

Virginia Early Intervention Autism Initiative
May 28, 2003
Henrico Mental Health Center
Draft Meeting Notes

The meeting of the Virginia Early Intervention Autism Initiative was held May 28, 2003 at the Henrico Mental Health Center. Karen Durst, Technical Assistance Consultant for the Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia welcomed the participants. The participants then introduced themselves. They included:

- Pasquale Accardo, M.D., Professor of Pediatrics, Developmental Pediatrician, Children's Hospital (Richmond);
- Donna Rimmel, Educator, Infant & Toddler Connection of Chesterfield (Chesterfield);
- John M. Suozzi, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist, Children's Hospital (Richmond);
- Tracy Miller, Occupational Therapist, Program Manager, Rehabilitation Associates, P.C. (Tidewater);
- Deana Buck, Coordinator, Infant & Toddler Connection of Richmond (Richmond);
- Janet Lachowsky, Occupational Therapist; Spiratos School
- Sharon Jones, T/TAC, Virginia Commonwealth University;
- Linda Hutton, Council Coordinator, Infant & Toddler Connection of Prince William, Parent;
- Sherry Confer, Department of Medical Assistance Services;
- Carol Burke, Council Coordinator; Infant & Toddler Connection of Rockbridge;
- John Clary, Mental Retardation Director, Colonial Community Services Board;
- Heather Elias, Parent;
- Bruce Schaffer, New Horizons, Guest Presenter;
- Terry Renvyle, SECEP;
- Beth Tolley, Part C Technical Assistance Consultant, Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia;
- Karen Durst, Technical Assistance Consultant, Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia.

Based on a previous request by the group for further information related to treatment approaches and options, Mr. Bruce Schaffer, from New Horizons, then provided an educational presentation entitled *Intervention Approaches to Autism: An Overview*. Included in Mr. Schaffer's presentation were the following:

- Historic Background
- Diagnostic Criteria
- Educational Principles
- Types of Intervention Approaches
 - Interpersonal Relationships
 - Skill-Based

- Physiologically Oriented
- Combined Programs
- Common Intervention Approaches
 - TEACCH
 - PECS
 - Greenspan/Floor Time
 - Biomedical/Complementary Approaches

Discussion followed the presentation related to the needs of the children with autism spectrum disorders in Virginia, their families and those providing services. The following issues were discussed:

- The federal natural environment requirement for Part C services and how this relates to intervention for children with autism spectrum disorders;
- The need for the use of multiple intervention techniques for children with autism spectrum disorders;
- The need for training statewide for individuals providing early intervention services for children with autism spectrum disorders;
- The need for immediate guidance and assistance whereby a foundation is established to build on, specifically, what can be done now;
- Exploring financial options such as waiver slots, increased state funding, parent advocacy for funding, lottery revenue, etc.;
- Exploring guidelines from other states such as Georgia. (The Part C office will electronically send the participants a copy of the guidance from Georgia for review).

At the next meeting, the group will be addressing how to meet the needs in Virginia and the process of reaching the goals of the Initiative. The Part C office announced that a facilitator is being provided to assist the group with the process. The facilitator will begin assisting at the June meeting.

The next meeting of the Virginia Early Intervention Autism Initiative will be held, Wednesday, June 25, 2003, from 1:00-4:00 at the Henrico Mental Health Center.