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March 6, 2018

Dr. Gregory Wm. Branch
Health Officer and Director
Dept. of Health & Human Services Baltimore County
6401 York Road, 3rd Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21212

Dear Dr. Branch:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (DSE/EIS) is required by the United States Department of Education (USDE), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to make determinations annually regarding the performance of each local Infants and Toddlers Program using one of the following four determination categories: “Meets Requirements,” “Needs Assistance,” “Needs Intervention,” or “Needs Substantial Intervention” [34 CFR §§303.700 and 300.703]. The MSDE, DSE/EIS uses a results-based rubric for given indicators to evaluate each local Infants and Toddlers Program performance in meeting the State’s identified targets. For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2016 determinations, the Baltimore County Infants and Toddlers Program has achieved the determination status of “**Needs Assistance – Year 1.**”*

Attached please find supporting documentation:

1. FFY 2016 Determination Overview (identifies the Part C Indicators used to assign a local determination on pages 1 and 2 – please note the addition of fiscal and complaints/due process hearing data);
2. FFY 2016 Local Determination Scoring Criteria (provides a six-year graduated results driven accountability plan used to make a local determination by year); and
3. FFY 2016 Annual Report Card on SPP/APR Part C Indicators (provides a three-year local data analysis and required actions).

To implement a results driven accountability system, we continue to focus on the three child outcome indicators. In 2015, a revised baseline was required and new targets established. Please see the attached *Part C Child Outcomes Baselines and Targets for Local Determinations* document. The DSE/EIS has developed one set of baselines and targets that are inclusive of children who receive services from birth to three, as well as children who receive services through an Extended IFSP. The decision to examine child outcomes as one group independent of age was unanimously supported by local Infants and Toddlers Program (LITP) Directors and Preschool Coordinators through a stakeholder discussion held in 2014. Please note the attached revised baseline and targets for local determinations of Maryland’s LITPs will not be included in Maryland’s Annual Performance Report (APR) to OSEP. For federal reporting, OSEP requested that Maryland report child outcomes data for children birth to three years separately from child outcomes data for children older than three so that comparisons could be made with other states that are not serving children through an IFSP after age three.

*Note: “Needs Assistance – Year 2” in FFY 2017 determinations will place the Baltimore County Infants and Toddlers Program in the DSE/EIS “Targeted” tier of general supervision and performance support within the four-tiered framework (Universal, Targeted, Focused, Intensive).

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The shift to a more balanced accountability approach does not relieve the DSE/EIS from ensuring compliance, correction of identified noncompliance, and the receipt of timely and accurate data. As a result of the accountability shift to an increased emphasis on results, an LITP's determination status may be impacted in the future.

To support Maryland's commitment to narrow the opportunity and achievement gaps for infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities and their families, the implementation of the DSE/EIS five-year *Strategic Plan* (page 12) provides a statewide differentiated framework for general supervision and performance support. Based upon comprehensive data analysis (including the SPP/APR local determination status), the Baltimore County Infants and Toddlers Program has been assigned the "**Universal**" tier for the delivery of the DSE/EIS technical assistance model for results.

Local Infants and Toddlers Programs are strongly encouraged to work closely with their Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC) to perform an analysis of local data and infrastructure. The analysis should guide the development of strategies for data-informed decision-making, increased parent partnerships, strategic collaboration, and the use of evidence-based practices to improve the results for infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities and their families. As we continue this shift in focus to results-driven accountability, the MSDE, DSE/EIS will provide State and local professional learning opportunities.

Thank you for your hard work and commitment to excellence, equity, and efficiency. The MSDE is committed to supporting the efforts of the Baltimore County Infants and Toddlers Program to improve results for infants, toddlers, and preschool age children with disabilities and their families. If you have any questions or wish to request technical assistance, please do not hesitate to call me at 410-767-0238.

Sincerely,



Marcella E. Franczkowski, M.S.
Assistant State Superintendent
Division of Special Education/
Early Intervention Services

MEF/BMM/cc

c: Karen B. Salmon
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