



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

MAR - 3 2011

Honorable Michael J. Lewis, M.D., Ph.D
Cabinet Secretary
West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services
State Capital Complex
One Davis Square, Suite 142
Charleston, West Virginia 25301

Dear Secretary Lewis:

This letter is to inform you of the results of the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP's) verification visit to the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services during the week of November 29, 2010. As indicated in our July 22, 2010 letter to the State, OSEP is conducting verification visits to a number of States as part of our Continuous Improvement and Focused Monitoring System (CIFMS) for ensuring compliance with, and improving performance under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).¹ Sections 616 and 642 of the IDEA require the Department to monitor States with a focus on: (1) improving early intervention and educational results and functional outcomes for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities; and (2) ensuring that States meet the program requirements, particularly those most closely related to improving early intervention and educational results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

The purpose of the verification visit is to review the State's systems for general supervision, collection of State-reported data, and fiscal management, as well as the State's systems for improving child and family outcomes and protecting child and family rights. OSEP developed critical elements that were used to guide its evaluation of West Virginia's general supervision, data, and fiscal systems. The Enclosure to this letter describes the scope of OSEP's review of the State's systems and briefly outlines relevant statutory and regulatory requirements for each critical element. Generally, the Enclosure to this letter does not include descriptions of the State's systems because this information is available on the State's Web site in the State's State Performance Plan. OSEP's analysis of each critical element is provided in the Enclosure to this letter.

As further detailed in that Enclosure, OSEP was not, based on the review of documents, analysis of data, and interviews with State personnel, able to determine whether the State's system monitors all programs and activities used by the State to implement the requirements of IDEA Part C, including the timely provision of early intervention services

¹ During the week of November 29, 2010, OSEP also conducted its Part B verification visit to the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE). OSEP has sent the Part B verification letter and enclosure to WVDE under separate cover.

and individualized family service plan (IFSP) transition content requirements. As further set forth in the Enclosure, OSEP has required that, within 90 days of the date of this letter, the State clarify whether it has procedures to monitor all programs and activities used by the State to implement the requirements of IDEA Part C, including the timely provision of early intervention services and IFSP transition content requirements. Further, if the State does not have such procedures, the State must provide, within 90 days from the date of this letter, an assurance that it has revised its procedures to ensure that all programs and activities used by the State to implement the requirements of IDEA Part C, including the provision of timely early intervention services and IFSP transition content requirements, are monitored.

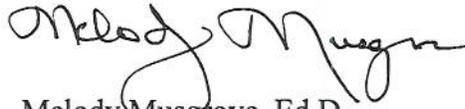
OSEP would like to recognize several improvement initiatives being implemented in the State that are designed to improve results for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. The Lead Agency collaborates with its intra-agency and interagency partners on strategies for outreach to families. For example, the Lead Agency collaborates with the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Title V, Head Start, the Bureau for Children and Families, Medicaid, and other community partners to implement the child find/referral process for infants and toddlers that may need early intervention services. The Lead Agency also works with the Newborn Hearing Screening and Right from the Start programs to ensure that infants and toddlers identified through newborn hearing screening receive diagnostic testing and referral to the Part C program and the Ski Hi Program (a home-based preschool/parent education program for children who are deaf or hard of hearing) as soon as a hearing loss has been identified. Also, the Lead Agency reported that it coordinates with the State's Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) and the Regional Administrative Units (RAUs) to implement ongoing strategies to promote early identification of infants and toddlers with developmental delays and children with risk factors that may not be present or known at birth. Further, the Lead Agency helps educate families through the child find process by links for families on its Web site to information on "Learning about Early Intervention" in West Virginia and "How Babies Grow."

The State has focused on professional development for practitioners, including both service coordinators and early intervention service providers. One of the Lead Agency's latest efforts is an initiative for training its practitioners on implementing evidence-based social-emotional interventions and early literacy practices. The Lead Agency was one of a select few chosen to work with the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children (TACSEI) and the Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL). The Lead Agency will work in collaboration with other early childhood programs within the State, along with the early childhood special education preschool program under WVDE, to implement this initiative. As part of the Lead Agency's professional development efforts, the State's Web site provides lists of core training for service coordinators and service providers. These core trainings are based on Part C requirements and the State's commitment to family-centered services.

OSEP appreciates the cooperation and assistance provided by your State staff and others, including staff from the West Virginia Parent Training and Information Center and parents of infants and toddlers with disabilities in providing feedback and input on the State's systems for special education. We look forward to collaborating with all stakeholders and

actively working with the State to improve results for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. If you have any questions or wish to request technical assistance, please do not hesitate to call your OSEP State Contact, Barbara Thomas, at 202-245-7386.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melody Musgrove". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Melody" and last name "Musgrove" clearly distinguishable.

Melody Musgrove, Ed.D.
Director
Office of Special Education Programs

Enclosure

cc: Pam Rausch
Part C Coordinator