

Early Intervention Advisory Council Meeting
August 13, 2025
Lucas Room, State Library of Ohio, Columbus, Ohio

I. Call to Order

Shelly Palumbo called the meeting to order at 10:13am

II: Roll Call: Trish Barnett, Julie Brem, Maria Breno, Cindy Davis, Maggie Gons, *Kathy Greenwalt-Cherry, Gretchen Hagerman, Erin Hale, *Pam Hamer, Arley Hammons, *Johni Hayes, Jackalyn Jones, Mandy Marcum, David Mitchell, Anni Monks, Shelly Palumbo, Katie Parker, *Jenni Remeis, Beth Schearing, Megan Schuler, Tracy Schurch Thomas, *Erin Simmons, Colleen Tucker, Erica Wallace, Erica Wladyka

III. Approval of minutes from last month

Motion to approve the minutes from the May Advisory council meeting by Erin Simmons, second by Katie Parker; Minutes from the May 2025 meeting were approved.

IV. Open Issues

FFY23 Determination: Palumbo started by expressing DCY's appreciation for all the work the field is doing to support children and families in Ohio, acknowledging that things have been challenging. She announced that Ohio received its Determination from OSEP and was "Meets Requirements," the highest possible designation, for the 9th consecutive year. She indicated that county APR and Determinations were sent out in December and have been posted to Ohio EI website.

Open Positions: Palumbo provided an update on DCY structure and open positions. She let the group know that there continues to be an open monitoring position in the Policy division that the agency hopes to fill in the coming months. A new Fiscal Program Manager has been hired and has begun the onboarding process. The EI Funding Specialist position has also been filled, and the candidate will be starting within the next month. Cory St. Myers recently joined the EI team as the new Regional PC and will be covering counties in the NW region of Ohio.

EIDS move to DCY: Palumbo informed the group that the EIDS went live at DCY Thursday, June 26 and was successful. There were no changes to the application itself and only minor changes to login process. New instructions for requesting access are available on the Data System page of the EI website.

2025 Family Questionnaire: Palumbo provided an update on the completion of the SFY25 Family Questionnaire (FQ). The response period was extended through July 14th and we obtained a response rate of 29.35% (just below record last year 29.78%). She let the group know that quantitative reports were sent to counties on July 31 and individual reports would

be posted to the EI website in the coming weeks. She also indicated that DCY is currently reviewing open-ended responses and de-identifying, as needed. Palumbo explained that if any parent complaints/concerns are noted during the review, DCY will follow up with parents and/or programs if necessary. She explained that reports with open-ended responses will be sent to counties upon completion, but will not be posted on the EI website.

SFY26 EI Service Coordination Grants: Palumbo acknowledged that the process has not gone as smooth as we would have liked, but we are learning as we go and making changes. She indicated that the DCY EI will soon be holding monthly EI calls to provide updates and hear directly from the field. She explained that EISC Grant are in the process of being finalized. OACB reported that going through the contract revision process with EISC grants has made it easier as they move forward with FCFC and Home Visiting contracts. Shelly shared that Akron Children's Hospital will not be contracting to deliver EI hearing services; however, Jenni Remeis's team at OSSB will be supporting those hearing specialists to continue offering services. The hope is to keep disruptions minimal by working to ensure counties have access to the same provider that worked with them previously. Shelly also provided an update on COG contracts. She explained that Westcon and NOWAC will no longer be providing services, but DCY is working to locate additional providers to ensure we have statewide coverage and can ensure long-term sustainability.

EI Referrals: Palumbo informed the group that while referrals in SFY25 were slightly lower than in SFY24, overall referral numbers remain high. She indicated that parents/families continuing to be the number one referral source, followed by physicians/medical professionals, and then Hospital Based Child Find. The group discussed that the increase in referrals is likely due to outreach efforts that are leading to delays being identified earlier. The group also reported that many of the children who are referred have more intense, complex needs. Palumbo indicated that a higher percentage of children referred are being determined eligible/served, as well. Jenni Remeis reported that vision providers have been using neonatal screener to identify concerns. Tracy Schurch Thomas shared information about Ohio Department of Health's (ODH) CMH program and it's ability to assist with funding for children with complex medical needs. ODH also has courses on serving medically fragile children that are Ohio-Approved. She also provided an update that the program recently made changes and now serves birth to age 26. Maggie Gons from OCALI shared that OCALI also offers general courses on various topics to assist teams in serving medically complex children, although the courses may not be specific to the birth to three population.

Central Intake Southern Region: Palumbo provided an update on Central Intake in the southern region and reiterated that Pike County Board of Developmental Disabilities (PCBDD) is no longer serving as the Help Me Grow Central Intake provider for the southern region. The 17 counties previously served by PCBDD have been redistributed into Central, Southeastern, and Southwestern regions.

The group also discussed that the Sparkler app has been very successful in screening children and referring to EI. Cindy Davis in Washington County has been encouraging use of the Sparkler App to increase kindergarten readiness and to gather data locally.

Children & Youth Advisory Council: Palumbo informed the group that the Children & Youth Advisory Council is a DCY stakeholder group established this budget cycle. She reported that there is no additional information to share at this time, but details will be communicated when they are available. She clarified that for the time being, the EI Advisory Council and stakeholder group will proceed as usual and we plan to hold the Nov 5 meeting as scheduled.

POSC module 3: Palumbo reminded the group that all EISCs, EISC Supervisors, and CMs are required to complete course by December 31. She explained that this module provides updated information on System of Payment (SOP). She reiterated that we want to ensure resources are being used efficiently, as DCY understands how confusing the SOP rule can be. She indicated the new EI funding specialist will be working with SOP to support counties and provide TA.

IFSP Guidance Document: Palumbo indicated that the PCs are in the process of reviewing and revising the IFSP Guidance Document, along with making any necessary revisions to other guidance documents.

OACB EI Forum: Palumbo informed the group that the DCY EI team will be presenting two sessions at the OACB EI Forum on September 10 - one on relationships during the 45-day process and IFSP development and another on effective/efficient teaming. Erica from OACB let everyone know that she would be sending out the registration links soon.

TA and Training Plans: Palumbo also provided an update on annual TA and training plans. She explained that the state focus of this year will be on the IFSP/teaming process and assessment practices. Palumbo also let everyone know that Regional PC map changes are being made due to hiring new Regional Program Consultant. She indicated that we anticipate map changes to be announced Oct 1.

Assessment practices for SFY26: Palumbo reiterated that the PCs will be working with counties to find out what's working, what's not working (tools, challenges, supports) and developing plans to address needs. She reminded the group of the Donuts with Di training series that is focusing on assessment practices.

System of Payment: Palumbo explained that DCY continues to contract with Hearing/Vision/Nutrition providers, Councils of Government (COGs), Assistive Technology providers, and other Department Contracted Providers (DCPs). She informed the group that there is a temporary hold on contracting with new DCPS. She reminded the group that there

is a section on EI website that provides guidance for prospective providers that may be interested in becoming DCP

Assistive Technology RFQ: Palumbo informed the group that an Assistive Technology RFQ, which is different than a grant, will be opening soon. She indicated that the hope is for current providers to continue to be able to support the field. She reiterated that we understand that counties are in need of AT and we will communicate updates as they become available. Remeis indicated that she would like to be able to send out a survey to CMs throughout the state to get information on what is working and not working, asking if there is a good time to send that out. Katie Parker suggested mid-fall or mid-spring. Remeis talked about how beneficial the information is, as it allows them to identify PD needs and create a plan for providers.

DS Certification Process: Anni Monks presented on PD updates and reiterated that the DS certification process transitioned to the Ohio Child Care Resource & Referral Association (OCCRRA) through the Ohio Professional Registry (OPR) on March 3. She provided data around certifications that have been issued since the transition. From March 3 to July 30, 58 five-year and 32 one-year DS certifications were issued. She also provided data on DODD certifications that remain active, which include 543 five-year 33 one-year DS certifications. She reiterated that this is a significant number of DS's who will need to renew their certification using the new process and urged everyone to ensure they are monitoring timelines and expirations.

Monks noted that several Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs) have been issued recently for DS certifications that have lapsed. PIPs are issued when provider fails to complete requirements and/or apply for recertification prior to the expiration date of their certification.

She then provided some key reminders around the certification process, including that it is a two-step process that consists of 1) the creation of OPR profile and upload of required documents (which takes up to 30 days), and 2) the submission of the DS application (which takes an additional 30 days). She reminded the group that information regarding the changes to the DS certification process have been sent out via Tuesday Times and the DS FAQ Document.

Upcoming SFY26 Trainings: Monks provided updates related to upcoming PD/training opportunities. She informed the group that DCY is finalizing Battelle, Bayley, and NBO trainings. She indicated that training updates will be shared via the Biweekly program update within the DCY Tuesday Times and posted to the EI website. Hale reiterated the importance of providers subscribing to Tuesday Times to ensure they are receiving updates directly. Monks reminded the group of the Donuts with Di Assessment series DCY is offering in collaboration with OCALI and informed them that recordings of these sessions will be made available and attendees can receive CPDUs for the asynchronous training.

Group members communicated that OCCRRA notifications are not coming through for EISC and IEMHC. Monks indicated that she will check into that.

V. DS Certification Rule Activity

Attendees split into 5 groups and were asked to provide feedback on current DS certification rule and any changes that they would like to see.

Each group discussed and reported out on the following questions:

- How well do current DS certification req support the overall quality of EI services in Ohio?
- Do the certification standards help ensure a qualified, competent workforce? Are there new or emerging competencies you feel should be added to the rule?
- Have you experienced difficulties recruiting, hiring, and/or retaining qualified personnel as a result of certification requirements? If yes, please describe.
- Is the Evidence-Based Practice Coaching requirement for newly certified DSs adequate and feasible within your program's capacity?

VI. Partner Updates

Palumbo opened up the meeting for attendees to provide updates. Members discussed the OACB Forum and indicated registration would go out by the end of the day. The group mentioned that Monks would be presenting on the DS Certification rule on September OACB DS calls and that Erin Hale would be gathering stakeholder feedback related to the rule on the October OACB DS calls, with Monks attending.

The OCALI [Education Station](#) (hub for resources) was discussed – this website location contains microlearning courses on AAC & Young children, and supporting parents with intellectual disabilities. These courses are approved for CPDUs for both DS and EISC.