

The Parent Leadership Project's *Parent Perspective*

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Early Intervention Information and Resources

December/January 2009

Planting the Seeds: Growing Parent Leaders

**Parent Leadership on the Web:
www.eiplp.org**



The Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project invites you to visit us on the web at www.eiplp.org. The Parent Leadership Project website has been recently updated and includes a variety of information for families of children enrolled in Massachusetts Early Intervention programs.

Resources for families include information about IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) development, Family Rights, Transition and Opportunities for Family Involvement. A recent addition to the website is the "Parent Contact Connection", a place where Parent Contacts from EI programs across the state can gather to share their ideas by joining the EIPLP Yahoo! Group. Registration is free and easy!

Beginning in 2009, the website will also feature surveys for families to share their ideas with the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project.

Of course, families are always welcome to contact us toll-free at 1-877-353-4757 or email us at eiplp@yahoo.com.



YOU'VE GOT MAIL! Interested in receiving the *Parent Perspective* by email? Please send an email to eiplp@yahoo.com to let us know! Past issues are also available on our website.



Save the Date!
**Visions of Community
Conference**
Saturday, March 14, 2009
Seaport/World Trade Center, Boston

This conference, sponsored by the Federation for Children with Special Needs along with other state and community agencies, will feature more than 35 sessions. Many of the sessions will be presented and/or translated into Spanish, Portuguese and Cantonese.

Workshop topics include Early Childhood, Special Education, Health Care for Children with Special Needs and more. Parents will also have the opportunity to network with other families and visit the more than 50 vendors in the exhibit hall.

For more information and registration, visit the Federation for Children with Special Needs website at www.fcsn.org or call 1-800-331-0688.

ICC Updates

The Massachusetts Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) welcomed two new Parent Co-Chairs at the November meeting. Kimber O'Connell and Joanne Williams, former Regional Parent Representatives on the ICC, join Margaret Mahoney, Clinical Director for Thom Anne Sullivan Early Intervention Program, as chairs of the council.

Amy Young, who served as the most recent ICC Parent Co-Chair, shared that she "enjoyed working with all the ICC members and the Early Intervention community" and looks forward to ongoing collaborations.

The Massachusetts Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) is a federally mandated statewide interagency group that advises the Department of Public Health on Early Intervention.

The ICC is made up of seven Parent Representatives, providers and professionals who are interested in Early Intervention.

Parent participation on the ICC is encouraged and supported. Family members are invited to attend ICC meetings or join one of the six standing committees. For parents who are unable to attend meetings, there are a variety of other ways to participate on the ICC. Mentoring, support and orientation for new members is provided.

If you are interested in learning more about the Massachusetts ICC or family involvement at the state level, please contact the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project toll-free at 1-877-353-4757 or email eiplp@yahoo.com.

NCSEAM Family Survey Information



Families, we are pleased to let you know that almost **2000** NCSEAM Family Surveys have been returned. We will "close the books" this year on December 1, 2008 and will have collected a whole year of information from the surveys you filled out. Your responses will be used in the DPH Annual Performance Report to OSEP, the federal Office of Special Education Programs, which oversees Part C Early Intervention in Massachusetts. In addition, each EI program will receive a report which summarizes the information provided by families in the program.

In October, OSEP came to Massachusetts for monitoring visits with the Department of Public Health and the Departments of Early Education and Care and Elementary and Secondary Education. After four days of intensive meetings, our federal monitors gave the DPH/Early Intervention system high marks for complying with federal regulations and involving families across the EI system. Your responses on the Family Survey helped us demonstrate the effectiveness of EI services.

Family Survey Frequently Asked Questions

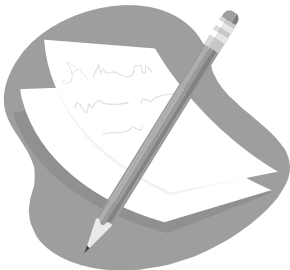
1. Will the report my EI program gets mention families by name?

No, there is no place on the Survey where you are asked to give your name. Information sent to your program will be the combined results from all the Surveys received with no identifying information provided.

2. I've been in Early Intervention for almost two years and never got a Family Survey. What's going on?

Family Surveys are distributed by service coordinators either just before or at the six month IFSP meeting. Sometimes it is included in a packet with other papers and information. Check with your service coordinator and let him or her know that you don't think you've received one. Your service coordinator will make sure you have a chance to share your thoughts and opinions.

Información sobre la encuesta familiar de NCSEAM



Familias: nos complace informarles que hemos recibido casi **2000** encuestas familiares del Centro Nacional de Supervisión de la Educación Especial (*National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring* o NCSEAM). Este año, "cerraremos los libros" el 1 de

diciembre de 2008, después de haber recopilado información durante 12 meses de las encuestas que ustedes completaron. Sus respuestas se usarán en el informe de desempeño anual que el Departamento de Salud Pública (*Department of Public Health* o DPH) presenta a la Oficina Federal de Programas de Educación Especial (*Office of Special Education Programs*, OSEP), a cargo de supervisar la Parte C de los servicios de Intervención Temprana en Massachusetts. Además, cada programa de Intervención Temprana recibirá un informe con un resumen de la información dada por sus familias.

En octubre, la OSEP vino a Massachusetts para observar las visitas al Departamento de Salud Pública, el Departamento de Educación y Cuidados Tempranos (*Department of Early Education and Care*) y el Departamento de Educación Primaria y Secundaria (*Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*). Después de cuatro días de reuniones intensivas, nuestros inspectores federales le dieron al DPH y al sistema de Intervención Temprana buenas calificaciones por cumplir con las regulaciones federales y dar participación a las familias. Sus re-

spuestas a la encuesta familiar nos ayudaron a demostrar la eficacia de los servicios de Intervención Temprana.

Preguntas comunes sobre la encuesta familiar

1. En el informe que se enviará a mi programa de Intervención Temprana, ¿se mencionará a las familias por nombre?

No, en ninguna parte de la encuesta se pide que usted dé su nombre. La información enviada a su programa consistirá en los resultados combinados de todas las encuestas recibidas, sin ninguna información de identificación personal.

2. Hemos recibido servicios de Intervención Temprana durante casi dos años y nunca nos han enviado una encuesta familiar. ¿Por qué?

Los Coordinadores de servicios distribuyen las encuestas familiares justo antes de la reunión del Plan Individualizado de Servicios Familiares (IFSP) o en la reunión de evaluación que se hace a los seis meses. A veces, la encuesta se incluye en un paquete con otros documentos e información. Averigüe con su Coordinador de servicios. Dígale que usted cree que no ha recibido una encuesta. Su Coordinador de servicios asegurará que usted tenga la oportunidad de compartir sus ideas y opiniones.

Parent Leaders in the Community:**Growing Parent Leaders from the Ground Up:
Supporting Parent Contacts**

What does Parent Leadership mean? How can parents and families take on leadership roles in their Early Intervention programs and in their own communities? What are some of the ways that parents and families build connections and grow the skills that support them to become leaders? In this and following issues of the newsletter, we'll be exploring these questions and highlighting the process of grassroots leadership development.

Parent Contacts are an important part of the Early Intervention system. As a link between the Early Intervention program and the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project, Parent Contacts share knowledge about workshops, trainings and other opportunities for involvement. Parent Contacts also gather information about activities their EI program is doing with and for families. This information, shared in the *Parent Perspective* newsletter, gives other families and EI programs ideas for new events or programs.

Massachusetts Early Intervention Operational Standards require that each certified Early Intervention program have a designated Parent Contact. The Parent Contact must be the parent of a child currently enrolled in the EI program. Parents interested in becoming Parent Contacts can speak to their EI Program Director or service provider for more information.

For many parents, the Parent Contact role is the first step towards parent leadership in the EI community and beyond. But taking that first step can often be intimidating. Parents interested in becoming a Parent Contact may be new to EI and unsure of how they will find support for their new leadership role. The Parent Leadership Project has several supports available to Parent Contacts to help develop the skills they need and provide opportunities for networking, sharing and learning.

EI Parent Leadership Project

The EI Parent Leadership Project works to support an Early Intervention system that is family-centered by involving families as partners at all levels within the EI system. As part of that role, the PLP can provide information and technical assistance to new and experienced Parent Contacts. Additionally, the PLP maintains a website, www.eiplp.org which contains information on a variety of topics, including IFSP, Transition, and Opportunities for Involvement. The Parent Perspective newsletter, published six times per year, also provides Parent Contacts and other families with information about upcoming events, issues relating to the Massachusetts EI system and ways for families to develop leadership skills and get involved in the EI system.

Parent Contact Resource Binder

The Parent Leadership Project Collaboration and Outreach Coordinator has developed a "Parent Contact Resource Binder" that is given to all current Parent Contacts. The binder gives new Parent Contacts a starting point for learning about the Massachusetts Early Intervention system. The binder includes information such as:

- ✦ The "Working Together" book
- ✦ Statewide Opportunities for Family Involvement
- ✦ Overview of the Massachusetts EI system
- ✦ IFSP Guidance
- ✦ Information and Resources about the ICC (Interagency Coordinating Council)
- ✦ Resources for Families of Children with Special Needs, including SSI and MassHealth

Any of these resources may be copied and shared with other families and providers which helps to build parent-professional partnerships.

Parent Contact Listserv

The EIPLP is in the process of developing a Listserv to support Parent Contacts across the state. This listserv will allow Parent Contacts to discuss ideas, share resources and learn more about the Massachusetts EI system and the Parent Leadership Project. By bringing together Parent Contacts from across the state, the listserv will encourage collaboration and support for families in this important leadership role.

MEIC Conference

Each year, the Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium (MEIC) holds a statewide conference for EI providers and families. The two-day conference includes workshops on a variety of topics related to early childhood growth and development as well as opportunities for networking. The Parent Leadership Project also hosts a "Parent Networking Dinner" on the first night of the conference, giving parents a chance to connect with other families of children in EI from across the state. With funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Parent Leadership Project sponsors Parent Contacts to attend the conference free of charge (hotel, conference registration and meals). At the conference, Parent Contacts can attend workshops, meet other parents and share their thoughts and ideas about parent leadership.

For more information please contact the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project toll-free at 1-877-353-4757 or e-mail eiplp@yahoo.com.



Cómo formar padres líderes desde las bases: Cómo apoyar a los padres de contacto

¿Que significa ser un padre líder? ¿Cómo pueden asumir papeles de liderazgo los padres y las familias en sus programas de Intervención Temprana y en sus propias comunidades?

¿Cómo pueden relacionarse y desarrollar habilidades que los ayuden a convertirse en líderes? En este número del boletín y en los próximos exploraremos estos temas y examinaremos el proceso de desarrollo de líderes desde las bases.

Los padres de contacto forman una parte importante del sistema de Intervención Temprana (IT). Como enlaces entre el programa de IT y su Proyecto Padres Líderes, comparten información sobre talleres, sesiones de capacitación y otras oportunidades de participación familiar. Además, reúnen información sobre las actividades que su programa de IT lleva a cabo con y para las familias. Esta información, que se comparte en el boletín *Parent Perspective* (La perspectiva de los padres), sugiere a las familias y a los programas de Intervención Temprana posibles actividades o programas nuevos.

Las Normas de Intervención Temprana de Massachusetts (*Massachusetts Early Intervention Standards*) requieren que todos los programas certificados de IT nombren a un padre de contacto. Este padre debe tener un hijo inscrito en un programa de Intervención Temprana. Los interesados en ser padres de contacto pueden hablar con el Director o proveedor de servicios de su programa de IT para obtener más información.

Para muchos, ser padre de contacto es el primer paso para convertirse en padres líderes en su programa de IT y en su comunidad más amplia. Pero dar ese primer paso a menudo puede ser algo intimidante. Los interesados en ser padres de contacto pueden ser nuevos en el sistema de IT y tal vez no sepan cómo conseguir apoyo en su nueva función de liderazgo. El Proyecto Padres Líderes ofrece varios recursos de apoyo a los padres de contacto con el fin de ayudarles a desarrollar las habilidades que necesitarán y darles oportunidades de relacionarse, compartir y aprender.

Proyecto Padres Líderes de Intervención Temprana

El Proyecto Padres Líderes (PPL) promueve un sistema de Intervención Temprana centrado en las familias, que las hace participar como socias en todos los niveles del sistema de IT. Como parte de esa función, el PPL puede dar información y asistencia técnica a padres de contacto tanto nuevos como veteranos. Además, el PPL mantiene un sitio web, www.eiplp.org, con información sobre temas diversos, como los planes individualizados de servicios familiares (IFSP, por sus siglas en inglés), las transiciones y las oportunidades de participación. El boletín informativo *Parent Perspective*, que se publica cada dos meses, también da a los padres de contacto y a las familias información sobre actividades venideras, temas relacionados con el sistema de IT de Massachusetts, y maneras en que las familias pueden desarrollar habilidades de liderazgo y participar en el sistema de IT.

Carpeta de recursos para padres de contacto

El Coordinador de colaboración y promoción del Proyecto Padres Líderes ha desarrollado una carpeta de recursos (*Parent Contact Resource Binder*, en inglés) que se entrega a todos los padres de contacto. Esta carpeta es un punto de partida para comenzar a informarse sobre el sistema de Intervención Temprana de Massachusetts e incluye la siguiente información:

- El libro *Working Together*
- Oportunidades de participación familiar a nivel estatal
- Perspectiva general del sistema de IT de Massachusetts
- Asesoramiento con los planes individualizados de servicios familiares (IFSP)
- Recursos e información sobre el Consejo Coordinador entre Agencias (*Interagency Coordinating Council* o ICC)
- Recursos para familias de niños con necesidades especiales, como SSI y MassHealth

Todos estos recursos pueden copiarse y compartirse con otras familias y proveedores para promover la colaboración entre padres y profesionales.

Listserv para padres de contacto

El Proyecto Padres Líderes de IT está desarrollando un servidor de listas de correo automático (listserv) para apoyar a los padres de contacto de todo el estado. Este *listserv* permitirá que estos padres intercambien ideas, compartan recursos y reciban más información sobre el sistema de IT de Massachusetts y el Proyecto Padres Líderes. Al relacionar a los padres de contacto de todo el estado, el *listserv* alentará la colaboración y el apoyo a las familias que cumplen esta importante función de liderazgo.

Conferencia MEIC

Cada año, el Consorcio de Intervención Temprana de Massachusetts (*Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium* o MEIC) lleva a cabo una conferencia estatal para proveedores y familias de IT. En esta conferencia de dos días se ofrecen talleres sobre una amplia variedad de temas relacionados con el crecimiento y el desarrollo durante la primera infancia, así como oportunidades para relacionarse. La primera noche, el PPL celebra una cena (*Parent Networking Dinner*) para que los padres se relacionen con otras familias de niños que reciben servicios de IT en diferentes partes del estado. Con fondos del Departamento de Salud Pública de Massachusetts (*Massachusetts Department of Public Health*), el PPL ayuda a que los padres de contacto asistan a la conferencia cubriendo sus gastos de hotel, inscripción y comidas. En la conferencia, los padres de contacto pueden asistir a talleres, reunirse con otros padres y compartir ideas y sugerencias sobre la función de liderazgo.

Para más información, por favor, comuníquese con el Proyecto Padres Líderes de Intervención Temprana, llamando al número sin cargo 1-877-353-4757 o escribiendo a eiplp@yahoo.com.

Family TIES of Massachusetts: *Together In Enhancing Support*

Family TIES of Massachusetts is a network for parents of children with special needs. We are parents of children with special needs, just like you, and feel strongly that parents are an important source of knowledge and strength to other parents. Our staff share information and skills with other parents, helping to expand opportunities for children with special needs.

Effective January 1, 2009, all individuals in Massachusetts must be covered by a health insurance plan that includes a broad range of medical benefits, or face tax penalties. Many families and young adults express concern about the rising cost of health insurance, and wonder how they are going to be able to afford this important coverage. The state created the COMMONWEALTH CONNECTOR to help everyone find reasonably priced coverage. Call 877-623-6765 or visit: www.mahealthconnector.org or more information.

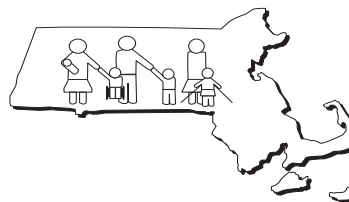
Did you know there are special programs available for your child with special healthcare needs, even if you have a family health insurance policy? **MassHealth** is the name of our state Medicaid program, and most individuals with special needs can qualify for some level of benefits. According to state guidelines (see below), some families will have access to MassHealth Standard coverage for their child with special needs, at no charge. MassHealth/CommonHealth can offer additional coverage for a child for a monthly premium, if your family income exceeds those guidelines.

(www.masslegalservices.org/docs/Combined_2008_Income_Chart.pdf)

To learn more about programs that offer financial support for families, ask about MassHealth Family Assistance *and* MassHealth Standard/CommonHealth Premium Assistance Programs. Many families qualify for these supports. Contact Family TIES, the DPH Community Support Line at 1-800-882-1435 or Massachusetts Family Voices (www.massfamilyvoices.org) for more information. We all work together to ensure that our children with special healthcare needs have access to medical care and related services.

For more ideas on meeting the needs of your child and family, contact the Family TIES of Massachusetts staff at 800-905-TIES or www.massfamilyties.org.

FAMILY TIES of Massachusetts



Together In Enhancing Support

Focused Monitoring: Ensuring Quality EI Services



In order to ensure the quality of services provided to children and families enrolled in Massachusetts Early Intervention, the Department of Public Health designed its General Supervision system to promote core values and to ensure compliance with federal and state requirements through training, technical assistance, and monitoring. General Supervision focuses on identifying commendable practices, suggesting improvements to enhance quality of services and identifying and correcting noncompliance in a timely manner. This concept of general supervision, including focused monitoring, is the primary method for federal and state monitoring of the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Massachusetts DPH uses local program determinations to decide which programs will receive a focused monitoring onsite visit. Onsite visits will give the DPH a better look at

what the program is doing and allow DPH to provide appropriate technical assistance and support to the program in the specific areas of concern. Department of Public Health Regional Specialists and Parent Team Members gather information during the onsite visit and then develop a report to the program identifying areas of non-compliance with state standards and federal regulations and provide strategies on improvement.

The programs receiving onsite Focused Monitoring visits for the 2008-2009 year are:

- Dimock EI Program, October 2008
- Valley Infant Development Service, January 2009
- Harbor Area EI Program, March 2009
- Criterion Medford EI, May 2009

For more information on focused monitoring please contact Faith Piaggi from the EI Parent Leadership Project toll-free at 1-877-353-4757.

Working Together — Southeast

The Cape and Islands ECIP is once again providing holiday support to struggling families with sponsorship from TD BankNorth branch employees and patrons, Eight Cousin's Bookstore, Broadreach Rehabilitation and Toys for Tots. These wonderful sponsors provide toys, books, clothing, and special requests for about 40 families each year. This has included things like microwaves, pots and pans, or dishes for families moving into permanent housing; a computer for a father starting his own business; gift cards for the teens in the household; and even 4 new tires for a parent traveling back and forth to Boston for medical appointments. We are very grateful to these long-time sponsors, most of whom have been doing this project with EI for over 10 years!

Associates for Human Services' **Taunton Early Intervention Program** held its annual Halloween party on 11/1/08 at the Elks Club in Taunton, MA. The event was attended by 275 families and staff. Children came all dressed up in costume and participated in circle time, singing, pumpkin shape sorting, bean bag toss, find the spider in the spaghetti, play dough, bowling and pin the leaves on the tree.

On December 6, 250 children and staff will be attending the Annual Holiday Party at St Nicolas Hall in North Dighton. Santa plans to arrive for circle time and pass out a gift to all the children. Caroling and face painting will also be part of the celebration.

Over the past year, many families and community groups have generously donated to the **Kennedy Donovan Center Attleboro EI** program. In the spring, family and friends of CJ Buckley, Attleboro EI graduate, hosted the Annual "CJ's Spring Swing Golf Tournament". CJ's parents, Sandra and Sean Buckley included the EI program to receive part of the tournament's proceeds. The Buckleys graciously donated \$6000 to our program from proceeds from the golf tournament. The program is very grateful to the Buckley family for their generosity! Also this spring, local Junior Girl Scout Troop #984 raised money participating in a Bottle Drive to purchase a Therapeutic Bubble for the program. Raising money through the bottle drive enabled the girl scouts to earn their Bronze Star awards. We thank the Junior Girl Scout Troop #984 for raising money for the Bubble and visiting our Program.

On October 4, the Kennedy Donovan Center again participated in the Annual Rodman Ride for Kids, a one-day cycling tour that raises money for children's programs. Combined with the funds from the golf tournament, this fundraiser allowed the program to exceed its goal of raising over \$11,000!! We thank Scott Scales, KDC Board Member and alumni parents, Steven Hamerski and Maureen Wilcox, for riding and raising money.

On November 5, 2008, Edith Benisty, OTR/L, CEIS, Early Intervention Transition Coordinator presented "Transition Night" at our Center. Many parents filled the room along with the local school representatives to listen to Edith's presentation and had the opportunity to break into small groups by towns and ask questions.

The Project Connect Family Network Program has been presenting "The Parenting Toolbox" workshops for parents in our Attleboro EI program. Topics such as "Positive Child Guidance Techniques", "Communication Skills", and "Self Esteem" are being discussed. This workshop started October 21st and runs for 8 weeks.

The Schwartz Center for Children hosted a very successful Halloween Party for all children from the Center and their families. Children from the Early Intervention, RCP, Rehab and Day School programs attended a fun filled event. The Regional Consultation Programs of MA also held a state wide Harvest Event for all RCP families in October.

On November 12, the Center held its annual Open House. The classrooms were decorated with our children's art work for parents to view. Also in November, Family TIES presented *Let's Get Organized* at the Center.

The Regional Consultation Program (RCP) has been busy presenting trainings in the Community. The Regional Consultation Program sponsors the SNIN group, (Special Needs Informational Network) on the 1st Thursday evening of the month for parents of children with special needs. The group meets from 6 – 7:30 and child care is provided. The group is open to all interested families in our community. Please visit the website, www.schwartzcenter.org for a current listing of community trainings.

In December, The Family Involvement Committee will be hosting its annual "Dinner and A Movie" Event. This is our Center's most popular event as parents get some time for themselves to holiday shop or go out to dinner while volunteer staff provide child care and activities for their children. This will be the third annual event. The event has been well attended and a very successful and fun evening for everyone!

Kennedy Donovan Center - Plymouth EI held its annual Swing Fore the Kids Golf Tournament on September 12th at Souther's Marsh Golf Club. Families, alumni parents, friends and employees joined together for a great day of golf, dinner and silent auction. This year, the program was fortunate enough to have volunteers from the Kohl's Kares for Kids program, thanks to one of our EI parents who works at Kohl's.

Working Together—Cont'd

On December 11, 2008 the program will host its Annual Family Holiday Party for families currently enrolled. At the event, children will meet Santa and take part in holiday themed activities. This has always been a very successful event attended by many of our children and family members.

The program has also hosted several workshops this fall. The "Yelling Doesn't Work" workshop was well attended by families and community members. Together with Plymouth Family Network, we hosted an Introduction to Basic Sign Language open to the general public. Elyse McPherson, Speech Language Pathologist, facilitated the classes. In November, the program participated with Plymouth Family Network in a workshop for parents about choosing appropriate toys for the holidays.

Greater Fall River Early Intervention Program is gearing up for another season of Swim Group. During the group, infants, toddlers and their parents can work on gross motor, sensory motor, social and language goals while having fun. Held at Health Trax in Dartmouth, the group runs for 10 weeks and is open to families of children enrolled in the EI program.

Greater Fall River recently provided a six-week Evening Music Group. Participants met during the evenings, with a pizza dinner provided by the program, and learned about incorporating music into their child's life. The group was facilitated by Andrea Schachne, Licensed Kindermusic Teacher and Devon Neely, SLP.

For more information about activities at the Greater Fall River EI Program, contact Program Director Robin Jones at 508-675-5778.



WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES



Supporting Siblings of Children with Special Needs

— December 16 from 11am-12pm. This topical conference call is hosted by the Massachusetts Family-to-Family Health Information Center. Families are invited to call in. For more information, toll-free dial in number and conference code, visit

www.massfamilyvoices.org, call 1-800-331-0688 ext., 210 or

email massfv@fcsn.org.

"Insight Into Autism Spectrum Disorders" — January 10, 2009 from 10am to 12:30pm at SCAN 360 in Springfield. This interactive workshop, sponsored by Community Resources for People with Autism, is designed to introduce families and caretakers to Autism Spectrum Disorders. Characteristics and strategies to support individuals will be discussed, and the workshop will also provide an opportunity to meet other parents of children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. For more information, call 413-529-2428.

Basic Rights — January 26 from 7-9pm at Capuano Early Childhood Center in Somerville. This workshop provides families with an introduction to their rights and responsibilities under state and federal special education laws. The workshop is held at various locations throughout the state. For more information, visit the Federation for Children with Special Needs website at www.fcsn.org or call 1-800-331-0688.

Building a Community, Part 1 — February 4 from 9am to 3pm at Tewksbury Hospital. This workshop, offered by the Early Intervention Training Center, provides an overview of the Massachusetts EI system. The orientation series is presented by a team of three facilitators, including EITC staff or consultant, a parent, and DPH staff. Parents are welcome to attend. For more information or to register, visit the website at www.eitrainingcenter.org or contact Eileen McDonal at 508-751-6309.

SAVE THE DATE! "Visions of Community" Conference — March 14, 2009 at the Seaport/World Trade Center in Boston. Sponsored by the Federation for Children with Special Needs, the conference features over 35 break-out sessions, many presented and/or translated into Spanish, Portuguese and Cantonese. For more information, visit the Federation for Children with Special Needs website at www.fcsn.org or call 1-800-331-0688.

THE PARENT LEADERSHIP PROJECT

The Parent Leadership Project was created to support parents whose children receive early intervention services. The Project's main goal is to promote lifetime advocacy, leadership skills and the development of an informed parent constituency, which will encourage early intervention services to be increasingly family centered. The Project is a parent driven endeavor, which continually seeks family involvement and input regarding the needs of families enrolled in Early Intervention and is implemented by parents whose own children have received EI services. The Project staff consists of a Statewide Director, a Communications Coordinator, an EI Program Focused Monitoring Parent Coordinator, Education Coordinator and Collaboration & Outreach Coordinator. Please feel free to contact any of them with your thoughts, suggestions, and concerns.

EI Parent Leadership Project Team

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To receive the *Parent Perspective Newsletter*, a free publication, published six times a year by the Parent Leadership Project, call us toll-free at (877) 353-4757 and ask to be added to the PLP mailing list or email eiplp@yahoo.com

NEXT DEADLINE: We welcome your input and suggestions for resources and articles. The next deadline is **January 16**. Please call our toll-free number (877) 353-4757 or email the newsletter editor at Brenda.allair@state.ma.us.

The *Parent Perspective* newsletter is produced six times a year by the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project, through funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

