

PUBLIC INPUT: CURRENT CHALLENGES ON PROVIDING SERVICES TO UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

1. Case workers are no longer performing the role of a social worker when families are in crisis (e.g., the family is stressed by the possibility of termination of service and service provider is left to support the family while be pushed by the RC case worker to terminate) Their annual visit is 5 min long and then a large paper form is fill out away from the child. Solution: Case worker visits should be a collaborative meeting between the family, case worker AND the provider. The observation of the services in action should be at a minimum 45 minutes
2. Case workers have no idea as to the quality of the services provided, but rather refer service providers based on personal relationships or biases. Solution: Again, case workers should spend more time observing the program during visits and leave the paperwork duties to be handled via phone or e mail.
3. Critical time in early intervention is lost through putting off parents, "bring him/her back in 6 months and we'll see where they are" or "check back with a rejection from your insurance co. Solution: Begin intake and referral while family is contacting insurance company.
4. Early intervention is being put off by: a) forcing parents to attend trainings before services can be started (can take months) and the RC does not have enough providers "vendored" to provide those trainings and those that may don't provide services in a timely manner (e.g. provider won't do it if there are not enough families as this is done in a group setting only, etc....). Solution: vendorize more agencies to provide parent training and terminate contracts with agencies that cancel trainings for low enrollment.
5. At age three, services are essentially ended with no safety net in the interim of what and where the families can get services for their child. Again extremely critical time period for consistency of services. The school districts are often so far behind in the process of IEPs, (or simply cannot support the current program) etc. that regression is a very real possibility.
6. Services are handed out based upon parent's ability to speak English and to relentlessly hound the case worker. Many times the need for these services are questionable. Solution: since this is a direct result of a lack of relationship between providers and case workers, RCs should schedule quarterly face to face meetings with providers at RC offices to discuss each case, both the child's progress and the caregiver's involvement.

Fred Baldi