

2019 AILPA/GCDSE Early Intervention Committee ILP Recruitment and Retention Survey

Summary

The Association of Infant Learning Providers (AILPA) and the Early Intervention Committee (EIC) of the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education (GCDSE) conducted an Infant Learning Program (ILP) Recruitment and Retention Study to advance the knowledge base respective of current recruitment and retention challenges in the ILP programs to better support not only the stability of ILPs, but also the families they serve.

14 of 17 Early Intervention/Infant Learning Programs responded to the survey.

The following information was revealed:

- All programs reported Recruitment of new staff as challenging. Five (5) programs also reported that keeping or retaining staff is also a challenge.
- 8 of 14 programs stated that it is taking more than a year to fill vacant positions. Comments indicate that the therapy positions (OT, PT, SLP) are the most difficult to fill.
- Programs have been very creative in their use of incentives to get new staff including the following in order of prevalence:
 - Time Off/Leave (10 programs)
 - Mentoring (9 programs)
 - Relocation Stipend (7 programs)
 - Travel opportunities (5 programs)
 - Student Loan Reimbursement/Stipend (4 programs)
 - Other incentives listed:
 - Flexible schedules
 - Professional Development
 - Family Leave

**Note two programs stated they are not able to provide any incentives at this time.

- For retention, incentives are similar and are listed here:
 - Leave (13 programs)
 - Training/Professional development (10 programs)
 - Travel opportunities (5 programs)
 - Longevity bonus (3 programs)
 - Other incentives listed:

- Reflective Supervision
 - Regular raises
 - Rich benefit packages including retirement, medical/dental, and vision
- The barriers to hiring include the following
 - Remote location (9 programs)
 - Competing with other businesses (10 programs)
 - Competitive Salary
 - Lack of qualified candidates
 - National shortages
 - Small communities without trained professionals in community
 - Home visiting is different than medical model
- The barriers to retaining staff are very similar to hiring challenges.

The ideas on how the programs have to help with recruitment and retention fall into a couple of categories. One is competitive pay and benefits and the other is providing assistance for student loan forgiveness.

Comments shared in the survey reflect how difficult it is to hire highly qualified staff especially in smaller communities. The challenge of the loss of the Early Childhood Special Education program in state will likely make it more difficult our Developmental Therapists as it is for the OT, PT, and SLP providers. Other programs commented that the EI/ILP is part of a larger organization that does not understand the special requirements for highly qualified and therefore further complicating hiring. Utilizing reflective supervision to prevent burn out and support has been listed as an idea.

The information provided appears to indicate that smaller, more rural programs are having challenges hiring highly qualified staff and it is taking a long time-more than a year (some reported 2-3 years) to fill vacant positions.

Salaries and benefits for EI/ILP providers are not competitive with businesses in their community so the qualified staff are not hired by EI/ILP.

If the ILPs are not able to grow their own highly qualified providers, they need to be able to attract them from the lower 48 and have attractive incentives to bring them here.