



Friday, September 19, 2025
Meeting Minutes

Public Meeting 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
ZOOM Meeting Platform

A regular public meeting of the New Jersey State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) was held on Friday, September 19, 2025. The meeting was held via ZOOM meeting platform. The meeting was called to order at approximately 9:30 a.m. by Joyce Salzberg, Acting Chair.

Welcome

I. Joyce Salzberg welcomed attendees and read the Welcome Statement.

Attendance

I. Attendance maintained by the Department of Health (DOH).

Introductions

- I. SICC members and DOH representatives were introduced.
 - a. Virginia Lynn announced her new position as the Family Support Coordinator at Mid-Jersey CARES
vlynn@cjhfc.org
- II. Quorum requirements were met.
- III. Public members signed their attendance through the chat box in the ZOOM platform.

Approval of Minutes

The June 27, 2025, Minutes were APPROVED; no discussion, 2 abstain. Motion by Catherine Colucci, seconded by Virginia Lynn.

SICC Standing & Ad Hoc Committees Reports

I. Administrative/Policy Committee, Samuel Kivell, Chair and Saira Hussain Akhter, Co-Chair

- Reported a summer slowdown but plans to resume monthly meetings.
- Saira Hussain Akhter stated a goal of the Committee is to set up the administrative function and the transparency in relation to the initiatives that are going on and work with the other Committees to help new Members understand what the SICC is about.

II. Service Delivery Committee, Virginia Lynn, Chair

- July 29th meeting reviewed childcare access concerns.
- The Committee is continuing to work on Early Intervention (EI) services in Child Care Centers. Research by the Committee shows Liability Insurance is not required by the licensing board for the Practitioners, though the center is required.

- The Committee found that some Centers are restricting the times that EI Practitioners can come to the Centers. The requirements could be pointed out more firmly if needed, but Ms. Lynn expressed the importance of building a positive relationship.
- Virginia Lynn mentioned some future work would be a handout to Centers explaining the Evaluation Process, a letter expressing gratitude after an evaluation has occurred, and speaking at Provider meetings, TET trainings, and presentations for ChildCare Centers.
- Plans include training TETs on functional outcomes, outreach to childcare associations, and developing resources for IFSP integration in childcare settings.
 - Nicole Edwards suggested getting in touch with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC.)

III. Fiscal Infrastructure Committee, Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen, Chair

- Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen asked if there was any information regarding the Federal impacts to EI and why the 1% increase was redacted?
 - Josephine Shenouda clarified that Susan Evans will share the OSEP report information later and the 1% increase discussion happening now is how to minimize the impact on Families. There will be more information to come on this. The December 1, 2025, effective date is still on the table. Discussions still occur regarding Family Cost Share, which does remain in place currently.
 - Erika Nava added that during the budget process, the Majority Leader allocated money for the 1% increase. There was discussion regarding that any increase does affect Families who pay towards services. Senator Ruiz's office confirmed legislative support for provider rate increases.
- Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen asked about any discussion about the consequences to families who are not paying Their Cost shares. Ms. Hinnigan-Cohen asked about data regarding the amount of families who are notifying the system they leave because they cannot afford the cost share.
 - Josephine Shenouda replied to it can be looked in to.
- Ms. Hinnigan-Cohen asked about a Medicaid increase.
 - Dr. Thomas Lind stated this is on the backburner with all of the other changes occurring at this time.
- There is no movement at this time on the insurance company reimbursement.
 - Josephine Shenouda stated DOH is looking at other states' processes.
 - Susan Evans added there is conversation regarding adding the diagnoses codes to EI Statements.
- Provider Liaison position has not been filled yet. There is a hiring freeze at the State right now.
- DOH does hear the concern.

- Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen expressed a concern regarding the Federal cut to the Child Care Assistance Program, which helps parents pay for child care and how this may contribute to lower referral numbers.
 - Susan Evans responded that this specifically has not been looked at but, there are many contributing factors including COVID, that contributed to a rise in eligibility and have now returned to a pre-COVID number.
- Conversation regarding whether the BDI updates/being re-normed is affecting eligibility ensued. DOH will look into that data and informed clinical opinion. Further conversation in the future.

IV. Personnel Preparation Committee, Corinne Catalano, Chair

- The Committee was asked to provide recommendations on revisions to the NJEIS Personnel Standards. The Committee looked into what other states are doing and consulted with the Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) and the Division of Early Childhood (DEC.)
- The Committee recommends collapsing 3 current titles, the Child Development Specialist, Behavior Specialist, and Special Educator, into one. Ms. Catalano shared a PowerPoint of the details regarding Collapsing the titles and the justifications.
- Below are some pages from it:

Recommended Changes to NJEIS Personnel Standards
9-19-25

Title(s)	Current Standards	Proposed Standards	Notes
	Behavior Specialist (BS) Child Development Specialist (CDS) Special Educator (SE)	The Personnel Prep Committee offers two proposed titles for consideration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Childhood Specialist • Early Intervention Educator 	<p>Justification for Early Childhood Specialist: This title reflects a professional who is qualified, experienced, and specialized in understanding and supporting young children's learning and development. It communicates a higher level of expertise than generalist roles and acknowledges the critical work involved in shaping children's earliest experiences and learning outcomes.</p> <p>A trained professional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on the development, learning, and well-being of young children • Providing coaching and training to early childhood educators • Collaborating with families to support children's learning at home • Offering guidance on parenting strategies and child development • Possessing in-depth knowledge of developmental milestones (cognitive, emotional, social, physical) <p>Justification for Early Intervention Educator: DEC (Division of Early Childhood) is advocating for using this language of Early Intervention Educator. National organizations (i.e. DEC, NAEYC) are recommending this title to unify the field and professionalize the role of educator. The EI Educator is an educator of the child in all areas of development, including social & emotional, as well as an educator and support for</p>

Recommended Changes to NJEIS Personnel Standards
9-19-25

			families and child care providers. This is outlined in the position statement; <i>Role of Special Instruction in Early Intervention</i> (2024). https://www.dec-sped.org/single-post/position-statement-the-role-of-special-instruction-in-early-intervention-revised-2024
Education	BS & CDS- Bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited institution in a related health, human service, or education field; SE- Bachelor's degree or higher	Bachelor's degree, or higher degree from an accredited institution AND a record of coursework and/or professional development (PD) from an accredited institution or state approved PD provider in the required areas (see coursework).	The Personnel Prep Committee is recommending that we broaden the field of candidates by requiring a degree BUT not specify a related field. This allows for a candidate who has a degree in a non-related field (i.e. music) to be considered if that candidate has the required experience (see below) and coursework and/or professional development aligned with particular competencies (see below). We also recommend that NJEIS works with higher education and approved PD providers so that the competency aligned coursework and PD are more easily accessible to the workforce.
Coursework/ Professional Development	BS- completed coursework from an accredited institution in behavioral methodology for children CDS- at least six (6) credits in infant or early childhood development and/or special education coursework (only required if the candidate does not have one year experience with individuals from birth to 5 who have developmental delays or disabilities) SE- at least six (6) credits in infant and toddler or early childhood development (only required if the candidate does not	Completed coursework and/or professional development that addresses all required competencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typical and atypical patterns of infant and toddler development, behavior, and learning in all areas (e.g., cognitive, social-emotional, communication, adaptive, and motor development), 	The Personnel Prep Committee is recommending that we raise the level of expected competencies for this personnel standard by requiring competencies aligned with the service of Developmental Intervention. Coursework: Provide PCG guidance on competencies addressed by coursework. Recommend using Applicant Review Forms for each standard. <i>Teacher Preparation Alternate Route Coursework should be accepted</i>

- Interest in creating a career ladder, particularly for bilingual staff and candidates from underserved populations.
- Nicole Edwards and Corinne Catalano had further conversation regarding changing the birth to 5 to Birth to 3 and programs needing to have a set number prior to being able to launch in the colleges.
- Council will review this and possibly ask questions and vote at the November 2025 meeting. The Special Educator mentioned here will not include Special Educator, hearing and visually impaired.

V. Family Support Committee, Nicole Edwards, Chair

- The Committee worked with the Procedural Safeguards Office (PSO) to focus more on families in Part C and better navigating the Dispute Resolution Process and will continue to work on Child Find.
- Mid-Jersey REIC shared survey results: sending evaluation reports to physicians increases referrals and provider-family discussions.
- The Committee is working on an infographic for Pediatricians that can also be provided to the families.
 - Saira Hussain Akhter suggests thinking about birth to 1 year and what parents can look for.

VI. Transition Committee, Steven Weiss, Chair and Josephine Shenouda, Co-Chair

- Steven Weiss mentioned the Committee has formed 2 sub-committees: Bridging the gap between Part B & Part C, and Parent Support & Education. Further updates in the future.
- Josephine Shenouda stated the DOH does share information monthly to the DOE regarding children exiting Part C and we are looking to receive a reciprocal report.
- Special Child Health, Case Management is available for children who meet their criteria, overseen by Sandy Howell at the DOH. Discussion regarding different options at Part C transitioning and working on getting data.
- Parents can also look into registering with the Division of Children & Families (DCF) and PerformCare, with meeting eligibility.

Lead Agency Report

Susan Evans, Part C Coordinator

- Josephine Shenouda clarified there is now a policy on Public Comment so the rules for Public Comment can now begin to be worked on.
- Federal Updates

Federal budget process is underway for FFY26

- President's proposed budget consolidates 7 of the 8 IDEA funding priorities including SPED, 619, Technical Assistance centers, Parent Centers and others. These were proposed to block granted to States. Part C is carved out in that proposal.
- Both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees rejected the President's proposal, and keeps these items funded according to the IDEA statute (individual funding, not block granted)
- House and Senate both agree on flat funding for FFY26.
- Final agreement must be reached on all program funding levels by the full House and Senate before the bill goes to the President for signature.

Senate Bill

- The Senate bill recommends IDEA programs (OSEP) remain in the Department of Education.
- Senate bill also includes a requirement that the Department of Education maintain the staff necessary to ensure it carries out its statutory responsibilities
- Maintaining staff at OSEP is vital to supporting NJEIS and other OSEP funded activities, including APR submissions, monitoring and oversight, and release of grant funds timely.
- Next Steps
 - If no budget by October 1, Congress must approve a continuing resolution (CR) or force a government shutdown. A federal government shutdown does not affect Part C/NJEIS. The Part C funding has been received, and we continue even if there is a shutdown.

Funding Cuts and Grant Terminations

- In early September, OSEP terminated grants for 25 programs funded under IDEA Part D.
- \$14.8 million for existing grants for state education departments, nonprofits, universities and other entities were canceled.
- These were canceled because these grants referenced diversity, equity, inclusion, racism and similar work “not in line with the administration’s priorities”

- The canceled grants include funding for Community parent resource centers, preparing special education teachers and related service providers, (pre-service pipeline of practitioners), Braille and interpreter training, and programs supporting those who are deafblind.

Medicaid Changes under the OBBBA

- Gov. Murphy issued an Executive Order directing agencies to analyze and report any impact the changes to Medicaid will have on programs and residents.
- DOH is doing internal work to respond to the Executive Order as it pertains to potential impacts on NJEIS.
- Medicaid provides 38% of the NJEIS annual revenue
- States Updates
 - Public Hearing held September 9, 2025 – Public Notice, Public Comment, and Public Hearing procedures for the NJEIS.
 - The public can submit comments either electronically by OCTOBER 3, 2025 to www.nj.gov/health/legal/ecomments.shtml , or by regular mail postmarked by October 3rd. Alvina Seto can provide you with additional information if you want to review and comment.
- Service Coordination Training Day was September 18, 2025, presented by Patty Green
 - December 2024 Needs Assessment completed; June 2025 Follow up on Needs Assessment completed.
 - The Top 4 Priorities from Needs Assessment were Family Cost Participation, Transition, What IF we put the “F” in IFSP, and Who is the Parent (PSO).
 - Additional needs identified to be discussed at a later date.
 - 210 in person and +120 virtual; asked to complete a survey. This input will be incorporated into the next training.
 - There is a Service Coordination Manual that has been given to each unit. Patty Green holds monthly meetings with units and plans to make this training a yearly event.

- NIEER Update

NIEER: Family Survey

- First Satisfaction Survey done from DOH
- Covers family's experience from Referral to Transition
- Piloted with 10 families and we had good feedback
- Will give to family support committee for review of the survey
- Will include a gift card option for parents who complete
- Data will inform successes and pinch points in the NJEIS processes

Procedural Safeguards Office (PSO) – Beth Lohne, Coordinator

- Monthly office hours reported strong attendance, with participation increasing by 32% as a result of the switch to Microsoft Teams.
- Continuing quarterly training on Procedural Safeguards.

Procedural Safeguards Office Initiatives

OFFICE HOURS SFY26:

- Beginning September, the PSO will resume monthly dedicated office hours for the NJEIS, via Teams platform to allow maximum attendance. ****Using Teams had a 32% increase in attendance in SFY25.**

TRAINING INITIATIVES:

- PSO Quarterly Trainings: Continuous education on Procedural Safeguard requirements for direct service providers.
- Mediator Refresher Training
- ****Assurance that families have been informed of their right to formal dispute resolution.**

ONGOING INITIATIVES:

- Monthly Office Hours: Regular sessions to address questions, discuss trends, and provide support.
 - Infographic Resource for families ensuring the importance of their signatures.
- Partnership with the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network: Collaboration on a joint training for families on Creating Agreements and Formal Dispute Resolution Options in the NJEIS. SICC Family Support Committee collaboration.

- An infographic resource for families was created to highlight the importance of their signatures:

Common Trends Observed by the PSO

Families not signing required documents

- Delays in IFSP implementation and service provision
- Missing signatures on consents, evaluations, or IFSP forms

Service Verification Logs

- Incomplete or missing logs
- Lack of timely submission/documentation
- Inconsistencies between logs and services provided

9/19/2025



- Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Investigations SFY25 – 21 total:
4 unfounded, 4 unable to determine, 11 substantiated, 1 pending, 5 suspended from NJEIS
- PSO SFY26 Compensatory Awards Data
July – 39 Children, 740 Compensatory Hours
August – 37 Children, 676 Compensatory Hours
September – 45 Children, 78 Compensatory Hours
Total: 121 Children, 1,494 Compensatory Hours

Benefits of the new Compensatory Process

Early Implementation:
Begins the process at 32 months of age, allowing more time for planning.

Increase in Exit Data:
Improved data collection, supporting better outcomes analysis.

Timely Access to Services:
Reduction in delays, ensuring families receive needed services on time.

Proactive Missed Services Review: Missed services are identified and addressed earlier during IFSP meetings, ensuring that families' needs are considered promptly.

Regional Early Intervention Collaborative (REIC) Update, Nicole Brogden & Laura Washington, Family Support Coordinators

- Nicole Ramirez and Laura Washington presented a PowerPoint with statewide referral data as well as a targeted child find initiative as a possible solution to the recent 12% decline in referrals.



- A postcard was created to send to pediatricians statewide, and another postcard to send to households with children under 3. The parent version includes a QR code linking to the CDC Milestones.
 - Both postcards have a QR code link to each Region and REICs will be sending them out.
 - Discussion ensued regarding the efficacy/return on investment of sending out postcards.
- Susan Evans stated that Mid-Jersey CARES had done similar outreach and will share the data with the Council, using Direct Mail to access mailing information.

New Business

I. Future Hybrid Meeting Dates:

- November 21, 2025

Susan Evans requested time during the November meeting to discuss the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP).

Old Business

I. SICC Member Appointments Update, Josephine Shenouda, Executive Director

- Hoping to have at least five new appointments to the SICC Council by the end of the year: two parents, a service coordinator, a 619 coordinator, and a pediatrician.
- Update on the Rutgers Study (NIEER)

Public Comments

The following comments were made by members of the public:

Kenneth (David) Holmes, ABCD EIPA – Mr. Holmes' statement is summarized below:

- ABCD, EIPAA responded to the public comment regarding the proposed rules, identified in NJCA 9, Column 17-19,
- The procedures for public notice, public hearing, and public comment. Mr. Holmes states he feels it was well written and comprehensive.
- Mr. Holmes asked what rules are the DOH going to be reviewing over the next 6 months to a year? The status of the 1%, looking forward to more information. Appreciated all the data presented today.
- Would like more NIEER study data. Mr. Holmes also asked if the number of practitioners would increase or decrease with the proposed personnel standard change.

Kayley Mayer, Program Coordinator, Sound Start Babies –

- Will the Special Educator hearing impaired & vision impaired be collapsed as well in the Personnel Standards?
- Corinne Catalano stated that they are not included in the collapse and that it is different.

Submitted Chat Messages as Public Comments:

02:23:24 Erika Nava (Senator Ruiz): can we get a copy of the slides?

02:23:30 Christina Hernandez: Reacted to "can we get a copy of..." with 👍

02:26:30 Ashley Dalia: Thank you, Susan, for these critical updates. I am the director of the New Jersey Center on Deafblindness (housed at TCNJ), and I am pleased to share that we have received a continuation in our funding. We are actively seeking new ways to make stronger connections with NJEIS and other service providers across the state to support the education of our children with deafblindness and their families.

02:29:23 tmadden: Can EIP's also have access to the training materials?

02:29:50 Danielle Cuskey: Danielle Cuskey, CFCS Director of TET

02:30:18 Maureen Archibald: Thanks so much to Patty Green and Kendra on planning and facilitating a seamless days. (Yes, Kendra Taggart was amazing in accommodating last minute changes!)

02:30:26 Danielle Cuskey: Reacted to "Thanks so much to ..." with ❤️

02:31:15 Melissa Gordon: Reacted to "Thanks so much to Pa..." with ❤️

02:32:17 Nichole Gooding: Reacted to "Thanks so much to Pa..." with ❤️

02:33:14 Christina Hernandez: Reacted to "Can EIP's also have ..." with 👍

02:33:23 Jennifer Blanchette McConnell: Reacted to "Thanks so much to Pa..." with ❤️

02:34:25 Melissa Gordon: It would be great to get trainings out to all practitioners and TET as well. The work yesterday can only go so far if the rest of the EI teams are not trained as well.

02:34:34 Maureen Archibald: Reacted to "It would be great to..." with 🏆

02:34:36 tmadden: Reacted to "It would be great to..." with 👍

02:34:48 Kathryn Hohner: Reacted to "It would be great to..." with 👍

02:34:49 Christina Hernandez: Reacted to "It would be great to..." with 👍

02:35:17 Sarah Teresavage- Senior Service Coordinator: Reacted to "It would be great to..." with 👍

02:35:20 jpratt: Reacted to "It would be great to..." with 👍

02:36:22 jpratt: Would be great to have training opportunities for TET and provider agencies as well.

02:36:37 Christina Hernandez: Reacted to "Would be great to ha..." with 👍

02:36:44 Jill Glassman - Arc of Somerset: Reacted to "Would be great to ha..." with 👍

02:36:48 Maureen Archibald: Reacted to "Would be great to ha..." with 👍

02:36:52 Jill Glassman - Arc of Somerset: Reacted to "It would be great to..." with 👍

02:40:46 Maureen Archibald: Replying to "Would be great to ha..."
Agree, so often it is left to SCs to train the practitioners, in addition to the often needed follow-up for progress summaries!

02:45:05 tmadden: Can EIP's pls have access to the form?

02:45:22 tmadden: Reacted to "Would be great to ha..." with 👍

02:45:27 tmadden: Reacted to "Agree, so often it i..." with 👍

02:51:24 jpratt: Reacted to "Would be great to ha..." with 👍

02:51:37 tmadden: Is the Parent Release Form ready for roll out 9/30?

02:52:40 jpratt: Reacted to "Is the Parent Releas..." with 👍

02:55:05 jpratt: Thank you Kathy!

02:55:22 Jill Glassman - Arc of Somerset: Absolutely - TY Kathy!!

02:57:32 EMastricova: Yes, I agree, we need to have an EI Liasion, as communication is inconsistent at best for Provider agencies to fulfill our objectives and requirements to the best of our abilities. Thank you.

02:58:45 Christina Hernandez: Reacted to "Yes, I agree, we nee..." with 👍

02:58:48 jpratt: Reacted to "Yes, I agree, we nee..." with 👍

02:59:20 Jill Glassman - Arc of Somerset: Reacted to "Yes, I agree, we nee..." with 👍

03:00:53 Eleanor: Totally agree about the need for an EIP liaison.

03:02:31 Barbra Bowers: Reacted to "Yes, I agree, we nee..." with 👍

03:02:45 tmadden: Reacted to "Yes, I agree, we nee..." with 👍

03:02:47 tmadden: Reacted to "Totally agree about ..." with 👍

03:04:26 Jennifer Blanchette McConnell: Wonder about how NJ trends compare to national trends?

03:05:00 EMastricova: We are finding that the BDI-3 is finding more children found ineligible for services without giving the team the input for clinical opinion.

03:05:10 MDEBOW: Reacted to "Wonder about how NJ ..." with 👍

03:06:27 Dawn Jenkins: Reacted to "Totally agree about ..." with 👍

03:08:25 Liz Mannino: Since we are talking about gross numbers, I'm just wondering if birth rate has been steady, decreased or changed in any way year over year

03:09:07 Susan Evans: Reacted to "Thank you, Susan, fo..." with 👍

03:11:52 Stephanie Flamini: This data and the "why" behind this campaign is so important! Great job!

03:12:46 Cynthia Newman: just an FYI- mid jersey reic has been doing postcard outreach to 2000 health care providers in our region for years - our first one - during pandemic was - we are open for business!!

03:13:47 Jennifer Blanchette McConnell: Replying to "just an FYI- mid jer..."
And it is interesting to see the total #s for 2025 in MJ region

03:14:01 Cynthia Newman: Replying to "just an FYI- mid jer..."
yes we have higher numbers...

03:14:44 Cynthia Newman: Replying to "just an FYI- mid jer..."

mid jersey cares has a process to add to our physician list on an ongoing basis..

- 03:15:58 Audrey Searles-Bogdan: All four REIC's are very active in the Outreach/Child Find process
- 03:16:26 Jennifer Blanchette McConnell: Will PAs, APNs, family practice drs also be included in the mailing? to include the other types of primary healthcare providers for infants/ toddlers?
- 03:16:31 Jennifer Blanchette McConnell: Reacted to "All four REIC's are ..." with 💜
- 03:16:54 Tiffany Martinez: Reacted to "All four REIC's are ..." with ❤️
- 03:19:57 Jennifer Blanchette McConnell: Replying to "All four REIC's are ..."
Yes-and I believe some of the research shows that these repeated and multiple opportunities for outreach are so important
- 03:20:31 Jill Glassman - Arc of Somerset: Reacted to "All four REIC's are ..." with 👍
- 03:22:28 Jennifer Blanchette McConnell: Reacted to "This data and the "w..." with 💜

Submitted Written Comments (Attached):

No written comments submitted.

There were no additional public comments.

The Public can submit comments to the Department or in the Chat Box which are recorded for the Department.

The next SICC public meeting is November 21, 2025, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn the meeting by Corinne Catalano and seconded by Virginia Lynn at approximately 12:17 p.m.