

**New York State Early Intervention Coordinating Council
Minutes – December 10, 2025**

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action Items																																																
<p>Welcome</p>	<p>The following members/designated representatives attended the meeting. X= present:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="453 280 1738 662"> <tr><td>X</td><td>Heidi Bond</td><td>X</td><td>Leah Esther Lax</td></tr> <tr><td>X</td><td>Raymond Bowman</td><td>X</td><td>Lidiya Lednyak</td></tr> <tr><td>X</td><td>Bonnie Catlin</td><td>X</td><td>Shelbi McIlroy (Rochester)</td></tr> <tr><td>X</td><td>Victoria Collins</td><td>--</td><td>Emily Mondschein</td></tr> <tr><td>--</td><td>Joy Connolly</td><td>X</td><td>Julie Opalecky (Rochester)</td></tr> <tr><td>X</td><td>Timothy Conway</td><td>X</td><td>Lynn Shea (Rochester)</td></tr> <tr><td>X</td><td>Cheryl Schaefer Coppola (Rochester)</td><td>X</td><td>Robin Stegman (New York City)</td></tr> <tr><td>X</td><td>Brigitte Desport (New York City)</td><td>X</td><td>Angella Timothy</td></tr> <tr><td>X</td><td>Amy DeVito</td><td>X</td><td>Elina Tsenter</td></tr> <tr><td>X</td><td>Katie Heath (Rochester)</td><td>X</td><td>Marina Yoegel</td></tr> <tr><td>X</td><td>Steve Held</td><td>--</td><td>Patricia Zuber-Wilson</td></tr> <tr><td>X</td><td>Jordan Kase</td><td>X</td><td>Carlo Cuccaro</td></tr> </table> <p>Department of Health staff present: Peter Baran, Karen Dwyer, Brett Engel, Diane Ginsburg, Deborah Gutierrez, Michael Iorio, Tricia Kandefer, Jaclyn Kingston, Kelli Lyndaker, Erin McDonald, Raymond Pierce, Elizabeth Rialdi, Jennifer Sandshaw, Kirsten Siegenthaler, Jessica Simmons, and Dr. Shu-Kuang Tai. Guests: Kayla Bogdanowicz- Reid, McNally and Savage, Brad Hutton- Hutton Health Consultants/Agencies for Children’s Therapy Services, Tracy Lyman- Council on Children and Families, Pamela Madeiros- NYS Alliance for Children with Special Needs, Laura Parcell- Thursday’s Child, Inc., Sarah Ravenhall- New York State Association of County Health Officials, Jana Vitale- Children’s Speech and Rehabilitation Therapy/Agencies for Children’s Therapy Services, and Jeanne Ward- Thursday’s Child, Inc. Paula VanMeter and Lauren Zelinsky from Public Consulting Group. <i>All references to the Department refer to the New York State Department of Health, Bureau to the Bureau of Early Intervention, and Council to the Early Intervention Coordinating Council.</i></p>	X	Heidi Bond	X	Leah Esther Lax	X	Raymond Bowman	X	Lidiya Lednyak	X	Bonnie Catlin	X	Shelbi McIlroy (Rochester)	X	Victoria Collins	--	Emily Mondschein	--	Joy Connolly	X	Julie Opalecky (Rochester)	X	Timothy Conway	X	Lynn Shea (Rochester)	X	Cheryl Schaefer Coppola (Rochester)	X	Robin Stegman (New York City)	X	Brigitte Desport (New York City)	X	Angella Timothy	X	Amy DeVito	X	Elina Tsenter	X	Katie Heath (Rochester)	X	Marina Yoegel	X	Steve Held	--	Patricia Zuber-Wilson	X	Jordan Kase	X	Carlo Cuccaro	
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<p>Welcome</p> <p>Approval of Minutes</p>	<p>Steve Held, Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:21 am and thanked Council members for attending the Early Intervention Coordinating Council meeting. The next full Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 11, 2026, from 10:15 am to 3:00 pm. The next Task Forces meeting will be held on Thursday, February 5, 2026, from 1:00pm-3:00pm.</p> <p>Steve Held informed the Council that the minutes from the September 11, 2025, meeting were emailed to them. A motion was made by Lidiya Lednyak and a second by Marina Yoegel to approve the September 11, 2025, meeting minutes. Sixteen members voted in-favor, none opposed, and none abstained. The motion passed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next full Council meeting will be on 3/11/2026. • The next Task Forces meeting will be on 2/5/2026. 																																																
<p>New Business <i>Bureau Administrative Updates</i></p>	<p>Raymond Pierce, Director, Bureau of Early Intervention, provided updates on the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of Special Education Programs Update (<i>Action Item</i>)- No changes have been made to the Part C grant. For federal fiscal year 2026, the President, the House, and the Senate are all calling for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C to be funded at \$540 million, which would be a flat budget for the third year in a row. • The 4% rate modifier for services in underserved and rural areas was approved by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services on September 25, 2025. A communication was sent to stakeholders. The increase will be retroactive to April 1, 2025. The Bureau will evaluate how well the modifier works, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureau Administrative updates will be provided at the 3/11/2026, meeting. 																																																

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<p><i>Council Membership Updates</i></p> <p><i>Council Bylaws Amendment</i></p> <p><i>Open Discussion</i></p> <p>Annual Performance Report and State Systemic Improvement Plan</p>	<p>and counties will be asked for feedback regarding zip code selection. There will be an opportunity to adjust zip codes in July of 2026.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Medicaid State Plan Amendment for the 5% rate for services increase, and the 20% reduction for services delivered via telehealth, was submitted to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services on December 31, 2024. On December 9, 2025, the Centers asked the Department to formally submit the request for additional information for the 5% increase and the telehealth rate decrease, which will begin the 90-day clock for the Centers to formally respond. • Bureau guidance documents are undergoing updates and include the assistive technology and billing for initial and ongoing service coordination activities. The Bureau anticipates that these will be distributed and posted on the memorandum and guidance page on the Bureau's website in the coming months. • The Bureau continues to be out in the community and working with the contractor, Measurement Inc., focusing on workforce recruitment in the field. <p>Raymond Pierce, Director, Bureau of Early Intervention, provided the following Council membership update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Council member Carlo Cuccaro is a retired school psychologist and currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at SUNY Oswego, in the Counseling and Psychological Services Department. <p>Steve Held, Council Chair, asked for a motion to approve the amendment in the Bylaws to remove the reference to Executive Committee meetings being held online since all meetings must now be held in public and in accessible areas. A motion was made by Heidi Bond and a second by Elina Tsenter to approve the amendment. Nineteen members voted in-favor, none opposed, and none abstained. The motion passed.</p> <p>Steve Held read a letter to the Governor from the Council requesting not to move forward with any planned regulatory or administrative changes in the upcoming budget cycle that would limit or reduce the availability of Early Intervention services or funding for the Program. A motion was made by Marina Yoegel and a second by Lidiya Lednyak to send the letter to the Governor, Senate, and Assembly. Eighteen members voted in-favor, none opposed, and two abstained. The motion passed.</p> <p>Steve Held read a letter to the Governor from the Council to support implementing the service provider rate increases, receiving Covered Lives assessment payments, paying funds overdue to municipalities, and receiving Medicaid retro payments funds to Early Intervention program and services. A motion was made by Steve Held and a second by Jordan Kase to send the letter to the Governor, Senate, and Assembly. Seventeen members voted in-favor, none opposed, and three abstained. The motion passed.</p> <p>Dr. Shu-kuang Tai, Data and Program Evaluation Unit; Karen Dwyer, Training, Technical Assistance, and State Systemic Improvement Plan /Outcomes Unit; Kelli Lyndaker, Provider Approval and Due Process Unit provided the Annual Performance Report and State Systemic Improvement Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A motion was made by Steve Held and a second by Marina Yoegel to approve the report. Twenty-one voted in-favor, none opposed, and none abstained. 	
<p>Lunch Break</p>		

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New Business <i>(continued)</i>	An edited version of the second letter to the Governor was read by Steve Held. A motion was made by Steve Held and a second by Lidiya Lednyak to send the edited letter to the Governor, Senate, and Assembly. Sixteen members voted in-favor, none opposed, and three abstained. The motion passed.	
Report of Department Activities <i>Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Update</i>	Elizabeth Rialdi, Program Coordinator, Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program update will be provided at the 3/11/2026, meeting.
Report of Additional Department Activities <i>Provider Workforce Capacity Task Force Update</i> <i>Rate Setting Methodology Task Force Update</i> <i>EI-Hub and State Fiscal Agent Updates</i>	Marina Yoegel and Lidiya Lednyak, Task-Force Co-Chairs. provided the Provider Workforce Capacity Task Force update. Steve Held, Task Force Chair, provided an update on the Rate Setting Methodology Task Force. EI Hub and State Fiscal Agent updates were provided by Paula Van Meter and Lauren Zelinsky from the Public Consulting Group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task Force updates will be given at the 3/11/2026, meeting. • An update on the EI-Hub and State Fiscal updates will be given at the 3/11/2026, meeting.
Report of Department Activities (continued) <i>Fiscal Agent Payment Data Update</i>	Ken Moehringer, Fiscal Planning and Policy Unit provided the Fiscal Agent Payment Data Update.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Fiscal Agent Payment Data Update will be given at the 3/11/2026, meeting.
Public Comment	Public comments were made by Sarah Ravenhall- New York State Association of County Health Officials, Jana Vitale- Children’s Speech and Rehabilitation Therapy/Agencies for Children’s Therapy Services, and Jeanne Ward- Thursday’s Child, Inc. addressing EI-Hub issues, provider rates and capacity, and their impact on the delivery of services as a result.	
Future Agenda Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	
Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned by Steve Held at 3:00 p.m.	