

The Davidson's Story

Background

Michelle Davidson moved to West Virginia on June 10th from Ohio. She moved with her daughter, Kayla, 9 months old, and her son, Adam, 3 years old. Michelle is 25 years old. The children's father stayed in Ohio. Michelle and her children moved in with her mother, Eunice. Kayla was born 2 months premature. Although there were no major complications, Kayla spent 10 days in the NICU and was on oxygen for the first 8 days. She was being followed by her pediatrician in Ohio. Just before leaving Ohio, Kayla was diagnosed as having cerebral palsy. The staff at the pediatrician's practice informed her about Part C and the entitlements under the law. Because Michelle was getting ready to move to West Virginia, she decided to wait until she got to WV to begin the IFSP process.

When Michelle first arrived in WV, she devoted most of her attention to the details of the move, settling in, finding a job and enrolling in college. She then turned her attention to Kayla's needs. Her biggest concern for Kayla was eating; however, she also worried about her ability to play with Adam and helping Adam play with her. At Eunice's prompting, Michelle applied for Medicaid and Kayla began seeing Ruby, an occupational therapist, to work on feeding issues.

Ruby was very familiar with the WV Birth to Three and suggested that Michelle call the Regional Administrative Unit to begin a formal referral into the Birth to Three system. Ruby briefly described Part C and offered to make the referral call if Michelle wished. Michelle chose to call the RAU herself.

Referral - August 15th

The staff person who received Michelle's call explained the referral process. She told Michelle one of the services she would receive immediately would be service coordination and briefly explained the role of the service coordinator. The staff person gathered some preliminary information from Michelle over the phone and told her to expect a phone call from the Interim Service Coordinator within the next couple of days.

Two days later Annie called Michelle. Annie told Michelle a little more about her role as an Interim Service Coordinator and the IFSP process. She suggested they get together to gather further information and select a team to help answer Michelle's questions. Annie asked Michelle when and where it would be most convenient to meet. She told Michelle they would probably need an hour and that Michelle could invite anyone else to join them. Michelle said she would like for her mother to be present and that the best time for a meeting would be when Kayla and Adam weren't napping so that Annie could meet them as well. They scheduled a time to meet at Michelle's home. Before hanging up, Annie told Michelle it would be useful to have on hand any recent reports, medical records, or other similar background documents that Michelle would like the Birth to Three team to have about Kayla. She also suggested that Michelle jot down any questions she might have, since Michelle did not have any immediate questions. Annie asked for directions to the house and gave Michelle her phone number before hanging up.

The day before their meeting, Annie gave Michelle a call just to make sure the meeting was still convenient for Michelle. It was. When they hung up, Annie gathered the paperwork and information she would need for their visit.

Initial Contact - August 22nd

Annie arrived at Michelle's home on time. She was greeted by Eunice who invited her into the living room where Michelle and the children were. After introductions, Annie reiterated the purpose of the visit. Michelle was somewhat familiar with the Part C process and had some basic knowledge of the IFSP process. Annie explained that one thing she would be doing was gathering some information about Kayla, their family's routines, Michelle's concerns, etc. In addition, she explained that she would also be providing some information to Michelle and her mother. All of the information would be used in creating a plan for Kayla that was meaningful for the family. Michelle had copies of an evaluation report which had been done in Ohio just prior to their move. She also shared some of Kayla's medical records with Annie. Michelle wanted clarification on the eligibility process and how this information from Ohio would be used. Annie explained the eligibility categories in West Virginia. Annie explained that cerebral palsy is considered a condition that is associated with having a high probability of resulting in developmental delays. Annie further explained that even though Kayla's documented diagnosis of cerebral palsy would meet one of the eligibility categories under Part C, it is important to gather a team to explore Michelle's concerns and Kayla's strengths and needs across all areas of her development. Annie explained that Kayla has a right to a multidisciplinary evaluation to gather this information. She also explained that the information gathered during the evaluation would help the family and other team members to develop a plan which would focus on supports the family needed to be successful in helping Kayla's development within their daily routines and activities. Annie reviewed the timelines and shared that the evaluation and assessment process would be completed, a meeting would be held to discuss the information, and, if Michelle wanted to receive services for the family, a plan would be developed within 45 days from Michelle's initial referral, which would be by September 28th.

Annie engaged Michelle in a conversation to complete the initial information gathering form and assisted Michelle in choosing practitioners to assist with the evaluation and assessment process, as well as determining Kayla's eligibility for WV Birth to Three and developing an IFSP. Based on the areas of her concern, Michelle chose a physical therapist to look at Kayla's motor development and a developmental specialist to help focus on how the entire family could be involved in helping Kayla learn. Ruby and Kayla's physician would also be participating in the team. Annie reviewed with Michelle what would happen during the eligibility/IFSP meeting. They talked about how long the meeting might take, and what Michelle and the other team members would do in order to help Michelle be prepared.

Annie suggested that Michelle and Eunice continue thinking about what they believe Kayla's strengths, interests and needs are, as well as identifying the times of day that were particularly difficult for them as a family. This information would be the focus of the evaluation and assessment process and would be critical in developing Kayla's IFSP. Michelle requested that the evaluation and assessment activities occur at their home, as she believes that would give the team the best information about Kayla.

Michelle had no further questions for Annie. Annie told Michelle that Michael, the physical therapist, and Olivia, the developmental specialist, would be contacting her to schedule visits to gather the additional information needed to continue with the IFSP Process.

Michelle received telephone calls from Michael and Olivia on August 29th scheduling for September 12th at Michele's request, as this was her day off from work. They each received the Initial Information Gathering Form, Referral Form, Reciprocal Consent, Practitioner Confirmation Form and reports/medical records to review prior to their visit.

Evaluation and Assessment - September 12th

Michael and Olivia had coordinated their assessment visits to overlap just a few minutes. They discussed the importance of gathering this information to really understand Kayla and the concerns of the family. They each used a play-based process to observe Kayla interacting with her family. Throughout the process each explained to the family what they were doing, what they were looking for and the family's observations. At the end of each visit, Michael and Olivia discussed what they had learned with Michelle and Eunice, checking for accuracy with the family observations. Prior to leaving, Michael and Olivia discussed with the family that they would be developing a written report summarizing their observations, offering to either come back to review it with Michelle or have Michelle call them to discuss the final report and any additional questions. Michelle chose the latter option of calling them to discuss their reports and address any other questions.