

I. ORGANIZATION

PROGRAM STANDARD I.A. ALL BIRTH TO THREE PROGRAMS MUST HAVE A MISSION STATEMENT BASED ON SHARED BELIEFS AND GOALS.

A mission statement defines the values, principles, purposes, and goals of a program. It should reflect a commitment to the Illinois State Board of Education Birth to Three Program Standards. A primary goal of a birth to three program is to enhance parent-child interaction, and this goal should be reflected in the mission statement. The mission statement is the basis for all decision-making. It is reviewed annually to incorporate the results of program assessment and current research.

Quality Indicator I.A.1. A mission statement based on shared beliefs is developed cooperatively by parents, staff members, families, and community representatives and is reviewed annually.

Laying the Foundation

Every group or enterprise including programs, organizations, or businesses has a purpose or reason for existing and functioning. A mission statement is written by programs to convey who they are, to identify their area of operation, to determine their goal or purpose for being, to indicate what they are about, and to identify who or what will be the focus of their efforts. It is not a slogan, goal, business plan, ad, or public relations piece.

The value gained from having a mission statement is that it promotes clarity internally for all staff and leadership and then externally for customers and other stakeholders. Every word in the mission statement is important and able to be justified. The content may range from "hard" being defined in clear and exact terms, to "soft" being defined as more subjective and "touchy feely" in its nature. The mission statement must be considered when making organizational decisions and should help determine how resources are to be allocated to different demands.

Getting Started

Your mission statement guides your program and is the basis for making decisions as well as setting goals and objectives. The following process could be used by programs to develop their mission statements.

- Identify and recruit participants in the process.
- Bring together board and staff members and other stakeholders in the program and involve them in the process.
- Discuss the purpose and goals of the program.
- Collect and document in writing all ideas from all participants. Use Chart or butcher paper to display ideas.
- Review ideas and rank in order of importance.
- Draft a short paragraph that synthesizes the overall, long-term aim of the program.
- Circulate the draft copy for comment to board members, staff, and stakeholders.
- Reconvene group to discuss the statement and suggest changes.
- Make final changes in the mission statement.
- Submit to governing board for approval.
- Distribute copies to board, staff, and stakeholders.
- Review and edit your statement on a regular basis, at least annually.

(Organization cont.)

The following Keys to Success are important when creating and finalizing a mission statement:

- Say who you are, what you do, what you stand for and why you do it.
- Document the nature and extent of the commitment to the Illinois Birth to Three Program Standards.
- Allow time for input and final editing but keep the process moving.
- Establish trust and ownership in a shared vision while using conflict and differences of opinion constructively.
- Include input from all members of the organization and its stakeholders including families, community members, other agencies, and programs.
- Examine other mission statements as a resource.
- Use simple, direct, and powerful statements.
- Strive for an original statement that portrays your program and states your priorities in three or four sentences for a total of about 150 words.
- Use your mission statement to supplement and enhance a variety of program activities including public awareness, child find, and marketing efforts.

*Keys adapted from Jack D. Deal
Deal Consulting in Santa Cruz, California
<http://www.tsbj.com/editorial/0304.0503.htm>
<http://www.dealconsulting.com>*

Moving Forward

Review additional materials related to writing mission statements and conduct an Internet word search. Possible examples include strategic planning, small business management, etc.

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Explore the writings and materials of consultants such as Stephen R. Covey, Stan Hutton, Jack Deal, Dr. Tim Nolan, and Organizational Research Associates who are but a few who recommend the development of a mission statement by organizations.

Identify and locate a program similar to your own that has developed a mission statement and use the program as a resource to develop your own mission statement.

Explore the possibility of a retreat or retreat atmosphere for annual program planning that could include the tasks of writing or reviewing the mission statement as part of the agenda.

Quality Indicator I.A.2. The mission statement and beliefs are consistent with those of the community.

Laying the Foundation

In quality programming for infants and toddlers and their families, the focus is not just on the child, but extends to the family in creating partnerships. The child's progress and development is influenced by the circumstances that exist in the home and community. The program must be knowledgeable about local and regional agencies and programs concerned with supporting the child and family. All involved in providing programs and services to help meet the child's as well as family's needs, will be more successful if they work together. There are three considerations that underscore the importance of this collaboration and coordination:

- Families have a variety of changing needs that require broader consideration rather than isolated areas of consideration that one program can provide.
- Continuity of programming brings about significant dividends for children and families. Clear links between facilities, local agencies, and programs result in improved achievements of children.
- The general development and progress of young children will be far more productive when there is collaboration among public and private agencies, civic organizations, concerned businesses, and legislative bodies.

The quality early education and care program sees children in terms of the family, and seeks to provide comprehensive services, working with other entities in the community. As a result, the program views children within the context of their families and cultures and seeks to provide services through collaboration(s) with other community organizations and groups. Families are linked with a range of services based on identified priorities, resources, and concerns. Consider including community agency

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representatives in program planning and development, including the mission statement.

Getting Started

Consider the following strategies to build collaboration:

- Know the community and select key entities to begin building trust relationships through ongoing communication.
- Identify and recruit members of the community who may be participants in the mission development process.
- Gather materials from the community as well as share your program materials to foster knowledge of each other and the services provided.

Moving Forward

Deepen your understanding of adult group dynamics.

Explore team development and its principles.

Study the process of consensus building.

Become familiar with the mediation process and strategies and when it might be used to assist with consensus building in difficult situations.

Seek out a program close to yours that has had success in building participation of community entities.

Become active in the community in order to deepen your knowledge of available resources.

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Quality Indicator I.A.3. The essence of the mission statement is reflected in all decisions, and a copy is posted and available.

Laying the Foundation

The mission statement should be the foundation upon which decisions are made. It is a fluid document and changes as the program priorities change. A plan with strategies for exposure, awareness, and marketing should be developed with input from individuals within the program and the community.

Getting Started

The following strategies for sharing the mission could be considered:

- Post an attractive, readable copy of the program's mission statement, perhaps a poster, wherever persons enter the building or near the section of the building where the program is located.
- Incorporate the mission statement in the text of brochures, handbooks, newsletters, notices, etc. used by the program.
- Display a readable copy of the mission statement in all rooms and locations where meetings concerning the program and its services are held.
- Consider the mission statement always in any decision made which impacts the program.
- Encourage staff to describe and share the mission statement preferably in 50 words or less.
- Include marketing/public awareness in the program budget planning.

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- Provide all members of your staff and organization with a copy of the mission statement and include it in discussions at staff meetings.
- Provide a copy of your mission statement to all clients, customers, and stakeholders. Some organizations use banners, plaques, mugs, pins, pens, and other creative ways to share and distribute the mission statement or its synthesis.
- Print your mission statement on give away incentives such as calendars or magnets.

Moving Forward

Work with the community to sponsor an innovative marketing or public awareness idea.

Approach community, county, and state officials for their support.

Explore the Internet to identify additional marketing and public awareness ideas.

Identify any known celebrities who may be interested in promoting your program and its mission.

Be aware of new ideas and strategies that are part of the business world regarding marketing, public awareness, and mission statement development.

Quality Indicator I.A.4. The program goals stem from the Illinois Birth to Three Program Standards. These goals are developed by leadership and staff, shared with parents and other stakeholders, and serve as the basis for all planning and program development.

Laying the Foundation

A program has its mission statement developed along with the beliefs and principles that guide the program in its quest to put the mission into action. If there are no goals that will indicate outcomes and progress, it is like a ship leaving port without a captain and no destination. Disaster is sure to follow. Program planning will accomplish nothing without a clear course of action that indicates who, what, how, when, and where.

A goal is what one intends to do, happen, or achieve. Goal setting is an ongoing dynamic process that comes about as the result of an assessment process that helps establish priorities about what the program will accomplish in the short and long term. Once they are established, goals and objectives are periodically reviewed in a qualitative as well as quantitative manner and then revised to respond to changes in the program and other influences.

Goal statements are the most important broad, general outcomes that need to be accomplished to achieve and maintain the mission of the program. The goal statements are derived from the principles and requirements and must be addressed through an action plan for each program component. The goal statements can establish the long-term as well as short-term direction for the program's work. They should be developed collaboratively. The goals transition programmatic thinking from ideal to realistic, forming the basic roadmap toward realizing the mission of the program. Some goals may be accomplished in a relatively short time while others may take longer than a year. Each goal should be able to be evaluated in a qualitative or quantitative manner. This assessment or evaluation allows for the monitoring of progress toward goal accomplishment. By setting clear, well-defined goals,

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changes can be measured and observed and pride taken in goal achievement.

In "Deciding Goals" of Mind Tools Book Store on the Internet states that research (Burton 1983, 1) has shown that effective goal setting results in less stress and anxiety, better concentration, evidence of self-confidence, better performance, and more satisfaction and happiness for the staff.

Getting Started

A written plan or set of plans is an outcome of a process of program planning that documents the program's strategies for implementing standards and other applicable regulations along with its own goals and objectives.

Goal statements must:

- Be based upon the beliefs and values of the program.
- Reflect the beliefs and values of the families and community.
- Be developed collaboratively by representatives from the key stakeholders of the program.
- Establish outcomes necessary to accomplish the mission of the program.
- Be based on the Illinois Birth to Three Program Standards.
- Address each prioritized program component that is identified by a self-needs assessment process.
- Include timelines.
- Be evaluated qualitatively and quantitatively.

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- Provide a clear sense of direction for the program staff.
- Be written clearly and concisely without professional jargon.
- Be understood by staff, families, program advisories, and community stakeholders.
- Be reviewed and updated annually as necessary.

As a final step, goals should answer the following questions:

- How does the program monitor the appropriateness of the goals?
- How does the program make needed modifications to the goals?
- Are the goals moving the program toward the realization of its mission?
- Does a continuous process exist for establishing new goals?

By setting goals the program can:

- Achieve more,
- Improve performance,
- Increase motivation to achieve,
- Increase pride and satisfaction in achievements, and
- Plan to eliminate attitudes and strategies that hold back progress and cause negativism.

Moving Forward

Attend a goal setting/development seminar.

(Organization cont.)

Review books and journals on goal setting.

Conduct an Internet search to add information and resources to the program files.

Quote: "If you don't know where you're going, you will probably end up somewhere else." - Laurence Johnston Peter

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PROGRAM STANDARD I.B. SCHEDULING PRACTICES AND INTENSITY OF SERVICES ARE TAILORED TO THE INDIVIDUAL STRENGTHS AND NEEDS OF CHILDREN BIRTH TO THREE AND THEIR FAMILIES.

Scheduling practices must take into consideration the developmental needs of infants and toddlers as well as the preferences and needs of their families. Flexibility within the organization allows for the provision of a variety of services to families at times and in places convenient for them.

Quality Indicator I.B.1. The program leadership engages in scheduling practices, including evenings, weekends, and summer programming that respect the individual needs of infants and toddlers and their families in both home visiting and center-based programs.

Laying the Foundation

Scheduling practices need first to reflect an understanding of how infants and toddlers develop. Consider that among the most widely acknowledged principles of human development is the existence of "individual differences." However, this is frequently ignored in making developmental decisions. Children's individuality is related to genetic and experiential factors, both cultural and contextual. Know the child well and use what is known including learning styles, interests and preferences, personality and temperament, skills and talents, as well as challenges and difficulties to support their learning and development.

Program staff need to be knowledgeable and open to the complexities within the family and community. In *Young Children*, the following statement presents just one of these complex challenges. "Each year more than one million adolescents become pregnant, and of these close to 500,000 give birth. Most who give birth choose to keep their children rather than give them up for adoption (Bureau of the Census 1991). At delivery more than 75% of all teen mothers are single (Children's Defense Fund 1998), and at least 40,000 girls drop out of school each year because of pregnancy and

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childbirth (Children's Defense Fund 1987). What does the future hold for these adolescent parents and the thousands of babies born to and raised by them?" (DeJong & Cottrell 1999, 37)

Unique challenges presented by this population include first of all the birth of a healthy baby then remaining in and completing school along with issues around the child's father, part-time work, child care, poverty, housing, transportation, and health care to mention only a few. Welfare to Work Reform only complicates the picture.

In addition, more recent research shows that fathers are increasing the amount of time that they spend directly interacting with their children as well as taking care of them. Many fathers indicate that they meet obstacles when they try to become more involved.

The report on Early Childhood Development and Learning, "How Are the Children" from the White House Conference in September of 1999, states: "But one theme was sounded most emphatically: the needs of young children and their families are so diverse and complex that no single institution can fully meet them." (U.S. Department of Education 1999, 1) These are but a few of the enormous challenges facing those who develop schedules to provide programs and services for infants and toddlers and their families. In order to develop appropriate and effective program schedules, changes will undoubtedly have to take place.

Getting Started

The following suggestions can provide some starting points to make programming accessible to and appropriate for families. It is recommended that administration, staff, families, and governing groups be included in the scheduling process in order to build support for the changes.

- Chart the present program schedule, reflecting all current activities with times, locations, and attendance for each.

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- Conduct a needs assessment with families to determine preferences for time and location of program activities and provision of services.
- Conduct time studies to determine where, when, how and on what do staff members focus their time and energy.
- Survey the present staff's flexibility for providing services at times and in places different from the present program schedule.
- Identify staff needed for those areas of continued programming.
- Record unmet service needs and identify staff responsibilities for those who can be flexible in their own work schedules. Program support for flex-time schedules for staff is critical.
- Give a high priority to unmet programming needs in future hiring.
- Plan for a phase-in of these programming changes considering interests of families, support from constituencies, cultural implications, financial support, and transportation needs.
- Communicate scheduling information using a variety of strategies addressing the cultural and linguistic needs of the families served.

Moving Forward

Network with other birth to three programs about strategies they use in program scheduling.

Use consultants such as those located at ISBE, the Illinois Resource Center, and Illinois STAR NET to identify programs that have been creative in scheduling practices.

Conduct the needs assessment at least annually.

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Look in the chapter on Management Systems and Procedures "Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations" for more information on building an effective communications system within your program.

Take a course at the local college or university that deals with family systems and effective program management.

Obtain more information on Welfare to Work TEGl 15-01 along with TANF.
<http://www.doleta.gov/>

Quality Indicator I.B.2. The intensity of program services is commensurate with the preferences, strengths, and needs of individual children and families.

Laying the Foundation

The process of individualization may be applied across a broad continuum. It can range from how each human being wants to be viewed, all the way to identification and implementation of specialized services for the infant or toddler with disabilities and his family. At some point on this continuum rests the intensity of program services that are provided for the children and families participating in birth to three programs.

Emily Fenichel emphasizes the need to individualize services using principles that lead to quality in birth to three programs. She states, "Thoughtful front-line practitioners and administrators in the field are likely to agree that:

- Services for infants, toddlers, and their families must be specially designed for this population in order to be developmentally appropriate. They cannot be scaled-down versions of programs for older children.
- Infants and toddlers must be understood and served within the context of their families.
- Families are the constants in a child's life: the job of the professional is to assist families in supporting the child's development.
- Services to infants, toddlers, and their families must be individualized to respect and build on unique constitutional, developmental, and cultural characteristics.
- Service coordination should be available to ease families' access to the range of services they require.

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- Policy and practice should recognize and build on the capacities, resilience, and resourcefulness of children and families" (Fenichel 1992).

The extent to which the above principles are applied depends on the competence of the program staff. There is an element of individualization needed in the application of these principles whether stated directly or indirectly.

Getting Started

Use the answers to these questions to develop a menu of service options for families and determine the intensity of services:

- Are the physical space and materials structured and adapted to promote engagement, play, interaction, and learning?
- Does the physical space attend to the children's preferences and interests?
- Is the social dimension of the environment structured and adapted to promote engagement, interaction, communication, and development?
- Are peer models, peer proximity, and responsive, caring, and imitative adults provided to support the expansion of children's play and behavior?
- Are routines and transitions structured to promote parent/child interactions, communication, and development?
- Are environments designed to expose children and families to multiple cultures and languages?

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- Does the environment consist of a variety of appropriate settings and naturally occurring activities to facilitate children's learning and development and enhance adults' experiences?
- Are parent preferences regarding services and service intensity considered and identified?
- Are staff members sensitive and non-judgmental in their interactions with parents who wish a less intensive involvement?

Moving Forward

Obtain a copy of *DEC Recommended Practices in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education* by the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) 2000 and look at Chapter 4: Recommended Practices in Family-Based Practices, pages 39-46.

Form a study group of interested professionals to discuss recent literature on frequency and intensity of services such as *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*, National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2000. Jack P. Shonkoff and Deborah A. Phillips, eds.

Study your community and identify possible collaborations that will promote a comprehensive system of services.

Quality Indicator I.B.3. The program uses a variety of strategies based on the preferences, strengths, and needs of individual children and their families.

Laying the Foundation

Infant and toddler developmentally appropriate program practices are based on families' diversity, their concerns, priorities, and resources and how young children develop and learn. Early childhood programs will not have identical goals; priorities may vary because programs serve a diverse population of children and families. The revised edition of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs* states, "Each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as individual personality, temperament, learning style and experiential and family back-ground. All children have their own strengths, needs, and interests; for some children, special learning and developmental needs or abilities are identified" (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC] 1997, 10).

The same resource continues, "Recognition that individual variation is not only to be expected but also valued requires that decisions about curriculum and adults' interactions with children be as individualized as possible." In order to meet the needs of a variety of unique individuals, programs must develop many different strategies. It is widely recognized that individuals have preferred or stronger styles or modes of learning. Studies of these different styles have revealed that they may be visual, auditory or tactile. The concept of learning styles was expanded by Gardner (1983) in the theory that human beings possess at least seven "intelligences." They are:

- linguistic,
- logical-mathematical,
- musical,

(Organization cont.)

- spatial,
- bodily-kinesthetic,
- intrapersonal, and
- interpersonal. (NAEYC 1997, 15)

Professionals must draw on all of these fundamental ideas, as well as others, when making decisions about the services they provide and the strategies they use.

From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development states, "In the final analysis, there is considerable evidence to support the notion that model programs that deliver carefully designed interventions with well-defined goals can affect both parenting behavior and the developmental trajectories of children whose life course is threatened by socioeconomic disadvantage, family disruption, or diagnosed disability. Programs that combine child-focused educational activities with explicit attention to parent-child interaction patterns and relationship building appear to have the greatest impacts" (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2000, 379).

Getting Started

Adults are responsible for ensuring children's healthy growth and development. Right from the start, relationships with adults are critical factors in the determination of children's healthy, social, and emotional development and serve as the mediators of language and intellectual development. Program staff members use their knowledge of child development and parents use their knowledge of their own child to mutually identify the range of activities, materials and experiences that are appropriate. This knowledge is used together with the knowledge of the context and understanding about individual child growth patterns, strengths, needs, interests, and experiences to design the curriculum and environment and to guide the adults' interactions with young children.

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Recognize and use the following factors when developing services and programs for children and families and making decisions about strategies used in providing services:

- Children and families are respected, valued and accepted and treated with dignity at all times.
- Priority is given to know each child and adult well.
- Parents' concerns, priorities, and resources are considered.
- The needs of the children are met at their unique levels of development and ability.
- The development of self-regulation in children is facilitated.
- Opportunities are presented to children for interactions with their peers and adults.
- A wide range of strategies is employed, including a multi-sensory approach, to enhance children's learning and development.
- The environment is structured to foster interactions as well as to demonstrate a safe, healthy, comfortable, and pleasant space.

Moving Forward

Attend at least one conference that offers some professional development in implementing successful service strategies.

Become a member in at least one professional organization and subscribe to at least one professional periodical or journal to learn about additional service provision strategies.

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Share resources and what is working with program staff members and encourage them to do the same.

Identify and network with another program, rich in resources, that is successful in implementing a variety of service strategies.

Get to know a professional in higher education who can serve as a good resource in this area and perhaps schedule an inservice for your program staff. Invite a neighboring program to attend and even serve as a co-sponsor.

Quote: "There is more to life than increasing its speed." - Mahatma Gandhi

PROGRAM STANDARD I.C. THE STRENGTHS AND NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AS WELL AS RESEARCH ON BEST PRACTICE DETERMINE THE RATIO OF PARTICIPANTS TO STAFF AND THE SIZE OF PROGRAM GROUPS.

The size of a group as well as the ratio of adults to children is critical to children's learning and interactions with parents and staff. In determining caseloads, home-based programs must take into account the needs of children and families and the geographic distances between homes and the program site.

Quality Indicator I.C.1. Group size and ratios of adults to infants and toddlers are developmentally appropriate in program groups.

Laying the Foundation

The Vision for 2005 Statement in the *Early Care and Education Briefing Paper* identifies quality education and care for young children ages birth to five as a priority. A statement is made that defines what "quality education and care" entails. "Quality care and education can be provided in a range of settings. Careful attention must be paid to child/caregiver ratios and group size and to staff development, education, and support. Parents are number one in a child's life; quality care and education is supplemental to parental and family care" (McCormick Tribune Foundation 2000, 5).

There is growing research that supports the following critical components of quality care:

- Well educationally prepared providers
- Low child-to-adult ratios
- Small group sizes
- Low staff turnover

(Organization cont.)

Research has also indicated that having staff members work with a small number of infants and toddlers is important for the child's development and program quality. Additionally, licensing agencies have specific requirements concerning child/staff ratios.

"Research shows that low ratios and small group sizes are important for facilitating positive interactions between adults and children such as sensitive and attentive responses to children's needs. They also appear to be important for cognitive development, such as language skills. Group size appears to have more consistent effects on all children under 5 years old. For example, researchers have found that higher ratios-more children per care giver-for infants and toddlers are associated with children displaying more distress and apathy and with situations exposing children to more potential danger" (Fenichel, Griffin & Lurie-Hurvitz 1999, 55-56).

A survey with published results, *What Grown-ups Understand About Child Development: A National Benchmark Survey*, sponsored by CIVITAS, ZERO TO THREE, and BRIO Corporation, was conducted in the summer of 2000 of over 3,000 adult (meaning 18 years and older) Americans. They were asked to rank in order of importance, seven components for childcare. Over one third of the respondents were parents needing care for their children. The number of children under the care of each adult was ranked second out of seven in importance with childcare providers' training and credentials number one (DYG, Inc. 2000, 182).

The challenge to the birth to three programs is to use the results of current research and apply it to the individual program.

Getting Started

Funding is critical to staffing ratios in quality programs. These funds or resources must be adequate to limit the size of groups and provide a sufficient number of adults to ensure individualization and quality education and care. The "rule of thumb" is the younger the child is, the smaller the

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group size and the greater the ratio of adults to children. Child-to-staff ratios measure the number of children per caregiver in a given group or class; group size is the number of children assigned to a team of caregivers or service providers for a given time. Furthermore, when children are included with special needs, carefully added considerations must be made to appropriately meet their needs. Programs that are not under a particular governance should be knowledgeable about existing recommended ratios and then make decisions based on available resources, the commitment to quality, cultural considerations, past history, and the flexibility to adapt. The following requirements are currently in effect for each identified agency or organization:

<u>Agency/organization</u>	<u>Staff/Child Ratio</u>	<u>Group Size</u>
Early Head Start	1:4 - birth to 3	8
Illinois Department of Human Services-DHS	1:4 - 6 wks. to 15 mos.	12
	1:5 - 15 to 24 mos.	15
	1:8 - 24 to 36 mos.	16
Illinois Early Childhood Birth to Three Block Grant- is ISBE	(No requirements are given. Best practice encouraged.)	
Child & Family Services DCFS (Child Care)	<u>Illinois Department of</u> (Per DCFS Licensing Standards; see DHS column for specifics.)	
National Association for The Education of Young Children (NAEYC)	1:4 - birth to 12 mos.	8
	1:4 - 12 to 24 mos.	12
	1:6 - 24 to 30 mos.	12
	1:7 - 30 to 36 mos.	14
The Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion(DHQP)	1:3 - birth to 24 mos.	6
	1:4 - 24 to 30 mos.	8

& American Academy of
Pediatrics(AAP)

1:5 - 30 to 36 mos.

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When making decisions regarding staff/child ratios and group sizes, consideration needs to be given to best practice, quality, purpose, and environment. In some instances, the child may not be separated from the parent while on the program premises. When there is a brief separation of child and parent or caregiver for programming purposes, the program is obligated to provide an optimum setting for the child. The program will have to make that decision to the best of its ability using recommendations that are available. The advantage in this situation is that the parent or caregiver is close at hand. In this circumstance, the same requirements that exist for child care settings do not apply.

Having a smaller number of infants/toddlers/children served by each educator/caregiver has produced the following results:

- Children imitate earlier, and more often than usual, the speech and gestures of others.
- Adults have more time to give the best education and care to children.
- Children talk and play more often.
- Children are in distress less often.
- Children are exposed less to danger.

Grouping children in smaller numbers results in:

- Adults attend better to children.
- Children have more positive developmental outcomes.

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- Children are more cooperative and responsive to adults and other children.
- Children are more likely to speak without being urged.
- Children less likely to wander aimlessly or be uninvolved in activities.

Adapted from "Issues in Child Care Settings," Division of Healthcare Quality Promotion(DHQP), January 1997

The determination of the proper group size for a parent/child interactive group, should give consideration to the type of activity and the space available and needed. The total group size could be 8 dyads (parent and child) with 2 professionals (a ratio of 1 to 4 dyads). Possible consideration should be given to a third member of the professional team to act in the role of facilitator. A group size greater than this recommendation presents challenges for communication, the environment, quality issues, and interaction.

Moving Forward

Obtain further information and resources through the Internet, conferences, or journal articles regarding adult/child ratios and group size.

Talk to other birth to three programs about the ratios and group sizes they use.

Be alert for new research and studies.

Identify and locate available higher education opportunities that address these practices.

Contact your ISBE and other consultants for any suggestions they may have or for a list of programs that have successful practices.

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Quality Indicator I.C.2. A reasonable number of families is served by each service provider in accordance with program design and goals, considering geographic location, severity of need, intensity of services, and training of staff.

Laying the Foundation

Staffing plans and concerns are critical to the smooth, fiscally responsible, effective operation of a quality infant and toddler program. The *Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations* identifies areas for concern in staffing. "Staff must be employed for sufficient time to allow them to participate in pre-service training, to plan and set up the program at the start of the year, to close the program at the end of the year, to conduct home visits, to conduct health examinations, screening and immunization activities, to maintain records, and to keep service component plans and activities current and relevant. These activities should take place outside of the time scheduled for classes in center-based programs and home visits in home-based programs" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 1999, 251). Another consideration includes the time needed for planning and preparation.

In home-based program operations the standards additionally say, "Allow staff sufficient employed time to participate in pre-service training, to plan and set up the program at the start of the year, to maintain records, and to keep component and activity plans current and relevant. These activities should take place when no home visits or group socialization activities are planned" (U.S.DHHS 1999, 252).

Administrators need to apply service principles and information about the program, the population served, staffing resources, and service needs in order to design an appropriate staffing plan.

Getting Started

There is no simple magic number or universal formula that can be used to determine service loads. The context and diversity of each program require that an individualized process be applied. Keep in mind that support comes about as a result of staff being included or represented in the planning process. In order to define what is a "reasonable number" of children and families to be served by each staff member, consider the following:

- The individual diversity of the child and family and its impact on service provision.
- Each staff member's job description and responsibilities as well as availability.
- The geographic setting for the service area.
- The program's design, goals and needs.
- Equitable distribution of staff assignments and responsibilities.

The following steps could be part of a process to determine service loads:

- Establish an internal work group to draft a proposed staffing plan for the coming year. Include timelines for completion, trial period, review and changes, and implementation.
- Encourage and accept feedback from the total staff at various times during the process.
- Conduct current desk audits for each staff member providing services and review past desk audits, if available, of staff with similar responsibilities. These audits can reveal a best estimate of time required for planning and implementation of the activities required to implement the goals and objectives of the program. The audit should also include times required for program set-up and closure, travel

(Organization cont.)

times, child find and screening activities, immunization and other health services, maintenance of records, staff meetings, planning and preparation, professional teaming, required telephone calls, and professional development.

- Match the service needs, including home visits, play groups, parent/child interaction groups, and parent information groups, with the available time and talents of each available staff person.
- Identify home visits as requiring special consideration for planning due to travel distance as well as the complexity and intensity of service provision.
- Allow for flexibility and closely monitor the plan's implementation to determine gaps and needed adjustments.

Moving Forward

Identify a program similar in its service provision and establish a relationship to promote sharing of work plan processes.

Identify available computer programs that can assist with any of the planning and implementation components.

Determine if any classes from higher education are available locally that deal with this concern.

Locate consultants who know about successful practices and are willing to consult or even come to the program site and advise.

*Quote: "People are like stained glass windows.
They sparkle when the sun is out,
But when the darkness sets in,
Their true beauty is revealed
Only if there is a light from within." - Elisabeth Kubler-Ross*

(Organization cont.)

PROGRAM STANDARD I.D. THE PROGRAM MEETS THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OF VARYING ABILITIES AS WELL AS DIVERSE CULTURAL, LINGUISTIC, AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS.

There is no "one size fits all" approach to working with young children. Program activities must be individualized to maximize the effects of interactions with children and their families. Cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic sensitivity allows the program to "meet families where they are" and ensure that families are respected as having the primary responsibility for their children.

Quality Indicator I.D.1. A variety of activities, strategies, and materials are used to meet the diverse needs of children and families.

Laying the Foundation

The following statement is made in the article, *Implementing an Anti-Bias Curriculum in Early Childhood*. "Children are aware of differences in color, language, gender, and physical ability at a very young age. Numerous research studies about the process of identity and attitude development conclude that children learn by observing the differences and similarities among people and by absorbing the spoken and unspoken messages about those differences. The biases and negative stereotypes about various aspects of human diversity prevalent in our society undercut all children's healthy development and ill-equip them to interact effectively with many people in the world" (Bisson Hohensee and Derman-Sparks 1992, 1).

Culture shapes one's view of the world. Each person belongs to a multiplicity of cultures. Culture may be based on gender, socioeconomic status, religion, language, general level of education, ethnicity, ability, profession, or sexual orientation. The impact of multiple cultural influences can be addressed through answers to the following questions. Does behavior remain the same or change depending on the cultural group one is with? Does one dress, speak, and act differently when with a professional group or going with an elderly mother to religious services? The diversity found in families and

(Organization cont.)

individuals must be considered when looking at one's culture. In fact, diversity is one more cultural influence and must not be excluded.

There are many definitions of culture for example:

- Culture is artifacts, customs, values and how people impact meaning in their lives (Williams 1990).
- Cultures are represented by family roles, communication styles, holiday traditions and child rearing patterns (York 1992).
- Culture is the way that any group of people develops to manage its environment (Almonte 1994).
- Technically, culture is the vast structure of behaviors, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, values, habits, customs, language, rituals, ceremonies, and practices peculiar to a particular group of people that provides them with a general design for living and patterns for interpreting reality (Nobles 1989).
- Culture can be understood as the ever-changing values, traditions, social and political relationships, and world-view shared by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors that can include a common history, geographic location, language, social class and/or religion (Niето 1992).

The birth to three program has an important responsibility in planning, management, and programming to integrate sensitivity for and reflect all aspects of diversity including culture. The program should reflect a composite of all cultures represented by families, staff, and the community. It can be compared to quilt making, which is made up of many individual parts, complete in themselves, but sewn together to make an impressive, beautiful whole.

(Organization cont.)

Programs need to support parent activities that are responsive to the language and culture of the family and are tailored to meet specific needs of teen parents, single parents, working parents, blended families, and families with special service needs. For low-income families, response must be given to the comprehensive needs of children and health care, child care, and other supports.

The important question now is, what diversity and cultures found in America and the world beyond are not yet represented? How can the program include these in its fabric? What strategies can be used to accomplish this?

Getting Started

There are several strategies that need consideration when working toward a program goal of multi-cultural sensitivity and appreciation for diversity:

- Know the cultures represented by the families, staff, and community.
- Become familiar with as many aspects of each identified culture as possible.
- Encourage staff members to support efforts in multi-cultural sensitivity and appreciation for diversity.
- Set up a mentoring program for new staff members, teaming a new staff member with an experienced one.
- Draft a goal for the development of sensitivity for a multi-cultural program focus.
- Establish a program work group to design, draft, and review a work plan for the implementation of the sensitivity program goal.
- Develop an Environment Climate and Curriculum that include:

(Organization cont.)

Images of all children
Images of all adults
Images of daily lives of people
Images of intergenerations
Images of differently abled children and adults

- Explore using "family stories" written by the parents and children about themselves as families. They may be shared in the program activities as families wish. The stories can stimulate growth and sensitivity among everyone.
- Use other strategies like presentations, sharing of customs and foods, storytelling, videotapes, music, drama, and field trips.
- Provide resources:
 - Toys and materials reflecting images in centers
 - Manipulatives to include diversity, race, gender, and occupations
 - Artifacts to include art, literature, and music including movement
 - Center areas rich in culture
 - Published materials for staff and families
- Celebrate families, feelings, rethinking of holidays, and sense of community.
- Define terms such as multiculturalism, multi-cultural education, culture, ethnocentrism, anti-bias, bias, homophobia, and cultural differences and similarities.

Moving Forward

Get to know the richness of resources on culture and diversity available through the Illinois Resource Center in Des Plaines.

Refer to The National Association of the Education of Young Children for resources on culture and diversity.

(Organization cont.)

Look in the curriculum section of this *Resource Guide* for additional information.

Form a relationship with a program that has implemented a rich cultural approach in its operation.

(Organization cont.)

Quality Indicator I.D.2. Qualified staff who demonstrate cultural and linguistic competency are available to effectively interact with children and families.

Laying the Foundation

"Research supports the idea that children's early childhood experiences are powerful in influencing their cultural understandings.....Children develop ideas about racial identity and the attributes of cultural groups other than their own as early as three years of age (Banks 1993). Equally significant, children begin their development of self-understanding (inclusive of their cultural identity) at birth. Self-understanding is constructed from experiences with others, mainly parents, but certainly including caregivers and teachers and significant kin and friends (Rossi and Rossi 1990).

Recent studies suggest that the intimate involvement of parents and teachers with young children provides natural opportunities for modeling, guiding, and nurturing positive racial, ethnic, and cultural attitudes and perspectives" (Swick, Boutte and van Scoy 1995, 1).

The above statements provide support to the birth to three program model and identify the critical role played by staff employed in birth to three programs. When cultural assumptions, beliefs and values are violated, people react with strong emotions. Shock and a sense of bewilderment are often overwhelming, limiting responses and generating immense barriers to effective communication. Many times these responses are strong and based on affect. Cultural knowledge is based upon interactions with others and is continually modified in light of these interactions.

As America becomes more diverse, socially and culturally, all must gain understanding and appreciation for the full range of values, beliefs, and experiences that people bring to the challenge of child-rearing.

Getting Started

Learning to bridge gaps in knowledge shared by two individuals requires two complimentary and ongoing processes: self-awareness of one's own cultural assumptions, values, and beliefs; and willingness to explore the cultural knowledge of others in the full context of personal and shared histories, assumptions, goals, beliefs, and practices. Personal skills to build self-awareness and promote respectful cultural sharing and exploration with families must be developed. It is important that early education and care professionals learn that culturally sensitive practice requires awareness of how personal experiences, beliefs and understandings influence their own perceptions. This is only the first step toward more inclusive services for infants, toddlers and their families. The next step is that the service provider makes proactive efforts to gain understanding of each parent's goals and expectations, and to share their own perspectives respectfully.

If professionals are not willing to actively seek the parents' cultural perspectives and personally share their own, communication will frequently remain one-sided, and the effects of services will be minimal. The staff of birth to three programs can employ strategies that support family-centered and culturally responsive services that may include:

- Know their own values and culture.
- Be conscious of the importance of their own family experiences that "keep them honest."
- Actively work to create and sustain an environment that truly reflects principles of family-centeredness and cultural responsiveness.
- Consider learning a second language to facilitate communication with program families.
- Keep an open mind, listen.
- Be willing to mentor new staff members.

(Organization cont.)

Program staff who serve the role of cultural facilitator need appropriate knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Service providers and families who live by the principles of multi-cultural education, learn self-respect, respect for others, learn about their own cultures and promote lasting racial peace.

(Acknowledgement given to Rhonda Hunt
Bright Futures Program, Peoria, Illinois)

Moving Forward

Identify and register for sensitivity training.

Research cultures of groups represented in the program.

Form a study group on Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children. Derman-Sparks, L. National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1989).

Learn about a program that has been successful in developing a curriculum committed to sensitivity and appreciation for culture and diversity.

Look for conference presentations and other state training opportunities to deepen understanding and sharpen skills.

Quote: "What you do speaks so loud I cannot hear what you say." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

PROGRAM STANDARD I.E. THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE PROGRAM IS SAFE, HEALTHY, AND APPROPRIATE FOR CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT.

The physical environment promotes healthy growth and rich child-family relations and learning. The environment should provide security from physical and emotional harm. An appropriate physical environment should be conducive to positive and enriching experiences, should stimulate children's minds, promote discovery, and reinforce positive family relationships.

Quality Indicator I.E.1. The program implements local and state health and safety guidelines.

Laying the Foundation

Learning occurs as children touch, manipulate and think about objects, experiences, and people. This requires a safe and healthy environment. The furnishings, equipment, and materials must be attractive, well maintained, and appropriate to facilitate infant and toddler development as well as family participation. Facilities including indoor and outdoor play areas must be accessible and accommodate all children and their families.

All components of birth to three programs are related to each other as well as to the environment. The physical environment must reflect the program's mission and its goals. All planning should involve the staff and consider the participants.

(Organization cont.)

"Enduring and responsible human relationships are critical for the infant. During the first three years of life, the safety, comfort level and variety of stimulation available in the physical environment also affect developmental process. It is the baby's caregivers, however, who mediate his world. Through the physical environment and experiences they offer, they activate, nourish, and facilitate growth within and across all developmental areas or, conversely, act in ways that impede progress" (Fenichel, E., and Eggbeer, L. 1990, 5).

Getting Started

Although some birth to three programs do not have to comply with the Department of Children and Family Services guidelines, they must comply with local health and safety guidelines established by the Department of Public Health and local fire departments. All these guidelines must be researched and used to develop program policy.

- Review existing health and safety guidelines as well as the characteristics of the program participants.
- Develop a policy appropriate for the program. Consider budget and space limitations and set priorities.
- Provide appropriate orientation for the staff and volunteers on health and safety guidelines.
- Maintain a list of children's health precautions for staff awareness.
- Apply and enforce health and safety policies to all aspects of the program including the participants.

(Organization cont.)

- Keep current child health history and immunization records in the program files and implement a system of tracking through regular and frequent records review.
- Develop guidelines for volunteers.
- Provide changing tables with accessible clean diapers, wipes, gloves, and other supplies.
- Provide an interesting visual environment for infants and toddlers being changed on the changing table.
- Provide sinks adjacent to the diaper changing tables.
- Provide child-sized toilets, safe step aids, and modified toilet seats or potty chairs that are easily sanitized for children being toilet trained.
- Conduct daily, weekly, and/or monthly environmental checks of the following:
 - accessibility,
 - appropriate use and layout of space,
 - cleanliness and attractiveness,
 - condition of furnishings and equipment,
 - condition of toys, manipulatives, and all materials,
 - food preparation,
 - lighting, ventilation, and temperature control,
 - noise level control,
 - restrooms and diaper changing areas, and
 - rest areas.

(Organization cont.)

- Develop a field trip policy with the following requirements:
 - research the potential field trip environments prior to visit,
 - preplan with the staff,
 - discuss insurance issues,
 - determine who and how many will participate,
 - develop a "field trip flyer" for parents with all necessary information,
 - develop an emergency plan, and
 - inspect, prepare, and take "first aid" kits.

Field trips require careful planning and implementation to assure the health and safety of all participants. The National Health and Safety Performance Standards from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau state, "Injuries are more likely to occur when a child's surroundings change or when there is a change in routine. Activities outside the facility may have the potential for increasing a child's risk of injury. When children are excited or busy playing in unfamiliar areas, they are likely to forget safety measures unless they are supervised at all times" (MCHB 2002, 52, 2.3).

- Evaluate the implementation of the established guidelines periodically and keep the results of the evaluation. This procedure will indicate if it is necessary to update the guidelines.
- Be informed about and follow Universal Precautions. "Universal Precautions" is a term defined by the National Health and Safety Performance Standards that describes the infectious control precautions recommended by the Center for Disease Control to be used in all situations to prevent transmission of

(Organization cont.)

- blood-borne germs (e.g., human immunodeficiency virus, hepatitis B virus).
- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires workers who might come into contact with blood and other body fluids (such as stool, urine, vomit, drainage from wounds) to practice the following:
 - Wash hands
 - Use latex gloves
 - Disinfect the environment
 - Dispose of materials properly
 - Develop an exposure control plan for blood borne pathogens.

Moving Forward

Use the following resources to upgrade program policies:

- *Healthy Young Children: A Manual for Programs, 1995 ed.*, National Association for the Education of Young Children
- *Caring for Our Children-National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-Of-Home Child Care Programs* by the American Academy of Pediatrics (1991)
- Head Start Performance Standards
- Maternal and Child Health

(Organization cont.)

- Department of Children and Family Services Licensing Standards

Participate in seminars and workshops that explore health and safety guidelines for birth to three programs.

Invite local representatives from the fire, health, and other social service agencies to come and present to staff and parents.

(Organization cont.)

Quality Indicator I.E.2. The program décor, furnishings, materials, and resources are appropriate for infants and toddlers and their families.

Laying the Foundation

Love of beauty should be cultivated at an early age. If a child is surrounded by an environment that is beautiful as well as organized, he will grow accustomed to it and the family inspired. Every aspect of beauty and order must be implemented to make the space comfortable and inviting for children and families.

The physical facility should be welcoming, comfortable, and attractive. It should be suitable for the activities conducted. Children should have freedom of movement and the families encouraged to interact with each other. Relevant aspects of culture and/or ethnic background of the participants should be considered in the layout and décor. Another important factor is to provide children with a sense of permanency by avoiding big changes in the place where they meet regularly. A place that is organized will influence the children and family to develop organizational habits. A sense of order in the environment will provide a place appropriate for children and families to play and learn. This does not imply that some changes cannot be made periodically. Changes necessary for health and safety and program success should be made. Planning and coordination of activities and materials in relation to the environment are essential for success.

Getting Started

A process should be established by which the program acquires new materials, resources, and furnishings as well as for evaluation of the existing environment including its contents. In some programs this responsibility may fall upon the leadership, while in others there may

(Organization cont.)

be a staff committee or work group that takes on this task with input from others. Involve members from the board or family representatives as part of the work group or to provide input.

- Look at catalogs to get ideas about materials for purchase in coordination with the curriculum.
- Select materials that encourage active involvement of the children and their families.
- Reflect on what would be most appropriate, considering the range of ages and characteristics of the participants.
- Consider the children's gender when ordering materials to stimulate diversity in learning and play.
- Consider what materials will hold the children's interest.
- Choose a variety of materials making sure that they are soft and cuddly, but durable and washable, stimulating, and attractive.
- Have enough materials to accommodate the activities and the number of participants. Provide multiples of certain toys or materials to avoid participant frustration.
- Be prepared to change materials and equipment if an emerging situation requires it. A pre-arranged and gracious substitution can save the situation from failure.
- Withdraw a toy or other materials that prove to be inappropriate.

(Organization cont.)

- Rotate materials to maintain interest and extend involvement.
- Provide a quiet area to stimulate parents to read aloud to their children and/or talk to each other.
- Use music appropriately to promote mood and creativity and facilitate transitions.
- Assure that order and cleanliness do not inhibit children's spontaneous and creative play and activities.
- Make the space child and family friendly so when they come in, they feel "at home" because they are welcomed, greeted, and invited to enjoy the space and materials.
- Consider the cultural and ethnic composition of the participants when decorating the physical space to make them feel welcome and contribute to their own pride and self esteem.
- Provide adequate lighting, ventilation, temperature control, and sound absorbing materials in the environment.
- Allow ample space for children and families to move freely and unrestricted in the environment.
- Exchange rooms for different activities.
- Seek different options to overcome shortcomings in space; for example, alternating activities, holding activities such as family gatherings in a community hall or scheduling activities at a time when they can be held outdoors.
- Arrange play areas to ensure safety.

(Organization cont.)

- Explain safety rules to parents including the reasons for them.

Moving Forward

Visit a program that has been in operation to get ideas, recognize valuable characteristics, and assess problems to avoid in the program environment.

Attend a workshop or seminar on creating appropriate environments for infants and toddlers

Consult National Association for the Education of Young Children, High Scope, Baby Talk, and Head Start about appropriate environments and materials for infants and toddlers.

Visit a children's museum for creative ideas.

Visit pertinent websites. An example would be to search for the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care.

Quote: "There are two lasting bequests we can give our children: One is roots. The other is wings." - Hodding Carter Jr.

(Organization cont.)

PROGRAM STANDARD I.F. THE ADMINISTRATION PROMOTES AND PRACTICES INFORMED LEADERSHIP AND SUPERVISION. THE ADMINISTRATION PARTICIPATES IN AND ENCOURAGES ONGOING STAFF DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING, AND SUPERVISION.

Effective leaders set the professional tone of the program as they model best practices. They encourage staff to expand their knowledge of working with infants and toddlers and their families. The leadership will ensure access to professional development opportunities that enable staff to meet this challenge.

Quality Indicator I.F.1. The leadership takes advantage of opportunities for advanced learning regarding best practice in the infant/toddler field.

Laying the Foundation

The director of the program needs an educational background in child development and/or social services, in order to provide the staff with effective supervision and technical assistance. However, in a field where new research, information, and methodologies to support best practices are changing, the need to keep current can be achieved through a well designed plan supported by policy of educational training and planned participation in informational meetings, conferences, and peer discussions.

In order to provide adequate supervision and technical assistance to the staff, the administrator of a program should update her own knowledge of birth to three program practices regularly and consistently. The administrator must provide timely assistance and support based on the individuality of the staff so that the staff can develop and grow with the job, as well as effectively meet the challenges of working with children and families. The program leadership is instrumental in encouraging the staff to learn and improve their practice, to increase their knowledge base, and to grow personally.

(Organization cont.)

The administrator needs to have basic knowledge of the participants' learning styles, cultural differences, and professional and personal information. Based on this knowledge the leader can provide adequate training and assistance to the staff so that they may effectively respond to the families. Moreover, the administrator needs to effectively assess the interactions and relationships between the staff and children and their families as well as the quality of services provided.

An administrator can be a facilitator for the staff's training and development and will capitalize on staff member strengths and valuable ideas. Staff development experiences can bring the administrator and staff together and deepen the appreciation for and recognition of each other's valuable knowledge, experience, and expertise, thus becoming partners in learning.

Sometimes administrators feel that by attending meetings, workshops, conferences and/or forums, they are neglecting other important duties because of their busy schedules. The provision of continued learning and professional development opportunities for the staff and administrator is an important priority in order to be well informed about quality program practices.

Getting Started

The program leadership sets the tone regarding the appreciation and value of advanced learning when setting a personal course of action. The staff members will tend to reflect this attitude and value when designing their own plans for professional development.

- Develop an administrative professional development plan early in the program year in order to schedule workshop/conference attendance including making necessary contingency plans for absence from the program site.

(Organization cont.)

- Read new pertinent literature and research, followed by discussion with staff to share and expand everyone's knowledge.
- Participate in birth to three meetings, committees, lectures, conferences, and seminars to obtain current information and provide feedback to the staff.
- Participate in management meetings to enhance decision making skills.
- Acquire information on current health, educational, economic, and political trends relevant to the field and share with the staff to enhance their development and growth.
- Learn about relationship building in order to relate with all staff members.
- Strive to establish a partnership with staff by learning together.
- Gain knowledge of the cultural and ethnic characteristics of the participating community in order to act in a well-informed manner when the administrator's intervention is necessary.
- Be aware of outside sources for personal and staff professional development opportunities.
- Subscribe to and read educational periodicals, newsletters, and journals that may have good information to enhance the program operation and support for staff.

Moving Forward

Develop a portfolio on personal professional development. The following is a helpful resource: *Developing a Professional Teaching Portfolio A Guide to*

(Organization cont.)

Success by Patricia M. Constantino and Marie N. DeLorenzo, published by Allyn and Bacon, Boston, MA. 2002.

Join a professional association such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the Illinois Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators, Zero to Three, or the Division of Early Childhood/Council for Exceptional Children (DEC/CEC).

Explore web sites with relevant information to keep abreast of advances in the field. (See web site list.)

Look for resources for professional development from the community that may be less costly than other lecturers, trainers, or commercial training packages.

Seek ways of sharing the cost of contracting professional training with other neighboring programs that provide similar services.

Participate in Birth to Five Program Forums, to obtain and exchange valuable information from colleagues about relevant training for self and staff.

View and discuss an educational video about infants, toddlers, and families with the staff such as "Child Care by Design," 1995, produced for Childcare Resource and Research Unit, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario Canada; available from Child Development Media, Inc., Van Nuys, CA 91401.

(Organization cont.)

Quality Indicator I.F.2. The leadership assures that all program staff takes advantage of opportunities for advanced learning regarding best practice in the infant/toddler field.

Laying the Foundation

Elizabeth Jones proposed the following in *Growing Teachers*, "Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood education is also a good model for effective practice in teacher education. Adult learners, like children, need to play-that is, they need to take initiative, make choices among possibilities, act and interact. And, as adults, they need baseline social knowledge/training to get started and know how to behave, but then they need continuing opportunity to make intellectual and moral judgments, to observe children's behavior, and to put their experience into words that are taken seriously by other adults, including both peers and teacher educators" (National Association for the Education of Young Children, Jones, ed. 1993 146).

The administration should lead the staff toward careful reflection on the status of their professional development. It is inevitable that one will become engrossed in the many tasks required in starting a new program or a new program year. Because of this, the administrator and staff may neglect to address the need for the staff's continued learning and further education. Staff development activities should be planned and designed early, collaboratively, proactively, and in detail. A conscious effort must be made to address the staff's need for professional and personal growth and learning, thus augmenting knowledge in specific areas and enhancing job performance.

In a bicultural setting, mutual learning is an essential part of effective training. The facilitator who is a respectful learner can help build bridges between cultures. The early childhood teacher who gains skill in bridge crossing can become a "cultural broker" for children, parents, and other teachers in her community.

(Organization cont.)

When members of the staff become involved in the daily activities of providing services, there is a tendency "to do things as they have always been done." It is important to remember that services can be enriched by integrating new ideas gained from successful professional development experiences that staff members have had throughout the year.

By reviewing old methods, examining outcomes and experimenting with new systems and approaches, staff performance is greatly improved. This process with appropriate and supportive supervision, constitutes experiential staff development, and contributes to the staff's personal growth and continuous learning.

Life and work experiences can be career enlightening. Staff including paraprofessionals should be strongly encouraged and assisted to continue their education. Staff development is an ongoing process, never fully accomplished, always with new perspectives and aspirations. These aspects make it more challenging and full of promise.

Getting Started

The program leadership should inform the staff of advanced learning opportunities including:

- Conduct a survey to determine each staff member's preferences for learning and personal needs.
- Recognize each staff member's strengths and support their growth.
- Strive to have staff development that is realistic, feasible, applicable and appropriate to the needs of the staff.

(Organization cont.)

- Work together with the staff to identify their needs for professional development and match them with the appropriate resources.
- Explore different means of providing professional development that is affordable and accessible.
- Draw a detailed and practical staff development plan that includes attendance at seminars, workshops, courses, conferences, and forums.
- Encourage staff to develop a professional development portfolio including visitations to other programs, on-site training, memberships in associations, attendance at meetings, lectures, and conferences, curriculum development, and presentations to groups to name but a few.
- Allocate necessary time, resources, and incentives when developing the program budget.
- Praise efforts and celebrate successes.

Moving Forward

Research staff development opportunities that are offered at minimum or no cost and in locations convenient to the program, such as the Illinois State Board of Education Early Childhood Comprehensive Staff Development System, Illinois STAR NET, Provider Connections, and other opportunities.

Review documentation of activities in the professional development portfolio, reflect on gaps, and plan for additional opportunities.

(Organization cont.)

Read literature that describes different staff development systems such as *Growing Teachers: Partnerships in Staff Development* edited by Elizabeth Jones.

Consider developing a plan for staff retention that would include staff appreciation, recognition, incentives, support for professional development, and released time to participate in training.

Consider implementing a model of mentorship in the program's staff development plan where every staff member teaches and learns.

Find out more about the T.E.A.C.H. PROGRAM, a professional development assistance program. The "T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood Project" provides educational scholarships for child care teachers, center directors and family child care providers statewide. Under the "T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood" umbrella, scholarships partially fund the cost of tuition, books and travel for individuals who are interested in achieving formal education. For more information contact:

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Illinois Project Office
739 Roosevelt Rd. #8-304
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
800/863-0499

Quote: "Even the highest towers begin at the ground." - Chinese Proverb

(Organization cont.)

PROGRAM STANDARD I.G. ALL BIRTH TO THREE PROGRAMS MUST FOLLOW MANDATED REPORTING LAWS FOR CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT AND HAVE A WRITTEN POLICY STATEMENT ADDRESSING STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION.

Being confronted with identifying potential child abuse or neglect is one of the most difficult situations a staff member encounters. Strong, clear policies and procedures, coupled with training, provide program staff with the support needed to assure consistency in regard to documenting, reporting, and coordinating with child protective services.

Quality Indicator I.G.1. The program leadership familiarizes staff with the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act [325 ILCS 5] as well as with the program's policy. This should be included as part of new staff orientation and, at a minimum, be reviewed annually.

Laying the Foundation

Child abuse and neglect are concerns of all that have children under their care. Unfortunately it is prevalent and happens with more frequency among families that are at risk. Therefore, the staff of a program that serves children and their families must be alert and well informed about the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. To be alert does not imply to be looking to find cause where there is none, but to be knowledgeable, attentive, and objective if there are signs that there is cause for concern. The administration, must develop criteria for identifying child neglect and abuse, provide proper and relevant training for the staff, and define responsibilities and procedures to assure that appropriate action is taken when necessary.

(Organization cont.)

The *Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations* in Appendix A, 1301.31 defines child abuse and neglect as follows:

"A (b) Child abuse and neglect means harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare by a person responsible for the child's health and welfare.

B. I. Harm or threatened harm to a child can occur through: Non-accidental physical or mental injury; sexual abuse, as defined by State law; or neglected treatment or maltreatment, including the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, or shelter. Provided, that a parent or guardian legitimately practicing his religious beliefs who thereby does not provide specified medical treatment for a child, for that reason alone shall not be considered a negligent person or guardian; however, such an exception shall not preclude a court from ordering that medical services to be provided to the child, where his health requires it.

C. A person responsible for a child's health or welfare includes the child's parent, guardian or other person responsible for the child's welfare, whether in the same home as the child, a relative's home, a foster care home, or a residential institution."

(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 1999, 10)

Without an effective and appropriate policy, a very dangerous situation may arise and decisions could be randomly made without considering all the implications. It is important to consider that most parents do not intend to harm their children. Rather abuse and neglect may be the result of a combination of psychological, social, and /or situational factors. The program plays an important role in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services press release, "Every One Has a Role to Play in Preventing Child Abuse: The More You Help, The Less They Hurt," presents state and national data on this problem:

"The number of children who are found to be victims of abuse or neglect has risen to over 1 million each year. Approximately 49 percent suffer neglect, 24 percent physical abuse, 14 percent sexual abuse, 5 percent emotional maltreatment, and 18 percent other forms of maltreatment.

(Organization cont.)

Child abuse and neglect occur in all racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic groups. Parental abuse of alcohol and other drugs has been identified as a major factor in contributing to child maltreatment and death. It is estimated that nearly 10 million children under age 18 are affected in some way by the substance abuse of their parents.....Child abuse and neglect damages our children, our families, and our communities. "Maltreatment costs children their childhood; it deprives them of their indisputable need to be loved and safe" (Government HHS Press Release 1995).

On reporting child abuse and neglect, the program administration and staff will act as a link with the agency that has the legal obligation to take charge of the case and continue with the process. It is important that the administration and the staff of a program for children and families have established a working relationship with the local agency that is designated to act on a case of child abuse and neglect.

Getting Started

Design a policy for reporting child abuse and neglect that has specific stipulations such as contained in *The Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations, Appendix A to 1301.31 "Identification and Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect"* on page 10.

The program policy must include procedures to communicate with parents or guardians about child abuse and neglect as well as procedures for staff members to report concerns to the administration. Families and staff should be made aware of their role when providing protection to a victim of abuse and neglect.

An orientation about child abuse and neglect should be held for all staff, new and old, to review and discuss in general terms, what constitutes child abuse and neglect, and the policy and procedures that must be followed if there is evidence it exists.

(Organization cont.)

The initial orientation should be followed by a formal training to review the mandate and discuss probable, though fictional, cases of child abuse and neglect, using them as examples to demonstrate the difference between perception and reality of child abuse and neglect. It is imperative that the staff understands the seriousness of complying with the law as part of the training.

In the training, the administrator must convey the following content found in program policy to the staff:

- Ascertain that there is cause to investigate, respecting all parties involved.
- Determine that there is validity that a case exists.
- Follow necessary procedures to comply with the law.
- Follow the established chain of command.
- Establish clear parameters of communication to prevent breaches of confidentiality.
- Act swiftly avoiding speculation and discussion.
- Document facts such as date, place, persons involved, action taken, etc.
- Review what led to the identification of the problem, what happened, if there was a case of child abuse and/or neglect, and how everyone dealt with the outcomes and aftermath.
- Determine if all was conducted according to law and program policy.
- Verify that the family knows or has contact with available social services when a case of child abuse and neglect has occurred.

(Organization cont.)

- Review the policy with staff, determine if it is effective, and change or reaffirm it as appropriate.

The protocol, confidentiality, skill, prudence, and objectivity of the process are extremely important factors. In such a delicate matter no one should act impulsively or hastily, but tactfully, cautiously, and judiciously.

Moving Forward

Review the law on child abuse and neglect:

- 1) *The Child Care Act of 1969 [225 ILCS 10];*
- 2) *The Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, as amended [325 ILCS 5];*
- 3) *And the portions of 89 III. Adm. Code 407, "Licensing Standards for Day Care Centers, that affect their functions and responsibilities." - Section 407.70 Licensing Standards For Day Care Centers, January 1, 1998-P.T. 98.2, Subpart C: Administration.*

Discuss with the families the role of the program as an important factor in protecting children and supporting families.

Identify ways to involve the community working together in the prevention of child abuse and neglect and develop a program as a preventive measure to strengthen the family.

Consult literature and locate other helpful resources relevant to child abuse and neglect as well as seek additional information on the cultural implications regarding this issue.

(Organization cont.)

Quality Indicator I.G.2. The written policy must include procedures for documentation and follow-up of reported abuse.

Laying the Foundation

The birth to three program administration and staff must understand that in a case of child abuse and neglect their role is to report the case. They will not directly exercise the law but will be the link with the agency that has the legal obligation to take charge of the case and its process. However, as birth to three program providers and members of the community, they may concern themselves with the outcome of the process.

The program staff may help as intermediaries to secure assistance, counseling including interpreters and placement, or protection for members of the family. For these and possibly other circumstances, it is important that the program have a written follow-up policy and procedures that define who, what, and how to do it. It is in the interest of the affected children and their families that they receive appropriate assistance and protection.

Records must be kept of the whole process. These records must be objective, precise, complete but concise, and supported by dates and other information that could be important if a case needs to be reviewed.

Getting Started

- Develop a follow up policy and guidelines including a protocol and procedures for child abuse and neglect reporting.
- Make sure records are complete and filed in one secure location.
- Review the follow-up communication policies to identify breaches of confidentiality that could negatively affect the case or involved parties and move to make necessary changes.

(Organization cont.)

- Hold a review, including professional discussion of the case, as an opportunity to learn from the experience and plan for the future.
- Give an opportunity to all staff involved to bring closure to the matter by expressing their personal feelings as caregivers.

Moving Forward

Look at child abuse and neglect procedures of other birth to three programs.

Explore opportunities to attend seminars or workshops that address child abuse and neglect.

Review and evaluate the policy and procedures to assess if it needs to be revised, updated or approved as valid and workable.

Identify and consult with other resources such as:

National Clearing house on Child Abuse and Neglect Information
cwelfare@calib.com

Licensing Standards For Day Care Centers January 1, 1998-98.2

A Coordinated Response to Child Abuse and Neglect: A Basic Manual by Diane DePanfilis and Marsha K. Salus, 1992, US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, and National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect

Quote: "Help them fight monsters, beasts and ghosts in life and in nightmares." - Parents Care & Share of Illinois

(Organization cont.)

PROGRAM STANDARD I.H. THE PROGRAM BUDGET IS DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT QUALITY PROGRAM SERVICE DELIVERY.

The program budget supports effective quality programming. It must reflect the human and material resource needs of the organization with consideration for competitive salaries and benefits for staff. In addition, funds should be allocated to support parent participation, staff development and training, purchase of equipment and materials, and the maintenance of facilities.

Quality Indicator I.H.1. Sufficient funds are allocated to support human resources.

Laying the Foundation

The human factor is undeniably the key element in service provision. Programs, whose main objective is to provide services and interact with people, are largely dependent on the persons that provide these services. The quality of services in birth to three programs is largely determined by the quality of the staff that serves the participants. Moreover, because the training needed for continuing and new personnel becomes a continuous process, the training line item can be depleted quickly. In some cases staff members are not well-trained or trained at all due to the challenges presented by staff turnover and budget constraints.

In order to secure good personnel to work in programs that strive to be the best, the issue of salary cannot be dismissed lightly. Most of the time programs for children and families have significant staff turnover because wages in this field are not competitive. Personnel turnover affects services negatively. Because of it, there is lack of consistency, continuity, and constancy. Staff turnover does not contribute to establishing trust

(Organization cont.)

and stable relationships between the program staff and the children and families.

Worthy Work, Unlivable Wages says, "Two other issues were identified by the literature and the experts that are related to interactive dimensions of quality: staff turnover (that is, how many staff left a facility within a year) and compensation of caregivers. While standards typically do not cover interactive dimensions of quality, the issue of turnover and wages are considered by experts and researchers to be critical in the quality of child care, as these issues affect interaction between child and the caregiver" (Whitebook 1998, 8).

Some programs do not provide benefits such as health insurance in order to save money. A birth to three program should help the families improve their quality of life including health maintenance. In order to be credible and that the quality of services meets the desired levels of high standards of practice, the program must deliver the same message and benefits to its staff as it does for the program participants and advocate for staff health benefits. Salaries and benefits must be considered very carefully when working out the budget.

Getting Started

An assessment of the community and its needs will allow the leadership to determine the program's priorities according to the program's goals and available resources. This will help determine the choices, intensity, duration, and location of program services. In addition, it will help determine the number of participants served.

The leadership should consider the assessment results and implement the following steps when developing the budget:

- Set the budget by considering program goals, objectives, and outcomes.

(Organization cont.)

- Prioritize the funds received according to proposed expenses and services.
- Identify the number of program participants that are able to be supported by the funding resources.
- Establish the number and kind of personnel resources required.
- Identify activities that can be done by volunteers such as child care while parents participate in a class, workshop, or group discussion.
- Start with what is doable and progressively build the program as the year progresses always bearing in mind the budget support available.

Moving Forward

Observe if staff members are properly assigned and consider making adjustments.

Develop a plan to review assignments considering staff performance and service needs as changes may occur as the program year progresses.

Consider rewarding outstanding performance with a salary increase, bonus, perk, or position advancement.

Develop a plan for upgrading salaries and benefits that would show that good performance is valued and demonstrates an effort to improve equity of compensation among education and care professionals.

(Organization cont.)

Quality Indicator I.H.2. Sufficient funds are allocated to provide staff development and training.

Laying the Foundation

A decisive plan, along with sufficient funds, assures that staff development is well-planned and effective. Otherwise it may be erratic, sporadic and ineffective. The administrative structure of the birth to three program must influence those making budget decisions for the program to recognize the importance of staff development and training.

Many workshops are available at no cost to staff from state and other programs. However, staff members may need a particular training that follows a specific plan or is determined necessary as a result of an evaluation. It is important that funds are budgeted to support this.

In addition, staff development can occur at the local program level and may include supervision, mentoring and staff meetings. Staff meetings with open discussions about the staff's own experiences from their work can be a very good source of personal training if they are allowed to express their experiences and ask questions without fear of being rated or judged. These meetings may offer staff members the opportunity for group exchanges, to share successes and fears, to express doubts about their work, and to ask about effective methods and strategies in early childhood practice. It is important for staff to be acknowledged and reassured and to feel supported in their work.

One of the barriers staff encounters in continuing their education, is that the wages they are paid may not allow them to afford classes in higher education. The demands of working and raising a family often make it impossible for them to continue their education, regardless of

(Organization cont.)

their ambition to improve and the desire to have better remunerated jobs. While great efforts are made to improve the lives of the participating families, assistance for staff members who want to work toward better paying jobs, educational growth, or a professional career is often not extended. The program leadership should address these issues while seeking all possible avenues to overcome any or all obstacles.

Getting Started

The following suggestions can assist program leadership in the process of building funding supports:

- Demonstrate leadership by guiding the staff to grow personally and educationally, making use of available and newly created resources.
- Consider staff's training expenses as part of the cost that must come from staff development funds.
- Analyze if the program budget for professional development needs adjustment because of staff goals, their professional development plans, and future career opportunities.
- Address the additional skills needed by staff and allocate funds.
- Make a particular training cost affordable by coordinating and collaborating with another program, to share the cost.
- Analyze if the initial goals have evolved and changed because of the work experience and/or new discoveries.
- Review staff progress, review plans and goals, and assess outcomes, to determine new opportunities for training.

(Organization cont.)

- Analyze barriers that have impeded staff to accomplish goals and develop strategies to overcome such barriers.
- Adjust existing expenditure plans in regard to the availability of funds remaining for the year.
- Strive to make staff development a comprehensive system, with the ultimate goal to encourage staff members to pursue college credits, possibly leading to a degree and if possible, with program fiscal support.

Moving Forward

Work with other programs and look into different strategies for funding staff development and training.

Consult the ISBE Professional Development Program for regional workshops at no cost that are available to ISBE funded program staff and others as space allows.

Find out about regionally subsidized education courses for professionals and paraprofessionals working in early childhood programs, such as TEACH.

Contact other programs in your area to build collaborations to offer training that addresses similar needs.

(Organization cont.)

Quality Indicator I.H.3. Sufficient funds are allocated for material resources to support quality programming.

Laying the Foundation

The availability of sufficient funds is basic to the success in early childhood programming. When funds are in short supply, programs may resort to different means to attain their goals. The program's leadership may try to look for less expensive materials often resulting in poorer quality. However, in a program for infants and toddlers and their families, it is important for materials to have certain characteristics and degree of quality. Some specifications must be followed and standards applied. As with other items in the budget, it is critical to analyze quality, quantity, purpose, and expectations for materials in order to allocate adequate funds. Materials should correlate with the curriculum and planned activities. Furthermore the need to replace materials in poor condition must also be considered in the budget.

Sara Packer in the article, "The Effects of Scarcity and Abundance in Early Childhood Settings," expresses the concept of abundance as: "Abundance does not mean a wealth of expensive items but rather large amounts of a wide and interesting variety of materials. Recycled materials and the creative use of inexpensive items such as duct tape and cardboard boxes can go a long way toward creating a feeling of abundance in children's programs" (Packer 2000. 36).

Keep in mind that the most basic goal of the program is to promote parent and child interactions. This goal must guide the curriculum and indicate what materials will carry and support all activities. Remember also that certain materials will be more conducive than others to stimulate parent and child interaction, such as books, blocks, balls, games, and puzzles.

(Organization cont.)

Getting Started

Plan to purchase materials that will be progressively more challenging to the children and families and offer opportunities to explore, create, and investigate, develop skills and solve problems, as well as be entertaining. The following are important factors to consider when planning the budget line items for materials and equipment:

- The program administrator must coordinate the purchase of materials and equipment with input from staff.
- Keep in mind program expectations when materials and equipment are purchased that they encourage parent/child interactions and coordinate with the curriculum.
- Get materials that are age appropriate and adequate considering the participants' interests, the sturdiness of the materials, quantity, attractiveness, and size.
- Obtain materials that are gender and culturally relevant and reflect the characteristics of the participants.
- Get materials that are stimulating and challenging in the development of new skills.
- Explore the possibility of purchasing some toys and materials from a local merchant if less expensive than if they are purchased through the catalog.
- Investigate if some local merchants would donate materials for the program.

(Organization cont.)

- Recognize that children's minds reach farther than their age or size may indicate. They need appropriate stimulus for their brains to function and continue healthy growth and development.
- Buy only a portion of materials at the beginning of the program year to allow the administration and staff time to observe and assess the group's interests, inclination, participation, involvement level, use of materials, and curriculum application before buying more.
- Accept donated materials and/or equipment only after examining that they are safe and have not been recalled.

Moving Forward

Review the budget and purchases that the program has made.

Visit other programs to get ideas regarding equipment and supplies.

Attend conferences that have displays or exhibits of materials.

Visit places developed for children such as museums, gardens, playscapes, and galleries.

In addition, review other available published materials supporting young learners.

(Organization cont.)

Quality Indicator I.H.4. Sufficient funds are allocated to encourage and support parent participation in all program activities.

Laying the Foundation

One of the goals of a program for children and families is to provide support and adequate resources for parents and children to develop healthy and enthusiastic interactions. Funds to support and implement families' participatory experiences must be allocated in the budget to ensure that there are consistent opportunities to strengthen parent/child interactions and build social support among the families.

An effective way to demonstrate appropriate behavior is through modeling. This can be achieved best through activities such as home visits, playgroups, and group sessions. Parents will observe effective interactions that they can do at home with their children.

To gain parent's respect and trust, and to assure the effectiveness of the activities and experiences, staff members must be sensitive and trustworthy. Activities should be conducted at the parent's level of interest in a non-patronizing manner. Strategies to achieve effective communication and assure parents' participation include planning educational activities in a social context such as lap-sits, play sessions, parent sharing meetings, group discussions and breakfast meetings.

(Organization cont.)

All of this may require more than just planning schedules and activities. It may require providing additional services such as: transportation, snacks and other food, and incentives provided through scrapbook making and other arts and crafts that can be repeated or used with the child at home. Home visits, classes, workshops, make and take sessions, cultural celebrations, and other activities foster more interest among the participants if they receive some article or hand-out that has intrinsic and meaningful value for them and reinforces their learning. It shows evidence of their participation as well as reminds them of a positive experience.

Field trips for the children and their families are also very effective educational experiences, which should be at no cost to the parents. The families' active participation in group activities with their children help them grow together as they play and learn. Perhaps the most important effect is that by sharing with their children, a special bond is created. It will also earn the child's admiration when they realize that their family shares an interest in an activity done together.

Getting Started

Program leadership should consider the following when planning their budgets to support parent participation:

- Budget money for activities with the children and their families as an integral part of the program's operation.

(Organization cont.)

- Match activities with the schedule, curriculum, and the participant's characteristics and estimate the cost.
- Provide incentives to encourage parent/child interactions and emerging literacy skills such as bubbles, books, and crayons.
- Budget home visits as an important component that should be thoughtfully planned and estimated.
- Plan playgroup activities based on desired outcomes and include the materials that will be needed.
- Budget for parent's educational groups including materials.
- Budget field trips so that the children and parents may share valuable learning experiences.
- Make family-child activities significant, inspiring, and fully funded by the program.
- Develop a budget to include needed transportation for families.
- Explore funding for parent participation in workshops, classes, and conferences with complete or partial funding support.

(Organization cont.)

- Budget adequate acquisition of appropriate materials for a Resource/Lending Library.
- Provide funding support for social celebrations including food as this helps families build relationships by providing opportunities for sharing and interaction.

The administrator and the staff must periodically review activity plans, analyze outcomes, celebrate successes, examine barriers to success, and discuss different strategies to improve outcomes and effectiveness. At the same time assess if what was budgeted was adequate or needs revision.

Moving Forward

Become familiar with the parent and budget planning sections of The Head Start Resource Manual.

Visit organizations in your community to identify additional funding sources.

Become a member of and attend a Birth to Three Forum to share ideas and funding resources as well as to learn from others about innovative parental involvement activities including the successes and pitfalls to avoid.

Research websites that have excellent articles on involvement of families in programs for infants, toddlers and their families, such as www.ehsnrc.org

(Organization cont.)

Reflect on the participation of families for evidence of participation levels and cost effectiveness.

(Organization cont.)

Quality Indicator I.H.5. Sufficient funds are allocated to support an evaluation process for program effectiveness and outcomes.

Laying the Foundation

Assessment of a program is an account of specified actions, events, and/or outcomes. It is conducted after the program has been in operation for a period of time as identified in the evaluation plan. Careful collection of records that document progress or lack of it is important and necessary. The data collection to support changes and reaffirm current activities is a process that requires a system, time, and resources.

The program's budget must also include funds to implement internal evaluation. Section III, Developmental Monitoring and Accountability of the Illinois Birth to Three Program Standards addresses the need to conduct adequate and regular evaluations of programs for children and their families. The standard for program assessment and accountability specifically states that besides periodically conducted self-evaluations, there must be a commitment by the program that an evaluation is conducted by external sources. Consequently, the budget must include funding support for the external process that may include fees, travel, and other related expenses for qualified, approved evaluators.

The results of the internal, as well as external, evaluations will assist the administrator and staff to review the standards as well as the program goals and objectives. In fact it will give insight for all elements of the program. It will provide an opportunity to address funding, based on the effectiveness of activities, curriculum, schedules, and efficiency of program operation. The adequacy or inadequacy of funding will also be evident. The program evaluation will indicate if revisions to the budget are necessary.

Getting Started

When developing the budget for the program the following should be considered:

- Discuss the reasons for conducting an evaluation.
- Discuss allowable expenses for the evaluation.
- Ask if the staff understands the goals and objectives of the evaluation allowing time for expressing concerns and/or questions.
- Reflect with all the staff on all aspects of internal and external program evaluation.
- Ask everyone to give their candid impressions to eliminate fear or negative reactions.
- Allow opportunity for everyone to provide input and reactions to the process.
- Request and encourage responses, suggestions and recommendations for making improvement or desired changes.
- Agree who is going to be actively involved and who will have supportive roles.
- Develop needed documents, or if using an existing document, review it beforehand.
- Assign a place to keep all relevant or necessary documents for the evaluation process.
- Record all comments, seek team consensus, and adopt prioritized recommendations agreed upon by the group.

(Organization cont.)

- Discuss how the outcomes will be used regarding the program's goals, objectives, budget, and planning future activities.
- Relate the assessment and results to the budget process.
- Develop a summary report of both internal and external evaluation costs.

Moving Forward

Visit another program to learn how others conduct internal and external program evaluation as well as cost. Include budgetary support for the visit.

Request ISBE consultants to assist in budget planning.

Network with administrators of other birth to three programs at meetings and other events.

Attend conferences and workshops/seminars on program evaluation and budget planning and preparation.

Quote: "Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution; it presents the wise choice of many alternatives." – Willa A. Foster