

**VIRGINIA INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL  
DRAFT MINUTES  
Henrico Mental Health  
06-11-03**

Brenda Laws, Secretary, called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. She welcomed everyone and then announced that Mary Ann Discenza had been hired as the new Part C Coordinator. Best wishes were extended to Mary Ann. Karen Durst then called the Virginia Interagency Coordinating Council (VICC) role-call. The minutes from the previous meeting were then reported as having been approved via electronic transmission.

**Part C Update**

**Part C State Coordinator Position**

Mary Ann Discenza provided the Part C Update. She expressed her thanks for the support and well wishes received related to her new position as Part C Coordinator and further expressed her dedication and commitment to the Part C system.

**Budget Forms**

Mary Ann reported that new budget forms had been disseminated to localities. She reported that changes were made to the budget forms and the process based on input received from the field. Mary Ann stated that the request process for one-time funds was being included in the budget process this year. Review of the budgets and requests would be made at the same time. This would enable the localities to receive the approval for one-time funding along with their budgets and would provide the opportunity to better meet the needs of the localities. As of the VICC meeting, all but 10 localities were reported to have submitted their budgets.

Mary Ann further reported that the requests for one-time funds received thus far had exceeded the expectations. She stated that the Early Intervention Interagency Management Team (EIIMT) had discussed the need for additional one-time funds by localities. It was determined that additional requests for increased funds would be addressed through Management Team and the Early Intervention Agencies Committee (EIAC) and if approved, funds would be made available from reserve funds to assist in meeting the needs.

It was reported that there is currently \$4,000,000 in unspent federal funds available. The original projection was that these funds would last until 2005. Based on existing needs, many related to natural environments expenses and increased child counts, the funding was reported as expected to last through 2004. Mary Ann reported that the exact timeframe is unknown and that this is currently being discussed.

**Local Contracts for FY 2003-2004**

Related to the Local Part C Contract for FY 2003-2004, Mary Ann reported the contract was disseminated along with the budget forms. The deadline for submission of the contract is June 30, 2003. For those localities with fiscal agents other than Community Services Boards (CSBs), such as municipalities, and that must undergo different local approval processes, extensions are being granted for submission of their

contracts by July 31, 2003. Three initial payments will be provided to these localities to help meet their needs during the processing of their contracts.

### **Future Budgets**

It was reported that based on dialogue with the Council Coordinators Association (CoCoA) and input from other individuals that a work group would be developed to simplify and refine the budget process for the future. Mary Ann stated that this group would convene in the near future. The work group is expected to develop the budget process during the summer. Training will then follow as preparation for the upcoming budget year. The new forms and process will be instituted with next year's contract.

### **Administrative Complaint**

Mary Ann reported that an administrative complaint has been received by the Part C office. She stated that the office is currently in dialogue with the family's attorney. A meeting has been set for Friday, June 13, 2003, for the purpose of fact-finding. Mary Ann stated that the original request was for mediation which was followed by the attorney's request to change to an administrative complaint due to the time frames involved. The Part C office has 30 days from June 13, 2003 for a response.

### **IDEA Reauthorization**

Information was provided by Mary Ann related to House Bill 1350, which is the reauthorization of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). She stated that the House has passed the bill with an amendment that would weaken the original language related to the provision of Part C services in the natural environment. The statement specifically focused on shared decision-making related to the family and the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team. Additionally, a change would be made to eliminate the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council (FICC). The Senate was to act last week on the bill but did not act. It is expected that the HB will go to committee. Following the reauthorization, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) will promulgate the federal regulations. Mary Ann further reported that the state Part C office has decided to wait on revisions to the state policies and procedures until revisions are made of the federal regulations by OSEP. Mary Ann encouraged the group to view the information related to HB 1350.

Dr. Colleen Kraft commented that individuals need to contact their senators related to the reauthorization of IDEA. She stated that this impacts Part B as well as Part C. Pam Johnson then shared that independent groups are coming together related to the impact that the reauthorization will have on Part B. She stated that her agency, Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy (VOPA), would be expressing their views on issues related to the impact on Part B. She stated that she didn't know if the VICC would be interested in taking a position on the issues as well.

Shirley Ricks then further reiterated that regarding the natural environments issue, as related to HB1350, that the issue of parent choice was changed to state that the IFSP team, with the family, will make the decision as to the location for services that will best result in the child meeting their outcomes.

Wanda Pruett stated that based on the conversations that were occurring on the Family Involvement Project website, that people are questioning if the wording in the Reauthorization of IDEA is an attempt to work around natural environments. Mary Ann responded that the Part C office is awaiting the interpretation of the federal regulations by OSEP. Discussion continued regarding the use of the wording “to the maximum extent possible”. Dr. James Blackman questioned that if the wording of “feasible” would be used, would this provide more flexibility in choices. Beth Tolley stated that she was planning on speaking on the natural environments as part of her report on the Phase II Natural Environments Trainings and that she would like to address the issues of best practice from evidence-based research related to natural environments at that time.

Shirley Ricks asked the VICC members if they would like for the Part C office to send each member a copy of HB 1350 relative to Part C. The VICC members agreed stating that a synopsis would be preferred. Dr. Blackman asked if information could also be provided related to differing views. Mary Ann stated that this could be researched and provided.

Mary Ann then stated that an additional change being proposed with the Reauthorization of IDEA would be to change the wording on the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) from objective to outcome.

Shirley further reported that it is being required that the following agencies be included as representatives on the VICC: Education Coordinator for the Homeless from the school systems; Child Protective Services; and a Children’s Mental Health Representative.

### **Virginia Interagency Coordinating Council Nominating Committee**

Shirley then reported to the VICC that the nominating committee had selected the following individuals as the slate of persons to serve as offices for VICC FY 2003-2004: Brenda Laws-Chairperson; Bethany Cooke-Vice Chairperson; and Dr. Willie Bragg-Secretary. Shirley stated that these individuals had agreed to the nominations but that the process was open to any others that were interested. No other individuals responded to the request for others who were interested in serving. Glen Slonneger then made a motion that the nominations be closed. Dr. Blackman seconded the motion and the motion was approved. The VICC members will receive ballots and will vote at the September VICC meeting.

### **VICC Retreat**

Shirley Ricks then spoke with the members regarding a possible VICC retreat. She stated that due to the fact that many of the VICC members were new in their positions, that a retreat could provide an opportunity for individuals to come together for discussions and interaction on their roles and responsibilities. The roles and responsibilities of the VICC; Early Intervention Interagency Management Team (EIIMT); Early Intervention Agencies Committee (EIAC); and the council coordinators could be discussed. This was noted as an opportunity to look at the priorities and challenges facing the Part C system. Mary Ann Discenza reported that the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) had been contacted related to the

retreat and that they could provide information related to how other councils nationally had approached retreats and how it could work.

Mary Ann also talked about the previous orientation of the new VICC members. She noted that the VICC members, at that time, had then decided to move forward with the developed Integrated Work Plan and stated that now was the opportunity for the new members to become further involved as the system looked at the Work Plan goals of Financing the System and Service Delivery. It was also stated that the opportunity existed for changes to occur within the VICC as well, related to the organization of the group and the by-laws. Mary Ann pointed out that now is the time for the VICC members to help in shaping early intervention and assist in meeting the needs of children and families in Virginia.

The dates of September 9 & 10, 2003 are tentatively being considered for the retreat. Feedback was requested from the members. Delly Greenburg stated that she felt that the retreat was a good idea. She stated that this was a new experience and that she felt that new information related to the roles of those within the system would be helpful. Dr. Willie Bragg's question concerning a possible location was answered as likely being in the Richmond area.

Shirley Ricks stated that the major issue facing the Part C system at this time was financing and how to keep services going for the children and their families. Deborah Sprang spoke about the attendance at the last Early Intervention Agencies Committee meeting in March of Secretary Jane Woods and of her commitment to help early intervention. She stated that Secretary Woods had told the agency heads to "Ask and ask again for help". Deborah asked if anything had been sent to the Secretary's office to which Shirley replied that nothing had been moved over as of this time. Shirley stated that once the extra funds were spent that Part C would be in a better position to ask for state funds. She reported the need to document the needs and reported that more information would be available in 6-12 months.

Pat Dewey expressed concern on waiting 6-12 months. She stated that requests for funding could only occur at specific times. Shirley responded that the Virginia Association of Community Services Boards (VACSB) was currently working on plans to go before the General Assembly to request assistance in meeting the existing financial needs. Deborah Sprang expressed that the issue needs to be addressed now if it is known that Part C will be out of money. Shirley replied that guidance is needed from the Early Intervention Interagency Management Team. She stated that information had been provided during the past 3-4 years and that the general response from the agency heads has been that there are federal funds that need to be expended.

Pam Johnson asked if the issue with the agency heads is asking for the funds or education related to the issue. She further asked if the agency heads need information stating that even though the money is available, that it can only be used for certain things. She stated that the Early Intervention Interagency Management Team cannot make decisions but can make recommendations to the agency heads.

Shirley then reported that the budget cuts throughout the state have had an impact on localities. She stated that the Part C office is open to suggestions and recommendations and that final decisions must go through the DMHMRSAS Commissioner. Deborah Sprang commented that more money needs to be put into the system in order to utilize the federal funding. Glen Slonneger stated that the Early

Intervention Agencies Committee wants to ask for the funds but they need to know how much, have documentation of what is needed and be able to defend the request. Shirley reported that there are several groups working on gathering this information. She further stated that it has been difficult capturing the true cost and that it is hoped that within 6-12 months that the true cost for early intervention services would be known.

It was then reported by Shirley that there has been a yearly increase of 8-10% in the numbers of children served. She stated that this cost has been absorbed through federal dollars. She said that help is needed and that Part C is an interagency program. Pam Johnson commented that estimates have been given in the past when other groups have lobbied for funding. She stated that support is needed from Legislators at the General Assembly and from the Secretary. She further stated that the Agency Heads need to convene and cooperatively mount an effort to go to before the General Assembly.

Shirley explained to the new VICC members that state funding in the amount of \$125,000 was established in 1993 for the Part C system. She reported that there have been no increases since that time. Further explanation was given related to how prior to 1993 there were voluntary state funds but that amount is no longer counted.

### **Membership**

Shirley Ricks then reported that related to the appointment by the governor of new VICC members in December, the parent appointee from Northern Virginia has resigned. She stated that that position would need to be filled. VICC positions for a council coordinator, as well as representatives from the Department of Education related to Education for the Homeless, Protective Services and Mental Health for children were also discussed. Shirley stated that it would appear that the VICC currently has representation through the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services to meet the mental health requirement and through The Department of Social Services to meet the protective services requirement and Department of Education to meet the coordinator of education for the homeless. Recommendations will be sent to the Governor's office for those unfilled positions. Wanda Pruett reported that information has already been sent to the Governor's office related to a parent representative from Northern Virginia.

### **Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)**

It was reported by Shirley Ricks that Deborah Sprang had returned as the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) representative on the VICC. It was previously thought that this position was vacant. Deborah Sprang reported that she would continue to fill the position.

### **Monitoring and Improvement Measurement System (MIMS) Update**

Mary Anne White provided an update related to the Monitoring and Improvement Measurement System (MIMS) process. She began by providing an explanation regarding MIMS. Mary Anne stated that there is a federal requirement that all states have a monitoring mechanism for Part C. She reported that Jeff Harlow developed the monitoring process for Virginia approximately 7-9 years ago. This process was patterned after the monitoring system of the Part B program. Mary Anne further

explained that the monitoring system used a self-study approach based on data that was identified through indicators.

It was reported by Mary Anne that the MIMS process has undergone many changes and is currently on its fourth iteration. She reported that in 1999, six (6) sites participated in the MIMS process. In 2000, nineteen (19) sites participated. With the current cycle, fifteen 15 sites were originally planned with the actual number being twelve (12) sites participating. There will be nine (9) sites participating in MIMS this fall.

Mary Anne reported that MIMS would follow a four-year process for localities. She stated that the MIMS Consultants are assisting localities in using their data and in developing their plans of improvement. She emphasized that the plans of improvement are based on themes that are identified from the data. Of the current twelve (12) participating sites, Mary Anne reported that nine (9) have completed their self assessment, state review team process and have developed their plans of improvement with fine tuning currently occurring with the plans of improvement.

Shirley Ricks and Mary Anne further reported that the Internal Data Committee is to meet tomorrow, June 12, 2003, to determine approval of reducing the current 150 indicators to 80. Following their approval, the process will progress to the VACSB Data Committee and then the reduced indicators will be used with the upcoming sites. Glen Slonneger asked if the MIMS process had been looked at and approved at the federal level. Shirley reported that the process has been left up to the states to develop their own mechanisms but that there has been no problem with the process based on questions presented to OSEP. Shirley further reported that based on information from OSEP, the process will eventually move to focused monitoring. This will include child find and early identification. Jeff Harlow added that the national consultants view the MIMS process in Virginia as a model. Shirley stated that any VICC member who would like to view the MIMS process could contact Mary Anne White or Cathy Fisher to arrange to go along with them to a site.

### **Family Report**

Wanda Pruett provided an updated Family Report. She stated that based on topics, that the following topics were receiving the most postings on the Family Involvement website: Sibling Issues; Financial Planning for Children with Disabilities; and Parent-to-Parent Support and Networking. She suggested that these topics be considered in planning the State Early Intervention Conference.

Wanda also reported on an upcoming March on Richmond, which will be held on September 20, 2003, and sponsored by the ARC of Virginia. The purpose of the march is to advocate for better services for individuals with disabilities. A goal has been set of 5000 participants.

It was decided that Wanda would report on parental reaction to the Phase II Natural Environments Training as part of Beth Tolley's update.

### **Introduction of Audience Members and Public Comment**

At this time, members of the audience introduced themselves and stated their affiliations with Part C. Public Comment then followed.

Kathy Phillips, representing CoCoA, presented the following public comment (italicized information is provided verbatim from written comment provided).

*I am speaking on behalf of the Steering Committee of CoCoA, the Virginia Council Coordinators' Association.*

*First, I would like to extend a sincere welcome and congratulations on behalf of the CoCoA Steering Committee to Mary Ann Discenza, the new state Part C coordinator. We look forward to working closely with Mary Ann and the Part C office to meet the needs of infants and toddlers and their families across the state. While there are many significant tasks and hurdles ahead, we are very optimistic about our collaborative ventures. The Steering Committee would like to recognize that, while the Fiscal Year 2004 Budget process and procedures have been challenging, we have appreciated the fact that Mary Ann and the Part C office heard our concerns and revised the process accordingly to address these concerns.*

*Secondly, as identified in comments at previous VICC meetings, CoCoA would like to express the continuing concerns regarding the financial picture for Virginia's infants and toddlers. The recent request to the VACSB has identified from data that an additional \$8 million will be needed beyond Fiscal Year '04 over the next two years, in order to provide early intervention services for the additional children who are being identified, as well as the children who are waiting for some or all of the services they need. Without these additional funds, Virginia's infants and toddlers are in serious jeopardy of not receiving the early intervention services they need which, according to federal legislation, are required to be provided. This recent report to the VACSB clearly identified that the funds that are currently dedicated to serving all identified infants and toddlers, either through ongoing funding or one-time funding, are not adequate.*

*And lastly, CoCoA would like to request to be "at the table" at all stages as the system of early intervention services in Virginia is reshaped to address the existing and emerging needs. As has been demonstrated since the initiation of Part C, the success of the early intervention system across the country has been and will continue to be dependent upon partnerships - with families, with the many public and private agencies which support and contribute to this interagency system, and with the unique local systems representing 40 diverse areas of our state. CoCoA, as an organization, offers its support and its willingness to participate in the activities ahead. Areas in which we would particularly hope to participate include: 1) revising the Budget process and procedures well in advance of the next fiscal year and 2) determining what is needed for "next steps" for the natural environments training, to assure that all areas of the state are well prepared and appropriately trained.*

*Thank you again for the opportunity to express these views.*

Allison Standing then provided the following public comments.

*I am Alison Standing, Council Coordinator in the Rappahannock Area. Carol Granger and I represent CoCoA on the VACSB Public Policy Committee and are working with them on the Part C budget request. As mentioned earlier, education is key in gaining legislation. We need to educate the legislators, the governor's office,*

*administration, and the advocates. Carol and I are working with VACSB in developing documents to help in this education process. She and I would appreciate the input of all members of the VICC in the next few weeks to bolster the need for state funds in the system. Some legislators see Part C as a federal program that should be funded by the feds, we need to work together against that tide.*

### **Response to Public Comment**

Shirley Ricks extended a thank you for the positive public comments. She stated that Mary Ann Discenza was making a positive contribution to the Part C system as the new State Part C Coordinator. She emphasized Mary Ann's commitment to partnering with others within the system.

### **Infant & Toddler Online Tracking System (iTOTS) Update**

Jeff Harlow provided an update on the Infant & Toddler Online Tracking System (iTOTS). He stated that the Data Committee was working diligently on moving from how Phase I of iTOTS works to Phase II which focuses on services delivered, cost of services and managing the IFSP process and documentation. Jeff reported that the Data Committee had decided that with the Phase II model, that the entering of data related to services and the costs of services would be required but that the other aspects of the IFSP and utilization of other components would be optional.

Jeff then provided an explanation of iTOTS. He described the system as a web-based data entry and operation system that is currently an intake system. Jeff continued to explain the design and implementation of the export function of the system and how it will reduce the redundancy of entering information. He emphasized that while this will work for most systems there are some that will not be compatible. Jeff stated that the three major data systems to be used by localities throughout the state are CMHC, Anastasi and BTI. Through one of the systems, approximately 800 infants and toddlers are served.

The system allows for iTOTS data to be clumped into local systems. All of the information entered can also be mapped to MIMS. The iTOTS feature also allows the data from the locality to be readily available for Family Surveys.

Jeff provided information on the new Virginia Infant Screening and Infant Tracking System (VISITS) referral program from the Virginia Health Department. He and Pat Dewey explained that this pilot program is about ready for start-up in the Tidewater area in connection with The Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters (CHKD). The pilot program will allow for electronic referral, through iTOTS, of children from CHKD to pilot localities in the Tidewater area. **The pilot also includes electronic referral for any infant/child reported with hearing loss and with other diagnosed disabling conditions tracked in VISITS.** The capacity exists to link a lot of data according to Jeff. To the question as to whether this would become a statewide project, Pat Dewey responded that the results of the pilot would be examined when completed to determine the next steps.

Jeff then provided information related to a unique identifier with iTOTS. He reported that there would be one optional identifier, which will be a name, and one required identifier, which is the child's social security number. He stated that the use of

the name is Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) compliant. The optional use of the child's name will be a local decision and that the use of the child's name would improve communication. A written informed consent from the family must be attached.

As of July 01, 2003, the use of the child's social security number will be required. Deborah Sprang then asked how the situation would be addressed where a child does not have a social security number. Jeff stated that special consideration would allow for the category to be by-passed with a random digit assigned for the child.

Wanda Pruett then requested that Jeff send her information related to the encryption of the child's identifier so that she could fully explain the process to families if asked. Jeff agreed. He stated that once the child's identifying information leaves a locality that no one would be able to decode it due to an encryption mechanism.

Leslie Snead posed the question as to what would happen if a family chose not to consent to the use of the child's social security number. Shirley Ricks replied that public agencies could obtain social security numbers if necessary but that consent is preferred.

Glen Slonneger then asked if parents could look at the information on-line. Jeff responded "no". He stated that it was up to each locality to determine access.

Vicki Beatty asked if the information is encrypted from the beginning then how can it be linked to MIMS and to the Health Department? She further stated that as a parent, she may not want her information given to the Health Department. Jeff clarified that the information for MIMS is aggregated and not individual. He further clarified that ITOTS information was not going to be provided to the Health Department. He stated that the only information related to the Health Department was the automatic referral from a hospital to a locality that is currently being piloted. Related to ITOTS, there will not be an identifiable social security number but an encryption according to Jeff.

~~Related to the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS), discussion was held as to the need for the same algorithm to be used if there was to be the linkage and identification Part C children. Deborah Sprang expressed the need for DMAS to be included in the dialogue in order for this to happen. This was identified as not a technological issue but a policy issue. Deborah Sprang indicated that DMAS has not been approached regarding compatibility of the algorithms for iTOTS and that DMAS should be at the table to discuss how the program could communicate in a way to identify kids in the Part C and Medicaid system. Part C has been working on this data for three years and DMAS has not been involved. Deborah Sprang agreed to get a contact person at DMAS to help with data for iTOTS.~~

Debbie Billodeaux expressed concern that the encoded information would not get to the cost of services. Jeff stated that Phase II would capture those services delivered and the actual costs. It would provide better estimates of what the cost is but not who.

Leslie Snead then asked about whom would be providing the training to hospitals related to VISITS. Pat Dewey stated that the Health Department would take care of the training and that the pilot at CHKD would be used for 3 months. She clarified that the pilot involved referrals being made electronically through ITOTS rather than via the telephone. She reiterated that after the pilot the possibility of expansion would be determined. She stated that the system was designed as another avenue to help Part C

with child find. Brenda Crockett asked who the contact people were at CHKD. Pat stated that those individuals were Rachel White, Donna Englestad and Martha Jones.

### **Infrastructure**

Shirley Ricks reported that the Part C infrastructure is comprised of the Virginia Interagency Coordinating Council (VICC), Early Intervention Agencies Committee (EIAC), Early Intervention Interagency Management Team (EIIMT) and Local Interagency Coordinating Councils (LICCs). She reported that Part C, along with other departments, were being asked to look at the current systems and determine if changes should be made. Shirley further reported that the question was raised by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) as to the legality of council coordinators to sign contracts. Part C was asked to look at the pros and cons of the infrastructure and to address the issue of legality. Shirley explained that Local Interagency Coordinating Councils are not public entities and that they must pick a public entity to serve as their fiscal agents.

Shirley reported that a work group, consisting of stakeholders, is being formed to look at the issue. It is anticipated that the group will have information available by mid-October to November with the results possibly being a different structure. The Code of Virginia would have to be amended if the structure was changed, according to Shirley. Possible changes to the Early Intervention Interagency Management Team were also mentioned. Pat Dewey expressed that extensive thought should be put into the process and she questioned as to whether four (4) months was adequate time.

Colleen Kraft stated that localities are the strength of the system and that she had concerns over the potential for programs to become regional. She expressed that she did not want to see individuals having to travel to provide services. Shirley responded that the legal issue of the authority of the council coordinators had to be address. Pam Johnson asked if the legal issue had been addressed in the contract and if so, where? Shirley responded that fiscal agents were required to sign contracts. Mary Ann Discenza responded that the Code of Virginia spelled out the requirement of the fiscal agent to sign the contract but that nothing was said related to the legality of the council coordinator. The OAG has indicated that the Department should continue doing what was being done for now to implement Part C program and have the fiscal agent on behalf of the LICCs to sign the contracts but the situation must be "fixed".

Debbie Billodeaux stated that it would be helpful if the OAG laid out options to assist with the situation. Shirley stated that it was up to the work group to develop the options and that the options should then be forwarded to the OAG for their review. Pam Johnson stated that the OAG is the council for the agency and that legal assistance should be provided.

### **Annual Report**

David Mills then provided an update on the Part C annual report. He stated that an annual report was required by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and that tables had been provided with information to be filled in. David then displayed an eight (8) page gate-folded report that will be provided as the annual report. He stated that Secretary Jane Woods had agreed to write a letter of support to include with the report. Graphs were also shown in the report that represent successes and

challenges. David reported that the report is still in the draft form. Shirley Ricks, and the entire group, expressed their appreciation to David for the work he has done on the annual report.

### **Second Annual Conference**

Beverly Crouse provided information related to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Early Intervention Conference. She stated that the conference dates had been set for Tuesday and Wednesday, November 18-19, 2003, at the Hotel Roanoke in Roanoke. Beverly reported that plans were well underway by the Integrated Work Group and that the conference was planned to accommodate 400 people this year.

### **National Significance Project**

Beth Tolley asked Wanda Pruett to begin the update by providing parent feedback related to the Phase II Natural Environments Training. Wanda reported that feedback had been mixed based on the differences in trainers that were provided in locations. She stated that Scottie Burnette, a Family Involvement Project Parent Representative, had attended a training and that she began the training with concerns related to the natural environment philosophy. However, Wanda reported that Scotty changed her outlook and became excited about the information. She stated that Scotty believed that the natural environments philosophy of incorporating the activities into the family's daily routines and activities, and the philosophy of a primary service provider, was not an issue of money but was truly in the best interest of the child. Additionally, Scotty embraced the concept that intervention was not just the therapist's job but that the parent/caregiver had the biggest impact on the child. Wanda stated that how this information was expressed to the family was critical and that families needed to know that this approach was based on evidence-based research and was shown as being the best for the child.

Beth Tolley then reported that six (6) regional trainings had been provided as part of Phase II of the Natural Environments Training. She stated that two training teams had provided the trainings as part of the National Significance Grant from the University of Connecticut. Beth stated that the trainings were advertised for family involvement but that few parents actually attended. Wanda Pruett expressed that numerous parents actually did attend as service providers but did not identify themselves as parents.

Beth emphasized the need for providers to provide clear, total accurate and up-to-date information to families related to the natural environments approach. She stated that the approach is evidence-based and has been shown to be what works for children.

Over four hundred (400) attended the trainings according to Beth. She stated that the federal law views early intervention as "enhancing the capacity of families to help their children" and that the trainings emphasized this approach. She stressed the need for providers to look at what families are doing and work the intervention into their activities. Beth reported that the approach de-emphasizes a hands-on therapy approach and focuses on family coaching.

The following challenges were identified by Beth:

- The third-party payor system is based on a deficit model and is child-focused to support an intervention model that is strength-based and emphasizes building the capacity of families to help their children;

- The learning curve for providers;
- Making time (and paying for it) for teaming; and
- Physician awareness and support.

Beth concluded with identifying the next steps, some of which are currently in process:

- Local Regional Direct Services (LRDS) Committee- debriefing; next steps, consideration of need for changes to the IFSP/instructions, etc.;
- Making the handouts from the training widely available including posting on the web;
- Service Guidelines (input was sought from participants);
- IFSP and Outcomes samples;
- Review at regional council coordinator meetings;
- Review and revision, as needed of existing training and TA materials for consistency;
- Incorporate any needed changes into policy revision that is occurring this year;
- Individual councils have planned various ways to implement changes; and
- October 1-3, 2003 Phase III.

**Other Business**

Brenda Laws then called for any other business. Shirley Ricks provided further clarification on the VICC retreat stating that plans are still being made. She stated that information will be made available as soon as possible to members and that ideas are needed from the members as to what they think should be included in the retreat.

There was no other business.

Brenda Laws adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

June 11, 2003 VICC Meeting Attendance

**VICC Members**

Dr. James Blackman  
 Dr. Willie Bragg  
 Bethany Cooke  
 Pat Dewey

Delly Greenburg  
 Pam Johnson  
 Dr. Colleen Kraft  
 Brenda Laws

Karla Melton  
 Shirley Ricks  
 Glen Slonneger  
 Deborah Sprang

**Attendees/  
 Families**

Wanda Pruett  
 Lillian Drew  
 Vicki Beatty

**Committee Membership**

FS&A  
 FS&A  
 PA

Leslie Snead  
Dana Yarborough

PA  
FS&A

**Council Coordinators**

Debbie Billodeaux (Fairfax)  
Brenda Crockett (Chesapeake)  
Katie McCullough (New River Valley)  
Kathy Phillips (Middle Peninsula-Northern Neck)  
Allison Standring (Rappahanock)

PA  
LRDS  
LRDS, Finance Task Force  
CoCoA, Finance Task Force  
MIMS, Integrated Data  
CoCoA, LRDS  
FS&A

Susan Werner (Goochland-Powhattan)

**Providers**

Nancy Butts

**Administration/TA, etc.**

Jeff Harlow  
Phyliss Mondak

**Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia Staff**

Mary Ann Discenza, Virginia Part C Coordinator  
Beverly Crouse  
Karen Durst  
Cathy Fisher  
David Mills  
Beth Tolley  
Mary Anne White

