

Virginia Early Intervention Autism Initiative Meeting
September 16, 2004
Location: Henrico Mental Health and Mental Retardation

Attendance

Pat Accardo	Cori Hill	Carol Schall
Carol Burke	Linda Hutton	Sharon Sikes
Amy Compton	Sharon Jones	Beth Tolley
Heather Elias	Sue Palko	
Debra Holloway	Phyllis Mondak	

Attendees introduced themselves. New members Cori Hill and Sue Palko were welcomed to the committee.

Announcements

The following training opportunities were announced:

- Circle of Support Conference sponsored by the Prince William Arc. This conference is an annual event and has historically been an excellent conference and has also been very inexpensive.
- SECEP trainings
- Autism Awareness training in Stafford County on September 29
- Series of trainings sponsored by JMU in collaboration with Commonwealth Autism
- Trainings in Hopewell and Blacksburg (in September)
- Region II training on September 22

Heather reported that training events are posted on the Autism Society of Virginia, Central Virginia Chapter website www.asacv.org

Heather requested that 25 minutes be allotted on next meeting's agenda to review the 20-minute First Signs Autism video which is geared for Physicians. The group agreed to put this on the agenda and to look at it in terms of education and training.

Heather is on the Central Virginia Chapter of the Virginia Board for Autism, and will be chairing or co-chairing a committee for increasing awareness. She said she would coordinate work of that committee with the work this committee is doing.

Dr. Accardo reported that the message of early identification seems to be getting out, and that he has had a child referred to him who was diagnosed by the primary care physician as having ASD who does not have ASD. However, Carol Schall reported that when the number of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Virginia is compared to the prevalence figures cited by the American Academy of Pediatrics (6 per 1000 births), Virginia is under diagnosing ASD by 43-63%.

Fact Sheets

The status of the fact sheets were reviewed:

- The “How to Make a Referral” sheet is a laminated Part C document that is completed.
- The “Family Information Form” is a Part C document that is complete and will not be further edited.
- The “Intervention for Autism” fact sheet was discussed.
 - Discussion centered around the following issues:
 - The lack of research supporting any approach for birth to three
 - Need to be sure that the fact sheets do not give the impression that families can choose an approach since this is not how the early intervention system operates
 - The group felt there needed to be a more complete listing of intervention communication and behavior interventions
 - The following revisions were agreed upon:
 - Divide the fact sheet into three sections with the first section describing the general characteristics of excellent supports and services as described by the National Research Council.
 - The second section will describe three categories of treatment and what specific treatments fall under each category.
 - In the third category a general statement will be made about alternate treatments with a recommendation that parents discuss these with their physician before trying them on their own.
 - Carol Burke will draft the revised fact sheet and will send it to the full group by next Friday. Beth, Carol Schall, Carol Burke, Sue, Cori and Heather will finalize the fact sheet via conference call Oct. 4.
- The group decided to eliminate the treatment section of the “What is Autism” fact sheet since treatment is covered in the intervention fact sheet.
- A couple school additions will be made to the “Resources” fact sheet. Phyllis Mondak will follow up with this.
- Beth will send the book list to the group. The group expected to be able to complete the book list by October 1, 2004. The book list will be added to the resource list.

Committee Reports

Systems and Data Committee:

Carol Burke reported that the group recommended that:

- Councils be instructed to write in Autism Spectrum Disorder under other in 5c of the ICDF (which is entered into the iTOTS database)
- The ICDF guidance be revised to include a definition of autism that includes information about what diagnoses might be included

- The group discussed adding a descriptor such as communication/behavior/social under the “Atypical” section of the ICDF (iTOTS) to capture those children who are suspected of having autism, but who have not yet been diagnosed. Discussion about this will continue in today’s meeting.

Beth reported that Sharon Jones presented the idea expanding the purpose of the existing Richmond early intervention interest group to an autism community of practice. The group was not interested in pursuing this at this time, though several members were interested in participating from time to time if a group was formed. VCU T/TAC cannot support an additional group at this time.

VCU T/TAC does have the capability of setting up an online group/listserv.

Family Support

Amy reported that Family Support committee would continue their work on the survey instrument today. They expect to have a final revision for the next meeting. The survey will be disseminated to the entire Autism committee prior to finalization. The subgroup will also work on the logistics of implementation of the survey.

Education and Training;

Carol Schall reported that she has contacted the State Autism and Training Committee. Work is in process on adapting competencies for persons working with infants and toddlers birth to three with ASD.

Membership

Membership discussion included the following points:

- Representation
 - Need representation from across the state
 - Need representation of key disciplines
 - Consider representation from councils who provide intensive intervention through their local Part C system (Blue Ridge/Charlottesville or Roanoke)
- Consider alternative ways of participating
 - Advisory or review committee
 - Meetings in conjunction with other events such as the Annual Early Intervention Conference and the Shining Stars Conference
- Keep people informed
 - Through CoCoA –
 - Presentation and the Virginia Interagency Coordinating Council – this may also be an opportunity to recruit members
 - Email and Website

Committee Reports (Reports after Committee Work)

Education

Carol Schall reported that the Education Committee has established three goals:

1. Take the competencies the state autism council is developing and revise them for early intervention
2. Create autism training module online for anyone
3. Develop protocols in 5 or six critical areas for coaching and modeling self-regulation, behavior support, sensory, etc.

Family Support

Revising and editing of the survey should be ready in a month. The survey will be provided to the group for review prior to dissemination.

System and Data

The group suggested that the follow up to the provider survey concerning training levels would be a better fit with the work of the education committee. Also the group recommended that the Education committee pursue the goals related to awareness level training for childcare workers through the Department of Social Services.

Beth will post a question to the NECTAC Part C listserv about what training and credentialing is done/required in other states for providers related to providing supports and services for children with autism.

Beth will work with the Part C office on the ICDF/iTOTS issues and will also pose the question about the possibility of considering a 4th descriptor under the atypical category which would read: *an impairment in social interaction, an impairment in communication skills, and a restricted and repetitive repertoire of activities and interests.*

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 PM.

Next meeting: October 21, 2004
Henrico Mental Health