

Role of Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) Members

Membership

New Hampshire ICC members are nominated by members and appointed by the Governor and have included over the years:

- Parents of children with disabilities (from one year of age to twelve years of age),
- Representatives of state agencies that serve young children and their families (including education, health, child care, Head Start and social services),
- Direct providers of early supports and services,
- Advocates for children with disabilities,
- Liaisons from the Governor's office,
- Representatives from institutions of higher education who prepare professionals to work with children with disabilities and their families,
- State legislators,
- People with knowledge and expertise in health insurance (including Medicaid),
- Early childhood program providers (child care, preschool special education, Head Start) and
- Medical professionals.

This diverse membership is critical to assisting the Bureau of Developmental Services (BDS) in overseeing the Family-Centered Early Supports and Services system. Every effort is made to have members from as many different regions of the state as possible. The "culture" of different communities needs to be represented to provide different perspectives.

The ICC is pleased to welcome new members. Please refer to the current membership list and member background information, and ask for the name of a "seasoned" member whom you can contact with questions. The ICC chair or staff from the Bureau of Developmental Services can assist with this. New members are asked to fill out a member background form that will be shared with other members.



Activities

The ICC has assisted the lead agency in identifying areas in the New Hampshire Early Supports And Services Program that needed attention and by providing valuable feedback. The ICC has also provided feedback to the Department of Education, Special Education regarding the preschool special education program. Members have engaged in activities designed to enhance the system, which have included:

- Suggesting and attending educational speakers, workshops, and conferences,
- Publishing documents,
- Influencing federal and state legislation,
- Forming of subcommittees (see below),
- Developing and reviewing pilot projects,
- Collecting data,
- Reviewing fiscal information,
- Forming task forces,
- Facilitating regional and statewide meetings,
- Establishing a clearinghouse of information,
- Conducting surveys, and
- Attending annual retreats.

Many of the topics and issues that the ICC has decided to take action on have required that a subcommittee be established to review pertinent information and meet more frequently than the ICC. Members who join a subcommittee usually have an interest or investment in the identified topic. Through work on a subcommittee, members learn more about each other as well as the topic of interest. Currently the only subcommittees meeting on a regular basis are the planning committee and the membership committee, but the following are examples of subcommittees that have been formed in the past:

- Parent Partnerships,
- Data Policy,
- Screening and Assessment,
- Policy Development,
- Personnel Preparation,
- Data Management,
- Sliding Fee Scale,
- Interagency Regional Forums,
- EI Mission/Vision,
- Public Awareness,

- Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD),
- Insurance,
- Healthcare Indicators Document,
- Managed Care,
- Reorganization (of Lead Agency),
- Welfare Reform,
- Self-Assessment, and
- By-laws and self governance.

It is not a requirement that you join a subcommittee, however, if you have a particular interest or perspective to offer, it is hoped that you will consider joining one.



Structure

The ICC meets every other month throughout the year, on the first Friday in the months of February, April, June, and August. The Annual Retreat is typically scheduled for the first Friday in November. Meetings are three hours long (9:30 – 12:30). A calendar of meetings is available, and reminder notices are sent out before each meeting. Members are asked to RSVP to assure adequate seating and materials.

In rare instances, members may need to be notified that a meeting is cancelled, such as when not enough members are planning to attend or inclement weather is predicted. Meetings are held in a centrally located, accessible, public space.

Meeting materials are disseminated by e-mail prior to the meeting. If a member misses a meeting, the member is invited to provide input regarding agenda topics. When a vote is indicated on the agenda, members who are not able to attend are requested to ask another member to cast a proxy vote for them. It is expected that members will make every effort to attend meetings regularly.

Meetings are facilitated by the ICC chair, or vice-chair if the chair is unavailable. A BDS staff member and the ICC Secretary typically take the meeting notes, however in their absence, another member may be called upon to assist with this duty.

Staff from the Bureau of Developmental Services arrange meetings, receive RSVP's, provide information on a regular basis at the meetings, and are available to members at any time. These staff members are not voting members of the ICC, but are present at all meetings to support the ICC. There are times when an invited guest will make a brief presentation or answer questions from the ICC.

The public is always welcome to attend any ICC meeting, and time is made at the end of the meeting to accept any public comment.

Subcommittees typically meet between the scheduled ICC meetings at the convenience of their members. The issue being addressed and the availability of the subcommittee members determine the frequency of these meetings.

Occasionally, the Bureau of Developmental Services or other ICC members may need a response to an inquiry or feedback on a document between meetings. Members will be notified by mail, fax, and/or e-mail. Members' prompt responses in these situations are appreciated.

Periodically, the ICC decides that a retreat is necessary to address a number of important issues in a longer meeting format. The ICC will decide when this is necessary and will determine the logistics of the retreat. In the past, this typically has occurred once per year and provided quality time for sharing, planning, and setting new directions.

Parents

Parents of children with disabilities particularly those that are or have received services from NH's Early Supports and Services Programs represent an important perspective that needs to be heard at each meeting. Part C of IDEA requires that 20% of the ICC membership be comprised of parents of children with disabilities. Parents are expected to fully participate in meetings. Each parent's voice is no less important than that of any other member of the ICC, and needs to be heard and encouraged. To facilitate attendance at meetings, the ICC is prepared to reimburse families for child care and mileage expenses. Family members should see a representative from the Bureau of Developmental Services for the appropriate paperwork.

National surveys have revealed that parent members of ICCs need three things to function effectively:

- Respect,
- Information, and
- Support.

It is expected that all members will provide these to all other members, but especially to parent members. Parents are encouraged to ask questions to gain clarification.

Family members have been vital in sharing what is working and what is not working in the Family-Centered Early Supports and Services system. They have served as an important link to information from other parents not represented on the ICC. They often see gaps in supports and services that are not apparent at a policy level. They are a constant reminder of the philosophy of “family-centered”. As their children have transitioned to the school system, they have provided invaluable information on transition and the preschool system some children will eventually experience, and feedback on all aspects of their experience.

There are some parent members who are also professionals in the field. The ICC is fortunate to have them participating, as they bring an integrated perspective that few people can have. They can often model for parents who have less experience with “agency representatives” to ask questions, disagree if a comment does not feel accurate, and educate others on subjects the parents know intimately.

All ICC members give of their time and energy, and the Bureau of Developmental Services appreciates the dedication and contribution of all participants. The participation of family members is particularly appreciated. The ability to speak about their personal situation, add another commitment to a full schedule, and work on behalf of all families in New Hampshire is admirable. The ICC chair or staff from the Bureau of Developmental Services can facilitate finding a parent mentor on the ICC to assist parents to adjust to work on the Council.



Responsibilities of an ICC Member

The following are some of the responsibilities of an ICC member:

- Supporting the ICC mission and vision,
- Being familiar with the New Hampshire Family-Centered Early Supports and Services system and Part C of IDEA (refer to the ICC Notebook), as well as the preschool special education program and Part B/619 of the IDEA,
- Attending meetings regularly, and calling in advance if not able to attend,
- Serving on subcommittee(s), if interest, and perspective is relevant,
- Responding in a timely manner to requests for feedback on documents or other items,
- Providing technical assistance to the other members from your role on the ICC,
- Avoiding speaking in “jargon” or acronyms, so everyone will understand your information,
- Presenting ideas, information, resources, and concerns to the ICC as appropriate,
- Representing the ICC on committees, advisory boards, or other related groups, as appropriate,
- Respecting confidentiality of information exchanged at ICC meetings, as appropriate, and sharing ICC documents only after the ICC releases them for public dissemination.
- Advising key personnel of any changes in your contact information or role,
- Listening to others respectfully at meetings,
- Contacting the ICC chair or Bureau of Developmental Services for clarification of any issues or concerns, and
- Avoiding conflict of interest situations.