

Child Development Watch

As Part of the Interagency Resource Management Committee
Early Intervention Outcome Evaluation Projects

Family Survey
Executive Summary

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Kelly A. Yannetta, M.A.
Deborah J. Amsden, M.S.

Center for Disabilities Studies
461 Wyoming Road
College of Human Services, Education, and Public Policy
University of Delaware
Newark, DE 19716
(302) 831-6974 (voice)
(302) 831-4690 (FAX)
(302) 831-4689 (TTD)
www.udel.edu/cds/ (Web Site)



About the *Center for Disabilities Studies*

The *Center for Disabilities Studies* at the University of Delaware is one of the 67 university affiliated program Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disability Research Education and Service (UCEDD) in the United States. The *Center* was established in 1992 and works in conjunction with individuals with disabilities to better their lives. The *Center* staff and affiliated faculty teach both pre-service and in-service courses for teachers, social service workers, and other service providers working with individuals with disabilities and their families. The *Center* operates state-of-the-art programs and assists both public and private organizations in adopting the procedures developed to operate those programs. *Center* staff and affiliated faculty also serve on state and national policy boards and commissions that address housing, transportation, education, advocacy, child care, health care, and other service areas. *Center* staff also conducts evaluations of programs serving individuals with disabilities and assists in policy development at both the local and state levels. The *Center for Disabilities Studies* is located at 461 Wyoming Road at the University of Delaware in Newark. The Director of the *Center* is Dr. Michael Gamel-McCormick.

About the Interagency Resource Management Committee

The *Interagency Resource Management Committee (IRMC)* is a Delaware state level governmental committee that includes the Secretaries of Education, Health and Social Services, and Services for Children, Youth and Their Families as well as the state Budget Director and Controller General. The Committee makes both policy and budgetary decisions for three major early intervention programs: the Birth to Three Early Intervention System of Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004; the state Early Childhood Assistance Programs, programs for four-year-olds and their families; and the Preschool Disabilities Program, and programs for three- and four-year-olds with mild disabilities and speech and language delays. The IRMC Coordinator during this project was Janet Carter, Delaware Office of Early Care and Education within the Department of Education.

About the Birth to Three Early Intervention System

The Birth to Three Early Intervention System is a statewide interagency program that ensures early intervention services designed to enhance the development of infants and toddlers at risk for disabilities or developmental delays, and the capacity of their families to meet the needs of their children. The lead agency for the program is the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). The DHSS works collaboratively with the Departments of Education (DOE) and Services to Children, Youth, and their Families (DSCYF), the A.I. duPont Hospital for Children, the Christiana Care Health System, and other private providers in the implementation of Child Development Watch services to children between the ages of birth and 36 months who have disabilities or are at risk for developing disabilities as well as their families. The administrator of Birth to Three Early Intervention is Rosanne Griff-Cabelli.

Executive Summary

Child Development Watch Family Survey Report

Staff of the Center for Disabilities Studies of the College of Human Services, Education, and Public Policy at the University of Delaware conducted a telephone interview for the Child Development Watch (CDW) program from April 2007 through June 2007. This family satisfaction and perception survey was conducted via telephone with a random sample of families with active Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) in CDW. CDW is a part of the Birth to Three Early Intervention System's response to Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. Delaware's Birth to Three Early Intervention System is under the lead agency of Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and is sponsored, in part, by the Interagency Resource Management Committee (IRMC). The telephone interview was successfully completed with a total of 158 families, including 117 families from the Northern region, and 41 families from the Southern region, representing 26.8% of the total number of families receiving Child Development Watch services in Delaware.

Families were asked about their use of services from Child Development Watch and their satisfaction with or perceptions about services in eight areas: a) overall satisfaction with services, b) perceptions of change in themselves as caregivers and change among family members, c) perceptions of change in their children's development, d) perceptions of family-program relations, e) perceptions about their opportunities to jointly make decisions with programs about the services for their children, f) perceptions about program accessibility and responsiveness, g) perceptions about changes in quality of life, and h) level of satisfaction with the CDW offices.

Of the 158 families completing the *Family Survey*, 93.7% acknowledged that they received service coordination services, which is having a CDW staff member as a liaison between themselves and their children's service providers. Of the services available through Child Development Watch, the most frequently reported services used by families were home visiting (82.3%), and speech and language therapy (72.2%). On the average, the families who reported using services through Child Development Watch in 2007 used an average of 7.1 services. In 2006, the average number of services reported being used by families was 6.7.

From the telephone interviews with families of children receiving Child Development Watch services:

- Over 97% of families who responded to the telephone interview indicated that they had overall satisfaction with the services they received;
- Over 94% of families perceived the program as accessible and receptive;

- Over 93% of families perceived change in themselves and their family;
- Over 93% of families perceived change in their child;
- Over 93% of families reported a positive perception of family decision-making opportunities;
- Over 92% of families reported a positive family-program relationship with CDW staff; and
- Over 92% of families reported a positive perception of their quality of life.

For the second time, the survey incorporated questions that specifically addressed three measures being collected at the request of the federal government, as the Birth to Three Early Intervention System is, in part, a federally funded program. For these outcome measures:

- Over 95% of families agreed they could effectively communicate their children's needs;
- Over 93% of families reported helping their children develop and learn; and
- Over 88% of families knew their rights of participating in this program.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of the *2007 Child Development Watch Family Survey* indicated that most families were satisfied with CDW services and perceived these services as helpful to both their children and to themselves. The data received from this survey administration are generally consistent with results from 2006.

The review of two years of survey data (2006 and 2007) indicate that Delaware's Birth to Three Early Intervention System has been providing services in a family-centered manner and that families have perceived the services as having a positive effect on both their children's development and their families' abilities to meet the needs of their children. Furthermore, the data provides some insight into how CDW has been affecting the quality of life of families and children.

Because of the plans for the United States Office of Special Education Programs to request indicators of children's outcomes and families' outcomes from states, the survey instrument for the second year included questions to also collect information that is required to be reported on families' outcomes as a result of having children involved in Child Development Watch.

These results of the *2007 Child Development Watch Family Survey* confirm that

families do perceive the program to support the goals of the CDW program and are consistent with the overall philosophy of family partnership and family empowerment upon which the federal legislation and the Delaware Part C application is based.

Based on the Family Survey results, there are two areas where some activities could be implemented to change families' experience and perceptions. These would be the areas of the transition process and providing information about CDW processes for families involved in CDW.

- To statements “the staff and family have talked about what will happen when your child leaves the program” and “families feel part of the process of making plans for what your child will be doing after leaving Child Development Watch,” approximately 86% of families have responded that they agree with the statements. While this is an increased proportion of families by about 10% who have responded to these questions in this way from past surveys, families' perceptions are not as high on this aspect of the program as on others. The increased proportion of families responding to these questions in this way may be the result of the focus the Birth to Three Early Intervention System has been giving to transition planning in the last 24 months. Given the progress that has been made in this area, the Family Survey results still provide insight about what families' needs are at the time of transition.
- The responses from families to the statements about knowing who within Child Development Watch to speak to if family's rights are not being addressed or if there is a complaint or concern about Child Development Watch indicated that nearly 20% of families were not aware of who they should speak with in CDW.

It would be appropriate for the Ongoing Program Evaluation Committee to discuss these concepts with the Leadership Team of Child Development Watch as a means of developing a plan to address the concepts and perceptions identified through the Family Survey.