

May 7, 2024 Town Hall Recap & Resources

Questions from participants / comments from Bureau Chief Benny Delgado

1. *Parent and provider, but lives in a different CFC than she works in. Beginning to notice a difference in staffing which has improved the communication from the service coordinator. They have a new SC now that responds to emails, which is appreciated. Named the SC, PT and CFC office. Began EI very early and received a PT eval – now beginning the transition process. She's familiar with the transition process from the provider side in a different CFC, but sees that the process is different in her home CFC with CPS. The terminology is different also – transition meeting vs. monthly calls offered for families.*
 - a. It's helpful to hear that the efforts to begin to rebuild the EI system are beginning to pay off.
 - b. Consistency in terminology is important. Expanding the bureau staff and supports will likely help that.
2. *Foster mother of a 2 ½ -year-old with level 3 autism disappointed in EI and the communication from SC when first starting. She waited months for services with no contact from any of the providers in the IFSP. Then SC changed, which improved the process. Transition is coming quickly and she feels unprepared for the process and doesn't know where to start. She needs documentation from EI for the court and can't get it because she only hears back from the CFC when she calls the manager, which doesn't seem right. She has since connected to the parent liaison who has been helpful. She's also disappointed that DCFS won't approve & pay for the recommended therapy.*
 - a. The EI Clearinghouse has great information for families about the EI process and transitioning from EI to the ECSE program.
 - b. The ombudsman will follow up to get information about her experience.
 - c. Another parent acknowledged her experience with the foster care system and commended her for being a strong advocate for her son. She offered additional thoughts on improving communication between DCFS and EI
 - i. Invite the DCFS caseworker to call in during one of the sessions
 - ii. Share the IFSP with the DCFS team
 - iii. Invite EI providers to the child & family team meetings
3. *Provider (PT) with experience in an outpatient clinic and nursing home is concerned about the option for group evaluations in EI. She doesn't feel that the time allowed is enough to get a true picture of the present levels of development. She has had to ask for another evaluation/referral from a pediatrician to a spine doctor. She's also concerned about lack of communication from the CFC she works in – she needs documentation to become an evaluator, but hasn't received a response.*
 - a. Benny shared information about the provider quarterly meetings. Those are geared toward providers and their concerns and issues that affect them.
 - b. Arena assessments are allowed in EI.
 - c. Funding formulas have been changed for CFCs and funding has been increased. As CFCs are able to hire more SCs, families and providers will notice a difference.

4. *I only received an email about this Town Hall. I think that social media – Facebook and Instagram – would be a good option for communicating with families. Many people find it easier to learn about events through those platforms.*
 - a. Links to the EI Clearinghouse social media platforms are in the chat.
 - b. Posting in multiple languages is helpful too.

Final comments from Benny:

“I'm glad we had a chance to connect and to hear all your thoughts again. They're critically important...for me as a Bureau Chief to hear and I think for our partners here as well. So that way, it really does have an impact. I take all these suggestions and the stories to heart and I'm always thinking about them as we think about “What are the things that we can either change in our procedures or in our funding or different ways that we look at to be able to make sure that we improve the experiences that families have?” And then, also to help advocate on your behalf as we're talking to other leadership and people within the state to say what the needs are for the early intervention program. These stories are stories that often times I can share to say, okay, here's how families are sharing with me the challenges that they're having and why we need to make the changes we need to make. So, it has a significant impact and so I really appreciate you guys taking time from your evening to be able to come and share with us. It makes a world of a difference.”

Resources shared during the 5/7/24 Town Hall chat -

- Parent Liaison blog post: <https://eiclearinghouse.org/articles/parent-liaison-ei/> Spanish: <https://eiclearinghouse.org/es/articles/parent-liaison-ei-sp/>
- Transition information : <https://eiclearinghouse.org/keyword/transition/> Spanish: <https://eiclearinghouse.org/es/?s=transition>
- Autism Resource Guide : <https://eiclearinghouse.org/guides/autism/> Spanish: <https://eiclearinghouse.org/es/guides/autism-sp/>
- Sensory Tip Sheet : <https://eiclearinghouse.org/einotes/sensory-play/> Spanish: <https://eiclearinghouse.org/es/einotes/sensory-play-sp/>
- how to advocate for your child while taking care of yourself tip sheet: <https://eiclearinghouse.org/einotes/advocate-care/> Spanish: <https://eiclearinghouse.org/es/einotes/advocate-care-sp/>
- TAP : <https://tap-illinois.org/>
- Family Resource Center on Disabilities: <https://frcd.org/>
- Family Outcomes survey blog post: <https://eiclearinghouse.org/blogs/fos/> Spanish: <https://eiclearinghouse.org/blogs/fos/>
- eBook information: <https://eiclearinghouse.org/library/ebooks/> Spanish: <https://eiclearinghouse.org/es/library/ebooks-sp/>
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