

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

Introduction

North Carolina must assure that persons who serve children enrolled in the Infant-Toddler Program are adequately prepared and continue their professional development throughout their careers. A comprehensive system of personnel development is required by the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs to ensure that an adequate number of staff in the disciplines involved in early intervention is available. This federally required component of Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act focuses on birth to three year olds; however, in North Carolina there is a collaborative personnel development effort for persons who work with children aged birth to five years. This collaboration is present in committees that focus on the planning and delivery of birth to five personnel development, such as the Professional Education Committee of the North Carolina Interagency Coordinating Council and the Birth-Kindergarten Higher Education Consortium.

The North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development outlines the basic requirements and training opportunities for early intervention personnel. It describes current and related training and service delivery system priorities among the collaborating partners. Statewide, there is a wide range of children and families, service providers, and agencies. The services mandated or recommended for children include a variety of disciplines and educational levels. The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development allows for flexibility and individualization of continuing personnel development and for the education of parents of children with special needs and other family members.

In-Service Training

Many staff members continue their formal education through community college, college, or university settings. At initial employment, service providers begin learning the procedures described in the *Infant-Toddler Program Policy and Procedure Manual*. All Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA) staff who provide direct services must take the online courses: *Orientation to Early Intervention in North Carolina* and *Needs, Dreams and IFSPs* course (available Spring 2008) within the first year of employment. Enrolled ITP service providers are strongly encouraged to take the online courses to augment their understanding of the Infant Toddler Program. *Orientation to Early Intervention in North Carolina* provides an interagency overview of the broad system of early intervention, in addition to information about the processes and procedures for the Infant-Toddler Program. *Needs, Dreams, and IFSPs* offers new employees specific instruction in the development and implementation of Individualized Family Service Plans.

Infant-Toddler Program Personnel Certification

The Infant-Toddler Program administers a credentialing program required for all CDSA staff who provide direct service and enrolled Infant-Toddler Program service providers of community-based rehabilitative services and service coordination, regardless of level of education, professional license or certification. Certification reviewers at CDSAs examine the skills of service providers through review of

coursework and observation and recommend staff for the appropriate certificate. The document entitled *North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program: Guidance for Personnel Certification* provides instruction for acquiring the certification. Continuing renewal is required.

The CDSA is responsible for ensuring that Infant-Toddler Program service providers demonstrate thorough knowledge, education, background, and skill-appropriate training as mandated and required by the Infant-Toddler Program.

For more information about personnel certification, contact North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program, Early Intervention Branch, Division of Public Health, 1916 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1916. Telephone: (919) 707-5520.

Technical Assistance and Consultation

Technical assistance and consultation are provided in a variety of topics through the Regional Early Intervention Consultants and consultants from other agencies. The processes and procedures in the Infant-Toddler Program Manual are a frequent topic of technical assistance. Resource materials such as specialized guidance documents and website forms are used to provide technical assistance and can be accessed online at www.ncei.org.

Early Intervention Publications and Resources

State agencies involved in early intervention have developed many written documents for parents and professionals to aid them in the implementation of the Infant-Toddler Program. Materials available to families and staff include the *Infant-Toddler Program Policy and Procedure Manual*, NC Infant-Toddler Program Parent Handbook, a child and family rights brochure, and the Individualized Family Service Plan form. Guidance documents on specific topics also are available and can be accessed online at www.ncei.org.

The Central Directory of Resources at Family Support Network of North Carolina provides information about disabilities and statewide resources. The Central Directory of Resources provides a list of public and private services, resources, and experts that support families with infants and toddlers and the specific services they offer; as well as information about access and eligibility for their services and/or resources. It includes information helpful for families with preschool-aged children as well, since children must transition out of the EI program by age three and may need support and information as they transition to another program.

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