

MULTICULTURAL NETWORK TELEPHONE CONFERENCE CALL

TOPIC: INVITATION TO COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATION ON WRITING REGULATIONS FOR THE NEW LAW, IDEA 2004

DATE: January 27, 2005

PRESENT: Robin Kinkaid, Alma Willis, Socorro Sanchez, Bobbie Coulbourne, Aucencia Crisanto, Ruben Madrigal, Noe de la Vega, Pat Mejia, Jeanne Bowman, Ellie Barron-Druckrey

We began our meeting with a brief report of activities at the centers. Bobbie began with reporting the inception of a new program S.M.A.R.T. that they are planning to open in February. A comprehensive program involving multiple disciplines, the program developed by Dr. Chaznoff of Chicago, the name stands for screening, decision making assessment, referral and treatment, and offers one-stop services where a family can obtain all services for at-risk children 0-5 years. Collaborators includes school districts, mental health, Regional Center Foster Care, and the Family Resource Center, and serves children who may normally slip through the system.

Bobbie was our guest speaker who brought in her perspective of how IDEA '97 was Re-Authorized, and what we might expect in the Re-Authorization of IDEA 2004 process.

Narrowing the wide-range of issues, Bobbie brought us to a point of how commenting on IDEA 2004 now, when the regulations are announced would apply to our centers and what centers could do to encourage parents to get involved.

“Ask them to write letters. ‘I have a child that would be impacted by ... and I want him to be protected regardless of what I know or don’t know...’”

Socorro brought our attention to the fact that underserved parents are barely beginning to realize their responsibilities in the I.E.P. process, let alone, that the law is changing and that they must stay abreast of new regulations.

Alma commented that she could assist the parents by helping them write letters and get them to get involved at the nascent stage of their understanding. It did not mean that they had to be law savvy, but that they be encouraged to stand up and be recognized.

Bobbie reiterated that the only way for parents to make a difference is to encourage them to use their voice. She used the example of how parents struggled with IDEA '97, and how afraid they were to make their voices heard, and now in 2004 they have a voice and are exercising their rights as parents for the benefit of their children.

How centers can help parents:

Encourage parents to participate, join the PTA, for example, and show up at their child's school.

Encourage their parent advisors to bring up the topic. Talk to parents, and set up a time to help them write the letters.

“Empower parents to make their voices heard.”

In closing, we promised to include websites that have information about IDEA 2004 and where letters could be sent:

U.S. Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Potomac Center Plaza, Room 5126
Washington, D.C. 20202-2641.

Or at the U.S. Government web site: comments@ed.gov.

Idea 2004 summary

www.pacer.org/text/idea/2004/summary.htm.

Get out the word about the public input meeting

The fourth public meeting will be held February 11, 2005, from 1:00 PM to 5:30 PM and from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM at the Lindbergh Schweitzer Elementary School in San Diego, California. The address for this meeting is:

San Diego City Schools
Lindbergh Schweitzer Elementary School
Schweitzer Campus
6911 Balboa Avenue
San Diego, CA 92111

<http://www.supportforfamilies.org/internetguide/laws.html>

We want to thank Bobbie for her enthusiastic words of wisdom. The information was exactly what was needed at this time when the regulations are still to be decided.

Save the date for our next Multicultural Telephone Conference Call April 28, 2005.
Please call with your input on topic.