dissemination of information:
 - (1) Pediatricians'/general practitioners' offices;
 - (2) WIC clinics;
 - (3) Well-baby/immunization clinics and mobile vans;
 - (4) Community and migrant health centers;
 - (5) Family support programs;
 - (6) Child day care centers and family day care homes;
 - (7) Visiting public health nurse programs;
 - (8) Local social service departments;
 - (9) Mental health clinics;
 - (10) Civic groups;
 - (11) Ethnic/community centers;
 - (12) Shelters;
 - (13) Hospital outpatient clinics;
 - (14) Family planning organizations;
 - (15) Businesses (e.g., banks, utility companies, grocery stores, laundromats, beauty parlors, etc.);
 - (16) Churches and synagogues;
 - (17) Professional associations;
 - (18) Advocacy associations;
 - (19) Private providers;
 - (20) Primary referral sources;
 - (21) Public schools;
 - (22) Adoption agencies;
 - (23) Parent support groups; and
 - (24) Other local points of contact with families and young children.