

*This newsletter will keep you informed about how the work is progressing.  
A new issue will be released every four to six weeks.*

**What is the SSIP?**

Vermont's Children's Integrated Services -Early Intervention (CIS-EI) supports families with young children who have developmental delays, or who are at risk of having developmental delays, by providing services in accordance with Part C of the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA). Knowing parents are their children's first and most important teachers, CIS-EI partners with families in their homes and in community settings to provide services that support children's development.

To enhance Vermont CIS-EI's work, the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is requiring every state's Early Intervention program to develop a five-year plan, known as the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that identifies a State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR). The SSIP strategies will improve outcomes and the quality of life for infants and toddlers receiving CIS EI services.

Vermont's chosen SIMR is that: **Families are able to help their infants and toddlers develop and learn functional social and/or emotional skills, and infants and toddlers substantially improve their social and/or emotional functional development.**

Supporting social and emotional development fosters positive relationships for children within their families, school and broader community. Doing this will help children now and in the future. Through the SSIP, CIS-EI will implement strategies that directly and positively impact families' ability to support their children's healthy social and emotional development.

**Four Main Interconnected Strategies:**

**Targeted Supports:** The Bennington, Brattleboro and Hartford regional teams met for the second face to face meeting to improve Child and Family Outcomes in mid-December. National Technical Assistance representatives Susan Hayes and Tamara Nimkoff were on hand with the State team to guide the teams through discussions around adding evaluation components to their regional plans, including gathering quality data to measure the success of the strategies they implement that will ultimately result in improvements in children's social and/or emotional development. The next in-person meeting is scheduled for March, and will focus on finalizing the regional plans so regions may move to implementation and evaluation of their identified strategies.

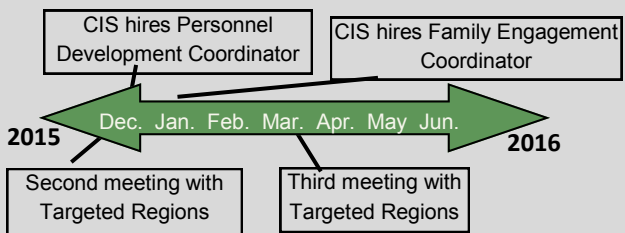
**Comprehensive System of Professional Development (CSPD):** CIS has hired Natalie Whitfield as the new CIS Personnel Development Coordinator. Under contract through our partners, the Center on Disability and Community Inclusion, Natalie's primary responsibility will be to coordinate the development and implementation of the CSPD. Vermont has received a technical assistance grant from the Early Childhood Personnel Center to help with this project. Many CIS-EI practitioners and key stakeholders will be invited to participate on workgroups or to give feedback throughout the development of the CSPD.

**Infrastructure Alignment:** CIS-EI Part C Coordinator, Danielle Howes, has been invited to participate with other stakeholders to speak with the Everything Matters for Babies organization in Vermont to examine connections to support child find and screening for infants and toddlers. Other alignments include connecting with Jill Pearl around the Early Learning Challenge Project 8, which seeks to improve specialized child care provider quality. During 2016, CIS-EI will be working with Integrating Family Services and the Department for Mental Health to talk about connections related to autism and children's social and emotional development. Finally, this year, CIS-EI will also be participating in connections with Part B's SSIP work to determine how we can work together to improve social and emotional outcomes for children as they grow through the third grade.

**Family Connections:** CIS has hired Heather Case as the new CIS Family Engagement Coordinator. Under contract through our partners the Rutland County Parent Child Center, Heather will work with the State CIS Team, the Child Development Division Promise Communities project, other State and community partners, and the regional CIS Teams to engage families to participate on the Vermont Interagency Coordinating Council, Parent Café's and other parent advocacy activities to build parent input and investment in improving CIS Early Intervention and the whole array of CIS services for Vermont's Children and Families.

**SSIP in Action: A Regional Spotlight** The VT I-Team Early Intervention Project is dedicated to promoting high expectations and improving the lives of Vermont infants and toddlers with complex medical and developmental needs. We are an interdisciplinary, collaborative team that provides unique and individualized supports to local teams with families at the center of the collaborative process. Our mission is to bring the most current and research-based knowledge and practice to local providers in support of their direct services to families, infants, and toddlers. Our website is in development; for more information, please contact Emma Nelson at [emma.nelson.1@uvm.edu](mailto:emma.nelson.1@uvm.edu).

**Estimated State Systemic Improvement Plan Schedule of Projects**



For questions related to the SSIP, please contact Danielle Howes, Part C Coordinator at [Danielle.Howes@vermont.gov](mailto:Danielle.Howes@vermont.gov)