



# Department of Public Health and Human Services

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**Steve Bullock, Governor**

**Sheila Hogan, Director**

April 13, 2017

Sheila Doll  
Hi-Line Home Programs  
605 3 Avenue South  
Glasgow, MT 59230-2408

Re: Letter of Determination  
Hi-Line Home Programs 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 Hi-Line Home Programs - Part C Early Intervention program for Federal Year 2015 in addition to Hi-Line'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 Hi-Line to address monitoring findings and monitored by the program's Quality Improvement Specialist, Sandra Carpenter, 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 Hi-Line 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.

#### **Hi-Line Home Programs Exemplary Practices:**

- Hi-Line staff created an internal spreadsheet maintained by the Family Support Specialist to monitor baseline and exit Child Outcomes Summaries. Hi-Line staff also maintains a monthly data base to obtain compliance and results indicator data including Child Outcome Summary baselines and exits.
- Hi-Line used Family Survey Results to enhance program planning:
  - By reviewing each survey and take note on common sections which reflect similar responses. That information is used to guide training of Family Support Specialist.
  - By discussing results and concerns annually at the January Staff Meeting.
- The Quality Improvement Specialist, Sandra Carpenter, identified evaluations and assessments are being conducted by qualified personnel. Primary and Family Support Specialist Assistants are being paired with qualified Family Support Specialists who complete the initial evaluation, assessment, and Routines-Based Interview. Newer personnel receive peer-mentoring and support to identify needed assessment tools.
- Families interviewed had many positive points to share about their experiences receiving Part C of IDEA services from Hi-Line. Many families said while their initial

relationship with Hi-Line staff didn't always begin well, all families identified significant improvements and believed the services and supports were very good. Families iterated that Service Coordination was helpful and they understood the IFSP.

- To ensure timeliness of Part C of IDEA services and supports, The Quality Improvement Specialist found that Hi-Line staff documented extraordinary efforts to meet with families and help them follow-up with meetings and appointments. Hi-Line staff is committed to making connections with different agencies and providers to better meet timelines.
- The Quality Improvement Specialist noted Hi-Line's improvement in the involvement and use of multi-disciplinary teams to develop the initial and annual IFSP. Sandra found evidence this improvement helps Hi-Line staff create an effective IFSP that families understand and implement in their daily routines.
- The Quality Improvement Specialist identified that a greater majority of IFSPs written by Hi-Line staff members included better quality child and family outcomes thus increasing the overall quality of the IFSP and improving its usefulness for families.
- The Quality Improvement Specialist found supports and services identified in the IFSP are being followed as Hi-Line staff members are committed to finding resources and making connections with families. Families interviewed were able to specifically state that Service Coordination was extremely beneficial.

#### **Hi-Line Improvement Plans and timelines:**

- Hi-Line Home Programs will provide training January 20, 2017 to address the quality of child and family outcomes written in IFSPs by Family Support Specialists (accepted 12/30/16). A copy of materials presented as well as a list of participants from the training will be provided to Sandra Carpenter, Quality Improvement Specialist, and Wendy Studt, MT Part C Coordinator. Hi-line Program staff intend to perform more careful reviews of IFSPs before their submission in the State's data management system (accepted 12/30/16). This monitoring data will be reviewed during the next cycle of comprehensive monitoring for FY 2016 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017).
- Hi-Line Home Program staff will provide additional training to new staff to ensure IFSPs include outcomes that are measurable; outcomes are related to family priorities and concerns; and services and supports with funding sources are accurately noted on January 20, 2017 (accepted 12/30/16). A copy of materials presented as well as a list of participants from the training will be provided to Sandra Carpenter, Quality Improvement Specialist, and Wendy Studt, MT Part C Coordinator. This monitoring data will be reviewed during the next cycle of comprehensive monitoring for FY 2016 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017).

- Hi-Line Home Programs staff will continue to monitor the timeliness of initial, six month reviews, and annual reviews (accepted 12/30/16). The Supervisor creates a schedule for each new child and Family Support Specialist outlining timelines. Intentional monitoring of the timelines will be performed by the Supervisor. **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. This monitoring data will be reviewed during the next cycle of comprehensive monitoring for FY 2016 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017).
- Hi-Line Home Programs staff will provide training on January 20, 2017 on how to complete periodic reviews and add new information as it is received to the IFSP. Program staff will monitor this monthly to ensure changes have been made (accepted 12/30/16). A copy of materials presented as well as a list of participants from the training will be provided to Sandra Carpenter, Quality Improvement Specialist, and Wendy Studt, MT Part C Coordinator. This monitoring data will be reviewed during the next cycle of comprehensive monitoring for FY 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.
  - Hi-Line Point in Time, Birth to 1 year of age: 7 infants
  - Hi-Line Point in Time, Birth to 3 years of age: 31 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 Hi-Line who are included in Hi-Line’s outcome data: 76%.
- **Performance Indicators:** OSEP will provide targeted assistance to improve performance outcomes for infants and toddlers in the three global outcomes. Hi-Line’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, 74% substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned three years of age or exited the program.

- Outcome A, Summary Statement 2: 26% 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, 63% substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned three years of age or exited the program.
- Outcome B, Summary Statement 2: 17% 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, 78% substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned three years of age or exited the program.
- Outcome C, Summary Statement 2: 32% of the children were functioning within age expectations in Outcome A by the time they turned three years of age or exited the program.

Hi-Line Home Programs' contract with the Montana Milestones/Part C Early Intervention Program is essential to the delivery of Part C of IDEA services in Daniels, McCone, Phillips, Richland, Roosevelt, Sheridan, and Valley 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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