

STATE OF COLORADO



Colorado Department of Human Services
people who help people



Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor

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Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: CCB Executive Directors
CCB Early Intervention Directors/Part C Coordinators

FROM: Colleen Head
Part C Community Coordinator

DATE: November 1, 2007

SUBJECT: Procedures for children with Sensory Disabilities

This memo is to provide clarification on procedures and expectations related to service coordination, multi-disciplinary assessment and IFSP development for infants and toddlers with visual impairments and/or hearing loss.

The attached documentation from a 2004 memo from Colorado Department of Education (CDE) describes the procedures and expectations set forth and are supported by Colorado Department of Human Services/Division for Developmental Disabilities (DDD) as the lead agency for Part C and the early intervention system in Colorado.

To: Local Part C Coordinators, Service Coordinators, and Service Coordinator Leads
From: Elizabeth Hepp, Colorado Department of Education
Date: April 2004
Re: Part C System Procedures for Children with Sensory Disabilities

This memo is to provide clarification on procedures and expectations related to service coordination, multi-disciplinary assessment and IFSP development for infants and toddlers with visual impairments and/or hearing loss.

There are approximately 250 Colorado children, birth-12 months of age, who are identified each year with a sensory disability. In order to be as effective as possible in supporting the needs of their families, it is essential that those with expertise in sensory impairment and those working as service coordinators in local communities function as members of the same team, working in partnership with each other and with other professionals and the families. Every family's situation is different and the partnership may look different for each family.

The Part C procedures for children with sensory impairments are the same procedures as for any child entering the Part C system. This memo is to clarify the roles of people and organizations that have expertise specific to sensory impairment.

In all cases the local school district's Child Find team is responsible for the initial multidisciplinary evaluation and for participating in the development of the initial IFSP. An infant or toddler whose primary disability is sensory loss must have a team member with expertise specific to that disability. If the district's Child Find team does not have personnel with that expertise, they should utilize existing Colorado resources. Colorado has specially trained and/or qualified personnel to offer expertise to local teams and to families about infants and toddlers with sensory disabilities. By participating in the multidisciplinary assessment and the IFSP process, these individuals contribute their knowledge and expertise to the development of a plan that is appropriate for an infant or toddler with a sensory disability.

Expertise in Visual Impairment: Persons with this specific expertise include teachers endorsed in the area of visual impairment (TVI) and certified orientation and mobility specialists. Colorado has such personnel who are additionally trained in the area of early childhood. Anchor Center for Blind Children (ACBC) has an outreach program, as does the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind (CSDB). The names of these appropriately qualified personnel are identified in the attached document.

Expertise in Hearing Loss: The Colorado Hearing Resource (CO-Hear) Coordinators, who are employed by the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind, have expertise that includes early childhood specialization as well as CDE licensure as teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing, speech/language pathologists, and/or educational audiologists. These regionally-based CO-Hear Coordinators have also participated in Colorado's Service Coordination Core Training. The names of the CO-Hear Coordinators and their respective counties are identified in the attached document.

There should always be a collaborative relationship between the CO-Hear Coordinator, the Anchor Center, or CSDB's Infant Toddler Program or any personnel specifically qualified to address the needs of infants and toddlers with sensory impairment and the local Part C service coordinator and other members of the multidisciplinary team. In order to support the spirit of collaboration and partnership, we recommend that each community consider the following:

1. If the referral of a child with a sensory disability is received first by the local community, an appropriate resource for children with sensory disabilities will be contacted to consult with the service coordinator and to participate in the multidisciplinary assessment and IFSP process (Vision: local school district vision specialist, Anchor Center, CSDB; Hearing: local school district audiologist or other hearing specialist, CO-Hear Coordinator, or other local appropriately qualified personnel).
2. If the referral of a child with a sensory disability is received first by an agency specific to that disability, the local early intervention system will be contacted to initiate the multidisciplinary assessment and IFSP process. The IFSP team may determine that the CO-Hear Coordinator or another person with expertise specific to the child's disability would be the most appropriate person to act as the Service Coordinator as long as that person has completed Service Coordination Core Training and agrees to fulfill all of the responsibilities of Part C Service Coordination and to participate in local service coordination training activities. Questions pertaining to the sensory disability should be directed to appropriately qualified personnel.

An ongoing spirit of collaboration and partnership on behalf of young children with their sensory disabilities is essential to address the needs of infants and toddlers and their families and to facilitate appropriate planning and smooth transitions.

Cc: Colorado Hearing Resource (CO-Hear) Coordinators
Anchor Center for Blind Children
Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind/Infant and Toddler Program
Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind/Colorado Home Intervention Program
Child Find Coordinators

Federal Part C Definitions of Services Specific to Children with Sensory Impairments (Section 303.12(d))

(2) Audiology Services

- a) Identification and ongoing assessment of an infant or toddler with an auditory impairment and determination of the range, nature and degree of hearing loss and communication function;
- b) skills of an infant or toddler with a significant hearing loss;
- c) Determination of an infant's or toddler's need for individual amplification, such as a hearing aid, and selecting, fitting and dispensing appropriate amplification and evaluating the effectiveness of the amplification; Collaboration with the family, service coordinator and other early intervention service providers identified on an infant's or toddler's IFSP;
- d) When necessary, provide referral for community services, health or other professional services;
- e) Provision of services including auditory training, aural rehabilitation, sign language and cued language services and other training to increase the functional communication
- f) Family training, education and support provided to assist the family of an infant or toddler with a significant hearing loss in understanding his or her functional developmental needs related to the hearing loss and to enhance his or her development.

(14) Vision Services

- (1) Assessment and intervention services to address the functional developmental needs of an infant or toddler with a significant vision impairment with an emphasis on sensory development, communication skills development, orientation and mobility skill development and adaptive skills training
- (2) Collaboration with the family, service coordinator and other early intervention service providers identified on an infant's or toddler's IFSP;
- (3) When necessary, provide referral for community services, health or other professional services;
- (4) Consultation to adapt the environment to promote development, access and participation of an infant or toddler with a significant vision impairment;
- (5) Family training, education and support provided to assist the family of an infant or toddler with a significant vision impairment in understanding his or her functional developmental needs related to the vision impairment and to enhance his or her development.