

VIRGINIA EARLY INTERVENTION AUTISM INITIATIVE
HENRICO MENTAL HEALTH CENTER
DRAFT MINUTES
05/24/04

The Virginia Early Intervention Autism Initiative met at the Henrico Mental Health Center on Monday, May 24, 2004. Carol Schall facilitated the meeting and Karen Durst served as the recorder. The following members were in attendance: Carol Burke; Karen Durst; Liz Fletcher; Debra Holloway; Sharon Jones; Janet Lachowsky; Donna Rimell; Carol Schall; and Beth Tolley.

The purpose of the meeting was identified as developing an action plan for the upcoming year. It was determined that the question “Where do we want to be a year from now” needed to be answered. The criteria for developing the plan included identifying those things that were positive and possible for the Initiative to accomplish by 05/24/05.

Various group members made the following statements:

- It is time to delve into the deeper issues related to serving children with autism;
- There is a reality as to where the group is starting. This reality includes a limited Part C budget, etc.;
- There is a concern related to the misconceptions about the Part C Services and Supports Guidance Document. The intervention involves helping everyone involved with the family, including other family members, daycare providers and neighbors;
- There is an expectation by some that Part C should be picking up all direct services. This may stem in part from the assumptions that the Part C model is the same as the Part B model where the IEP is written with the expectation that there is a person available and that person should provide the services;
- There is not a problem with the philosophy of serving children with autism spectrum disorders but rather who should provide the intervention;
- There is an inconsistency across Virginia in how localities are serving children with autism spectrum disorders, specifically related to frequency and intensity.
- It is a mistake to look at research that has been conducted with 3-4 year olds and to assume that the results are the same for 1-2 year olds.
- In the near future, there will be increasing numbers of 1-2 year olds being diagnosed with autism. It is possible that within the next 20 years, autism may be diagnosed at birth;
- There are many individuals working in the field of early intervention who do not understand the philosophy of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA). These individuals think of discrete trial. Training is needed.
- While discrete trial is good for some things, it is not good for play.
- Learning needs to be generalizable. Discrete trial is not generalizable and natural ABA is more favorable.
- There is concern that some individuals do not understand Part C.

- Many former members of the group are no longer attending the Initiative meetings.
- There is a need for support from other members as a vision for the upcoming year is developed.
- It is important to resolve communication issues.

Carol Schall guided the group with the explanation that resolving the communication issues could be part of the vision plan for the Initiative. This could include an understanding and respect of the role that each member plays and could include an understanding of Part C.

Carol encouraged the members by adding that the vision defines and guides the group. Broad thinking was encouraged. Discussion then surrounded the vision for the Initiative. The following main points were identified for the vision:

1. Understanding and respect for roles;
2. Part C Guidance;
3. Trust Issues;
4. Synergy;
5. Child First;
6. Training;
7. Funding;
8. Clarity About Resources;
9. Wider Community Understanding; and
10. Data

Based on the previous ten vision points, the group was encouraged to then develop a positive and possible action plan that can be completed by 05/24/05. The following items represent the beginning of the development of the plan.

1. The Virginia Early Intervention Autism Initiative held 12 meetings with the following people participating:

- **Autism Center of VCU/The Faison School;**
- **Autism Organizations Representatives;**
- **Families;**
- **General Practitioners;**
- **Part C;**
- **Pediatricians and Primary Care Doctors;**
- **Physicians;**
- **Providers; and**
- **Schools.**
 - Information was shared at the meetings about Part C and intervention in community settings. Members partnered for a day to learn about each other's roles.
 - The Initiative worked with local pediatrician organizations, both with in-service and pre-service, to promote medical education about autism and Part C.

- Trainings were provided to direct service providers in Part C on “Autism Awareness; Part C Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) Development; and the Principles of ABA (errorless learning).
- The Initiative established a pilot of a Community of Practice related to autism. Sharon Jones of T/TAC, is checking into the possibility of the assistance of T/TAC with this project.
- The Initiative added current information and updates on autism to the Part C website.

The Action Plan is to be completed at the next meeting.

The meeting then concluded with discussion surrounding how to get those individuals involved in the Initiative that are no longer attending. It was decided that members that were present for the day’s meeting would contact others to encourage participation. It was stressed that the assistance and support of the membership is needed as the Initiative moves forward in implementing the Action Plan. Karen will send contact information to the group.

The next meeting of the Autism Initiative was set for Thursday, July 01, 2004 from 1:00-4:00 at the Henrico Mental Health Center. Please note that the meeting will be held in Conference Room B.