



**child
development
services**

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June 11, 2008

Howard Wright
Lincoln County Board of Directors Chairperson
PO Box 255
Southport, ME 04576

Dear Mr. Wright:

First I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the site director, the staff and providers for the effort that was extended to accommodate this process. The involvement of staff in this process is beneficial to all. Please express my gratitude to all of the staff for helping with the review, taking part in the interview process and answering our paperwork questions.

As I shared with the site director and staff during the on-site visit, this process is designed to promote continuous improvement in compliance and in service provision to children in your service area.

1. The Process:

On April 4, 2008 program monitoring was conducted by an on-site visit to assess the Lincoln County CDS site's current status in meeting regulatory requirements. This letter will outline the base line data gathered during this review.

The collection of base line data and information regarding the provision of special education services at the Lincoln County CDS site was based on the following activities:

- Interviews with staff, and providers and board of directors
- Review of State Entitlement plan
- Review of parent questionnaires
- Review of:
 - 4 Part C files
 - 8 Part B files
- Review of Lincoln County Self-Review Plan and Internal Audit of
 - 7 Part C files
 - 9 Part B files

2. Themes from Interviews:

A. Staff and Related Service Providers:

The staff reported that the following areas are barriers in providing services to students / children in the natural environment / least restrictive environment:

- available therapists to travel and provide services within the natural and or least restrictive environment
- suitability of the natural environment to provide the services
- Transportation services for children to and from their services is limited or not available.
- Availability of approved preschools and day cares within the Lincoln County area for children to attend and receive their services.

The staff also indicated concerns with the following:

- Dynamic status quo of salaries due to state wide negotiations
- The changes in eligibility requirements in Chapter 101 in comparison to Chapter 180 – the staff feels they are more restrictive
- Certification requirements for case managers and how that will impact job responsibilities
- They would like more training in special education
- Lack of providers within the area, especially in the area of speech and language therapists, causing children to go without services for a period of time. *

* In review of the unmet needs data reported to the Child Development Services Office at the Department of Education the following chart outlines the unmet needs of children B-5 at the Lincoln County CDS site from December 2007 to April 2008

Specific service	Total Number of Unmet Services					
	December 2007		January 2008		February 2008	
	B-2	3-5	B-2	3-5	B-2	3-5
Occupational Therapy	0	0	0	0	0	1
Physical Therapy	0	0	0	0	0	0
Speech Language Therapy	0	1	0	1	2	4
Development Therapy	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other	0	2 (ed techs)	0	2 (ed techs)	6 (special instruction)	7 (5 specially designed instruction, 2 ed techs)
TOTAL percentage of Unmet needs	0%	2%	0%	2%	9%	6%

Specific service	Total Number of Unmet Services					
	March 2008		April 2008			
	B-2	3-5	B-2	3-5		
Occupational Therapy	0	1	0	1		
Physical Therapy	0	0	0	0		
Speech Language Therapy	4	5	5	6		
Development Therapy	0		0	0		
Other	1 (special instruction)	1 (ed tech)	1 (special instruction)	1 (ed tech)		
TOTAL percentage of Unmet needs	6%	3%	14%	5%		

In order to meet compliance in this area, the Lincoln County CDS must submit a goal within the corrective action plan to meet 100% compliance in the timeliness of the provision of services for children ages Birth through 5 years of age.

The staff also indicated they are pleased that the CDS program as a system stayed under the Lead Agency of the Department of Education. They also indicated a desire to collaborate with the local school systems for location of future programs, services and possible transportation remedies.

B. Board of Directors:

The Lincoln County Board of Directors meets once a month for approximately two hours. They review fiscal, CDS updates, policies, data, entitlement requirements and updates from the Department of Education. The Board indicated the desire to have state wide Board training on the roles and responsibilities of the members. They questioned as CDS sites will be when the state assumes fiscal centralization. They indicate concern with the staff negotiation process and time it is taking to complete the process. They feel the site director has a good relationship with the board and has demonstrated good leadership over the last couple of years as CDS has undergone many changes. They reported both the director and the staff are professional and child oriented.

4. Record Audit:

An integral part of this process involved the participation of the Lincoln County site staff in the auditing of children's records. Thank you for the effort and time extended to allow for this participation.

During our on site visit, the program monitoring team examined the following areas of both Part C and Part B:

- Referral, screening procedures and timelines;
- Parent notices and consents;
- Procedures involving evaluations IFSP and IEP team meetings;
- Individual Family Service Plans (IFSP) and Individual Education Plans (IEP);
- Extended School Year Services
- Communication with Parents

These areas were reviewed in a comprehensive audit of the children's records.

Attached are the compiled results of the record audit. Any section receiving a "Needs Corrective Action" rate of compliance is identified as an area of concern. Identified areas of concern on the record audit are followed by comments as to why the item did not meet the regulation standard.

In reviewing 4 files on-site (a minimum of 10% of the part C files based on child-count) and 7 files internally, the following areas in Part C did not meet compliance:

- Listing the members of the team on the Written Notice Form

- Completion of evaluations and IFSP team meeting within 45 days from the receipt of referral.
 - Written Notice of the initial placement into Early Intervention Part C services
 - Early intervention Services provided within the child's natural environment.
 - Listing the specific setting for the supports and services to take place for the family and children
- **All 53 remaining areas monitored on the Child Record Audit Form for Part C Met Compliance Standards.**

In reviewing 12 files on-site (a minimum of 10% of the part B files based on child-count) and 20 files internally, the following areas in Part B did not meet compliance:

- Use of the written notice of initial referral consistently
 - Completion of evaluations and IEP team meeting to determine eligibility within 60 days from the receipt of consent to evaluate.
 - Copy of the IEP provided to the parent within 21 days of the IEP team meeting.
 - Statement of the child's present level of functioning and performance, including how the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate activities.
 - Including a statement of how the child's parents will be regularly informed of their child's progress toward their annual goals
 - An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with non-disabled children
 - Completion of Section 8 of the IEP, Supplementary Aides and services
- **All 43 remaining areas monitored on the Child Record Audit Form for Part B Met Compliance Standards.**

5. Corrective Action Plan Development:

The Lincoln County Child Development Services Self-review plan has been reviewed and it is apparent that the director and staff have recognized through the internal audit the same concerns found by the on-site monitoring team.

In summary:

- 1.) **The Site will have one year from the date of this report to correct the findings of non-compliance found in Need of Corrective Action during the record audit which were noted in Section 4. A corrective action plan must be submitted to the Department of Education, Child Development Services Department within 45 days of the receipt of this report.**
- 2.) **The Site should include a goal in their Corrective Action Plan to address the finding of non-compliance in the provision of services in both Part C and Part B.**

The Site Director has submitted goals on the Site's self review plan that can be incorporated into the corrective action plan with additional goals for the concerns and

deficiencies noted within this report. The information included is extremely helpful in increasing our awareness of concerns and issues within the site so we can provide necessary technical assistance to the site and staff.

The Department of Education conducted a survey of parents of children with disabilities within your region. The results of this survey are attached. As CDS sites continue to improve services for all children, parent input is critical. These results can serve as additional information to be used in the planning and evaluation of services and programs for children and are used during the annual State Performance Plan to the federal government.

In accordance with the Freedom of Access Act, all letters related to the Special Education Program Monitoring are public record and shall be made available to parents and other members of the public upon request.

On behalf of CDS, I would like to thank you, the site Director, the staff and all other persons that took part in this review, for the thoughtful courtesy extended to me and the flexibility and cooperation afforded me during the visit.

Sincerely,

Erica Thompson, Distinguished Educator
Child Development Services Program Monitoring and Technical Assistance

Copies sent to:

Susan A Gendron, Commissioner
David Noble Stockford, Policy and Team Leader
Gail Donahue, Lincoln County Child Development Services Director
Debra Hannigan, State Director Child Development Services

Enclosures:

Part C Child Record Audit Form Summary
Part B Child Record Audit Form Summary
CDS Lincoln County Part Survey Results