

Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers By-Laws

INTRODUCTION

By authority of Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”), 34 CFR §303.600, State Interagency Coordinating Council, Florida’s Early Steps program is required to establish and maintain a statewide coordinating council to advise and assist the lead agency in coordinating activities for the planning and implementation of the IDEA, Part C. The Council in Florida shall be called the Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers (hereinafter, “FICCIT”).

FICCIT is coordinated by the lead agency. As such, it must adhere to the policies and procedures for Boards and Councils established by the Florida Department of Health.

VALUES

We are committed to:

- collaborate with all stakeholders to ensure effective child and family outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families;
- work with integrity by making informed recommendations; and
- be responsive to the needs of all stakeholders.

MISSION

To advise and assist Florida’s Early Steps system in the successful implementation of early intervention services and supports for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

VISION

FICCIT will advise and assist Early Steps to be the model for innovative and best practices of early intervention to ensure positive child and family outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

FUNCTIONS OF THE FICCIT

Pursuant to Federal regulations,¹ the function of FICCIT shall include the following:

- Advise and assist the lead agency in the identification of sources of fiscal and other support for early intervention service programs under Part C of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);
- Advise and assist the lead agency in the assignment of financial responsibility to the agency;

- Advise and assist the lead agency in the promotion of methods for intra-agency and interagency collaboration regarding child find, monitoring, financial responsibility, provision of services, and transition;
- Advise and assist the lead agency in the preparation of applications under Part C of IDEA including amendments;
- Advise and assist the state education agency and the lead agency regarding the transition of toddlers with disabilities to preschool and other appropriate services;
- Prepare an annual report to the Governor and U.S. DOE on the status of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families;
- Submit the report to the U.S. DOE secretary by a date that the secretary establishes that contains the information required by the secretary for the year for which the report is made; and,
- In addition, the Council may carry out the following activities:
Coordinate and collaborate with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care for children and other state interagency early learning initiatives, as appropriate.

MEMBERSHIP

Pursuant to federal regulation §303.600(b), FICCIT members are appointed by the Governor of the State of Florida and shall reasonably represent the population of the state. The Governor shall designate or require the membership to designate a Chairperson (hereinafter “Chair”) of the FICCIT. ² Any member of FICCIT who is a representative of the lead agency may not serve as the chairperson of the Council.

Per §303.601, the Council must be composed of the following:

- at least 20 percent of the members must be parents, including minority parents of infants or toddlers with disabilities or children with disabilities aged 12 or younger, with knowledge of, or experience with, programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities;
- At least one member must be a parent of an infant or toddler with a disability or a child with a disability aged six years or younger;
- At least 20 percent of the members must be public or private providers of early intervention services and supports;
- At least one member must be from the Florida Legislature;
- At least one member must be involved in personnel preparation;
- At least one member must be from each of the state agencies involved in the provision of, or payments for, early intervention services and supports to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families and have sufficient authority to engage in policy planning and implementation on behalf of these agencies;

- At least one member must be from the state educational agency (SEA) responsible for preschool services to children with disabilities and have sufficient authority to engage in policy planning and implementation on behalf of that agency;
- At least one member must be from the agency responsible for the state regulation of private health insurance;
- At least one member must be from a Head Start agency or program in the state;
- At least one member must be from a state agency responsible for child care;
- At least one member must be from the agency responsible for the state Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP);
- At least one member must be a representative designated by the Office of the Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youth;
- At least one member must be a representative from the state child welfare agency responsible for foster care; and,
- At least one member must be a representative from the state agency responsible for children's mental health;

One member may be appointed by the Governor to represent more than one program or agency listed above.

Per §303.601(c), FICCIT may also include other members selected by the Governor, including a representative from the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) or where there is no school operated or funded by the BIE in the state, from the Indian Health Service or the tribe or tribal council.

Members are expected to attend all regularly scheduled meetings. For Members absent from two or more quarterly meetings in a twelve-month period, the Chair will provide notice to the lead agency and the Office of Governor. If the Member is representing a state agency, the agency will be notified and a replacement will be requested to submit an application.

If an individual's qualification for membership changes and/or the individual no longer qualifies for the seat they are representing on the Council, the Member is expected to notify the Chair and file a letter of resignation with the Office of the Governor, lead agency, with a copy to the Chair for purposes of requesting the Governor to fill the upcoming membership vacancy.

In accordance with 20.052, Florida Statutes, Members shall be appointed for 4-year staggered terms.

Interested candidates should be referred to the Governor's Appointment Office website to complete the online Questionnaire for Gubernatorial Appointments.

Newly appointed Members will receive an orientation that includes the following:

- Council authority, purpose, membership, and governance as described in federal regulation;
- Requirements related to public records and the Governments in the Sunshine Law, specifically chapters 119 and 286, Florida Statutes;
- A listing of scheduled meetings; and,
- Minutes from previous meetings.

Newly appointed Members must complete the Sunshine Law training provided by the Florida Department of Health.

MEETINGS

Pursuant to Federal Regulation³, the FICCIT meets on a quarterly basis. All meetings are publicly noticed per federal regulation §303.602 and section 286.011, Florida Statutes and in advance of the dates the meetings are held to ensure that all interested parties have an opportunity to attend. All meetings will be open to the public per section 286.0114(2), Florida Statutes. FICCIT meetings will provide interpreters for persons who are deaf and other necessary services, both for FICCIT members and participants, as needed.

One half of the appointed Members shall constitute a quorum for transaction of FICCIT business.

Per §303.603, Members shall be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses for attending Council meetings and performing Council duties, with prior approval from the lead agency.

FICCIT meetings will be held in accordance to Robert's Rules of Order.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Per §303.601(d), no member of FICCIT shall cast a vote on any matter which would provide direct financial benefit to that Member, or the organization which employs the member, or otherwise give the appearance of a conflict of interest.

END NOTES

¹ TITLE 20 USC Sec. 1441. State interagency coordinating council; and 34 CFR 303.601 -- Composition

² TITLE 20 USC Sec. 1441. State interagency coordinating council; and 34 CFR 303.601 Composition

³ 34 CFR 303.602 Meetings