



January 6, 2014

Dear Early Childhood Educators,

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) are pleased to inform you of an interagency collaboration entitled “**Valuable Collaboration: Families, Early Childhood Providers, and Early Intervention Specialists**”. The purpose of this collaboration is to enhance collaboration among families, Early Intervention programs and Early Education and Care staff in order to support the integration of Early Intervention (EI) services into all early childhood education settings.

Many families request that Early Intervention Services be delivered in their child’s early education and care setting. Having EI services offered in early education settings can be beneficial to everyone involved:

- Early Educators can partner with EI in meeting the needs of children at risk of developmental delay,
- EI providers can see children in natural settings along side typically developing peers and can assess and support their ability to socialize and learn age appropriate skills.
- Families have expanded access services for their child in a setting designed to support development and can look to both EI specialist and child care providers for information and support to help their children learn and develop.

Despite the mutual benefits, feedback from the field suggests the need for more consistent guidance and tools to assist in effective collaboration between EI and early childhood educators. To support greater communication and collaboration DPH has developed the “Valuable Collaboration” tool for use by all Early Intervention providers. This tool has been shared with EI programs earlier this year. To see a copy of the Valuable Collaboration tool, visit the EEC website at www.mass.gov/EEC. It has also been shared with the EEC’s Child Care Resource and Referral Services, Coordinated Family Community Engagement Specialists, Educator Provider Support networks and the Regional Consultation Programs.

The Valuable Collaboration tool recognizes the strengths of collaboration in meeting identified child and family outcomes across programs and settings. It may be used to enhance communications and collaboration among all parties when services are being provided outside the home. It was designed to be completed by the EI Specialist in collaboration with you and the family, with a copy given to each party after completion.

We hope that, if you have not already seen this tool in action that the next time an EI provider serves a child in your program that you will find this a useful tool in establishing strong partnerships, collaboration and expectations for families in the delivery of EI services in community settings. EEC is interested in feedback from programs on the effectiveness of this collaboration and the usefulness of the Valuable Collaboration tool. Feedback and comments may be sent to Chris Pond at chris.pond@state.ma.us.

Sincerely,

Thomas L. Weber
Commissioner