

State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) Meeting in Washington DC – Parent Leadership in Action!

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On July 21st 2019, the day before the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Leadership Conference, ICC members from all around the United States gathered for a SICC meeting.



The Parent Leadership Project supported 3 representatives from Massachusetts to attend both the ICC meeting and the conference.

The first part of the meeting focused on the SICC's reviewing federal bylaws and regulations and strategic planning. Select states presented their strategic planning approaches to the group. What stood out, were the different challenges states are facing. Nevada for example has many topographical obstacles to overcome in service delivery. Other states have rebuilt their ICC structures using techniques such as “graphic recording” which results in a real time summary visually organized. (See picture)



In the second part of the meeting the large group split in several smaller groups to talk about parent performance engagement, orientation, recruitment and retention of new ICC members. The findings were shared with the large group.

What came out is that most attending States face similar issues with family outreach

and engagement. Geographical, cultural, organizational, time commitment and financial obstacles, as well as a sense of belonging and real tasks and a true understanding of what ICC is and does, were the main challenges that impact the ability and willingness of parent representatives to engage in SICC Councils.

States shared some of the incentives used to engage families such as reimbursement for their time and work as equal ICC members. This reimbursement is available to parents who serve on the ICC in Massachusetts. Other states offer stipends for food, travel, hotel expenses (if needed) and child care.

The good news is that most states sent parent SICC representatives to the meeting. It is important however, to realize that effective orientation, adequate reimbursements and engagement opportunities for ICC parents and ICC members are necessary for member recruitment and retention.

The last major point of discussion in the afternoon session was Child Find Self-Assessment and data visualization.

"The Child Find Self-Assessment (CFSA) is a voluntary toolkit to help state IDEA Part C programs strengthen their child find systems, to ensure children eligible for services are referred and enrolled properly."

We looked at data showing numbers and percentages of children identified, found eligible for services and actually enrolled to receive services as well as overall state and local data.

Although the overall state data of that particular example showed a relatively positive picture, the local data exposed locations with great challenges.

We talked about possible reasons for these differences between a large number of referred children and those who were actually found eligible, enrolled and exited services.

Some reasons might be referring bodies that are misinformed about eligibility criteria or care givers who are hesitant for personal reasons to enroll their children. Differences in the numbers of children who successfully transition out of EI services might be linked to lack of knowledge or funding issues.

The purpose of the activity was to show that it is essential to look at and study data in order to understand the state and local situation in terms of identifying children in need of services.

As the current ICC Co-chair I am grateful for the opportunity and support of the Parent Leadership Project and my state to have attended this meeting and the OSEP conference and the trust they have in our parent representatives to advise and assist the state in providing Early Intervention Services.