

*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 Harford regional teams met for the third time in March. The regions refined plans for implementing their targeted improvement strategies; further developed their evaluation plans to measure implementation and the impact of their targeted strategies. The evaluation plans will ensure the fidelity of implementation of their improvement strategies and will help determine their overall effectiveness. A fourth meeting in early April will be conducted to support the finalization of the regional evaluation plans by the end of April. Full implementation of the region's planned targeted improvement strategies, activities and evaluation will begin no later than July 1, 2016.

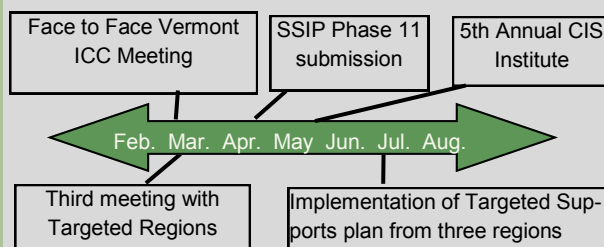
Comprehensive System of Professional Development (CSPD): Natalie Whitfield is settling into her role as the new Personnel Development Coordinator. She is in the process of researching Vermont's current professional development system and what pieces of the CSPD may already be in place. She is also networking with other Professional Development organizations, and actively planning follow up events to the upcoming CIS Institute. Current short-term goals include to inviting identified stakeholders to participate in CSPD core and strategic teams, and with the teams: generating a vision/mission statement, completing a self-assessment and SWOT of the current Part C professional development system.

Infrastructure Alignment: Vermont CIS-EI continues to engage key partners in SSIP planning and activities. Along with the CSPD, Family Connections and Targeted Supports, Vermont participates in shared conversations and planning around issues affecting the populations we serve. For example, the CIS-EI State staff are members of the Agency of Human Services Integrating Family Services (IFS) workgroups around issues such as family engagement, data and evaluation, and autism supports. As a result of conversations related to the need for Vermont to have a shared tool for family risk/needs assessment, CIS-EI, with regional CIS partners, will help identify a tool with the Home Visiting Alliance, IFS, Help Me Grow, among others.

Family Connections: Heather Case, the CIS Family Engagement Coordinator facilitated the March Vermont Interagency Coordinating Council (VICC) meeting, which included regional CIS -EI host agency staff. The VICC identified improvements to outreach strategies and promotional materials to engage with and encourage parents to voice their own unique perspective on services and outcomes and participate as members of the VICC. The Family Engagement Coordinator will be developing a Family Engagement Self-Assessment. This assessment will be utilized with each region in the coming months. The goal of the assessment is to identify current family engagement practices and activities within Early Intervention programs and among community partners

A Regional Spotlight Catch the Family Matters Talk show, a TV interview series presented by Brattleboro's Winston Prouty Center for Child Development on Brattleboro's Public Access station. These interviews with local professionals are family centric. They cover an array of topics that are interesting and engaging for families with young children including information on CIS services, transitioning to Early Childhood Special Education, and many aspects of child development. For more information, please visit: <http://www.brattleborotv.org/winston-proutys-family-matters>

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