



**child  
development  
services**

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June 23, 2008

Marcy Gray  
Child Development Services Opportunities  
Board of Directors Chairperson  
MSAD 17 Suite 1  
1570 Main Street  
Oxford, ME 04270

Dear Ms. Gray:

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 16, 2008 program monitoring was conducted by an on-site visit to assess the Opportunities 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 Opportunities CDS site was based on the following activities:

- Review of State Entitlement plan
- Review of monthly Unmet Needs Data
- Review of parent questionnaires
- Review of:
  - 8 Part C files
  - 12 Part B files
- Review of Opportunities CDS Self-Review Plan and Internal Audit of
  - 18 Part C files
  - 28 Part B files

Interviews were unable to occur during this year's monitoring visit due to the transition of a new site director, miscommunication with email and the time restraint in getting the interview process completed and returned in a timely fashion. The interview process will occur during the second round of monitoring in 2009.

## **2. Review of Unmet Needs:**

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 Opportunities 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	1	0	0	2	0	1
Physical Therapy	1	1	1	1	0	1
Speech Language Therapy	7	9	5	7	7	8
Development Therapy	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL percentage of Unmet needs</b>	10%	7%	7%	6%	7%	5%

Specific service	Total Number of Unmet Services					
	March 2008		April 2008			
	B-2	3-5	B-2	3-5		
Occupational Therapy	No data available	0	No Data available			
Physical Therapy		0				
Speech Language Therapy		7				
Development Therapy		0				
Other		0				
<b>TOTAL percentage of Unmet needs</b>		3%				

In order to meet compliance in this area, the Opportunities 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 goal must also include compliance with timely submission of required data to the Department.

## **3. Record Audit:**

An integral part of this process involved the participation of the Opportunities CDS 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 a finding of non-compliance. Identified areas of non-compliance on the record audit are followed by comments as to why the item did not meet the regulation standard.**

**In reviewing 8 files on-site (a minimum of 10% of the part C files based on child-count) and 18 files internally, the following areas in Part C did not meet compliance:**

- Written Notice of the initial referral
- Documentation of the Parents provided with a copy of their procedural safeguards
- Receipt of consent for initial and any subsequent evaluation
- The consistent use of the state required development evaluation tool as a part of the initial evaluation process
- Parental notice of the IFSP meeting
- Completion of evaluations and IFSP team meeting within 45 days from the receipt of referral.
- Transition planning and a Transition conference for children transitioning from Part C to Part B services must be held no later than 90 days before the child's third birthday.
- Documentation of the IFSP being sent to the parent within 21 days of the IFSP team meeting.
- Documentation of Section B, the Present Abilities, Strengths and Needs ( see comments on the Part C Child Record Audit Form)
- Eligibility for Part C services for children identified with an established condition. ( see comments on the Part C Child Record Audit Form)
- Early Intervention Services provided within the Natural Environment.
- **All 32 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 28 files internally, the following areas in Part B did not meet compliance:**

- Consistent documentation of the completion of screening or existing screening information that led to the referral to CDS.
- Written Notice of the initial referral, eligibility determinations, parental consent and proposed actions to be taken for the child's program.
- Documentation of the IEP team's input into the determinations made at the IEP team meetings.
- Receipt of Initial consent for evaluation
- Completion of evaluations and IEP team meeting to determine eligibility within 60 days from the receipt of consent to evaluate.
  - *The files reviewed at the Mexico branch of CDS Opportunities was found to be 100% compliant in meeting the required timeline.*

- The use of a variety of assessment tools and strategies, including the use of observation and the state required speech and language forms, as part of the initial evaluation process.
- A statement of measurable, annual goals on the IEP
- Statement of how the child's parents will be regularly informed of their child's progress in meeting their annual goals.
- The documentation of Extended School Year Services on the IEP services table and the need for ESY services within the child's educational record.

Based on the file review it was noted in Section 9 of the IEP; the explanation of the extent, if any to which the child will participate with non-disabled peers; it was determined that the site has a high prevalence rate of children receiving their special education services within a clinic or office setting even when they are attending preschool or child care programs. The site must establish a goal in their corrective action plan to establish a plan to create and or seek a continuum of placements in the Least Restrictive Environment in collaboration with local providers and programs.

- **All 38 remaining areas monitored on the Child Record Audit Form for Part B Met Compliance Standards.**

#### **4. Corrective Action Plan Development:**

The Opportunities CDS 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 3. 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 and the timely submission of required data to the Department.**

The Opportunities CDS site received technical assistance on June 9, 2008 from the Department to review compliance with the required State Special Education Forms. The site director and staff are encouraged to contact the CDS office if further training is deemed necessary to help improve compliance.

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  
David Lane, Opportunities CDS 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 Opportunities CDS Part Survey Results