

**New York State Early Intervention Coordinating Council
Minutes – March 11, 2026**

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="457 280 1738 691"> <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>Tracy Lyman</td></tr> <tr><td>X</td><td>Victoria Collins</td><td>--</td><td>Shelbi McIlroy (Rochester)</td></tr> <tr><td>X</td><td>Joy Connolly</td><td>--</td><td>Emily Mondschein (Rochester)</td></tr> <tr><td>X</td><td>Timothy Conway</td><td>X</td><td>Julie Opalecky (Rochester)</td></tr> <tr><td>--</td><td>Cheryl Schaefer Coppola (Rochester)</td><td>X</td><td>Lynn Shea (Rochester)</td></tr> <tr><td>--</td><td>Carlo Cuccaro</td><td>X</td><td>Robin Stegman</td></tr> <tr><td>X</td><td>Brigitte Desport (Brooklyn)</td><td>X</td><td>Angella Timothy</td></tr> <tr><td>X</td><td>Amy DeVito</td><td>--</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>X</td><td>Patricia Zuber-Wilson</td></tr> <tr><td>X</td><td>Jordan Kase</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> <p>Department of Health staff present: Peter Baran, Karen Dwyer, Brett Engel, Diane Ginsburg, Deborah Gutierrez, Jeremy Heisey, Michael Iorio, Tricia Kandefer, Jaclyn Kingston, Kelli Lyndaker, Ken Moehringer, Travis O'Donnell, Jillian Osborn, Raymond Pierce, Elizabeth Rialdi, Jennifer Sandshaw, Marina Sepowski, Kirsten Siegenthaler, Kimberly Smith, Cassandra Stockman, and Dr. Shu-Kuang Tai. Guests: Debra Blog, MD, MPH- Medical Director for the New York State Department of Health Division of Vaccine Excellence, Stephanie Bugos- Measurement Incorporated, Grace Dawson- New York State Association of County Health Officials, Tory Ervin, NP-C, MPH- Program Manager, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Foundation Brad Hutton- Hutton Health Consultants/Agencies for Children's Therapy Services, Pamela Madeiros- NYS Alliance for Children with Special Needs, and Jana Vitale- Children's Speech and Rehabilitation Therapy/Agencies for Children's Therapy Services. Rob Lillpopp, Matthew O'Brien, 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	Tracy Lyman	X	Victoria Collins	--	Shelbi McIlroy (Rochester)	X	Joy Connolly	--	Emily Mondschein (Rochester)	X	Timothy Conway	X	Julie Opalecky (Rochester)	--	Cheryl Schaefer Coppola (Rochester)	X	Lynn Shea (Rochester)	--	Carlo Cuccaro	X	Robin Stegman	X	Brigitte Desport (Brooklyn)	X	Angella Timothy	X	Amy DeVito	--	Elina Tsenter	X	Katie Heath (Rochester)	X	Marina Yoegel	X	Steve Held	X	Patricia Zuber-Wilson	X	Jordan Kase			
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<p>Welcome</p> <p>Approval of Minutes</p>	<p>Steve Held, Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:19 am and thanked Council members for attending the Early Intervention Coordinating Council meeting. The next full Council meeting will be held on Thursday, June 18, 2026, from 10:15 am to 3:00 pm. The next Task Forces meeting will be held on Thursday, April 23, 2026, from 1:00pm-3:00pm.</p> <p>Steve Held informed the Council that the minutes from the December 10, 2025, meeting were emailed to them. A motion was made by Victoria Collins and a second by Heidi Bond to approve the December 10, 2025, meeting minutes. Eighteen (18) 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 6/18/2026. • The next Task Forces meeting will be on 4/23/2026. 																																																				
<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"> • Budget Updates- The Governor's budget was released and extends Covered Lives through 2029. The House and the Senate both support the extension. \$15.4 million in the Covered Lives allocation was transferred to the municipalities on January 5, 2025, for the state fiscal year 2025-26. For stop gap payments, providers have repaid 12.5 million, or 65% of the 19 million stop gap that was distributed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureau Administrative updates will be provided at the 																																																				

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<p><i>Council Membership Updates</i></p> <p><i>Vice-Chair Nominations</i></p> <p><i>Open Discussion</i></p> <p>Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for the Women, Infant, and Children Program Presentation</p> <p>Childhood Immunizations Presentation</p>	<p>The Senate is requesting the Department to conduct a rate adequacy study and recommending adding \$13 million to the Early Intervention Program budget to increase rates. The final state budget is due April 1st. The federal budget passed, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C grant will be flat for 2026 with a national allocation of \$540 million.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department has responded to all questions from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services regarding the Medicaid State Plan Amendment for the 5% rate increase and the telehealth rate decrease. The last formal response was sent to the Centers on February 23rd. The 90-day clock for the Centers to decide began on January 5th. We expect a decision from the Centers on April 5th. The assembly has added \$11.5 million for the early intervention services rate increase. • The retroactive 4% increase for Medicaid claims back to April 1st, 2025, will be made in early April. • The Federal Secretary of Education wants to move the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C out of the Education Department and to other agencies • The Bureau submitted our annual performance report to the Office of Special Education Programs on February 2nd, and we should know what our determination is in June. • The statewide training contractor, Measurement Inc. has planned initial outreach events in 2026. They continue to work on updating existing training courses and new training content. • Just Kids Learning Early Learning Center is the contractor for the Family Initiative Coordinator Contract. They did an overview of the Early Intervention Program Information Sessions. <p>Raymond Pierce, Director, Bureau of Early Intervention, provided the following Council membership update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Council member Tracy Lyman from Broome County is the Pyramid Model Policy Coordinator at the Council on Children and Families. <p>Steve Held, Council Chair, announced that every March the Council nominates candidates for Vice Chair. Members were instructed to return the ballots to the meeting support staff.</p> <p>“Support Services for Children with Disabilities Linked to Improved Academic Outcomes” is a report that was released on March 2, 2026, from Columbia University. It demonstrated the academic benefits for children who were in the Early Intervention Program. A motion was made by Steve Held and a second by Amy DeVito to send the report to the legislature and the Governor with a cover letter from the Council supporting importance of the study. Fourteen (14) members voted in-favor, none opposed, and six (6) abstained. The motion passed. Marina Yoegel discussed the data collection on Three and Out, focusing on children in Westchester County who remained in the Early Intervention Program after age 3.</p> <p>Jillian Osborn, MS, RDN and Cassandra Stockman, RDN, CLC, New York State Department of Health Division of Nutrition provided a Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for the Women, Infant, and Children Program Presentation.</p> <p>Jeremy Heisey, RN, MSN, and Marina Sepowski, RN, BSN, Childhood and Adolescent Immunization Coordinators, New York State Department of Health Division of Vaccine Excellence provided a Childhood Immunizations presentation. Tory Ervin, NP-C, MPH and Program Manager, Centers for Disease Control and</p>	<p>6/18/2026, meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the Bureau receives the decision from the Centers in April, communication will be sent out to the field about how the retroactive pay will work, and what the timeline is for increasing the rates. • The Bureau will provide an update on the Office of Special Education Programs determination at the 6/18/26 meeting. <p>• The Bureau will re-circulate guidance from the Governor’s office on what to do if Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents arrive at a developmental toddler group.</p>

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	Prevention Foundation and Debra Blog, MD, MPH, Medical Director for the Division of Vaccine Excellence answered questions from the Council and the Department.	
Report of Department Activities <i>Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Update</i>	Elizabeth Rialdi, Program Coordinator, Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program update will be provided at the 6/18/2026, meeting.
Lunch Break		
Report of Additional Department Activities <i>Provider Workforce Capacity Task Force Update</i> <i>EI-Hub and State Fiscal Agent Updates</i>	<p>Marina Yoegel and Lidiya Lednyak, Task-Force Co-Chairs. provided the Provider Workforce Capacity Task Force update.</p> <p>EI Hub and State Fiscal Agent updates were provided by Rob Lillpopp, Matthew O'Brien, Paula Van Meter, and Lauren Zelinsky from the Public Consulting Group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task Force updates will be given at the 6/18/2026, meeting. • An update on the EI-Hub and State Fiscal updates will be given at the 6/18/2026, 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 6/18/2026, meeting.
Public Comment	Jana Vitale commented on the impact of early intervention services delays and reclassifying services and EI-Hub issues. Grace Dawson commented on EI-Hub issues, Program compliance and fiscal concerns, Medicaid retroactive payments, Covered Lives Assessment funding, and State Plan Amendments.	
Future Agenda Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interagency discussion about the new Medicaid requirements and how they will impact families • Follow-up on previous letters from the Council to the Governor and assembly 	
Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned by Steve Held at 2:58 p.m.	