

*Comment:* ADD received 18 comments on Proposed Priority Area 4, Child Care and Early Intervention: Linkages for Successful Inclusion of Young Children With Disabilities. All were supportive and many offered recommendations for project design or additional components. There were suggestions for including effective advocacy strategies and protection of ADA rights, for addressing the needs of children with severe disabilities, for training on the condition of nonorganic failure to thrive as well as the sequelae of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma, for prevention of secondary disabilities, and for broadening the priority to include life-span services and "seamless" interagency collaboration.

There were also recommendations for inclusion of training for staff in after-school programs, assistive technology, and systems conversion. Because of high staff turnover there is a need for ongoing program support, possibly through mentorship, and there is good opportunity for young adults with disabilities to work as educational aides.

There were requests that preference be given to projects addressing the needs of families with low income or living in poverty, migrant families, and homeless families, with a specific suggestion that the Early Prevention, Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment Program be utilized.

There were several comments urging attention to multicultural issues and the need for early intervention with respect to children with developmental disabilities at risk for delinquent behavior. Also suggested was establishment of a national task force to assist states and local communities in implementing policies and services and combining this priority area with Children at Risk: The Impact of Abuse and Violence on Children with Disabilities.

*Response:* ADD was pleased to see the point made that the experience of inclusion has benefits for children with and without disabilities. The community benefits of diversity are an ongoing focus of ADD. We are also committed to the development of tools and strategies for the implementation of the ADA for all children, with focused attention on those who have been unserved and inadequately served, such as individuals with severe disabilities, families with low income or living in poverty, migrant or homeless families, those living in rural areas, and immigrant and refugee families.

We appreciate the information and suggestions regarding failure to thrive, Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive

Head Trauma, and prevention concerns, which will be incorporated in appropriate priority areas, as well as attention to after-school personnel and the implementation of assistive technology. We have introduced the collaboration of individuals with and without disabilities in projects with the Family and Youth Services Bureau and our Americorps projects.

ADD will fund separate projects under the youth service providers and disabilities advocates and abuse and violence priority areas. As for a focus on multicultural issues, ADD includes this requirement in the design of all projects and will have a major funding priority area (Priority 5) addressing the development of models for technical assistance.

*Comment:* ADD received 15 comments on Proposed Priority Area 5. All but one agreed with the need for this proposed priority and many offered recommendations on the design and operation of projects, while others had concerns about sufficient funding and the need for ongoing projects in a multicultural network.

There was agreement that it is time for innovative approaches to identifying areas of need and developing action strategies to meet those needs. Advocacy groups hoped to be included when the various components are collaborating. Nationwide technical assistance within the developmental disabilities network was recommended to implement programs for training service coordinators from culturally diverse backgrounds to guide individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. It was suggested that coalition building and recruitment and retention efforts outside the network depend on the achievement of cultural competence within the network. The dissenting commenter felt that the Commissioner has already begun to build this network and these issues should not be in a separate priority area.

Another commenter felt that if the goal is to provide agency-integrated, comprehensive services to families, the multicultural theme should be a strong, clearly developed part of each project. Another suggestion with regard to this issue proposed a state project targeted for demonstrating model practices for further development of collaboration among the network components.

There was also commentary on including all ages, including young adults, middle aged, and older parents of aging individuals with developmental disabilities in multicultural communities, and on the need for training in self-advocacy and

empowerment to address effective actions for overcoming identified barriers.

*Response:* The issue of building a strong, effective multicultural network within the developmental disabilities system is a major concern of ADD. The Commissioner's Forum as well as the careful consideration of the discussions of the ADD Multicultural Committee and numerous other entities and individuals, including grassroots and larger advocacy groups, are reflections of the high priority of this area of proposed funding.

ADD continues to emphasize cultural competency and recognition of the value of cultural diversity to individuals, families, and the larger community. This will be a required element in the design of projects to be funded. The suggestions for inclusion of all ages will be added to inclusion of unserved and inadequately served individuals. In proposing to fund three State projects, ADD feels that models will be developed for utilizing the resources of appropriate organizations including Historically Black Colleges and Universities and that these intense efforts will provide replicable practices and strategies for focused efforts by others.

*Comment:* ADD received 12 comments on Priority Area 6, Accessing Telecommunication Services for Persons With Developmental Disabilities. They were supportive and one suggested that a requirement of funding be that grantees establish electronic communication with other recipients. The ideal outcome of projects in this area would be a clearinghouse system that is interactive, assistive, and empowering of individuals seeking services and information including, for example, location of accessible housing, availability of assistive technology, details of Social Security programs, medical developments, and best practices.

*Response:* ADD agrees that the fast-growing capabilities occurring in cyberspace are going to be factors in communications for previously unserved and inadequately served individuals. Working out how individuals access this technology is the challenge. ADD is funding one Training Initiative Project under its University Affiliated Program which is exploring this issue, and ADD does already link its grantees through teleconferences, Internet, meetings, and forums. We would like to see more consumers, families, and providers accessing and sharing information, calendars,