



## APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2018.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

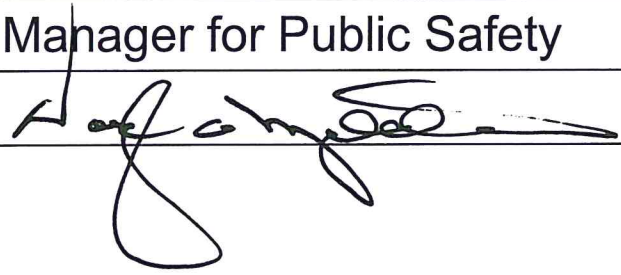
### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Henrico  
Program Title: Early Intervention Autism Clinic  
Program Category: Health and Human Services

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Douglas Middleton  
Title: Deputy County Manager for Public Safety  
Signature: 

## **1. Program Overview**

Henrico Area Mental Health & Developmental Services' Parent Infant Program (PIP), provides Early Intervention supports and services for babies with developmental delays. Early intervention providers are often the first professionals to identify concerns that indicate a need for an autism assessment. Regionally, wait times are 6 months or more, toddlers may age out of the service before a diagnostic assessment can be completed.

In 2015, the Parent Infant Program assessed and provided services for 199 (ages 18 months through 3years old) children that were referred for an early intervention assessment due to developmental concerns. Through an autism screening tool conducted in conjunction with each developmental assessment, 41 infants and toddlers scored in the high-risk range of autism. The 41 high risk infants and toddlers were referred to developmental pediatricians in the local area for an autism diagnostic assessment. The wait time for a diagnostic assessment ranged from 6-8 months. These results warranted the need for an autism assessment clinic to provide early diagnosis, lessen wait times for families, and to start targeted therapy treatment early.

The model is based on the best-practice literature regarding diagnostic assessment for young children, with particular emphasis on (a) transdisciplinary team functioning, (b) family-centered practice, and (c) evidence-based assessment instruments. Commonwealth Autism staff provided training and support to the Parent Infant Program's assessment team. The assessment team consists of six professionals, representing a variety of disciplines, with expertise in assessing and serving children ages 0 -3.

This type of assessment team has been very beneficial to the families as they have found value in the assessment being completed by trained professionals that provide early intervention treatment to infants and toddlers between the ages of 0-3. The very team that

provides the assessment and diagnosis are able to make recommendations for therapy within the Early Intervention program.

## **2. Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality**

Children born with developmental delays and/or diagnosed conditions require significant interventions early on to ensure they are successful in life. Research tells us children that enter kindergarten with significant delays have a greater risk of dropping out of school, being incarcerated, abusing drugs, or even death. The Parent Infant Program like many other programs across the state of Virginia is beginning to see an increase in the number of younger children with atypical behaviors that mirror those found in children with autism.

Unfortunately, parents experience extended wait times when seeking a diagnostic evaluation for a child with autism. During the extended wait times for an evaluation, a toddler will age out of early intervention service before an autism diagnostic evaluation can be completed. Children are often misdiagnosed prior to transitioning into the public school system. The problem is exacerbated for disadvantaged families who often struggle to advocate successfully for their children and to access appropriate assessment and intervention services. The American Academy of Pediatrics is promoting children to be screened for autism as early as age 18 months in hopes that treatment is implemented early on during the vital years of development.

## **3. How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria**

The partnership and collaboration between the Parent Infant Program and Commonwealth Autism is exceptional and unique. The quality of services provided to the families enrolled in the Parent Infant Program is directly interrelated to this unique private and public collaboration. This partnership has been highlighted across the state as an innovative model to replicate

throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. The ability to provide a range of treatment strategies for families that are served in the Parent Infant Program is progressive and having a team of therapists that understands the developmental delays and risks that are associated with autism is invaluable.

#### **4. How Program Was Carried Out**

Referrals are received from; parents of children receiving early intervention services, staff who work with children that have made minimal developmental progress and children whom an autism diagnosis is suspected. The assessments are scheduled 2 weeks after the case has been reviewed by the Parent Infant Program team. The assessment is conducted using a transdisciplinary process.

This process includes the participation of the parent(s). The assessments are conducted by the Early Intervention Autism Assessment team at Commonwealth Autism. The child is assessed by a developmental specialist and physical therapist. Simultaneously, the speech therapist and occupational therapist observe the assessment on a monitor in another room and the licensed clinical social worker completes a parent interview in another room. The child, parent(s), and therapists will move to a large therapy room and the child is observed by the entire team engaged in play activities. While the child is being observed in play, the licensed clinical social worker scores the assessment. The team then convenes and each team member report out what they observed. A diagnosis is provided, and the team moves right into action; supporting the parent, developing therapy outcomes for the child and connecting the parent(s) to community resources. The environment is family-oriented and very supportive. This has been a focus of the team as this type of diagnosis can be life changing for the families we serve.

#### **5. Financing and Staffing**

All assessments and diagnoses are free to parents. This makes it cost effective to parents that struggle with insurance denials and out of pocket cost that can range \$600-\$1000. Ongoing therapy services are either billed to Medicaid and/or private insurance companies. For services that are not covered by insurance, Early Intervention funds are used to supplement the difference between the parent's responsibility and insurance. There is a sliding scale and appeal process used to ensure that no family is denied services due to inability to pay for Early Intervention services.

## **6. Program Results**

The collaboration between the Parent Infant Program and Commonwealth Autism is invaluable. 100% of the PIP therapists (6 out of 6) were trained on the autism assessment tool in early 2017 and by the end of the year, was able to provide 10 autism diagnoses to families. One parent had 2 older children that had a diagnosis of autism. Although mom was aware of the different resources in the community for her child, she complimented the team on the quick turnaround time for the assessment and for the family friendly process.

The clinic has been able to increase availability of autism assessment services for families in the area through the establishment of a transdisciplinary assessment team. We have been able to reduce the wait time from 6 months to approximately 1 month for families who are seeking an assessment to confirm or rule out a diagnosis of autism. With an early diagnosis supports and resources are provided to enhance development through everyday learning opportunities with parents/caregivers.

## **7. Brief Summary**

In 2016, PIP partnered with Dr. Donald Oswald from Commonwealth Autism to develop an autism assessment clinic. The clinic was developed to meet several needs. First, provide

diagnostic assessment services for children served by early intervention teams and who are at increased risk for a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. 100% of therapists were trained to administer the autism assessments. Secondly, to decrease the wait time for children to receive an early diagnosis. The wait time was reduced by 87%. Finally, to develop a transdisciplinary team process with best practices regarding diagnostic assessment for autism. Both parents/caregivers and therapists are part of the team. Once a child receives a diagnosis of autism, the early intervention team establishes supports and resources to enhance learning and development through everyday learning opportunities.