

DIVISION OF DISABILITY AND AGING SERVICES
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MEMORANDUM

To: Developmental Services Directors
From: Ellen Malone, Director, Developmental Disabilities and Children's Services Unit
Re: Change in requirements for eligibility determinations for children with PDD funded for limited services.
Date: June 16, 2009

With the addition of the Bridge Program Care Coordination for children with developmental disabilities, your agencies have to do many more eligibility determinations and assessments for children. We have been made aware of a problem related to the need for re-assessment for children who were first diagnosed prior to entering first grade. The DD Act of 1996 Regulations require a full re-assessment of these children when they enter first grade. This continues to make sense for children who had a condition with a high probability of resulting in mental retardation or significant delays in cognitive development and adaptive behavior. Standardized IQ and adaptive behavior assessments are not required for young children prior to entering first grade. Confirming a mental retardation diagnosis using standardized assessments at that point is needed and continues to be required.

However, the requirement to reconfirm a diagnosis of a pervasive developmental disorder when a child enters first grade is creating challenges for our system. There are a limited number of evaluators with expertise in diagnosing PDD in VT. Even prior to the creation of the Bridge program, there were waiting lists for PDD evaluations resulting in delays in access to services for individuals looking to either establish or reconfirm a diagnosis. The situation has been exacerbated by the need for additional eligibility determinations for the Bridge Program. Also, the cost of completing these evaluations is significant. It is not cost effective to require this assessment for children who will be receiving limited services such as Flexible Family Funding, Targeted Case Management or the Bridge Program. Therefore, for children applying for or enrolled in FFF, TCM and/or the Bridge Program, we are waiving the need to have a new assessment to confirm a diagnosis of PDD when a child enters first grade. An adaptive behavior assessment will continue to be required at this time and the child would need to have substantial deficits in adaptive behavior as defined in the DD Act Regulations. The agency should do a full re-assessment if, at any time, they have reason to believe that the child does not have a PDD diagnosis. A full re-assessment is required when a child is transitioning to adulthood or if they are applying for Developmental Disability Home and Community-based Services. Families

Memo – Developmental Services Directors
June 16, 2009
Page 2

should be made aware that the eligibility requirements for limited services are less stringent and that their child's eligibility for developmental disability services is not guaranteed in the future.

This change will be incorporated into the DD Act Regulations when they are next revised.

c Joan Senecal
 Lorraine Wargo
 Amy Roth
 Clare McFadden
 Jennifer Myka