

*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: Brattleboro, Bennington and Hartford have all initiated their identified targeted supports. Their evaluation plans will demonstrate, over time, the level of impact these targeted supports have on improving child and/or family outcomes for supporting children's functional social and emotional development. While it will be some time before we have sufficient data to analyze, over the next issues of this newsletter we will highlight one region's plan for delivering and evaluating their identified targeted support. Once data is available, that information will also be shared.

Comprehensive System of Professional Development (CSPD): Our Strategic Planning Team met on June 7 with a day of activities that resulted in the establishment of three workgroups: State Personnel Standards (SPS) Workgroup, the Pre/Inservice Workgroup, and the Recruitment and Retention (R&R) Workgroup. These workgroups are open to anyone who is interested and invested in the work we are doing. Please reach out to Natalie.Whitfield@partner.vermont.gov if you would like to participate, provide input or just be informed as to our progress.

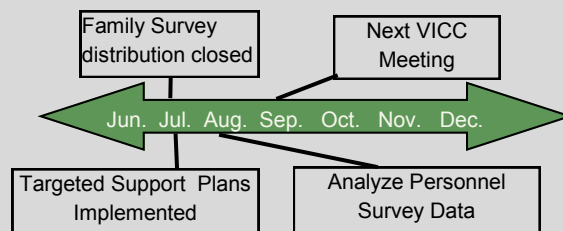
The State Personnel Standards workgroup has been in the process of evaluating applications for the EI Certification. This workgroup will evolve into a conversation around what, if any, renewal criteria will be put into place as our EI Certification moves forward, as well as conducting meta-analysis of the impact this certification has had on improving practices and child outcomes. The Inservice/Preservice workgroup endeavors to work with Vermont's Universities and Part C field supervisors and practitioners to discuss how to align trainings and coordinate resources in a mutually beneficial way. The Recruitment and Retention workgroup sent out a "Survey for the Retention of CIS Professionals." This workgroup will then analyze the data and develop a plan to improve retention of practitioners. Your input into this work is critical to making the CSPD useful to the field. Once completed the CSPD will guide future CIS personnel development strategies, funding and activities by the State CIS team.

Infrastructure Alignment: State SSIP team members participate actively in other initiatives that are related to our SSIP strategies. These include: Everything Matters for Babies discussions of connecting child find and screening activities; Integrating Family Services (IFS) discussions of family engagement; IFS-led discussions around serving children with Autism diagnosis's or suspected autism; the CDD-led workgroup looking at the infant-toddler credential; and the Guiding Principles workgroup facilitated by Camille Catlett and the Agency of Education, which is seeking to operationalize the Early Childhood Framework by developing a set of guiding principles to help Vermont early childhood services realize the promise of every child. Most directly, we have engaged with the Early Learning Challenge Grant Promise Communities staff of CDD to collaborate around our SSIP family engagement strategies. Over time this collaboration will support the development of an Early Childhood Family Engagement Framework. This framework will be applicable across settings and disciplines to inform seamless and supportive methods for authentic family involvement in systems improvements.

Family Connections: Strong family engagement is central—not supplemental—to promoting children's healthy development and wellness. Effective family engagement practices are thus becoming a marker of quality early childhood programming. CIS has long held the understanding that families hold the key pieces of information that can be taken together with what the professional observes in the classroom or home environment to form a more complete picture of the child. In May, The Departments of Education and Health and Human Services posted the new Policy Statement on Family Engagement: From the Early Years to the Early Grades. Please help us reflect on this new statement by visiting the CIS Blog!

A State-wide Spotlight: The 2016 Family Survey submission officially closed on July 1. The surveys were distributed through hand-delivery and the traditional mail to a cohort of 732 CIS-Early Intervention families. The intent of these surveys is to gather feedback from families on the efficacy of CIS-EI. This year we saw an increase from a State-wide response rate of 30% for the past two years to a response rate of 45%! These data from families will inform decisions at the State and regional level to improve CIS-EI services.

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