**RS 17:1979**

§1979.  Louisiana State Interagency Coordinating Council for ChildNet: Louisiana's Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs and Their Families

A.  The Louisiana State Interagency Coordinating Council for ChildNet: Louisiana's Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs and Their Families is hereby created.  All council members shall be appointed by the governor who shall also appoint the chairperson, with the understanding that any member of the council who is a representative of the Lead Agency may not serve as the chairperson of the council.  The members shall represent the population of Louisiana and shall include the following:

(1)  At least twenty percent of the members shall be parents of infants or toddlers with special needs or children with special needs age twelve or younger, with knowledge of or experience with programs for infants and toddlers with special needs.  At least one such member shall be a parent of an infant or toddler with special needs or a child with special needs age six or younger.

(2)  At least twenty percent of the members shall be public or private providers of early intervention services.

(3)  At least one member shall be an elected member of the Louisiana Legislature.

(4)  At least one member shall be involved in personnel preparation.

(5)  At least one member shall be from each of the state agencies involved in the provision of or payment for early intervention services to infants and toddlers with special needs and their families and shall have sufficient authority to engage in policy planning and implementation on behalf of such agency.

(6)  At least one member shall be from the state educational agency responsible for preschool services to children with special needs and shall have sufficient authority to engage in policy planning and implementation on behalf of such agency.

(7)  At least one member shall be from the agency responsible for the state governance of health insurance.

(8)  At least one representative shall be from a Head Start agency or program.

(9)  At least one representative shall be from a state agency responsible for child care.

(10)  The council may include other members selected by the governor, including a representative from the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs or a federally or state recognized tribe.

B.  The council shall meet at least quarterly and in such places as it deems necessary.  The meetings shall be publicly announced and to the extent appropriate, open, and accessible to the general public.

C.(1)  Subject to the approval of the governor, the council may prepare and approve a budget using funds under this Part to conduct hearings and forums, to reimburse members of the council for reasonable and necessary expenses for attending council meetings and performing council duties including child care for parent representatives, to pay compensation to a member of the council if the member is not employed or must forfeit wages from other employment when performing official council business.

(2)  The council shall use funds under this Part to hire an executive director who shall be responsible to and report directly to the council and the governor or his designee to carry out its functions under this Part.  The executive director shall be hired as an unclassified employee of the office of the governor.  The cost of maintaining the functions of the executive director and council shall be specified by an interagency agreement between the lead agency and the office of the governor.  The council may also use funds under this Part to obtain the services of other such professional, technical, and clerical personnel as may be necessary to carry out its functions under this Part.

D.  The council shall have the following duties:

(1)  To advise and assist the Lead Agency in the performance of the responsibilities under this Part, particularly the identification of the sources of fiscal and other support for services for early intervention programs, assignment of financial responsibility to the appropriate agency, and the promotion of the interagency agreements.

(2)  To advise and assist the Lead Agency in the preparation of applications and amendments thereto.

(3)  To advise and assist the Lead Agency regarding the transition of toddlers with special needs to preschool and other appropriate services.

(4)  To prepare and submit an annual report to the governor and to the United States Secretary of Education on the status of early intervention programs for infants and toddlers with special needs and their families operated within the state of Louisiana.

(5)  The council may advise appropriate agencies in the state with respect to the integration of services for infants and toddlers with special needs and at-risk infants and toddlers and their families, regardless of whether at-risk infants and toddlers are eligible for early intervention services in the state.

E.  No member of the council shall cast a vote on any matter which would provide direct financial benefit to that member or otherwise give the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Acts 1989, No. 377, §1, eff. June 29, 1989; Acts 1995, No. 1228, §1, eff. June 29, 1995; Acts 1997, No. 462, §1; Acts 1998, 1st Ex. Sess., No. 109, §1, eff. May 5, 1998.