



Friday, June 12, 2026
Meeting Minutes

Public Meeting 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
TEAMS Meeting Platform

A regular public meeting of the New Jersey State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) was held on Friday, June 12, 2026. The meeting was held via the Microsoft Teams meeting platform. The meeting was called to order at approximately 9:30 a.m. by Joyce Salzberg, Acting Chair.

Welcome

I. Joyce Salzberg welcomed attendees and read the Welcome Statement.

Attendance

I. Attendance maintained by the Department of Health (DOH).

Introductions

- I. SICC members and DOH representatives were introduced.
- II. Quorum requirements were met.
- III. Public members signed their attendance through the chat box on the Teams platform.

Approval of Minutes

The March 20, 2026, minutes were APPROVED; no discussion. Motion by Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen, seconded by Steven Weiss.

SICC Standing & Ad Hoc Committees Reports

- Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen asked Josephine Shenouda for an update regarding the SICC members, acknowledging her efforts with the previous administration.
 - Josephine Shenouda reported that the SICC appointments remain with the Department of Health and that they are in contact with the Governor's Office. She noted that turnover in the Governor's Office has caused delays and that six appointments are pending. She shared the same concerns as the group and remains hopeful that things will improve in the coming months.

Administrative/Policy Committee, Samuel Kivell, Chair

- Mikayla Krupp reported that the Administrative Committee is developing a welcome and orientation package for newly appointed SICC members, which will be presented to the SICC for approval. Further updates will be provided at the next SICC meeting.

Service Delivery Committee

- Cynthia Newman reported that the committee has not met recently and had no updates to share. The committee's last work focused on helping members learn how to work with the child care community.
- Susan Evans added that some of the Service Delivery Committee's work on collaborating with the child care community was incorporated into the conference and will need to move into its next phase.

Fiscal Infrastructure Committee, Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen, Chair

- Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen reported that the committee has not met since the last SICC meeting and plans to meet with Josephine Shenouda to revisit its focus and discuss priorities where the committee can assist the Department.
- Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen requested updates on recommendations regarding decreased enrollment, including increasing family cost-share eligibility, revising Battelle Developmental Inventory, Third Edition (BDI3) eligibility criteria, and engaging a marketing consultant.
 - Josephine Shenouda reported that the Department is exploring a marketing vendor. She noted that eligibility and family cost-share changes would require rule updates and public comment, with opportunities expected in 2027. She added that BDI-3 eligibility changes would require stakeholder collaboration.
- Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen inquired about the increased activity among the regional collaboratives around Child Find efforts, including committee meetings focused on planning and strategizing outreach.
 - Josephine Shenouda reported that improving Child Find is a priority for NJEIS, including efforts to streamline referrals with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), engage visiting nurse programs and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICUs), and support Regional Early Intervention Collaborative (REIC) outreach activities.
- Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen also asked about potential increases or changes to Medicaid reimbursement rates, noting the financial challenges facing providers.
 - Josephine Shenouda stated that there are no updates on Medicaid rates. She noted that Phase II of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) study will examine the fiscal structure of early intervention and require input from the SICC, stakeholders, and Early Intervention Programs (EIPs) to better understand rates in New Jersey.
- Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen noted increasing financial challenges for providers and asked about the possibility of a temporary stipend to help offset rising mileage costs.

- Josephine Shenouda stated that the mileage stipend remains a concern and is under consideration, but noted that unlike during COVID-19, there is no additional funding currently available to support it.
- Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen asked whether lower enrollment and reduced spending could be captured through a budget modification and carried over to the following year to support mileage costs. She also asked whether the family cancellation period could be temporarily extended from 14 to 30 days.
 - Josephine Shenouda stated that state appropriations do not carry over and noted that Susan would provide an update on funding in the DOH report.
 - Susan Evans stated that the Department has discussed the family cancellation policy and reviewed approaches used in other states. She noted that potential changes are being considered while maintaining appropriate EI practices.
- Joyce Salzberg asked whether family cancellations and no shows are being examined as part of the NIEER study.
 - Josephine Shenouda stated that family cancellations are being considered as part of the fiscal review. The Department is reviewing recent cancellation data and national trends before considering further policy changes. She noted that the cancellation period was recently increased from one week to 14 days and that extending it to 30 days remains under consideration pending further data review.

Personnel Preparation Committee, Corinne Catalano, Chair

- Corinne Catalano reported that the Personnel Preparation Committee met on May 22 with Kendra Taggart. The committee completed a survey to be distributed to agencies to gather information regarding the Targeted Evaluation Team position. She noted that there is currently no standard for this position at the state or national level.
- Corinne Catalano further explained that the survey is intended to inform the committee's development of recommendations for establishing a standard for the position. To avoid confusion with another recently distributed survey, the committee planned to distribute the survey on June 15, with responses requested by July 10 and a reminder scheduled for July 2.
- Joyce Salzberg noted that the council's Service Delivery Committee previously examined standards for Targeted Evaluation Team (TET) members approximately 10–15 years ago. She recalled that Carola was also involved and that they worked extensively on the project. Salzberg said she may be able to locate notes and other materials from that work that could be helpful to Corinne.
 - Corinne Catalano noted that it would be valuable to review the standards developed years ago and compare them with more recent information from the agencies. She thanked Joyce Salzberg for offering to provide the materials.

- Susan Evans offered to search the department's archives for related materials. She noted that comparing the historical evaluator standards with current thinking could be useful. Evans explained that once the evaluator standards are established, they would be combined with the group's work on the EI educator and proceed through the rulemaking process.

Family Support Committee, Nicole Edwards, Chair

- Joyce Salzberg presented a report on behalf of Nicole Edwards, Chair of the Family Support Committee, who was unable to attend. The EIS feedback and input from pediatricians before bringing a revised version to the council and recommending it for broader outreach report highlighted two subcommittees' ongoing work:
 - One subcommittee was developing a flyer for pediatricians to address misinformation about the Part C EI referral process. The group planned to obtain NJEIS feedback and input from pediatricians before bringing a revised version to the council and recommending it for broader outreach by mid fall.
 - The second subcommittee was developing a proposal for NJEIS to establish more formal communication and follow up with doctors after EI referrals, with the goal of improving consistency statewide.
 - Although the Family Support Committee would not meet during the summer, both subcommittees planned to finalize recommendations by early to mid fall and present them to the council and NJEIS leadership.

Transition Committee, Steven Weiss, Chair and Josephine Shenouda, Co-Chair

- Steven Weiss reported on the Transition Committee's work, which includes two subcommittees:
 - The Parent Support and Education Subcommittee is revising a resource for families explaining their options as they exit the Early Intervention System. The group received extensive positive and useful feedback, which is being incorporated along with additional stakeholder and REIC input. A completion date has not yet been established, but an update is expected at the next meeting.
 - The Bridging the Gap Subcommittee is developing a document addressing the transition and handoff from Part C to Part B. The group is seeking additional stakeholder input and expects to present a draft at the next meeting.

Lead Agency Report

Susan Evans, Part C Coordinator

- Susan Evans stated that the Lead Agency Report will cover three topics: federal and state updates, an update from the Early Intervention Conference held in May, and the Procedural Safeguards Report.
- Susan Evans provided an update on federal activities, noting that things have calmed somewhat compared to the previous year following the change in administration. She reported that the Department submitted its federal funding application for \$14,729,548, a slight increase from the prior year, after receiving two public comments during the spring public comment period. Evans stated that the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is expected to issue the award on time by July 1, with no anticipated delays.
- Susan Evans explained that the Annual Performance Report (APR) was presented in January and submitted to OSEP on February 1. OSEP reviewed the report and provided an opportunity for the state to clarify information in April. The state is expecting to receive its determination letter from OSEP around June 18 and will share the results with the field and the council.
 - Evans also noted that county performance reports have been developed based on the APR data. These reports evaluate the performance of each county's service coordination units and early intervention provider agencies across the APR indicators. Additionally, each service coordination unit will receive information specific to its performance and any areas identified as needing improvement.
- Susan Evans reviewed the following slide and clarified recent federal updates from the U.S. Department of Education:

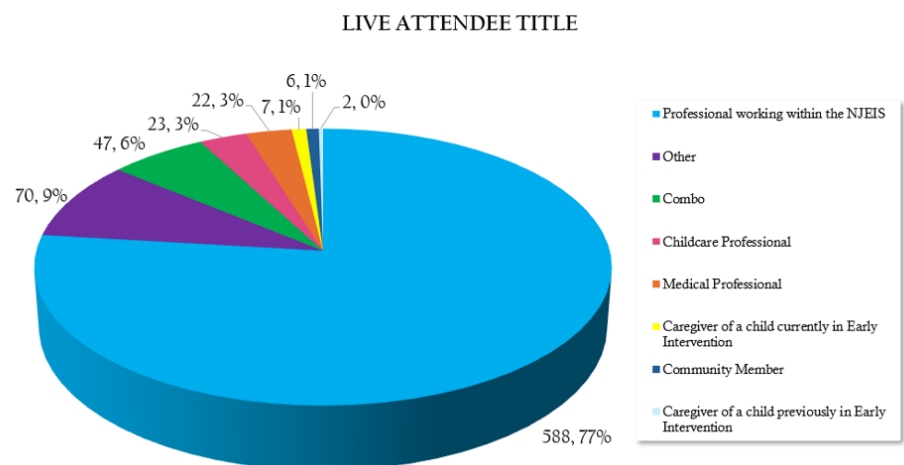
In the news....

- Federal announcements include new language in one of the appropriations acts that *"expands the use of funds under the IDEA, Part C program allowing states to use IDEA Part C funds to conduct child find, public awareness, and referral activities for individuals who expect to become parents of an infant with a disability"*
- However,
 - States are not required to implement this new languages nor did it create any new requirement
 - No new funds/grants have been set aside to assist states with this child find activity
 - Nothing prevented states from this activity under the "old" child find language.

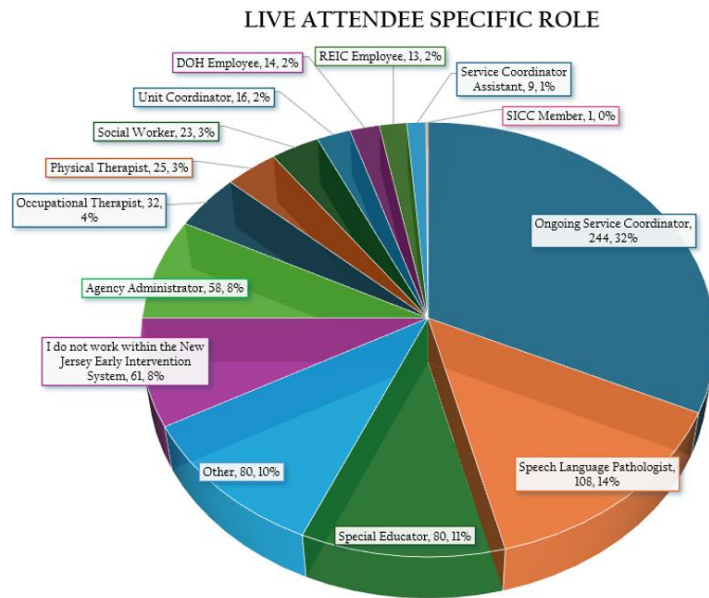


- Susan Evans explained that the additional \$20 million in Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funding for Part C resulted in only a modest increase for states and territories. She noted that, despite public announcements about increased funding, the allocation did not represent a significant infusion of new funds. She also stated that current congressional budget discussions are considering flat IDEA funding going forward.
- Susan Evans announced that Nicole Gooding became the Executive Director of Family Link on June 1, following Susan Marcario's retirement after 30 years in the position. Gooding brings extensive Early Intervention experience, having previously served as Family Link's Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator and as a service coordinator.
- Susan Evans reported that the FY 2027 state budget is expected to remain unchanged from FY 2026, with the state appropriation staying at \$117 million. She noted that there is currently no information regarding an additional \$2 million allocation for provider agencies, and the final budget is expected by June 30.
- Kristen Kugelman reported that the annual NJEIS conference was held virtually on May 13 using Zoom Events, which received positive feedback and worked well for the organization. The conference attracted 1,107 registrants and 765 live attendees, demonstrating a strong reach.
- Kristen Kugelman presented and explained the following slides, providing data on attendee demographics, survey responses, and overall satisfaction with the annual NJEIS conference:

Attendees By Self- Identified Title



Self- Identified Specific Role



338 survey responses were analyzed

Overwhelmingly positive feedback, with strong ratings across presenters, learning materials, and overall experience

Participants consistently highlighted autism, communication strategies, coaching, and family engagement as valuable topics

Most attendees indicated they would attend future conferences again.

Survey Responses

Satisfaction Breakdown By Role

Service Coordinators

- Demonstrated high consistency across the board
- Over 95% rated sessions positively, with an equal spread of "Strongly Agree" marks between *Coaching Families* and *Child Care Settings*

EI Practitioners

- Accounted for the highest concentration of the topmost "Strongly Agree" choices
- Strong support for the *Autistic Learners* session

EI Agency Administrators:

- Mostly reported uniform satisfaction across all tracks

- Kristen Kugelman highlighted the keynote presentation by Dr. Sarah Sexton, a North Carolina based expert, on the brain science of coaching. She noted that coaching is an evidence based practice reported to the federal government annually, making the session an opportunity to explore the topic in greater depth. Dr. Sexton received high ratings for her effectiveness, materials, and, most importantly, the practical application of the content.
- Kristen Kugelman noted that the conference offered continuing education units (CEUs) for the first time, awarding 129 CEUs to social workers and speech-language practitioners. Approximately 17% of attendees requested CEUs, with plans to explore expanding the program in the future.
- Kristen Kugelman announced that the 2027 NJEIS Conference will be held in a hybrid format on Friday, May 7, 2027, at the Princeton Marriott at Forrestal.
- Corinne Catalano and Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen praised the NJEIS Conference and recognized the significant effort involved in obtaining CEU approval.
- Susan Evans provided updates on State Initiatives & Happenings, noting that DOH will host a one-day in-service training for all service coordinators on October 2. She also reported that Annual Performance Report (APR) and cyclical monitoring of EIP programs are ongoing, with the State General Supervision Plan to be shared with stakeholders shortly.
- Susan Evans reported that 93% of 2026 Family Cost Payment (FCP) bills have been paid, totaling \$6.2 million of the \$6.6 million billed. She noted that the data demonstrates strong collection of family fees.

Procedural Safeguards Office (PSO) – Beth Lohne, Coordinator

- In Beth Lohne's absence, Susan Evans presented the Procedural Safeguards Office (PSO) report and provided an overview of the slides below:

Procedural Safeguards Office Initiatives

OFFICE HOURS SFY26:

- Beginning in March 2026, the PSO office hours will move to quarterly. The dedicated office hours will be an open forum focus on Procedural Safeguards for the DOH, REICs, SCUs, and EIP's, via Teams platform to allow maximum attendance. 979 Participated to date.
- Upcoming Open-Forum PSO office hour, June 22, 2026.

TRAINING INITIATIVES:

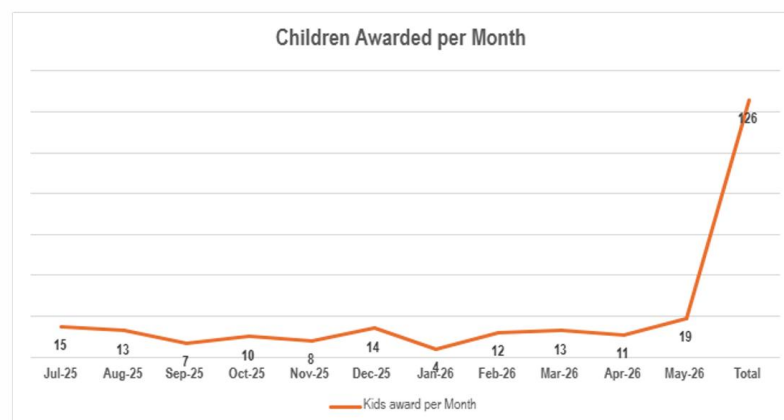
- PSO Quarterly Trainings: Continuous education on Procedural Safeguard requirements for direct service providers.
- Mediator Refresher Training- June 29, 2026
- **Assurance that families have been informed of their right to formal dispute resolution.

ONGOING INITIATIVES:

- Quarterly Hours: Regular sessions to address questions, discuss trends, and provide support.
- Infographic Resource for families ensuring the importance of their signatures.
- Partnership with the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network: Collaboration on a joint training for families on Creating Agreements and Formal Dispute Resolution Options in the NJEIS. SICC Family Support Committee collaboration.

- Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Investigations SFY26, 14 total; July 1, 2025- June 8, 2026:
Unfounded: 2,
Substantiated: 10
Pending Investigation: 2
Suspended from NJEIS: 5

PSO SFY26 COMPENSATORY AWARDS DATA



- Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen asked whether statewide or local data was available regarding trends in reduced enrollment, noting that Essex County has been experiencing a decline.
 - Josephine Shenouda stated that she received data on cancellations, referrals, and enrollment trends from the data team and will review it over the next month.
 - Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen noted that providers in Essex County have been collaborating to understand and address declining enrollment. She identified several potential contributing factors, including immigration and changes to Medicaid rules, and noted the broader impact on providers. Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen emphasized that declining enrollment and increased cancellations are affecting providers' ability to maintain staffing and operational capacity.
- Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen asked whether unspent state funds resulting from reduced enrollment could be used to provide stipends or other financial support to providers for costs already incurred. She noted that, although funds cannot be carried over, potential available funding could be considered for this purpose.
 - Josephine Shenouda stated that, based on the current analysis, there should be no unspent state funds available. She noted that NJEIS funding was previously reduced from approximately \$118 million to \$115 million. She highlighted that the current fiscal year maintains stable funding at \$117 million, including the additional \$2 million supporting the 1% increase.
 - Susan Evans provided an update on efforts to address enrollment trends, including exploring marketing firms to support Child Find activities. She explained that lower enrollment does not necessarily result in unspent funds, as state appropriations have remained relatively consistent and historically required additional funding when needed. She noted that the current situation means the department is not expected to need additional funding, rather than having excess funds available.
- Joyce Salzberg praised the improvements in family cost-share collections and asked how families who remain unpaid are handled, including whether they are suspended from services or continue receiving them.
 - Susan Evans clarified that suspension for unpaid family cost-share has not been reinstated and is not currently part of the NJEIS process.
 - Joyce Salzberg expressed concern that unpaid families may be receiving services while programs struggle to recruit and retain professionals. She noted that this could affect access for other children who are waiting for services.
 - Susan Evans explained that reinstating family suspensions, which are included in current policy, would require adding the process to EIMS. She noted that this was not incorporated during the system's initial transition and the COVID-19 period. Evans recommended gathering broader Council input before moving forward with reinstating suspensions.

- Joyce Salzberg noted that implementing suspension in EIMS could take 9–12 months due to the system's update schedule and would require dedicated fiscal staff for follow-up. She highlighted the improvement in family cost-share collections from 83% to 93% and stated that the team will continue working on collections while revisiting suspension and staffing needs in the future.

Regional Early Intervention Collaborative (REIC) Update

- Laura Washington highlighted the activities held during Early Intervention Week, which were extended throughout the month. She noted that New Jersey once again issued a proclamation recognizing Early Intervention Week, marking the third consecutive year and helping raise awareness of EI's role in supporting infants, toddlers, and families statewide.
- Laura Washington reported that the REICs expanded Early Intervention Week activities throughout May, offering weekday, evening, and weekend events to increase participation. They partnered with community organizations to support outreach and Child Find efforts and also offered three statewide virtual events, including parent support groups and an educational workshop on family well-being and safety.
- Laura Washington reported that 17 in-person Early Intervention Week events were held statewide, attracting more than 250 families. Activities included sensory play, movement, story time, and hands-on learning at various community locations. She highlighted the strong family engagement and connections formed among parents and children as a key success of the month long initiative.
- Laura Washington highlighted Child Find efforts, noting that each REIC has established an outreach committee to expand community outreach and connect more families with EI resources:



Recent Child Find Initiatives

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

**NJ AAP Annual
Conference 2026**

- ✓ Libraries
- ✓ Childcare Centers
- ✓ Pediatric Practices
- ✓ Hospitals & NICUs
- ✓ Community Organizations
- ✓ Community Baby Showers
- ✓ Rutgers CCR&R In-Service
- ✓ Family Resource Fairs/Events
- ✓ Consulate of Colombia, Salvador, Mexico

Parents Inc
of New Jersey

**Annual Parenting
Conference**

The graphic includes two photographs at the bottom. The left photo shows a booth for NJEIS at the NJ AAP Annual Conference 2026, with staff members and informational materials. The right photo shows a booth for NJEIS at the Annual Parenting Conference, also with staff and materials.

- Susan Evans praised the team's efforts during May, recognizing their work supporting both the NJEIS Conference and Early Intervention Week. She commended the professional and cohesive presentation of outreach materials and emphasized the importance of consistent marketing and continued community outreach.

New Business

- Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen suggested forming a PR and marketing committee, potentially under the Fiscal Infrastructure Committee, to support statewide outreach and a media campaign in collaboration with the state and regional partners.
 - Josephine Shenouda and Susan Evans welcomed further discussion about establishing a Child Find-focused subcommittee. They agreed to revisit the proposal during a meeting with the Fiscal Infrastructure Committee and confirmed that such a subcommittee would fall within the Council's purview.

Old Business

- No old business was reported at today's SICC meeting.

Public Comments

The following comments were made by members of the public:

Kenneth (David) Holmes, ABCD EIPA

- Kenneth (David) Holmes thanked Josephine for attending the ABCD Early Intervention Provider Association meeting earlier in the week and for engaging in an open and helpful discussion with approximately 14–15 provider members. He expressed appreciation for her willingness to answer questions and noted that the dialogue was valuable to providers.
- Mr. Holmes raised concerns regarding rising fuel costs and the impact they are having on practitioners who travel to deliver early intervention services. He noted that increasing travel expenses are placing additional strain on an already fragile service delivery system, especially as providers face competition from hospitals, schools, nursing homes, and other sectors. He encouraged consideration of increased travel reimbursement to help retain staff and support the workforce proactively.
- Kenneth (David) Holmes also suggested developing a memorandum of understanding between the Departments of Health (DOH) and Children and Families (DCF) to clarify the responsibilities of Early Intervention and child care centers. He noted that a simple guidance document could be distributed to child care centers and carried by practitioners to reduce barriers, improve understanding, and facilitate access to children receiving services.

- Lastly, Mr. Holmes expressed enthusiasm regarding the appointment of Nashon Hornsby as Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Health with oversight responsibilities related to Early Intervention. He recommended inviting Mr. Hornsby to a future meeting, noting his extensive knowledge of the EI system and his ability to provide valuable connections to Department leadership and the Governor's Office.

Cynthia Newman, Regional Director

- Cynthia Newman highlighted Nashon Hornsby's extensive knowledge of Early Intervention, including his previous role as Procedural Safeguards Coordinator and his legal background. She expressed enthusiasm about his increased involvement with the EI system.
- Cynthia Newman also discussed Mid Jersey's ongoing physician outreach project, which includes periodically sending postcards to physicians with information on Early Intervention referrals and encouraging families to refer early. Mid Jersey also encourages families to sign a release allowing their child's evaluation report to be shared with their physician after the evaluation, while recognizing that some families may choose not to authorize the release.

Maureen E. Archibald, Director

- Maureen Archibald noted that the numbers in Hudson are increasing and expressed appreciation for the efforts being made to reach children who need Early Intervention services. She thanked Josephine for advocating for stronger representation on the council and asked about the positions currently awaiting gubernatorial confirmation. Ms. Archibald emphasized the importance of having ongoing service coordination represented on the council and expressed hope that one of her unit coordinators could serve as a representative.

Sima Reisner

- Sima Reisner thanked the group for the outreach efforts and noted that many agencies are seeing a decline in referrals and children entering services. She suggested expanding outreach to urgent care centers, as more families are relying on urgent care providers rather than regularly seeing pediatricians. She expressed concern that children may be missed when developmental concerns are not identified during routine pediatric visits and recommended including urgent care providers in Early Intervention outreach efforts.

Jennifer Blanchette McConnell, Training & Technical Assistance Coordinator

- Jennifer Blanchette McConnell shared that a family member is interested in becoming more involved in system level advocacy and possibly participating in SICC or committee work. She inquired whether non-SICC members could participate in committees as a way to increase family involvement.
- Jennifer Blanchette McConnell asked about next steps for the Service Delivery Committee following Virginia Lynn's departure. In response to the discussion on outreach, she noted that outreach to federally qualified health centers is already occurring and may reach some of the children being discussed.

- Lastly, Jennifer Blanchette McConnell emphasized the importance of using longitudinal and county-level data to better understand referral and eligibility trends. She suggested examining the data to determine where outreach efforts are most needed rather than relying solely on perceptions of declining referrals. She noted that eligibility rates and enrollment numbers may be returning closer to pre-COVID levels and encouraged continued review of the data to help target outreach and identify actual areas of need.

Submitted Chat Messages as Public Comments:

- 01:38:13 Archibald, Maureen: Can Josephine kindly confirm the position now pending before the governor's office for the SICC? Would this include OSC, a significant role now missing!!
- 01:40:23 Jill Arc of Somerset Glassman: Reacted to "We will be presenting on child find and outreach - but none of us are PR experts -would be great if njeis could allocate some dollars for PR consultation to REICs!!" with 👍
- 01:47:23 TerraAnn Madden: I agree Jenn!

Submitted Written Comments (Attached):

There were no additional public comments.

The Public can submit comments to the Department or in the Q&A section which are recorded for the Department.

The next SICC public meeting is September 18, 2026, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Adjournment:

MOTION to adjourn the meeting by Corinne Catalano and seconded by Steven Weiss at approximately 11:23 a.m.