

*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: During meetings in April and May, the Bennington, Brattleboro and Harford regional teams continued developing their evaluation plans to measure implementation and impact of their targeted strategies. Each regional team conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of its plan with the support of their state TA liaisons. In preparation for implementing the plans no later than July 1, 2016, the three regions will meet in June for a 'readiness review' of their plans, using a checklist developed by the State team. The readiness review will ensure to the maximum extent possible that the regions implement their improvement strategies with fidelity and are able to determine the overall effectiveness of the strategies in supporting the State's SIMR.

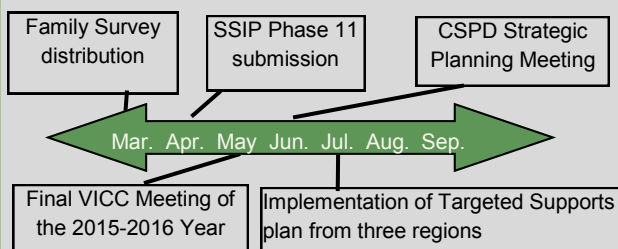
Comprehensive System of Professional Development (CSPD): Phase I of the implementation of the CSPD is nearly complete. A Strategic Planning Team meeting is planned for June 7, 2016, with participation from a diverse and representative group of stakeholders. Recruitment and Retention strategies have been initiated, and will be periodically monitored with updated data to determine their effectiveness. It is expected that the Strategic Planning Team will participate in identified workgroups and provide guidance and input to the Core Planning Team in order to complete Phase II of the CSPD, moving towards full development of this framework aligned with other early childhood personnel development efforts including early childhood education, public preschool and Building Bright Futures.

Infrastructure Alignment: The Part C Coordinator participated with other State and local partners in a critical conversation to identify guiding principles that will ensure every child's full participation in early childhood programs. The State is endeavoring to promote principles that can guide the early childhood field from practitioner to systems level. Participation in this shared conversation ensures Early Intervention is represented in the development of these guiding principles, including how they can be used to align standards across disciplines. To that end, while attending the Infant Toddler Strategies Institute in Kansas City, Missouri, the Family Engagement Coordinator, Heather Case, co-presented on the Early Childhood Family Mental Health competencies and credential structure and its impact since the first cohort. These competencies have been adopted as the standards for the Early Intervention Credential.

Family Connections: Improvements to outreach strategies and promotional materials, including logos and imagery, continued to be a topic of discussion at the final VICC meeting for the 2015-2016 council year. Work groups were identified for the 2016-2017 council year as we develop Phase III of the SSIP, the Vermont Family Engagement Plan, and identify what it means to advise and assist CIS. Heather Case has been invited to present at the Vermont Early Learning Standards Institute the week of June 20, 2016, discussing how to engage families around reflecting on the importance of play within the early childhood classroom.

A State-wide Spotlight: The 2016 Family Surveys were distributed through hand-delivery and the traditional mail to a cohort of 732 CIS-Early Intervention families in March. The intent of these surveys are to gather valuable feedback on the efficacy of the program, and so far have yielded a 45% response rate. The State will continue to accept responses until July 1. These data from families' input will be used by the State and regional CIS-EI programs to help make informed decisions regarding program supports, training and other improvements.

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