

SSIP Progress Report



FIRST CONNECTIONS – EARLY INTERVENTION IN ARKANSAS

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<http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/ddds/Pages/FirstConnectionsProgram.aspx>

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Phase 3 of State Systemic Improvement Planning (SSIP): Initial Implementation

Implement and Evaluate

SSIP Phase III

Stage: Initial Implementation

May 2016 to
April 2017

- Form Master Cadre of Trainers to Serve as External Coaches/Mentors to Target
- Convene Target (Unlimited Potential) to Self-Assess and Plan
- Professional Development, TA, Coaching, and Mentoring to Support Target Group to Begin Implementation
- Ongoing Evaluation / Assessment of Progress (Modify and Adjust)

A team from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) will be facilitating a virtual meeting to review the State's Phase II SSIP plan submitted in April. Phase III, initial implementation work began this spring with the target group to begin implementation, the Unlimited Potential sites.

The Unlimited Potential (UP) initial cohort group convened in late March to learn about Recommended Practices for Families. UP Teams completed self-assessment tools provided by national TA partner ECTA and used the tools to draft initial plans. Follow up calls with team leads at each site in June allowed each team to report on their progress and identify what information and support is needed to move forward. Their identified needs shaped the development of the agenda for the July face to face workday. A year-long calendar of calls, meetings, and due dates and a "starting point" for training was identified through work with Betsy Ayankoya of ECTA.

The group determined that in order to develop functional IFSP goals and objectives, UP teams needed additional support in gathering the right information from families about their interests, needs, priorities, and typical activities. The July meeting will feature a live demo of a family assessment using the assessment tool adopted by First connections in 2014. Following the demo, UP teams will participate in a guided practice in using the information gained from the parent to write functional child and family goals based on what the family has identified as a priority, a need, or an interest.

Arkansas' SiMR: State-identified Measureable Result for Part C

To increase the percentage of parents who report that early intervention helped them help their child learn and develop.

What's Next?

Next steps for initial implementation include:

- ◆ Monthly follow up calls with target group to assess progress and to support the work until the team face to face meeting in Sept where UP Sites will share results of their work in conducting family assessments and using the results to plan functional IFSP goals and objectives
- ◆ Part B/619 sites rejoining the group after the summer to watch a demo on conducting assessment with childcare provider and/or classroom teacher and using the results to set functional IEP goals for preschool learners with special learning needs while the Part C UP teams “coach” the ECSE teams
- ◆ Recruiting external coaches to serve as mentors to the UP teams. External and internal coaches will train alongside one another to learn the DEC Recommended Practices (the evidence-based practices selected for implementation) as well as how to effectively offer peer coaching/mentoring
- ◆ Monthly “Coaches Calls”

Cross-Sector Professional Development Leadership Team Completes “Landscape Survey”

More than “just another stakeholder group,” the Cross-sector Professional Development Leadership Team (or PD Leadership Team) is a body of professionals from a variety of fields, agencies, and organizations linked by the common vision:

“To create a multi-tiered connected network of professional development in evidence-based practices that results in successful outcomes for children birth to five and their families learning in inclusive environments.”

This team completed a survey of existing professional development (pre-service and in-service), technical assistance, mentoring, and coaching, and also looked at how quality professionals into fields supporting families and children 0-5 are recruited and retained. Using a self-assessment tool created by the Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center, the team members met at workdays and through Web calls to discuss “what’s out there” and to compare existing professional development in the state to benchmarks of a quality system.

Team members discussed and reached a consensus on a rating for each item on the assessment tool as to whether it’s “in place already,” “partially in place,” “not in place, but important,” and “not in place, and not important at this time.”

At the July workday, the team will take the items rated “not in place, but important” and draft an initial plan. The team will work to come to consensus on two or three of the most important – and most “do-able” to prioritize what the team will work on first.

Team members will break into subcommittees around a priority area or areas of interest. Subcommittee members may determine that others important to the work are “missing from the table” and may recruit other stakeholders to participate in the work of their subcommittee or to serve as consultants.

Arkansas to Share Information about Work with SSIP Stakeholders at DaSy Conference

The Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy) invited Arkansas to share information about their work with stakeholders at the national data conference in August. Tracy Turner - Part C Coordinator, Yvonne Greene - Part B/619 Coordinator, and Ravyn Hawkins - SSIP Coordinator will discuss with participating states their use of *Leading by Convening* principles to involve stakeholders in the SSIP work.