

Overview: Utah's Part C State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)

Utah Early Intervention System

The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) is the state's lead agency for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C program for the state of Utah. Within UDOH, the Baby Watch Early Intervention Program (BWEIP) is part of the Bureau of Child Development (BCD).

During Federal Fiscal Year 2013 (FFY13), BWEIP granted contracts to 15 statewide local early intervention agencies (EIS) for the purpose of ensuring all families have equitable access to a locally-coordinated system of early intervention services. The types of organizations that administered one or more local early intervention programs included two local health departments; four local school districts; six nonprofit agencies; and two universities. As a result, over 10,000 infants and toddlers and their families received early intervention services throughout FFY13.

In order to ensure services are coordinated and follow IDEA Part C requirements, each EIS provider conforms to the rules, regulations, and policies set by the BWEIP through contract performance and compliance.

State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Leadership and Work Teams

BWEIP followed Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) guidance and recognized that four levels of leadership and work teams would benefit and make possible SSIP planning, development, and implementation. Previous projects have had positive results utilizing the diverse expertise, knowledge, and perspectives of state and local agencies and their stakeholders. From the introduction of Results Driven Accountability (RDA) and beginning phase of the SSIP process, BWEIP involved the state Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC), which consists of parents and agency leaders and local EIS administrators and providers, and child and family advocates as stakeholders.

SSIP BWEIP Team

BWEIP state staff organized a SSIP BWEIP Team to begin the development of Phase I of the SSIP. The SSIP BWEIP Team consisted of senior staff including the Part C Program Manager, Project Coordinator (Education and Compliance), Data Team/618 Data Manager, Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Coordinator, and the ICC Program Specialist.

The BWEIP SSIP Team, in addition to the SSIP Broad Stakeholder Group, convened a twenty-six member SSIP Leadership Team. Seven representatives of the Leadership Team agreed to serve for one year with the SSIP BWEIP Team to form the SSIP Core Work Team. The levels of involvement of the three SSIP teams and the Broad Stakeholder Group are shown in Table 1.

Figure 1. Utah's SSIP Teams and Broad Stakeholder Group

Activities	SSIP BWEIP Team Program Manager, Data Team, Education and Compliance Team	SSIP Core Work Team BWEIP Staff, ECTA Staff, Representatives of the SSIP Leadership Team (four that are parents of a special needs child)	SSIP Leadership Team BWEIP Staff, ECTA Staff, Representatives of State Agencies, Parent Advocacy, ICC Members, EI Service Providers and Administrators	Broad Stakeholder Group BWEIP Staff, ECTA Staff, BCD staff, All ICC members, All EI Service Providers and EI Program Administrators
Designate SSIP BWEIP staff	✓			
SSIP Introduction	✓			✓
Initial Draft SSIP Phase 1 Activities and Timeline	✓			
Invitation to participate in SSIP Leadership Team	✓			✓
Orientation to SSIP Phase 1.	✓		✓	✓
Analyze key data	✓		✓	
In-depth low performance analysis	✓		✓	
Broad Infrastructure Analysis	✓		✓	
Report analyses	✓		✓	✓
SSIP Core Work Team formation	✓	✓	✓	
Define and limit scope of the SSIP	✓	✓		
Further refinement of COSF data (Meaningful Differences)	✓	✓		
Determine SiMR focus	✓	✓	✓	✓
Refine SiMR Selection	✓	✓		
Report SiMR Selection	✓	✓	✓	✓
Devise Root Cause Analysis for SiMR	✓	✓		
Train EIS Programs to Conduct Root Cause Analysis		✓	✓	✓
Synthesize Root Cause Analysis conducted by	✓			

<i>El Programs</i>				
<i>Discuss results of Root Cause Analysis</i>	✓	✓		
<i>Report results of Root Cause Analysis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Discussion to determine broad-coherent improvement strategies to address the SiMR</i>	✓	✓		
<i>Report on improvement strategies to address the SiMR</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Refine coherent Improvement strategies</i>	✓	✓		
<i>Report out on the Final SSIP Document</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓

In addition to the SSIP BWEIP Team and SSIP Broad Stakeholder Group, we convened a 26-member SSIP Leadership Team and a seven-member SSIP Core Work Team, as shown in Figure 1.

SSIP Leadership Team

The SSIP BWEIP Team wanted to assemble an SSIP Leadership Team with a representative group of stakeholders. BWEIP notified stakeholders statewide of the opportunity to join the SSIP Leadership Team, distributing invitations by email with an RSVP requested. The invitation was reiterated after the presentations of the ECTA SSIP overview at both the spring 2014 ICC and EIS provider meetings. Potential stakeholders with early intervention experience and expertise were strongly encouraged to consider joining the SSIP Leadership Team.

Twenty-six stakeholders responded positively to the notice of invitation and identified their early intervention interest, knowledge, and experience. These stakeholders included individuals representing the ICC, State lead agencies, local EIS providers, the Utah Parent Center (UPC), Early Head Start, higher education personnel preparation, and the BCD. Five respondents indicated they were also parents of a special needs child or a child who had received early intervention services.

A daylong in-person kickoff meeting occurred in July 2014 with the full SSIP Leadership Team in attendance. Continued SSIP Leadership Team statewide participation after that time was made possible by meetings occurring by teleconference and webinar.

SSIP Leadership Team meetings began in June 2014 and have continued to occur up to the present time. During summer and fall 2014, meetings were held at least monthly, with more frequent meetings occurring as the work has required. During teleconference and webinar

meetings, participants actively engaged in data and early intervention practice discussions that led to reasoned conclusions and action steps, when needed. The SSIP Leadership Team has been integral to addressing Phase I requirements by providing insight, expertise, and feedback reflecting their diverse perspectives.

SSIP Core Work Team

The 26-member SSIP Leadership Team designated a SSIP Core Work Team from its members to serve for at least one year and represent the larger body in the Phase 1 SSIP day-to-day work and process decisions. The SSIP Core Team members identified knowledge and interest in Part C data and data analysis tools, Annual Performance Report (APR), and child outcomes summary process.

The SSIP Core Work Team consisted of representatives from the Utah Parent Center; Easter Seals Rocky Mountain Region; ECTA; Utah State University Center for Disability Services; EIS administrators from programs varying in size and geographic location; and the SSIP BWEIP Team. Five SSIP Core Work Team members are parents of a child with special needs. The SSIP Core Work Team worked routinely by telephone and email to move the process forward in a timely manner and kept both the SSIP Leadership Team and the Broad Stakeholder Group updated as process decisions occurred.

SSIP Broad Stakeholder Group Involvement

The SSIP Broad Stakeholder Group was comprised administrators and staff from the 15 Utah EIS providers and the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, Parent Infant Program; and all ICC members, including parents, advocacy group, UDOH leadership, state agency, and education representatives.

To obtain broad stakeholder input, BWEIP used its quarterly EIS provider meetings and the five annual ICC meetings. BWEIP introduced the SSIP concept and Phase I requirements in October and November 2013. The EIS provider meeting participants typically ranged from 50 to 60 EIS administrators, service coordinators, and early interventionists, with approximately 45 individuals regularly attending ICC meetings. These nine annual meetings have served for an efficient way to provide information, gather feedback and wide ranging perspectives regarding SSIP related activities, data, infrastructure, root causes, improvement strategies, and planning timelines. These meetings include large and small group processes that encourage the in-depth discussions that were needed to generate stakeholder ownership of the SSIP process and encourage the willingness implement changes in early intervention process. Support of the Broad Stakeholder Group was integral to the work of the SSIP Core Work Team and ultimately the SSIP.

The SSIP was incorporated as an ongoing portion of both groups' full and half-day meetings in the fall 2013 and have continued to occur to date. All SSIP Broad Stakeholder Group meetings were available in person and by telephone and webinar.

State Identified Measureable Result (SiMR)

As a result of data analysis and in-depth discussion that has occurred over the past year by the SSIP Core Work Team, SSIP Leadership Team, and the SSIP Broad Stakeholder Group, Utah's SiMR is to "substantially increase the rate of growth in positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships) for culturally diverse infants and toddlers with disabilities in Utah by the time they exit Part C." These children will move closer in functioning to that of same-aged peers, as reflected in Summary Statement 1.

Guidance and Technical Assistance

During the Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center (MPRRC) fall 2013 meeting, BWEIP began discussions with MPRRC staff and member states regarding SSIP-related planning and possible next steps. Because of the timelines set for completion of Phase I activities, BWEIP staff determined it was imperative for planning and organizing statewide work as soon as possible. With foundational information from the 2013 OSEP Leadership Meeting, and knowledge about the new RDA structure and new SSIP requirement, BWEIP sought technical assistance from ECTA staff. At the April 2014 MRPCC regional meeting, the BWEIP team worked closely with Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) and ECTA staff to develop a draft Phase I timeline; discuss and adopt the SSIP Core Work Team concept; and plan child outcome data drill down as a possible focus area for improvement.

ECTA and the Center for Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy) staff have assisted the SSIP Core Work Team and SSIP Leadership Team through all aspects of Phase I activities. They have served in multiple roles essential to our progress such as participating in and/or facilitating all of the SSIP Core Work Team teleconference and webinar meetings. ECTA staff hosted most of the webinars, during which data and documents were routinely shared.