



Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council



SELF-DETERMINATION ♦ INDEPENDENCE ♦ PRODUCTIVITY ♦ INTEGRATION ♦ INCLUSION

October 27, 2014

John White
Superintendent
LA Department of Education

Via Email

Dear Superintendent White:

The Developmental Disabilities Council's October quarterly meeting included an extensive discussion of inclusive child care opportunities, or the lack thereof. The Council developed recommendations and a collaborative action plan to achieve several desired outcomes. We very much appreciated the attendance of Ivy Starns and the valuable information she provided on implementation of Act 3.

The Council acknowledges the Department of Education's (LDE) work to implement Act 3; however, we want to emphasize the vital importance of having policy decisions be informed by the needs of young children with significant disabilities to ensure these children have equal access to early childhood programs. For Louisiana communities to fully include and embrace people with developmental disabilities, regardless of the severity of that disability, inclusive practices must begin where our youngest citizens grow and learn to accept all of their peers, regardless of their differences.

The Council recommends:

- LDE inform the Council of its funding request to fully implement Act 3 upon submission of the LDE budget to the Division of Administration. As a result, the Council and other advocates will have an opportunity to support this request.
- LDE expand the Early Learning for All Inclusion Grant to all areas of the state to provide vital training and technical assistance for early childhood/child care programs to serve children with disabilities.
- LSU's Human Development Center (HDC) determine what data regarding children with disabilities and early childhood is needed from the LDE (by early November 2014);
- HDC assist the LDE by obtaining data from Early Head Start and Head Start (by mid November 2014);
- LDE and HDC analyze cost of serving children with varying needs (by early December 2014);
- Publicly funded educational settings receive additional funding to serve children with disabilities;

Superintendent White

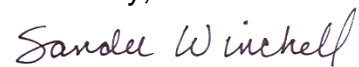
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- LDE develop a complaint process for parents not able to access an appropriate early childhood/child care setting;

Your favorable consideration of these recommendations will be very much appreciated.

Sincerely,



Sandee Winchell
Executive Director

c: Jamie Wong, LDE
Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council
Kay Marcel, DD Council Chair