



COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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William J. Moloney
Commissioner of Education

Roscoe Davidson
Deputy Commissioner

To: Local Part C Coordinators, Service Coordinators and Service Coordinator Leads
From: Elizabeth Hepp, Colorado Department of Education
Date: April 2004
Re: Part C System Procedures for Children with Sensory Disabilities

This memo is to provide clarification on procedures and expectations related to service coordination, multi-disciplinary assessment and IFSP development for infants and toddlers with visual impairments and/or hearing loss.

There are approximately 250 Colorado children, birth – 12 months of age, who are identified each year with a sensory disability. In order to be as effective as possible in supporting the needs of their families, it is essential that those with expertise in sensory impairment and those working as service coordinators in local communities function as members of the same team, working in partnership with each other and with other professionals and the families. Every family's situation is different and the partnership may look different for each family.

The Part C procedures for children with sensory impairments are the same procedures as for any child entering into the Part C system. This memo is to clarify the roles of people and organizations that have expertise specific to sensory impairment.

In all cases the local school district's Child Find team is responsible for the initial multi-disciplinary evaluation and assessment and for participating in the development of the IFSP. An infant or toddler whose primary disability is a sensory loss must have a team member with expertise specific to that disability. If the district's Child Find team does not have personnel with that expertise, they should utilize existing Colorado resources. Colorado has specially trained and/or qualified personnel to offer expertise to local teams and to families about infants and toddlers with sensory disabilities. By participating in the multi-disciplinary assessment and the IFSP process, these individuals contribute their knowledge and expertise to the development of a plan that is appropriate for an infant or toddler with a sensory disability.

Expertise in Visual Impairment: Persons with this specific expertise include teachers endorsed in the area of visual impairment (TVI) and certified orientation and mobility specialists. Colorado has such personnel who are additionally trained in the area of early childhood. Anchor Center for Blind Children (ACBC) has an outreach program, as does the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB). The names of these appropriately qualified personnel are identified in the attached document.

Expertise in Hearing Loss: The Colorado Hearing Resource (CO-Hear) Coordinators, who are employed by the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, have expertise that includes early childhood specialization as well as CDE licensure as teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing, speech/language pathologists, and/or educational audiologists. These regionally-based CO-Hear Coordinators have also participated in Colorado's Service Coordination Core Training. The names of the CO-Hear Coordinators and their respective counties are identified in the attached document.

There should always be a collaborative relationship between the CO-Hear Coordinator, the Anchor Center, or CSDB's Infant Toddler Program or any personnel specifically qualified to address the needs of infants and toddlers with sensory impairment and the local Part C service coordinator and other members of the multi-disciplinary team. In order to support the spirit of collaboration and partnership, we recommend that each community consider the following:

If the referral of a child with a sensory disability is received first by the local community, an appropriate resource for children with sensory disabilities will be contacted to consult with the service coordinator and to participate in the multi-disciplinary assessment and IFSP process (e.g., for vision loss, Anchor Center for Blind Children or the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Infant and Toddler Program or other local appropriately qualified personnel; for hearing loss, the CO-Hear Coordinator or other local appropriately qualified personnel).

If the referral of a child with a sensory disability is received first by an agency specific to that disability, the local Part C point of entry will be contacted to initiate the multi-disciplinary assessment and the IFSP process.

The IFSP team may determine that the Co-Hear Coordinator or another person with expertise specific to the child's disability would be the most appropriate person to act as the Service Coordinator as long as that person has completed Service Coordination Core Training and agrees to fulfill all of the responsibilities of Part C Service Coordination and to participate in local service coordination training activities. Questions pertaining to the sensory disability should be directed to appropriately qualified personnel.

An on-going spirit of collaboration and partnership on behalf of young children with sensory disabilities is essential to address the needs of infants and toddlers and their families and to facilitate appropriate planning and smooth transitions. . A bridge conference call to discuss these procedures and to answer questions has been scheduled for Monday, May 5 from 1:00 – 2:00 pm or Wednesday, May 7 from 9:00 – 10:00 am. Call 1-877-778-9088 and use the conference code: 051384 to participate in either call.

cc: Colorado Hearing Resource (CO-Hear) Coordinators
Anchor Center for Blind Children
Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind/Infant and Toddler Program
Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind/Colorado Home Intervention Program
Child Find Coordinators

**Federal Part C Definitions of Services Specific to Children with Sensory Impairments
(Section 303.12(d))**

(2) Audiology includes—

- (i) Identification of children with auditory impairment, using at risk criteria and appropriate audiologic screening techniques;
- (ii) Determination of the range, nature, and degree of hearing loss and communication functions, by use of audiological evaluation procedures;
- (iii) Referral for medical and other services necessary for the habilitation or rehabilitation of children with auditory impairment;
- (iv) Provision of auditory training, aural rehabilitation, speech reading and listening device orientation and training, and other services;
- (v) Provision of services for prevention of hearing loss; and
- (vi) Determination of the child's need for individual amplification, including selecting, fitting, and dispensing appropriate listening and vibrotactile devices, and evaluating the effectiveness of those devices.

(16) Vision services means--

- (i) Evaluation and assessment of visual functioning, including the diagnosis and appraisal of specific visual disorders, delays, and abilities;
- (ii) Referral for medical or other professional services necessary for the habilitation or rehabilitation of visual functioning disorders, or both; and
- (iii) Communication skills training, orientation and mobility training for all environments, visual training, independent living skills training, and additional training necessary to activate visual motor abilities