



**child  
development  
services**

State Intermediate Educational Unit-146 State House Station, Augusta, ME  
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6690

June 30, 2008

Jennifer Bishop  
Hancock County Board of Directors Chairperson  
80 Haynes Ave  
Ellsworth, ME 04605

Dear Ms. Bishop:

First I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the site director, the staff and providers for the effort that was extended to accommodate this process. The involvement of staff in this process is beneficial to all. Please express my gratitude to all of the staff for helping with the review, taking part in the interview process and answering our paperwork questions.

As I shared with the site director and staff during the on-site visit, this process is designed to promote continuous improvement in compliance and in service provision to children in your service area.

## **1. The Process:**

On June 12, 2008 program monitoring was conducted by an on-site visit to assess the Hancock County CDS site's current status in meeting regulatory requirements. This letter will outline the base line data gathered during this review.

The collection of base line data and information regarding the provision of special education services at the Hancock County CDS site was based on the following activities:

- Interviews with staff, and providers
- Review of State Entitlement plan
- Review of parent questionnaires
- Review of:
  - 6 Part C files
  - 9 Part B files

## **2. Themes from Interviews:**

### **A. Staff and Related Service Providers:**

The staff reported that the following areas are barriers in providing services to students / children in the natural environment / least restrictive environment:

- available therapists to travel and provide services within the natural and or least restrictive environment

- Transportation services for children to and from their services are limited or not available.
- Limited amounts of programs in the Hancock County area that provide a continuum of services for the Least Restrictive Environment.

The staff also indicated concerns with the following:

- Dynamic status quo of salaries due to state wide negotiations
- The changes in eligibility requirements in Chapter 101 in comparison to Chapter 180 – the staff feels they are more restrictive
- New transition requirements and the increase on paperwork and collaboration with public school personnel
- Lack of providers within the area, causing children to go without services for a period of time.\*

\* In review of the unmet needs data reported to the Child Development Services Office at the Department of Education the following chart outlines the unmet needs of children B-5 at the Hancock County CDS site from December 2007 to April 2008

| Specific service                       | Total Number of Unmet Services |     |              |     |               |     |
|--|--------------------------------|-----|--------------|-----|---------------|-----|
|  | December 2007                  |     | January 2008 |     | February 2008 |     |
|  | B-2                            | 3-5 | B-2          | 3-5 | B-2           | 3-5 |
| Occupational Therapy                   | 0                              | 1   | 0            | 1   | 0             | 2   |
| Physical Therapy                       | 0                              | 1   | 0            | 1   | 0             | 0   |
| Speech Language Therapy                | 1                              | 1   | 1            | 1   | 4             | 1   |
| Development Therapy                    | 0                              | 0   | 0            | 0   | 0             | 0   |
| Other                                  | 0                              | 0   | 0            | 0   | 0             | 1   |
| <b>TOTAL percentage of Unmet needs</b> | 1%                             | 2%  | 1%           | 2%  | 4%            | 2%  |

| Specific service                       | Total Number of Unmet Services |     |            |     |  |  |
|--|--------------------------------|-----|------------|-----|--|--|
|  | March 2008                     |     | April 2008 |     |  |  |
|  | B-2                            | 3-5 | B-2        | 3-5 |  |  |
| Occupational Therapy                   | 0                              | 1   | 0          | 0   |  |  |
| Physical Therapy                       | 0                              | 0   | 0          | 0   |  |  |
| Speech Language Therapy                | 0                              | 0   | 0          | 0   |  |  |
| Development Therapy                    | 0                              | 0   | 0          | 0   |  |  |
| Other                                  | 0                              | 1   | 0          | 0   |  |  |
| <b>TOTAL percentage of Unmet needs</b> | 0%                             | 1%  | 0%         | 0%  |  |  |

In order to meet compliance in this area, the Hancock County CDS must submit a goal within the corrective action plan to meet 100% compliance in the timeliness of the provision of services for children ages Birth through 5 years of age.

## **B. Contracted Service Providers:**

The contracted service providers that responded to the interview process indicated the following barriers to the provision of services in the Hancock County Area:

- Consistency of transportation services
- Available therapists to provide services in the natural environment and LRE

They also expressed concerns with the following:

- Changes in the paperwork and provision of services since Chapter 101 was adopted

They reported that they felt the site director is a good communicator, strong collaborator and is easily accessible. They feel they have a good working relationship with the case managers.

#### **4. Record Audit:**

An integral part of this process involved the participation of the Hancock County site staff in the auditing of children's records. Thank you for the effort and time extended to allow for this participation.

During our on site visit, the program monitoring team examined the following areas of both Part C and Part B:

- Referral, screening procedures and timelines;
- Parent notices and consents;
- Procedures involving evaluations IFSP and IEP team meetings;
- Individual Family Service Plans (IFSP) and Individual Education Plans (IEP);
- Extended School Year Services
- Communication with Parents

These areas were reviewed in a comprehensive audit of the children's records.

**Attached are the compiled results of the record audit. Any section receiving a "Needs Corrective Action" rate of compliance is identified as a finding of non-compliance. Identified areas of non-compliance on the record audit are followed by comments as to why the item did not meet the regulation standard.**

**During the on-site file review, it was found that the site has modified several of the State Required Special Education Forms. The Commissioner's Administrative Letter advising school districts and CDS sites to utilize only state forms was a clear and binding directive. Modifications of the forms are not allowed. The site board must verify that the site director has removed all modifications and verify the adoption and utilization of all of the forms required by the state immediately. A letter from the board chair of Hancock County CDS verifying the above must be received in this office no later than 10 business days from the date of this letter.**

**In reviewing 6 files on-site (a minimum of 10% of the part C files based on child-count) the following areas in Part C did not meet compliance:**

- Written Notice of the initial referral

- Completion of evaluations and IFSP team meeting within 45 days from the receipt of referral.
  - Parental notice of the IFSP meeting
  - Transition planning and conference for children transitioning from Part C to Part B services must be held no later than 90 days before the child's third birthday.
  - Documentation that the IFSP was provided to the parent within 21 days of the IFSP meeting.
  - Documentation of the Child Outcome Summary form in the children's files.
  - Inclusion of the evaluator's names, credentials, role/organization, signature and date in the IFSP
  - Inclusion of the objectives on the outcomes page of the IFSP
- **All 42 remaining areas monitored on the Child Record Audit Form for Part C Met Compliance Standards.**

**In reviewing 9 files on-site (a minimum of 10% of the part B files based on child-count) the following areas in Part B did not meet compliance:**

- Completion of evaluations and IEP team meeting to determine eligibility within 60 days from the receipt of consent to evaluate.
  - The use of a variety of assessment tools and strategies, including the use of observation and the state required speech and language forms, as part of the initial evaluation process.
  - Completion of the Supplemental Services section of the IEP.
  - The documentation of Extended School Year Services on the IEP services table and the need for ESY services within the child's educational record.
- **All 45 remaining areas monitored on the Child Record Audit Form for Part B Met Compliance Standards.**

## **5. Corrective Action Plan Development:**

**In summary:**

- 1.) **The Site will have one year from the date of this report to correct the findings of non-compliance found in Need of Corrective Action during the record audit which were noted in Section 4. A corrective action plan must be submitted to the Department of Education, Child Development Services Department within 45 days of the receipt of this report.**
- 2.) **The Site should include a goal in their Corrective Action Plan to address the finding of non-compliance in the provision of services in both Part C and Part B.**
- 3.) **The site must immediately remove all modifications to the State Required Forms and adopt the most recent versions as of Informational Letter 110 effective June 16, 2008. The forms can be found at <http://www.maine.gov/education/forms/specservices.htm>**

The Department of Education conducted a survey of parents of children with disabilities within your region. The results of this survey are attached. As CDS sites continue to improve services

for all children, parent input is critical. These results can serve as additional information to be used in the planning and evaluation of services and programs for children and are used during the annual State Performance Plan to the federal government.

In accordance with the Freedom of Access Act, all letters related to the Special Education Program Monitoring are public record and shall be made available to parents and other members of the public upon request.

On behalf of CDS, I would like to thank you, the site Director, the staff and all other persons that took part in this review, for the thoughtful courtesy extended to me and the flexibility and cooperation afforded me during the visit.

Sincerely,

Erica Thompson, Distinguished Educator  
Child Development Services Program Monitoring and Technical Assistance

Copies sent to:

Susan A Gendron, Commissioner  
David Noble Stockford, Policy and Team Leader  
Dewey Meterer, Hancock County Child Development Services Director  
Debra Hannigan, State Director Child Development Services

Enclosures:

Part C Child Record Audit Form Summary  
Part B Child Record Audit Form Summary  
CDS Hancock County Part Survey Results