

BABIES CAN'T WAIT (BCW) PROGRAM POLICY

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

The Department of Public Health requires a comprehensive set of management procedures that address issues of employment within an agency, ensures both attention to the rights of workers, as well as agency compliance with state and federal labor laws. Management procedures also facilitate the smooth operation of the agency and its programs.

- A. Each service provider, as required by federal and state regulations, shall have a set of personnel policies that meets these requirements.
- B. Personnel policies shall be in compliance with applicable regulations, including equal opportunity and employment of minority individuals and persons with disabilities.

Employment should be subject to a check of employment history, background check, references, transcripts, and/or certification when appropriate.

Each employee should be made aware, in writing, of the amount of professional liability insurance available, if any. Should the agency not provide liability coverage as part of the employment contract, employees should be provided with information about where to obtain adequate coverage.

Employers shall conform with federal and state regulations regarding the assurances and provision of equal opportunity for employment. (Refer to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA]. Both can be obtained from the local Babies Can't Wait [BCW] office.)

- C. Agencies shall have written job descriptions for each position, specifying required levels of education, experience, and skills, as well as performance objectives.
- D. Any individual providing specialized services to infants and toddlers with disabilities shall possess valid licenses as governed by professional licensure and/or certification, according to professional boards and regulations determined by the lead agency. These individuals include audiologists, psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, social workers, psychological

examiners, physicians, nurses, other health care professionals, speech pathologists, early intervention specialists, teachers, and others.

- E. Any individual providing early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities in a home-based or community-based program shall hold a baccalaureate degree in early childhood, special education, or related field of study from an accredited institution OR shall perform duties under the supervision of an early intervention specialist with a master's degree.

- F. Each service provider, as appropriate, shall maintain a written set of procedures regarding the contracting of services. These procedures shall delineate:
 - 1. personnel qualifications for each position;
 - 2. professional liability;
 - 3. payment for services;
 - 4. responsibility for supervision;
 - 5. length or duration of services;
 - 6. location of provided service;
 - 7. provision of transportation services;
 - 8. provision for reporting of service provided; and
 - 9. provision for termination of the contract.

- G. Written agreements shall exist for all contracted services. Agreements shall include specification regarding compliance with these Standards as well as other state and federal regulations applicable to the BCW Program.

Job descriptions should specify:

- 1) required levels of education, certification, licensure;
- 2) experience and skills required;
- 3) duties and responsibilities;
- 4) the person to whom this position reports; and

- 5) hours (full or part time).

Certification for the individual discipline should be verified through the appropriate licensure or credentialing agency. A person fully qualified to render the service should be responsible for maintaining standards of professional and ethical practice for each professional service operated by the agency. Individuals providing speech and language services to infants and toddlers with disabilities should hold a graduate degree (Masters or Doctorate) in Speech-Language Pathology and a Certificate of Clinical Competency (CCC) credential as governed by the American Speech, Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) **or** hold a graduate degree (Masters or Doctorate) in Speech-Language Pathology and GA Licensure in Speech-Language Pathology.. Clinical Fellows (CFs), defined by ASHA as “an individual who is obtaining the supervised clinical experience required to obtain the Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC)”, may provide services to BCW clients..Medicaid does not currently reimburse for CF services in Georgia, due to their provisional licensure status. Some, but not all, private insurance carriers allow CFs to bill for services. If contracted or employed by BCW, CFs must provide BCW supports only to families who either have insurance which allows for billing of the CF services or whose funding source is BCW.

Supervisors can be employees of an agency (director, coordinator, etc.) or can be consultants to the program. They should be appropriately qualified as specified. Qualified supervisors should develop a supervision plan with the staff member who is not appropriately qualified, at the beginning of the program year. This should include:

- 1) a schedule of at least 3 visits per year for the qualified supervisor with the child and/or family; and
- 2) a schedule for meetings (at least 2 hours per month) between the qualified supervisor and the staff member in order to determine if objectives stated in IFSPs are being met, and to review and approve all plans, methods, and materials selected for use with children and families, as well as written progress reports and evaluations.

Qualified supervisors should denote approval for all plans, progress reports, and evaluations by signing off on these documents. The agency should make qualified supervisors aware of their liability and accountability. Qualified supervisors should be made aware that they can be held accountable for the special education services provided by the individual who is not appropriately qualified.

Each agency should complete a standard provider agreement for the purpose of clarifying responsibilities between the agency and the individual providing the service(s). This contract is found in the Appendix to this Section. A signed copy of the agreement

should be maintained on file in the administrative office and a copy should be given to the provider.

- H. Each agency shall have written policies and procedures regarding the recruitment, selection, orientation, training, and supervision of volunteers.
- I. Each agency using volunteer services shall have procedures for screening potential volunteers. These procedures shall include an interview and reference check to assess the candidate's physical and mental health status and suitability for the volunteer position.
- J. Volunteers shall be oriented to the requirements for serving children enrolled in the BCW Program.

Considerable time and energy should be devoted to a volunteer program for those agencies who choose to use volunteers. Leadership of a volunteer program should be the designated responsibility of one staff member. Personnel practices relating to volunteers need not be as formalized as those for paid staff members, however, such practices should be clear.

An agreement form can be used with volunteers to clarify responsibilities, hours, etc. Job descriptions should be specific and efforts should be made to match volunteers with job expectations. Recruitment, orientation, and training for volunteers should be similar to best practices used for paid staff members.

An evaluation process for volunteers should be developed. This process should address specific strengths, weaknesses, and goals for improvement. Procedural safeguards regarding confidentiality of employee records should be followed for volunteer employees.

- K. Each agency shall have written policies and procedures for orienting and training new staff. These shall include:
 - 1. Agency programs, policies and procedures
 - a. Confidentiality and due process;
 - b. Child record keeping;
 - c. Child abuse and neglect reporting laws; and
 - d. Special needs of the children being served.
 - e. Service delivery model

2. Health and safety procedures

- L. Each agency shall document evidence of a systematic and periodic process of staff supervision.

Each employee should receive a copy of personnel policies and licensing regulations, if applicable. These can be incorporated into an employee manual. In addition to the topic areas mentioned above, other topic areas for orientation include:

- agency programs, policies and procedures
- appropriate methods of discipline
- instruction in first aid and CPR .

- A tour of the facility to include:
 - emergency exits
 - hazardous areas
 - administrative areas

Provider and staff training should consist of an organized program to prepare new employees/contract providers to perform their assigned duties competently, and to maintain and improve the competencies of all employees. Providers and staff member should be encouraged to write an annual development plan in conjunction with his or her supervisor. Documentation of the staff training program should include definitions and outlines for the training topics listed above.

While these topic areas are broad and cover many specific areas for further study, experienced staff members can be allowed to choose alternate topics which relate to their work. In such cases, these individuals should document their training and experience in the required topic areas and develop a plan for pursuing competency in the alternative topic area.

Records noting training provided to new staff members and annual training to all staff members should include:

- an agenda or outline of the training covered;
- dates and times of the training sessions;
- a list of participants; and
- training evaluation results.

The agency should encourage parents to be involved in the staff development program by 1) setting up a training advisory committee with parent representatives; 2) using parents as trainers; and 3) providing training which is pertinent to parents and staff.

Each agency should develop an organizational chart showing individuals responsible for supervision of each staff member. Monitoring or observation of a staff member's performance should be conducted with knowledge of the staff member, in a manner that does not interfere with the delivery of services.

- M. Each agency shall provide written evidence of annual staff evaluations. These evaluations will be kept in the employees' files.
1. Each agency shall provide employees with the opportunity to participate in the evaluation process.
 2. Evaluation of specialty staff may include consideration of the standards set by his/her professional organization.

Evaluations of staff members should directly relate to job descriptions. Staff evaluations can include both ability scales as well as narrative descriptions of performance. Evaluations of employees should be completed 6 months after hiring and annually thereafter. Evaluations of supervisors and administrators can include opportunity for employee input.

Parents may be provided with opportunities to provide input into staff evaluations.

REFERENCE

Section 635 of the IDEA (20 USCA § 1435) 34 CFR Section 303.119

Personnel Standards

a) *General.* Each system must include policies and procedures relating to the establishment and maintenance of qualification standards to ensure that personnel necessary to carry out the purposes of this part are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained.

(b) *Qualification standards.* The policies and procedures required in paragraph (a) of this section must provide for the establishment and maintenance of qualification standards that are consistent with any State- approved or State-recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable

requirements that apply to the profession, discipline, or area in which personnel are providing early intervention services.

(d) *Policy to address shortage of personnel.* A State may adopt a policy that includes making ongoing good-faith efforts to recruit and hire appropriately and adequately trained personnel to provide early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities, including, in a geographic area of the State where there is a shortage of such personnel, the most qualified individuals available who are making satisfactory progress toward completing applicable course work necessary to meet the standards described in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section.