

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

**Attendance:**

Carol Burke	Cori Hill	Sue Palko	Beth Tolley
John Clary	Debra Holloway	Bruce Schaffer	Charlene Wentland
Karen Durst	Phyllis Mondak	Sharon Sikes	

**Fact sheets**

Copies of the following fact sheets with the edits recommended by Kristen Stemhegen were distributed to the attendees.

- What is Autism
- Diagnosing Autism in Young Children
- Autism Resources
- Interventions for Young Children with Autism

Discussion followed and the following was decided:

- Several additional edits will be made to the Resources Fact Sheet including
  - Add the Learn the Signs; Act Early web site  
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/actearly/>
  - Add the Web site for Statewide Autism Project
  - Introductory sentence for the T-TAC listings (Sue Palko)
  - Correct the SECEP address (new address)
- Cori will work with David Mills to use color, graphics (the Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia logo and perhaps puzzle pieces) and different fonts to make the fact sheets more visually appealing
- Date and identification of who developed the fact sheets will be added to each sheet

**Plan:**

- Sue Palko will email Beth an introductory sentence for the T-TAC listings for the Resources fact sheet.
- Carol will assist Cori and David with converting the Intervention fact sheet into a questions and answer format in order to be consistent with the other fact sheets.
- The family information sheet is an official Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia document that cannot be edited by this group.

**Review Of The 12-Month Plan**

- The Systems and Data Subgroups have combined.
- Attendees decided that the EI Autism Initiative has established a group identity and is using an effective decision making system; therefore; this goal does not need to be carried forward

- “Autism” has been added to the ITOTS (infant and toddler online tracking system) as a specific diagnostic category
- The Part C Office did not agree to add an additional atypical category (*an impairment in social interaction, an impairment in communication skills, and a restricted and repetitive repertoire of activities and interests*) to capture data on children who have the cluster of symptoms suggestive of Autism, but who have not been diagnosed. (This would have required more extensive changes to the data form as well as policy changes).
- The plan for standardization of outcomes was discussed. In light of many factors including the federal focus on global outcomes for all children and the many efforts that are in process to develop outcomes including the work of the Early Childhood Outcome Center and Virginia’s General Supervision Enhancement Grant, the group revised the statement as follows: **We collaborated and participated in development of the nationally mandated outcomes of child development so that we can identify the outcomes associated with children with autism.**
  - Carol Schall suggested that one thing to consider for children with autism is how many transition with a communication device.
- Two Education/Training Objectives were added:
  - **We developed a manual for Part C providers on the critical areas on how to provide services in natural environments in a short time frame**
  - **We developed web-based training resources for providers.**

### **Discussion about Collecting Data on Children Who Have Not Received Diagnosis**

Attendees indicated that it was necessary to collect data on children who had the cluster of symptoms suggestive of autism. Reasons for collecting this data included:

- To know how many children with autism like symptoms are being served
- To be able to see where children with these systems are located in order to target resources and training
- To demonstrate that kids with these constellation of symptoms receive good supports and services from the Part c system – this is not possible without data
- For purposes of requesting funding
- Correlations could be made to see how many who were noted to have symptoms were later diagnosed with autism

**Plan:** Carol Burke will draft a letter to the Part C Office requesting that the decision not to add the atypical category to the tracking system be reconsidered. This letter will be circulated to the group for full input. Carol Schall will provide facts to support the request.

### **First Signs Video**

The group reviewed the First Signs Video and agreed that it is very good. It is available at [www.firstsigns.org](http://www.firstsigns.org).

## **Competencies**

Carol Schall reported on the competencies developed by the Autism Council\*. She noted that at the last meeting of this group, several recommendations were made by the education subcommittee for changes. However, since these competencies were intended to be generic and applicable across all ages, not all of the recommendations were accepted. The proposed additional column for EI providers was not added because that would set a precedent and the purpose was to keep this generic and not specific to any age group. In addition, the items checked for EI were all the same as for apprentice staff except for 8 items that were not checked in the positive behavior support category. Sue and Cori explained that these had not been checked because they had appeared to be specific to a particular treatment approach.

The document will be sent to national and state experts for review for content validity; the Council is also working on stakeholder consensus. The document is expected to be available on the Autism Planning Council web site soon.

Discussion followed concerning what is needed for Virginia's Part C system. It was suggested that perhaps a different document is needed with criteria for system managers, service coordinators, direct providers serving children with autism (they could use the Autism Council competencies), service providers (not serving the children with autism, but who need to be able to recognize the signs).

\* The Autism Planning Council is now called the Autism Council of Virginia. The website is <http://www.autismcouncilva.org/index.asp>.

## **Meeting Schedule for 2005 (Location to be Determined)**

**The group decided to continue to meet the same day and time and to schedule meetings for the entire year. Meetings for 2005 are the third Thursday from 1:00 to 4:00 PM on the following dates:**

Jan 20  
Feb 17  
Mar 17  
April 21  
May 19  
June 16  
July 21  
August 18  
September 15  
October 20  
November 17  
December 15

## **Agenda for next meeting:**

- Contacting Hospitals speakers
- Family fact sheet
- Competencies

- Group Work