



Department of Public Health and Human Services

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Steve Bullock, Governor

Sheila Hogan, Director

April 20, 2017

Mike Mahoney
Family Outreach
1212 Helena Avenue
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Re: Letter of Determination
Family Outreach Annual Performance Report for Montana Milestones/Part C Early
Intervention Program (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016)

Montana Milestones/Part C Early Intervention Program used two specific implementation drivers to review the overall quality of the Family Outreach – Part C Early Intervention program for Federal Year 2015 in addition to Family Outreach's self-assessment. The monitoring mechanisms capture a broad representation of compliance and results indicators.

The data gathered distinguishes practices, policies, and procedures that are well-executed and reveal quality practices and corresponding results. Additionally, particular issues identified require improvement approaches and strategies to meet compliance indicators and/or results indicators. The improvement proposals are generated by Family Outreach to address monitoring findings and monitored by the program's Quality Improvement Specialists, Joe Beneventi, Brooke Bartholomew, and Alexis Marthaller, and the Part C Coordinator, Wendy Studt. The expected outcome is increased compliance and quality measured in terms of results as well as identification of needed technical assistance to achieve improved results for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

(1) Montana's Comprehensive Monitoring Tool reviews a randomized statistically valid sample (based upon FY 2015 Child Count Data) for the following components:

- Program Management
- Multidisciplinary Teams
- Qualified Personnel
- Evaluation and Assessment
- IFSP development
- IFSP implementation
- Outcomes quality and implementation
- Family Interview

(2) Montana's data management system, the Early Intervention (EI) Module, manages the full data lifecycle needs of Montana Milestones/Part C Early Intervention Program. The data identified during the comprehensive monitoring process is conditional upon the validity and reliability of the data as entered by Family Outreach staff. The database is an organized collection of:

- IFSP records;
- Child Outcomes records;
- Transition records;
- Exit records
- Child Outcomes Summary data;
- Child Counts;
- Exiting Reports;
- Child Outcomes Analysis;
- IFSP status;
- Notification reports of potentially eligible children;
- Transition conferences reports;
- Part B service referrals;
- IFSP services;
- Children turning age 3 transition reports; and
- Children turning age 8 transition reports.

Family Outreach Exemplary Practices:

- Family Outreach's data indicates 63% of children exiting Part C in FY 2015 are included in Family Outreach's Child Outcomes data. Family Outreach has an effective procedure for recording Child Outcomes ratings at baseline and exit.
- Family Outreach's Family Survey response rate continues to be excellent, 63% for FY 2015.
- Family Outreach used Family Survey Results to enhance program planning:
 - To evaluate services being provided;
 - To identify areas of strengths and needs related to parental rights, effective communication for child's needs, and child development;
 - To identify training needs; and
 - To determine if grievance/appeal process is followed.
- Family Outreach Family Support Specialists create child-focused outcomes that encourage participation in routines, relate to the family priorities, and have reasonable time frames.

- Families interviewed gave very positive responses to all or almost all survey questions. When asked to elaborate on their positive responses, parents stated that they loved and adored working with their Family Support Specialists who they view as sources of help and information.
- All Family Support Specialists obtained the proper certification and training. Several are now Master Coaches. All Family Support Specialists are qualified to perform assessments to determine eligibility.
- Family Support Specialists work with families to hold both the six month and annual reviews at the family's convenience and ensure the meetings are held within the required timelines. Family Outreach data indicated an increase in timeliness for the development of IFSPs over FY 2014.
- Families reported good understanding of the intake process.
- Family Support Specialists schedule home visits to accommodate individual family schedules and make efforts to reschedule home visits when scheduling conflicts occur.

Family Outreach Improvement Plans and timelines:

- To ensure families' ability to access the procedural safeguards video, "Let's Chat About Early Intervention," Family Outreach staff will provide training regarding the dissemination of the procedural safeguards information to families during intake. Parents will initial the form for documentation purposes (accepted 12/14/16). The training agenda and participant list will be provided to the Quality Improvement Specialists, and Wendy Studt, Part C Coordinator. Monitoring data will be reviewed during the next cycle of comprehensive monitoring for FY 2016 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017).
- To meet the rules and regulations of Part C of IDEA (34 CFR 303.343), Family Outreach staff will identify, by name and role/discipline, the members of the required multi-disciplinary team developing the initial and annual IFSP (accepted 1/5/17). In the event a required team member could not attend, Family Support Specialists will use other forms of communication (written report, phone call, WebEx, etc.) and will reference that communication on the initial and annual IFSP (accepted 1/5/17). This monitoring data will be reviewed during the next cycle of comprehensive monitoring for FY 2016 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017).
- Family Outreach staff continues to monitor initial IFSPs to identify and eliminate barriers to meeting the 45-day timeline as well as six month and annual reviews. Family Outreach will provide training to staff regarding the 45-day timeline for an initial IFSP and all other timelines associated with the six month and annual review (accepted 1/5/17). A notification system will be put into place to notify the Supervisor of the 45-day timeline; six month review timeline; and annual review timeline for approval in the

State's data management system (accepted 1/5/17). **Note:** The State's data management system also issues upcoming timeline reminders to both the Family Support Specialist and the agency's identified overseer of the State's data management system. The training agenda and participant list will be provided to the Quality Improvement Specialists, and Wendy Studt, Part C Coordinator. Monitoring data will be reviewed during the next cycle of comprehensive monitoring for FY 2016 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017). **Comment:** the State's data management system records the date the IFSP is completed and submitted to the system. This automated date stamp will continue to be in use, as it has been since March 2013, to ensure consistency across the State.

- Family Outreach will provide training regarding functional outcomes with the Steps for Building IFSP Child and Family Outcomes to ensure participation-based outcomes are written with measurable completion criteria and are free of jargon. Family Support Specialists will learn outcomes link to family concerns and correspond to services identified in the IFSP (accepted 1/5/17). Family Outreach will also update the IFSP approval checklist used by Supervisors to include criteria for child and family outcomes (accepted 1/5/17). The training agenda and participant list will be provided to the Quality Improvement Specialists, and Wendy Studt, Part C Coordinator. The updated IFSP approval checklist will be provided to the Quality Improvement Specialists and Wendy Studt, Part C Coordinator. Monitoring data will be reviewed during the next cycle of comprehensive monitoring for FFY 2016 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017).

The Office of Special Education Programs Evaluation Team(s) reviewed Montana's Annual Performance Report for FY 2014 (July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015) and identified the following systems for targeted State-wide Technical Assistance in FY 2016 and 2017:

- **Child Count:** The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) will provide targeted assistance to improve Montana's state-wide efforts to serve infants (birth to one year of age) and toddlers (one year of age to 3 years of age) thus improving Montana's Section 618 Child Count. Additionally, referral sources (Child Protective Services and hospitals, clinics, and medical personnel focusing upon low birth weight babies) and their impact upon Child Count will be analyzed.
 - Family Outreach Point in Time, Birth to 1 year of age: 37 infants
 - Family Outreach Point in Time, Birth to 3 years of age: 210 infants and toddlers
- **Outcome Data:** OSEP will provide targeted assistance to improve the percentage of children exiting Part C that are included in outcome data.
 - The percentage of children exiting Family Outreach who are included in Family Outreach's outcome data: 63%.

- **Performance Indicators:** OSEP will provide targeted assistance to improve performance outcomes for infants and toddlers in the three global outcomes. Family Outreach's outcomes/results data:
 - **SiMR - Outcome A, Summary Statement 1:** Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome A, 60% substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned three years of age or exited the program.
 - **Outcome A, Summary Statement 2:** 57% of the children were functioning within age expectations in Outcome A by the time they turned three years of age or exited the program.
 - **Outcome B, Summary Statement 1:** Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome A, 57% substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned three years of age or exited the program.
 - **Outcome B, Summary Statement 2:** 39% of the children were functioning within age expectations in Outcome A by the time they turned three years of age or exited the program.
 - **Outcome C, Summary Statement 1:** Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome A, 60% substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned three years of age or exited the program.
 - **Outcome C, Summary Statement 2:** 55% of the children were functioning within age expectations in Outcome A by the time they turned three years of age or exited the program.

Family Outreach's contract with the Montana Milestones/Part C Early Intervention Program is essential to the delivery of Part C of IDEA services in Park, Gallatin, Madison, Beaverhead, Siler Bow, Deer Lodge, Granite, Powell, Lewis and Clark, Jefferson, Broadwater, and Meagher counties. Thank you for your commitment to meeting the requirements of Part C of IDEA and increasing the quality of early intervention in Montana.

Sincerely,

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