

STATE OF COLORADO

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Bill Owens
Governor

Summary and History of the Part C Program:

The State of Colorado receives \$6.8 million in federal funding to provide early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities through Part C of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). Early intervention applies to infants and toddlers who are discovered to have or be at risk for developing a developmental disability or other special need that might affect their development. Early intervention consists of services such as development in the areas of cognition, speech, communication, physical development, motor development, vision, hearing, social and emotional development; parent-child interaction; and early identification, screening and assessment services for the purpose of lessening the effects of the developmental condition. When appropriately provided, early intervention can significantly enhance a child's development, which can lead to a better quality of life and less need for future services. Thus, investing effectively and efficiently early on in intervention services can lead to substantial future savings.

Colorado has participated in the Part C program since 1987 when Governor Romer designated the Department of Education as the lead agency. A memorandum of understanding exists among the Colorado Departments of Education, Public Health and Environment, Human Services, and Health Care Policy and Financing to coordinate the State of Colorado Part C Program. The purpose of this agreement is to coordinate a statewide, comprehensive, interagency system of early intervention supports and services for infants and toddlers with disabilities in accordance with the Colorado Part C application for Part C funding to the Office of Special Education Programs, United States Department of Education.

Better serving our kids through a transfer of "lead agency" for the Part C Program:

An analysis of the Part C program with the Department of Education as "lead agency," along with an assessment of Colorado's existing system for providing early intervention services using State funds, indicate that there is unnecessary duplication of early intervention services and a need for reform. The State of Colorado can potentially realize greater efficiencies and better meet the needs of Colorado's children through the consolidation of the Part C program into other early childhood intervention efforts overseen by the Department of Human Services.

The efforts of the Colorado Department of Education duplicate a very well run early childhood program for children in need of early intervention services in the Division for Developmental Disabilities (DDD). DDD contracts with twenty Community Centered Boards (CCBs) to directly deliver or purchase community-based services for children with developmental disabilities. CCBs are responsible for intake, eligibility determination, service plan development, arrangement for services, delivery of services, monitoring and many other functions. It does not make sense to have an agency required by law to provide services to the developmentally disabled population (DHS) and have a small piece of these services buried in another department (CDE) whose mission is quite different.

Designating the Department of Human Services as lead agency for this program will increase the overall effectiveness by reducing unnecessary administrative costs, allowing more funds to go towards actual services for children. With the Department of Education as lead agency, an unnecessarily large amount of funding was devoted to administration and service coordination. The Department of Human Services is committed to using these funds in a manner that will comply with federal intent and maximize the dollars for direct services. This will eliminate duplication and allow the State to serve more children.

The Department of Human Services will work diligently with the Department of Education and other important stakeholders in order to understand all implications of the transfer and to ensure that services to these children and their families are not disrupted. The Department of Human Services is also devoted to working with the Department of Education to minimize any confusion for service providers and contractors. As part of the transition and implementation process, the Department of Human Services will convene a transition and implementation committee that is committed to ensuring a smooth transition and better serving our children.