

## AREAS OF INQUIRY

### Case workers at Multi-Barrier Agencies

**What we mean by special needs-** We will be using a broad definition in order to include children with medical, behavioral, sensory and cognitive impairments. Therefore examples could range from chronic asthma, ADHD and severe allergies to cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and autism.

Confidentiality

Tape Recorder

We'll be taking notes

#### **I. Background on agency:**

- A. Describe agency and employment programs
- B. Relationship with DHS
- C. Criteria for families served
- D. System for referring families
- E. At what point are families typically referred to you?

#### **II. Administration:**

- A. Roles and responsibilities of workers
- B. Role of supervisors
- C. How clients are assigned to workers
- D. How often clients change caseworkers and why
- E. Communication with families
- F. Caseload size
- G. What would be an ideal caseload?
- H. Questions that get at what they see as the primary goal/purpose of their work.
- I. What is the difference between your role/approach in serving families and that of the ASPIRE caseworkers?

#### **II. Families with Children with Special Needs:**

- A. Numbers of families served?
- B. What issues arise with this population and work?
- C. What referrals for services do you make?
- D. What workplace policies do you have for these families?
- E. What adjustments in work, if any, do you make for these families?
- F. Stress of families
- G. Work disruptions and consequences
- H. Are there families who you have recommended for a waiver of work requirements or reduction in hours?
- I. What authority do you have to make changes in the families' employment contract?
- J. What communication goes on between multi-barrier case worker and the ASPIRE worker re family contract, sanctions, etc.

### **III. Child Care:**

- A. Does family already have child care when they are referred to you?
- B. If not, do you assist the family with finding child care?
- C. If so, describe process.
- D. If child care arrangements fall apart, what happens?
- E. Do families with children with special needs have more problems finding and maintaining child care arrangements compared with families without children with special needs?

### **IV. Other questions:**

- A. Has there been any specific in-service training of workers about serving families with children with special needs? Describe.
- B. What have you found to be the hardest aspects of serving these families?
- C. Do you feel the ASPIRE program is responsive to the families' needs?
- D. What changes, if any, would you want to see in the ASPIRE Program itself or in how it is implemented in Maine in order to better serve families with children with special needs?
- E. What problems, if any, do you see in the policies affecting these families and their need to balance work and family?
- F. At what level are these problems occurring? (Federal, state, or the way policies are interpreted locally?)
- G. What help would you want to have, if any, from other state agencies in serving these families?
- H. Do you ever get referrals that you find to be inappropriate (meaning the issues faced by the clients are not in a "category" your program serves)?
- I. What other kinds of assistance would be helpful to you in serving these families?
- J. Questions regarding dual disability (parent and child)? Their observations about stress on parents, mental health issues, health problems, if any.