



**State Interagency  
Coordinating  
Council**

**April 2007**

**FY 2007  
Report  
To the  
Legislature**

**As required by  
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125A.28**

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**State  
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Upon request, this report can be made available in alternative formats.

## **ESTIMATED COST OF PREPARING THIS REPORT**

This report provides information that the Department of Education already collects as a part of its normal business functions. Therefore, the cost information reported below does not include the cost of gathering the data but rather is limited to the estimated cost of actually preparing this report document.

Special funding was not appropriated for the costs of preparing this report.

The estimated cost incurred by the Minnesota Department of Education in preparing this report is \$235.

## Minnesota Part C Annual Performance Report: Executive Summary

### Background

State accountability for student performance has gained increased attention over the past several years. Indeed, the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 includes a number of educational standards and provisions requiring states and local school districts to report on the learning outcomes of all students. One new requirement is that states must develop a comprehensive plan to evaluate the implementation of services for infants and toddlers with disabilities (also known as Part C services).

In alignment with IDEA, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has identified four monitoring priorities and 14 indicators (see below) by which states can measure the effectiveness of their Part C services. For each of the indicators, states are required to identify how they will meet measurable and rigorous targets and specify improvement activities over a six-year period in the *State Performance Plan* (SPP, <http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/groups/Compliance/documents/Report/030882.pdf> ). The targets are either compliance targets which are set by OSEP (100% or 0%) or performance targets which are set by the Governor's Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) in conjunction with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). States must also report on their actual progress within each indicator in the *Annual Performance Report* (APR).

The following report is a summary of the Minnesota Part C 2005 Annual Performance Report (APR). The complete, unedited version of the Minnesota APR can be accessed at the MDE website at <http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/groups/Compliance/documents/Report/030883.pdf>

### Monitoring Priority: Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments

*Indicator 1: Percent of infants and toddlers with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) who receive the early intervention services on their IFSPs in a timely manner*

In order to ensure that the needs of children with disabilities are being met, it is important that those eligible for Part C receive the services within a timely manner. The ICC defines "timely" as being not more than 30 calendar days after the initial IFSP team meeting.

During 2005, 91% of infants and toddlers with IFSPs received their early intervention services in a timely manner. While there has been slight improvement since 2004 (where 90.4% received their services in a timely manner), the state did not reach the compliance target of 100%. At the current time, Minnesota does not have a system to collect the data for this indicator as most recently defined by OSEP to include the timely initiation of *all* services on a child's IFSP. Data are readily available that provides information on the timely initiation of the first services on a child's initial IFSP and that data was used in reporting. A plan has been

developed to have compliance monitors collect the data needed for this indicator as part of their routine onsite visits to local school districts within the state.

*Indicator 2: Percent of infants and toddlers with IFSPs who primarily receive early intervention services in the home or community settings*

Part C promotes the delivery of early intervention services in environments that are natural for young children and their families. Natural environments in Minnesota include the home and community-based programs where infants and toddlers without disabilities typically spend their day.

The percent of infants and toddlers with disabilities who were served in natural settings increased slightly from 89.23% in 2004 to 90.3% in 2005. In addition, Minnesota's 2005 actual performance exceeded the state's target of 89.5%. It should be noted that the overall increase in the percentage of children served in natural environments is largely accounted for by the increase in the number of infants and toddlers served at home; the number of children served in community settings actually decreased during this period.

The Center for Inclusive Child Care (CICC) collaborated with MDE to increase the number of infants and toddlers with disabilities in family child care homes and community centers. These efforts included training opportunities for child care providers on the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities that were offered in multiple languages.

*Indicator 3: Percent of infants and toddlers with IFSPs who demonstrate improved:*

- A. *Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships);*
- B. *Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication);*
- C. *Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs (i.e., adaptive behaviors)*

In response to federal outcome reporting requirements and to improve interventions for young children with disabilities, Minnesota is implementing an outcome reporting system that will facilitate the measurement of the percent of infants and toddlers with IFSPs who demonstrate improved positive social-emotional skills; acquisition and use of knowledge and skills; and, use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs." The procedures put into place throughout are state are based extensively on the work of and recommendations made by the OSEP-funded Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO).

The data is reported at entrance into and exit from Part C. MDE provided additional funding to support local education agencies in the purchase of necessary assessment tools or training on the appropriate use of tools. Districts have been given the discretion to use any criterion-referenced or curriculum-based assessment measure that has been cross-walked by ECO as the foundational element for child outcome progress measurement.

Effort was put into building statewide capacity to collect and report meaningful data. MDE conducted 55 half-day training sessions throughout the state between August 1 and October 30, 2006. More than 2,000 ECSE leaders, ECSE teachers and related service providers attended these sessions. In addition, an informational overview was provided to Directors of Special Education and Head Start leadership.

As a new indicator, baseline data was collected in 2005 and revealed that 32.3% of infants and toddlers were at age level regarding positive social-emotional skills. Concerning early language and communication, 22.8% were at age level. Finally, 26.6% of infants and toddlers were at age level for adaptive behaviors. Performance data will be included in the 2007 APR and performance targets will be established.

*Indicator 4: Percent of families participating in Part C who report that early intervention services have helped the family:*

- A. Know their rights;
- B. Effectively communicate their child's needs;
- C. Help their children develop and learn

The ECO Center has also developed a survey which is used to collect data for this indicator. The survey is administered to all families exiting Part C whose children have participated in infant and toddler intervention services for at least six months.

Baseline data was collected in 2005 and suggest that early intervention services have helped 74.2% of responding families know their rights. It was also reported that services have helped 82.1% of responding families to effectively communicate their child's needs. Finally, 86.6% of families responding to the survey report that early intervention services have helped their children develop and learn. Performance data and targets will be included in the 2007 APR.

**Monitoring Priority: Effective General Supervision for Part C/ Child Find**

*Indicator 5: Percent of infants and toddlers birth to one year of age with IFSPs compared to:*

- A. Other states with similar eligibility definitions;
- B. National data

One critical component of IDEA is that infants and toddlers with disabilities have access to the appropriate services. Overall, 0.46% of infants and toddlers under age one received early intervention services in Minnesota in 2005. While this is an improvement over the 2004 baseline data of 0.40%, progress has been relatively slow. In comparison to other states with similar eligibility definitions, for example, Minnesota ranks 12 out of 13. In addition, Minnesota's percentage falls well below the national average of 0.99% of infants and toddlers who are served under Part C. It should be noted that the actual performance for 2005 did exceed the state's performance target by 0.01%.

It appears that the percentage of infants and toddlers receiving Part C services varies by region within the state. For example, the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area has the lowest rate of serving infants under the age of one, which may be attributable to the concentration of high-quality pediatric hospitals and other services in the area; that is, infants may be receiving services through the medical system rather than under Part C. In contrast, the highest rate for serving young children under Part C is in small communities in greater Minnesota, where access to specialty pediatric services might be limited.

MDE is currently working with the Department of Health (MDH) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) to increase the number of infants identified for Part C services, including improving the quality of screening activities throughout Minnesota. MDE is also undergoing a process to change the Part C eligibility criteria in order to bring it into compliance with federal requirements. There is also an increase in public awareness and outreach efforts to families from diverse cultures and early child care providers.

*Indicator 6: Percent of infants and toddlers birth to 3 with IFSPs compared to:*

*A. Other states with similar eligibility definitions;*

*B. National data*

In 2005, Minnesota served 1.56% of the general population birth to age three. This reflects an increase over the 2004 performance rate of 1.5% and falls just below the 2005 performance target of 1.57%. Minnesota's percentage falls below the national average of 2.40%. Minnesota's performance falls at 12th out of 13 states/territories with similar eligibility definitions. The national average is 2.40% with rates ranging from 1.34% to 6.71%. Of the 21 states with rates below 2.00%, Minnesota's rates are better than only 5 states.

As previously mentioned, Minnesota is making efforts to increase the number of children identified for Part C services by refining the eligibility criteria and screening processes, as well as increasing community outreach activities.

*Indicator 7: Percent of eligible infants and toddlers with IFSPs for whom an evaluation and assessment and an initial IFSP meeting were conducted within Part C's 45 day timeline*

Minnesota is made up of 96 local Interagency Early Intervention Committees (IEICs), which are responsible for implementing referral processes and procedures to identify infants and toddlers with disabilities in their local area. The IEICs must complete the identification process within 45 calendar days after the referral.

The percent of eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities with evaluations and assessments completed within the specified timeline in 2005 was 83.4%. While this performance data is an improvement over the 2004 rate of 75.9%, it falls short of OSEP's compliance target of 100%.

Local school districts are required to report on the timeliness of each Part C evaluation, as well as to identify reasons why any evaluation is late. In reviewing the 2005 data, it was revealed that most of the untimely evaluations are from one region of the state. MDE is currently working closely with this region to remedy the situation. In addition to general training opportunities for early childhood service providers, MDE works with advocacy organizations to ensure that families understand the IFSP process and timelines.

**Monitoring Priority: Effective General Supervision for Part C/ Effective Transition**

*Indicator 8: Percent of all children exiting Part C who received timely transition planning to support the child's transition to preschool and other appropriate community services by their third birthday, including:*

- A. IFSPs with transition steps and services;
- B. Notification to LEA, if is child potentially eligible for Part B
- C. Transition conference, if is child potentially eligible for Part B

The transition from Part C to Part B (early childhood special education system for preschool children with disabilities) is intended to be relatively seamless since the Part C services are also under the early childhood special education system in Minnesota.

OSEP sets compliance targets at 100% for parts A, B, and C. Actual performance data indicates that 80.04% of IFSPs included documentation of transition steps and services. The 2005 data suggest that while transition conferences were reported for all children turning three, only 30.35% were held within the regulatory time frame. The remaining conferences were held during times that coincided with an actual transition in service location or service provider. Minnesota's current Part C structure makes those transitions seem more meaningful than the federally required transition at age three.

**Monitoring Priority: Effective General Supervision for Part C/ General Supervision**

*Indicator 9: General supervision system (including monitoring, complaints, hearings, etc.) identifies and corrects noncompliance as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from identification*

Baseline data from 2004 indicated that 100% of identified instances of non-compliance were corrected within one year. When compared with a compliance target of 100% set by OSEP, the actual 2005 performance data fell somewhat short at 96.2%.

One explanation for this decrease is that MDE is now requiring 100% correction of systemic and individual student noncompliance; previously, only systemic compliance (i.e., district-level) was reported.

*Indicator 10: Percent of signed written complaints resolved within 60-day timeline, including a timeline extended for exceptional circumstances with respect to a particular complaint*

In 2005, 100% of all written complaints were resolved within the 60-day timeframe. Minnesota's performance for this indicator has been maintained from 2004, and OSEP's compliance target of 100% has been met.

*Indicator 11: Percent of due process hearing requests fully adjudicated within the applicable timeline*

OSEP's compliance target for this indicator is 100%. However, there were no Part C hearings/ hearing requests during the either the 2004-2005 or the 2005-2006 reporting periods in Minnesota.

*Indicator 12: Percent of hearing requests resolved through resolution session settlement agreements (applicable if Part B due process procedures are adopted)*

Because there were no hearing requests for Part C in 2005, there were no resolution sessions.

*Indicator 13: Percent of mediations resulting in mediation agreements*

The 2005 performance target for this indicator was 88%. However, there were no Part C mediation requests during the either the 2004-2005 or the 2005-2006 reporting periods.

*Indicator 14: State reported data (618 and State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report) are timely and accurate*

In 2005, Minnesota submitted all required data (e.g., child count, exit data) on or before the specified due dates. This was an improvement over 2004, where the data on early intervention services was submitted after the due dates. The data reported was accurate (i.e., measures of performance were valid). The fact that performance data must be publicly reported may contribute to the accuracy of the data.