

**ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON AUTISM
MEETING
APRIL 20, 2012**

The Arkansas Legislative Task Force on Autism met Friday, April 20, 2012, at 1:00 p.m., in Room 130 at the State Capitol, Little Rock, Arkansas. Senator Mary Anne Salmon and Representative Uvalde Lindsey, presided.

Task Force members present were Senator Mary Anne Salmon, Representative Uvalde Lindsey, Ms. Marjorie Greenberg, Dr. Steve Kahler, Dr. Charlie Green, Mr. Don Honey (sitting in for Mr. Jay Bradford), Ms. Dianna Varady, Ms. Karan Burnette, Mr. Eric Moxley, Dr. Loretta Cochran, Ms. Karen Massey, Ms. Kay Michael, Ms. Amanda Holsted, Ms. Dayna Miller, and Ms. Maureen Bradshaw.

Representative Lindsey welcomed new task force members; Ms. Kay Michael and Ms. Amanda Holsted.

Representative Lindsey opened the meeting. The minutes of the March 16, 2012, meeting were approved by acclamation.

Explanation of Quick Start and BIC Services

Ms. Maureen Bradshaw, Task Force Member, State Coordinator for Behavioral Intervention Consultant, Department of Education, introduced Dr. Sheila Smith, Psychologist, Early Intervening Services, Behavior Intervention Consultant and Dr. Jennifer Hennessey, Board Certified Behavior Analyst, Behavior Intervention Consultant (BIC).

Ms. Bradshaw explained the number of children in Arkansas diagnosed with autism has increased from 42 children in 1991, to currently 1 out of 88 girls and 1 out of 54 boys. She said children diagnosed with autism need early intervention before they are old enough to enroll in kindergarten. Ms. Bradshaw said the increasing number of children diagnosed on the autism spectrum increases the need for BIC services. Research shows if a child diagnosed with autism has unsuccessful interventions, the child will be resistant to future intervention services. Through the BIC network, school districts in the state have access to all research based best practices through the state network.

Dr. Hennessey and Dr. Smith explained how the Quick Start program is designed for children ages 2-5 years diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. Quick Start is an 8-session program based on the principles of applied behavior analysis that consist of professionally led discussions, direct observation of one-to-one intervention sessions, and a structured classroom environment. Each Quick Start session starts with a topic based discussion for parents. The discussions not only focus on pivotal response treatment such as improving communication and reducing problem behaviors, but parents receive information on accessing state services and coordinating with service providers. While discussions are held with the parents, the child attends a structured preschool classroom. The focus of the classroom environment is facilitating functional communication and appropriate social interactions. All interventions are ABA based and specifically tailored to meet each child's individual need. BICs will follow the child's progress

as each child transitions from the Quick Start therapy into the school setting. BICs also provide Quick Start training to teachers and staff.

Future goals for the Quick Start program:

- Offer treatment sessions during evening hours and weekends for families who are unable to bring their child to the clinic for treatment during working hours.
- Provide a modified schedule of Quick Start beginning July 2012.
- Replicate the modified schedule to Co-ops around the state.
- Train Health Care Providers and Early Childhood Behavior Consultants around the state to replicate the Quick Start program.

Representative Lindsey's requested Ms. Bradshaw provide the task force with the success rates of children transitioning from Quick Start to the school environment.

Representative Lindsey requested task force members work on developing a clearing house website for parents to use as a resource tool on developmental disability services.

Representative Lindsey requested task force members look at how to include autism in professional development training for teachers.

Mr. Charlie Green said he will check on 6B funding to help pay for the cost to train behavioral consultants on Quick Start.

Meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.