

# Assessing a Participant Directed Service System for Low Income Children with ASD

An Evaluation of the Massachusetts Medicaid Autism Waiver Program

2011 CAAI Meeting

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# Assessing a Participant Directed Service System for Low Income Children with ASD

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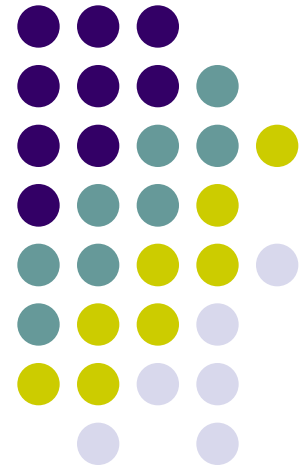
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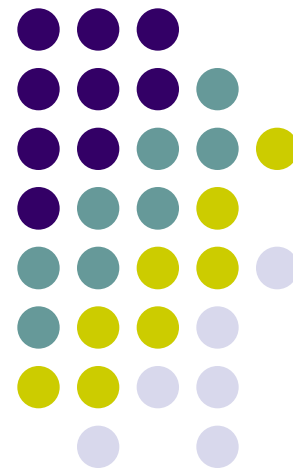
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# Massachusetts Medicaid Autism Waiver Program

## Key Features

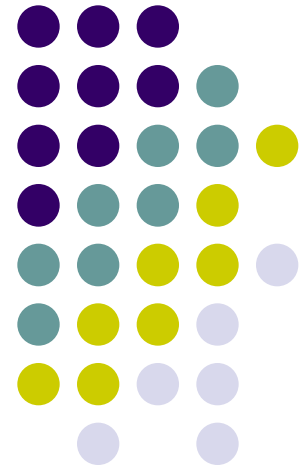
- **Targets young children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) under the age of nine**
- **Serves low income families at 150% of Federal Poverty level receiving Medicaid benefits**
- **100% Participant Directed with assistance from DDS Autism Clinical Managers, Autism Support Brokers, Senior Therapists, and in-home providers and with funds managed through a fiscal management service (FMS)**



# Massachusetts Medicaid Autism Waiver Program

## Key Features

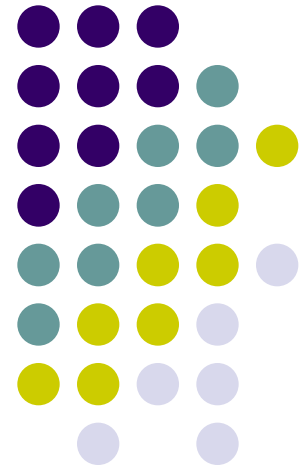
- Services designed to help children with autism receive services in their homes and actively participate in their families and their communities
  - Major Service: Expanded Habilitation Education  
Intensive one-to-one behavioral, social and communication based interventions
  - Ancillary Services and Supports:
    - Community integration activities
    - Respite
    - Home adaptations
    - Goods and services



# Evaluation Plan

## Specific Aims

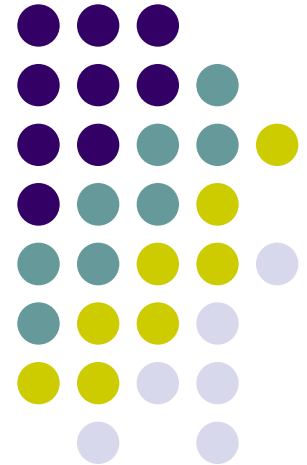
1. Assess the extent/manner in which participant-directed (PD) service systems are implemented in the communities served by the Medicaid autism waiver program [**System Level**]
2. Understand the variation in the implementation of participant directed services across families and assess which aspects of this service delivery model predict family well-being and child progress. [**Individual Level**]



# Aim I: Implementation and Operation of a Participant-Directed Service System

1. Focus Group

2. Qualitative Interviews



# Evaluation Plan

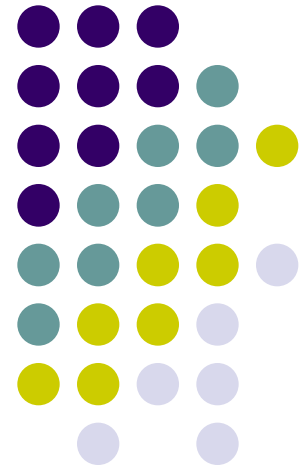
## Focus Group

### Participants:

- state coordinators, autism clinical managers, autism support brokers, and representatives from the financial management service

### Question:

- What are the components, processes, and/or conditions that make this participant-directed program work well (or not)?



# Evaluation Plan

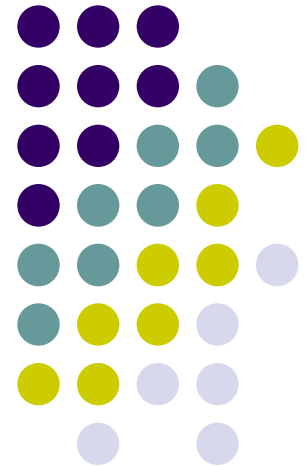
## Qualitative Interviews

### Participants:

- Clinical and fiscal managers, senior therapists, in-home providers and support brokers
- Families

### Questions:

- What components of participant direction are working?
- What components are problematic?





# Preliminary Findings

## Focus Group – Components Identified

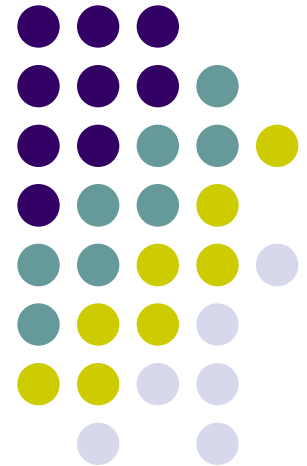
- Educated/Trained Families
- Staff Skills
- Communication
- Information Systems
- Pool of providers
- Leadership
- Success with other service issues
- Clear but flexible rules
- Adequacy of level of effort
- Consonance of policies and procedures between waiver program and broker agencies



# Preliminary Findings

## Focus Group – Components Rated

- Educated/Trained Families (**18**)
- Staff Skills (**16**)
- Communication (**15**)
  
- Information Systems (**9**)
- Pool of providers (**9**)
- Leadership (**8**)
- Success working through other service issues (**7**)
- Clear but flexible rules (**7**)
- Adequacy of level of effort (**6**)
- Consonance of policies and procedures between waiver program and broker agencies (**4**)

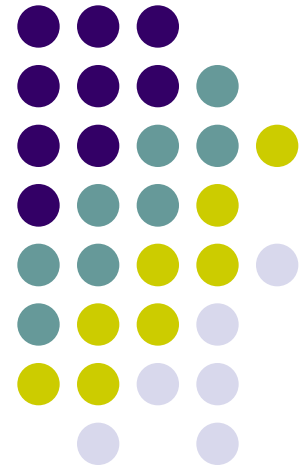


# Preliminary Findings

Qualitative Interviews with Clinical and Fiscal Managers, Senior Therapists, In-home Providers and Support Brokers

## General Themes/Lessons

1. Start-up issues addressed and mostly solved
2. Build on existing services, supports, and connections
3. Build in flexibility to allow for the individualization of participant direction.
4. Define the program carefully and specifically.

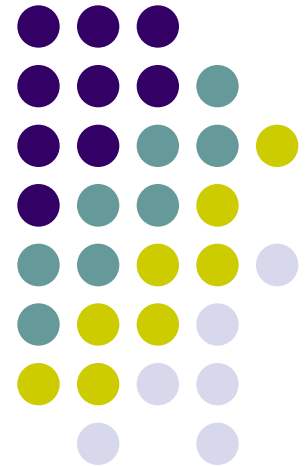


# Preliminary Findings

## Qualitative Interviews with Families

### What is working with Participant Direction?

- Parents know they are in charge and can choose providers and replace them
- Parents are learning about autism, items to purchase, and paperwork
- Staff communicate and listen well; support broker is the go-to person

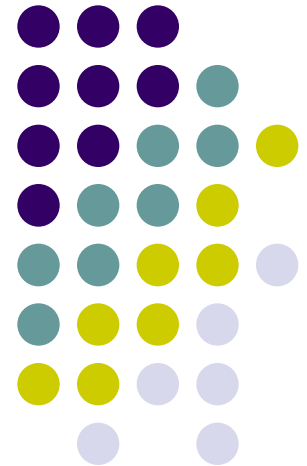


# Preliminary Findings

## Qualitative Interviews with Families

### What is not working with Participant Direction?

- Logistics for non-direct service items
- Choosing independent providers over agency providers
- Learning curve due to complexities



**Support**

**Maternal and Child Health Bureau**

