



# Department of Public Health and Human Services

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**Steve Bullock, Governor**

**Sheila Hogan, Director**

April 13, 2017

Kerry Dattilo  
Quality Life Concepts  
215 Smelter Avenue NE  
Great Falls, MT 59404

Re: Letter of Determination  
Quality Life Concepts 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 Quality Life Concept's (QLC) – Part C Early Intervention program for Federal Year 2015 in addition to QLC'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 QLC to address monitoring findings and monitored by the program's Quality Improvement Specialist, Lori Wertz, 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 QLC 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.

#### **QLC Exemplary Practices:**

- QLC used Family Survey Results to enhance program planning:
  - Share survey results with staff and employ brainstorming strategies to determine how to inform families of QLC's objectives and determine services provided are what families need.
  - QLC will use the survey results to review overall satisfaction data and, with input from the staff, identify means to increase satisfaction.
- QLC's supervisory staff currently monitors entry and exit COS entries. Following the completion of the COS training process in FY 2016, QLC intends to monitor through random sampling.
- Families reported during interviews with the Quality Improvement Specialist, Lori Wertz that excellent services were provided in a timely manner. Some families cited specific staff as consistently 'willing to go the extra mile;' 'my son's guardian angel – without her, we couldn't do what we have done;' and 'early intervention makes the difference.' All families reported progress with their children as a result of early intervention and the services they receive.

- Quality Improvement Specialist, Lori Wertz, used file reviews to find evidence that families were receiving more services than were outlined in the IFSP. Service Coordination, in particular, was consistently provided at or in exceedance of the IFSP services documentation and families consistently reported staff services were integral and important to their child’s progress.

**QLC Improvement Plans and timelines:**

- QLC will provide on-going training for writing family-focused outcomes (accepted 12/30/16). Training is scheduled for all Family Support Specialists in January 2017. The results of comprehensive monitoring were shared with staff and they were reminded of the importance of writing appropriate outcomes. A copy of materials presented as well as a list of participants from the training will be provided to Lori Wertz, Quality Improvement Specialist, and Wendy Studt, MT Part C Coordinator. All initial IFSPs are required to be reviewed by the Family Support Specialist Supervisor. Supervisors and the Director are updating QLC’s IFSP review form to reflect the Part C of IDEA regulations and any changes in the State’s data management system. A copy of the IFSP review form will be provided to Lori Wertz, 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).
- QLC will meet the criterion for procedural safeguards by modifying the Consent for the Use of Private Insurance to include documentation of the “Let’s Chat About Early Intervention” video and procedural safeguards information. This will be completed at all Part C intakes (accepted 12/6/16). The revised document will be provided to Lori Wertz, 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).
- QLC will continue to monitor the timeliness of initial, six month reviews, and annual reviews (accepted 12/6/16). All Family Support Specialists are required to review upcoming timelines with their supervisors on a monthly basis. **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).

**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.
  - QLC Point in Time, Birth to 1 year of age: 18 infants
  - QLC Point in Time, Birth to 3 years of age: 109 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 QLC who are included in QLC’s outcome data: 45%.
- **Performance Indicators:** OSEP will provide targeted assistance to improve performance outcomes for infants and toddlers in the three global outcomes. QLC’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, 46% substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned three years of age or exited the program.
  - **Outcome A, Summary Statement 2:** 30% 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, 42% substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned three years of age or exited the program.
  - **Outcome B, Summary Statement 2:** 30% 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, 55% substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned three years of age or exited the program.
  - **Outcome C, Summary Statement 2:** 33% of the children were functioning within age expectations in Outcome A by the time they turned three years of age or exited the program.

QLC’s contract with the Montana Milestones/Part C Early Intervention Program is essential to the delivery of Part C of IDEA services in Cascade, Chouteau, Blaine, Hill, Liberty, Toole, Glacier,

Pondera, and Teton 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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CC: Laurel Gebo, Regional Manager  
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