



Infant & Toddler  
Connection of Virginia



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Virginia Interagency  
Coordinating Council

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June 6, 2012

The Honorable Governor Robert F. McDonnell  
Office of the Governor  
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor  
1111 East Broad Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor McDonnell,

I am writing to you as the chair of the Virginia Interagency Coordinating Council. This Council is required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Code of Virginia to provide advice to the state Early Intervention office in the administration of the Early Intervention (Part C) program for infants and toddlers birth to three with disabilities. I've been asked by the VICC members to inform you of the issues and concerns our council is encountering.

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) has been working with the local Early Intervention (Part C) systems to address the U.S. Department of Education's (Office of Special Education Programs) concern that Virginia was not reaching all the eligible infants and toddlers. Through a number of efforts, the State system has been able to meet the target of eligible children from birth through age one and move closer to meeting the target for children from birth through age 3. Research has shown that the most critical period for influencing brain development and learning is birth through five years old. With the provision of early intervention services, at least one-third of children served never enter the special education system. The remainder of the children have acquired valuable skills to enhance their success in special education. The provision of early intervention services is cost effective, as every dollar that is spent on early intervention saves seven dollars in future costs.

The number of infants and toddlers served in Virginia has increased 36 percent from State Fiscal Year (SFY) 07 to SFY-11. The service needs of the children served under Early Intervention (Part C) were predominantly funded through the new Medicaid Early Intervention Benefit Program and ARRA funds. Unfortunately, the ARRA funds ended in SFY 2011 and we find ourselves with a severe shortage of funds for services for these children. The state Early Intervention (Part C) staff worked with localities to find additional one-time funds as localities identified a need. Local systems requested \$7,633,159 in one-time funds for SFY 2012. Federal and state funds totaling \$4,002,965 were awarded toward meeting the needs. However, even with this additional funding, shortages still exist.

The VICC is grateful for this infusion of funds. However, local systems need assurance that their annual budgets will be sufficient to meet the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities, and not worry that they will be unable to meet mandated needs due to an absence of funding to hire staff or pay providers. Systems throughout the Commonwealth are concerned that they are delayed in meeting timelines for completing intakes and provision of services and are considering starting a waiting list for services. These solutions are based on the absence of sufficient funding to meet children's needs and put the local systems and the state in danger of non-compliance with IDEA requirements.

The Virginia Interagency Coordinating Council respectfully requests that you please do whatever you can to see that the needs of Virginia's infants and toddlers with developmental delays, receive the services that they are entitled to under the Federal requirements of IDEA.

We are very proud of the progress Virginia has made in complying with Federal requirements by finding these eligible children, enhancing referral sources and working more closely with the Medical community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lissa Power-deFur".

Lissa Power-deFur, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

Chair, Virginia Interagency Coordinating Council

Cc:

The Honorable William A. Hazel, M.D.

Commissioner James W. Stewart, III