

Local Interagency Coordinating Councils

Introduction

Local Interagency Coordinating Councils are community-based advisory groups for the implementation of a birth to five interagency system of early intervention services. Local Interagency Coordinating Councils provide opportunities for service providers to be involved in activities such as child find and public awareness, community needs assessment, system evaluation, and professional development. It is recommended that a Local Interagency Coordinating Council be organized for each county.

Membership

Membership of a Local Interagency Coordinating Council should include, but not be limited to:

- representatives (mid-level to upper level managers recommended) of agencies providing services for children with special needs, birth to five years. These may include the Children's Developmental Services Agency, county Department of Social Services, local Health Department, Mental Health Local Management Entity, Local Education Agency Preschool Program, Head Start/Early Head Start, Governor Morehead Preschool Program, Early Intervention Program for Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, private providers such as specialized therapists, home health agencies;
- families and parents of children with special needs;
- family advocacy and other support groups;
- civic groups that provide services to or advocate for children with special needs and their families, including churches, Civitans, Junior Women's League, Lions Club, Shriners;
- community leaders including county commissioners, city managers, health and mental health board members, business leaders, staff from parks and recreation, and
- child care and early childhood groups or organizations including Smart Start, Child Resource and Referral agencies, county Day Care Associations or a local affiliate of the North Carolina Association for the Education of Young Children, More At Four.

Responsibilities of the Local Interagency Coordinating Council

The role of the Local Interagency Coordinating Council is to:

- develop and disseminate county specific public awareness, transitions, and child find materials ;
- foster interagency collaboration and information sharing;
- promote parent and family involvement in all community activities; and
- encourage community efforts supporting inclusion of children with special needs and their families.

Sub-committees may be appointed as need arises for such issues as transition, transportation, public relations, or child find, as well as to handle specific tasks of the Local Interagency Coordinating Council. Because Local Interagency Coordinating Council meetings are generally public meetings, a specific child or family must be discussed in such a way as to protect the confidentiality of the child and family.

It is strongly recommended that Local Interagency Coordinating Councils write by-laws and other operating procedures. Such procedures would include the mission of the Local Interagency Coordinating Council; goals and objectives; meeting times and places; election of officers; and selection of committee members. An excellent resource for Local Interagency Coordinating Councils is the *Local Interagency Coordinating Council Handbook*, available from the Early Intervention Branch, Division of Public Health or via the Early Intervention website at www.ncei.org.

The Local Interagency Coordinating Council Support Committee of the North Carolina Interagency Coordinating Council is a support system for local councils. This Committee is composed of both parent and professional volunteers who are appointed by the North Carolina Interagency Coordinating Council Co-Chairpersons. Many of these volunteers are also active members of local councils within their home communities. Activities of the Local Interagency Coordinating Council Support Committee of the North Carolina Interagency Coordinating Council include:

- maintaining a current listing of chairpersons of Local Interagency Coordinating Councils;
- facilitating communication between Local Interagency Coordinating Councils and the North Carolina Interagency Coordinating Council;
- awarding mini-grants to support the activities of Local Interagency Coordinating Councils, and
- developing orientation materials for Local Interagency Coordinating Councils.

The names of the Co-Chairpersons of the Local Interagency Coordinating Council Support Committee, both parent and professional, and how to communicate with them is available by contacting the North Carolina Interagency Coordinating Council, Early Intervention Branch, Division of Public Health, 1916 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1916. Telephone: (919) 707-5520 or Fax: (919)-870-4834 or at the North Carolina Early Intervention website: www.ncei.org.