



## Comprehensive Training Opportunities for Paraprofessionals in Early Intervention Services (CO-TOP\*EIS)



### CO-TOP\*EIS Project Rationale & Goal

#### Rationale for CO-TOP\*EIS:

- The Early Intervention Colorado State Plan for Part C of IDEA assures:
 

“The State has a comprehensive system of personnel development, including the training of paraprofessionals and the training of primary referral sources with respect to the basic components of early intervention services..” (20 U.S.C. 1435(a) (8) (A) and (B).
- To accomplish the above, in Fall 2006 Early Intervention Colorado initiated collaboration with The Paraprofessional Research and Resource (PAR2A) Center at the University of Colorado-Denver and developed a contract that began in January 2007 for the CO-TOP\*EIS project.

#### Overall Goal of CO-TOP\*EIS Project:

- To develop and implement a statewide system of training for paraprofessionals who work with families that have infants or toddlers (birth through two years) with developmental delays or disabilities.

**\*Note: CO-TOP\*EIS Coalition established Developmental Intervention Assistant (DI Assistant) to be the job title for the paraprofessional.**

### CO-TOP\*EIS Project Objectives

1. To establish a state-wide coalition of local, rural and urban agencies that will coordinate program goals, objectives, and activities
2. To prepare Developmental Intervention Assistants (DI Assistants) for the roles they assume in the delivery of early intervention supports and services
3. To enhance local capacity of Community Centered Boards (CCBs) to supervise and train DI Assistants
4. To facilitate DI Assistants career pathways into early childhood special education professions through articulated degree programs

### CO-TOP\*EIS Coalition

The CO-TOP\*EIS project has established a coalition that acts as the project advisory and decision-making body. The Coalition includes a well balanced representation from Colorado’s geographic regions as well as stakeholders, e.g. family members, service providers, representatives from state and local early childhood agencies, Community Centered Boards (CCBs), professional development organizations, special educators and early childhood paraprofessionals. The 23 coalition members are representatives from:

#### State Departments and Agencies

- Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS)
- Colorado Department of Education (CDE)
- Colorado Office of Professional Development
- Community Center Boards

#### Institutes of Higher Education

- American Indian Alaska Native Program
- Clinical Education & Clinical Services, University of Colorado at Boulder
- Early Childhood Department at Arapahoe Community College
- The PAR<sup>2</sup>A Center, University of Colorado - Denver
- Pediatrics & Psychiatry, JFK Partners, University of Colorado – Denver

#### Local Agencies and Service Providers

- Community Center Board Early Intervention Staff
- Clinical Psychologist
- Early Childhood Coaches
- Early Childhood Special Educator,
- Parent of child with special needs
- School Nurse/ Case Manager
- Speech and Language Therapist,
- Early Childhood Mental Health Educator
- Teacher of the Visually Impaired
- Certified Nurse Assistant / Paraprofessional.

### Accomplishments

The Project has:

- Gathered information from local agencies regarding Paraprofessional Training Needs
- Established a job title for the paraprofessional to be the Developmental Intervention Assistant (DI Assistant)
- Assembled a Curriculum Review Panel (CRP) with local and National experts) that established:
  - a) Considerations and value statements for developing DI Assistant training model based on evidence based best practices and nationally recommended standards (e.g. culturally appropriate, family centered, transdisciplinary service provision within everyday routines, activities and places)
  - b) Content and coursework for the DI Assistant Certificate consisting of 15 academies or courses and practicum.
- Clarified the roles of the DI Assistants and their Supervisors
- Completed Trainer manuals for all courses
- Created Supervisor Academy (DISA) & Trainer Academy (DITA)
- Trained 41 local supervisors and 33 local trainers who will work with DI Assistants in their own regions
- Begun work towards developing standards for the recruitment, training, supervision and career development of the DI Assistants in the state of Colorado
- Established a task force to discuss the infrastructural issues (recruitment of DI Assistants, insurance, liability, pay structure etc)
- Begun application process for recruiting DI Assistant

### Next Steps

- Pilot testing of the DI Assistant Curriculum
- Deliver training to DI Assistants in their own regions
- Complete standards for supervisors and DI Assistants
- Recruit and train more local trainers who will deliver training to DI Assistants in their own regions
- Evaluate project activities

Figure 1 June 8, 2010

