

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING FOR EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, in cooperation with the Massachusetts Interagency Coordinating Council, will hold a hearing on a proposed amendment to the Commonwealth's 23rd year grant under Part C of Public Law 108-446.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND OF THE HEARING

This hearing is being held for the specific purpose of discussing the Department of Public Health's proposed amendment to the its 23rd year grant under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act. Specifically the Department is proposing to change program eligibility and to implement administrative and/programmatic modifications that pose a substantive change to the Early Intervention system. **The proposed changes will only be implemented as a last resort once all other options have been exhausted.**

The following is a listing of some of the possible changes under consideration:

- Restrict program eligibility to require children to exhibit a greater level of delay.
- Eliminating "At-Risk" and "Clinical Judgement" as eligibility categories.
- Establish different eligibility criteria based on the developmental domain.
- Modifying the fee system and changes for payment of co-payments and deductibles.

Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, P.L. 108-446, provides funds to assist states in providing services for infants and toddlers with disabilities. In order to make any material changes to the existing grant, the Department must hold a public hearing which is open to families, service providers, and professionals serving young children and families.

ASSURING SERVICES TO ALL ELIGIBLE FAMILIES

In the grant, the Department has included assurances demonstrating to the satisfaction of the federal Secretary of Education that:

All eligible children shall be identified and their families offered an evaluation. If eligible, the child and family shall be entitled to the development of an Individualized Family Service Plan and to the early intervention services described in that plan. All families and children shall have procedural safeguards throughout this process.

This law also lists the components of a statewide system and requires that the state application include

the state policies and procedures to assure all components.

WHO SHOULD TESTIFY?

Members of families with young children, professionals who serve young children and families, and officials from any state agencies with responsibilities for services to children and families are encouraged to come and speak on the issues outlined in this notice or on any other related concerns.

WHEN ARE THE HEARINGS?

November 6, 2009

McCormack State Office Building
Ashburton Café Conference Room
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

November 12, 2009

Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel
181 Boston Post Road West
Marlborough, MA
1:00 – 3:00 PM

Written comments may be sent until December 14, 2009 and should be addressed to:

Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Early Intervention Services
250 Washington Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02108 – 4619

Attention: Ron Benham, Director, Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition

For more information or if you need assistive devices/services to participate in the hearing, please call Early Intervention Services at the Department of Public Health. The number is: Voice (617) 624-5436 and TTY (617) 624-5992.

