



**child
development
services**

State Intermediate Educational Unit-146 State House Station, Augusta, ME
04333 Telephone (207) 624-6660-Fax (207) 624-6661-TTY-1- 888-577-
6690

June 30, 2008

Debra Hannigan
State Director
Child Development Services
Cumberland Board of Directors Chairperson
Maine Department of Education
146 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Ms. Hannigan:

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 May 20, 2008 program monitoring was conducted by an on-site visit to assess the Piscataquis 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 Piscataquis County CDS site was based on the following activities:

- Interviews with staff, and providers
- Review of monthly Unmet Needs data
- Review of State Entitlement plan
- Review of parent questionnaires
- Review of:
 - 4 Part C files
 - 9 Part B files
- Review of Piscataquis County Self-Review Plan and Internal Audit of
 - 11 Part C files
 - 7 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
- Transportation services for children to and from their services are limited or not available.
- Availability of approved preschools and day cares within the Piscataquis County area for children to attend and receive their services.

The staff also indicated concerns with the following:

- 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.

The staff indicated they are looking forward to continuing the working relationships with the Project PEDS and Penobscot sites. They feel the professional development and support by the site directors has lent itself to a strong professional collaboration and consistency amongst case managers.

3. Unmet Needs Data

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 Piscataquis 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	1	1	0	0	1	3
Physical Therapy	0	0	0	0	0	0
Speech Language Therapy	0	1	0	0	0	2
Development Therapy	0	1	0	0	0	0
Other	0	2	0	0	0	1
TOTAL percentage of Unmet needs	1%	3%	0%	0%	1%	3%

Specific service	Total Number of Unmet Services					
	March 2008		April 2008			
	B-2	3-5	B-2	3-5		
Occupational Therapy	1	2	1	1		
Physical Therapy	0	0	0	0		
Speech Language Therapy	0	3	2	3		
Development Therapy	0	0	0	0		
Other	0	1	0	1		
TOTAL percentage of Unmet needs	1%	2%	7%	3%		

In order to meet compliance in this area, the Piscataquis 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.

4. Record Audit:

An integral part of this process involved the participation of the Piscataquis 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 9 files internally, the following areas in Part C did not meet compliance:

- Written Notice of initial referral any further changes in the child's IFSP
- Completion of evaluations and IFSP team meeting within 45 days from the receipt of referral.
- Consistent use of the State required Consent to Evaluate Form
- Transition from Part C to Part B

- Copy of the IFSP to parents within 21 days of the meeting

All 43 remaining areas monitored on the Child Record Audit Form for Part C Met Compliance Standards including Meeting the required timeline of 45 days from referral to eligibility and the Development of the IFSP.

In reviewing 11 files on-site (a minimum of 10% of the part B files based on child-count) and 7 files internally, the following areas in Part B did not meet compliance:

- Use of the written notice of initial referral consistently
- Documentation of input from IEP team on the written notice and consent forms
- Consistent use of the State Required Consent to Evaluate form
- 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.
- Completion of Section 8 of the IEP, Supplementary Aides and services
- Documentation of Extended School Year Services

- **All 42 remaining areas monitored on the Child Record Audit Form for Part B Met Compliance Standards.**

5. Corrective Action Plan Development:

The Piscataquis 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 process.

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 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
Cindy Brown, Piscataquis County Child Development Services Director

Enclosures:

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