

THE IRIS CENTER
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Administrative Progress Report
for
Year 1, Quarter 1

Submitted to:

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The IRIS Center Quarterly Report/ March 31, 2013 [First Quarter, Year 1]

As the **IRIS Center** engages a new grant cycle and an expanded mission, we will produce these **Quarterly Reports** as both a narrative of our effort and a detailed account of our work and progress. This **First Quarter of Year One** found the Center hard at work with OSEP-requested activities (e.g., the development of a conceptual framework), a Web site redesign, and much else. Read on to find out all the latest from the IRIS Center.

BUILD PROJECT INFRASTRUCTURE

Foundations – At OSEP’s request, the IRIS Center has undertaken a number of important activities designed to create a coherent conceptual and organizational structure for the new Center. A brief description of these is below.

Current:

- At OSEP’s request, modifications were made to the originally proposed IRIS personnel to include **early intervention/ early childhood experts**. These modifications include:
 - The development of a **Leadership Team**: Naomi Tyler, Deb Smith, Ilene Schwartz, and Vivian Correa
 - The development of an **early intervention (EI)/ early childhood (EC) Task Force**: Ilene Schwartz, Vivian Correa, Mary Louise Hemmeter, Phil Strain, and Cindy O’Dell.
- An OSEP-required **Kick Off Meeting** for the IRIS Center was held on **March 4–5** in Washington, DC. The meeting centered around discussions of the **IRIS Center’s mission** and the best way to go about attaining it, as well as thoughts and guidance on future **resource and materials development** and **project dissemination efforts**. Taking part were Naomi Tyler and Deb Smith (IRIS Project Co-Directors), Ilene Schwartz (Leadership Team), Bianca Montrosse Moorhead (Project Evaluator), Sarah Allen and Tracie Dickson (OSEP Project Officers), and other OSEP Staff.

- **Logic Model:** Based on feedback from OSEP staff at the **Kickoff Meeting**, the original **IRIS Logic Model** has been revised in order to demonstrate how the Center intends to meet the overarching purpose of the **cooperative agreement**: “(1) help address state-identified needs for highly qualified personnel—in special education, related services, early intervention, and regular education—to work with children, including infants and toddlers, with disabilities; and (2) ensure that those personnel have the necessary skills and knowledge, derived from practices that have been determined, through evidence-based research and experience, to be successful in serving those children.”
- **Vision and Mission Statements:** To encapsulate the work that lies ahead—and to serve as brief functional descriptions of IRIS and its primary goals—the Center has composed draft versions of its **Vision** and **Mission Statements**. These statements are not yet finalized or approved.
- **Conceptual Framework:** To visually represent interaction and feedback among the **development, dissemination, and TA/ Training** and the **evaluation, collaboration, and data-based decision making** elements of the Center’s mission, we created a preliminary version of a **Conceptual Framework**. This document is also in the approval process.
- **Work Plan:** To outline the specific steps necessary to meet specific development and dissemination goals, the Center has initiated the process of creating a point-by-point **Work Plan**.
- **Organizational Chart and Personnel Descriptions (i.e., staff, technical assistance providers, steering committee, leadership team, EI/ EC task force):** This approved document depicts Center personnel and their various responsibilities and roles.
- **IRIS Budget:** The Center Co-Directors have revised the **Year 1 budget** to accommodate OSEP-requested changes in personnel (e.g., the Leadership Team) and activities (e.g., additional presentations at DEC and NAEYC conferences).
- **IRIS Logo and Slogan:** To increase the Center’s brand recognition, we have revised the **IRIS Logo** and have been working to create a new **slogan**.

DISSEMINATE

The Center will build IHE faculty and PD providers’ awareness and knowledge regarding the infusion of IRIS and other federally funded products into their courses, program curricula, and PD trainings through multiple dissemination efforts.

- The Center's **Web site** is being created. We are currently in the design stage of this process. Ultimately, the Web site will entail a look at the layout and appearance of all IRIS materials, resources, and online tools. As part of this process, we have enlisted the assistance of **MindSpark**, a company dedicated to employing people with disabilities—especially Asperger syndrome and autism—in the software industry.
 - **Social Media** will play a prominent role in the IRIS Center, offering the ability to collaborate amongst peers and colleagues within different outlets from community forums to giving feedback on how to improve our resources or what we should add next. We will have a larger or expanded presence on **Facebook**, **Twitter**, and **LinkedIn**. All will be frequently updated with current events, PR opportunities, and Training/ Seminar Information to keep IRIS users up to date about current events.
 - As part of the Center's social media effort, we will release a **Quarterly Newsletter**, which will be available for our users to sign up to receive electronically, as well as be archived on the new site.
 - The Center will make a presentation at the **2013 Three Forum** (sponsored in part by the Professional Development Division of **Pearson Publishing**) to be held in July at Lake Buena Vista, Florida.
 - We will make a presentation at the **Division of Early Childhood's (DEC) 29th Annual International Conference on Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families**, to be held in San Francisco on **October 16–18**.
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TA/ TRAINING

The Center will raise IHE faculty and PD providers' awareness and knowledge regarding the infusion of IRIS and other federally funded products into their courses, program curricula, and PD trainings through a targeted and intensive system of technical assistance and training; and the development of high quality, useful, relevant and non-duplicative products and services.

- The IRIS Center is **collecting syllabi** and curriculum matrices from college faculty who are also IRIS users to learn more about how IRIS resources and materials are integrated into college courses.
- The Center is beginning to identify potential consumer groups for needs assessments and focus groups relating to **sample syllabi** and **matrices**.

- The Center is in the early stages of planning an **IRIS Seminar** in collaboration with **Tribal Colleges**.
 - An **IRIS Symposia**, perhaps to take place at TED in November 2013, is currently in the early planning stages.
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DATA-BASED DECISION-MAKING

The Center will implement a process for making decisions about development, technical assistance and training services, and dissemination efforts that align with developments in the field, reflect evidence-based instructional and intervention practices, and are responsive to the needs of IHE faculty, professional development providers, and practicing educators.

Needs Assessment:

- We are currently **collecting feedback** about our seminar materials and faculty tips booklets with an eye toward the development of new materials manuals, and documents.
 - Likewise, to further inform our work and to help us to learn more about IRIS users, we are revising and updating our **IRIS Outreach Surveys**.
 - We are conducting a **needs assessment** to inform our product development process. Potential topics for EI/ EC and K–12 education have been drafted and will be evaluated by the IRIS EI/EC task force in a meeting in early April.
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COLLABORATE

The Center will support development, technical assistance and training services, and dissemination efforts through a collaborative processes to ensure that products and services align with developments in the field.

- On **March 20–21**, the Center took part in the **2013 Leveraging Resources Conference** in Washington, DC. The focus of the conference was on helping centers and projects to make better use of technical assistance resources. At that same conference, the Center attended a session on collaboration.

- The IRIS Center has participated in a number of **collaborative calls** with the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA), the Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC), and the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSy).
- On **April 3**, a meeting of the IRIS Center’s **Early Intervention/ Early Childhood (EI/ EC) Taskforce** was held during the Council for Exceptional Children’s (CEC) 2013 Convention and Expo in San Antonio, Texas. Those taking part in the mini-meeting included Vivian Correa, Ilene Schwartz, Mary Louise Hemmeter, Phil Strain, Cindy O’Dell, Amy Harris, Deborah Smith, and Naomi Tyler. The participants grappled with such issues as defining “early intervention providers” as part of IRIS’s target audience, identifying topics and services for the needs assessment, and possible participants for focus groups.
- Pearson Publishing’s professional development division has requested that the IRIS Center present at the **2013 Three Forum** to be held in July at Lake Buena Vista, Florida.