



## The Parent Leadership Project's *Parent Perspective*

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**Early Intervention Information and Resources**

**August/September 2008**

*Planting the Seeds: Growing Parent Leaders*

### **Hausslein Awards Create Opportunities, Expand Horizons**

The 2007-2008 Hausslein Parent Leadership Award recipients were invited to the state Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) meeting on June 12 to present their projects to ICC Parent Representatives, EI staff, state agency members and others from the early childhood community.

Suzanne Gottlieb, Director of Family Initiatives at the Department of Public Health, shared information about this year's Hausslein Award recipients with the ICC members. She remarked that it was nice to see "what families can accomplish with a little idea, mentorship and a little money" when they decide to step beyond their role as a parent receiving services and get involved in the broader Early Intervention System.

Named in honor of Evelyn Hausslein, a long-time parent leader in Massachusetts, the Hausslein Parent Leadership Awards are given to parent-driven projects that meet the needs of families in Early Intervention and demonstrate collaboration between families and communities. This year, 5 teams were funded up to \$1000 each to implement their project ideas through generous funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project. This year's projects included: workshops to support families of young children with food allergies, music and movement for infants and toddlers, transition information and a sensory library. Parent teams were from many different EI programs across the state.



*Enjoying the "Movin' and Groovin'" program, funded through a Hausslein Award grant.*

Ann Chetwynd, one of the parent leaders on a Hausslein Award team, presented their project, Music and Movement at the ICC meeting. The team created a PowerPoint presentation showing photos of the children and families enjoying the activity funded by the award. This activity was provided to children and families throughout the community, including both families who do and do not receive Early

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### **MEIC Sponsors Support Parent Leadership**

The Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project and the 80 parents who attended the Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium Conference this past spring would like to thank the following organizations for their generous contributions:

- ♦ Criterion Child Development Services
- ♦ Thom Child and Family Services
- ♦ Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council

Through the efforts of these organizations, parents from across the state were able to attend the conference and enjoy two days of learning, networking and developing leadership skills to take back to their communities!



## NCSEAM Family Survey Information



**W**elcome to our first edition of the *Parent Perspective* newsletter for 2008-2009. As we did last year, in each edition we will provide updates about implementing the **NCSEAM Family Survey** and answer your questions about it. First, you might want to know what the Family Survey is all about. It's

a way to measure families' answers to the following questions:

Are you satisfied with your Early Intervention Services and are they helping you to:

- Know your rights
- Communicate your child's needs
- Help your child learn and develop

The Federal government requires Part C Early Intervention programs to ask families these questions and report on their answers. Every family enrolled in EI for at least six months receives a **Family Survey** from their Service Coordinator at the six-month Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) review. Our objective is to ensure that every family completes a **Family Survey** once a year. This is your chance to let the Department of Public Health, Lead Agency for Part C Early Intervention services, the Federal

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and your EI program know how you think we are doing in achieving the three goals listed above. Your input is very important and will help to improve Early Intervention services for you and for other children and families. Please fill out the Survey using a **pencil** and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided.

### Family Survey Frequently Asked Questions

1. I filled out a Family Survey last year. Do I have to do it again?

*Yes, we are required to report to OSEP every year about how families feel their EI programs are doing in helping them achieve the goals listed above. Your answers may be different from year to year based on how your child is doing in achieving the three goals.*

2. I got a Family Survey, but I don't really understand what I am supposed to do.

*Please share your questions and concerns with your Service Coordinator. Although he or she cannot help you actually fill out the Survey, they will be happy to explain the purpose and share ideas about where else you can get some help.*

## Información Sobre La Encuesta Familiar NCSEAM



**B**ienvenidos al primer número de nuestro boletín *Parent Perspective* (*La perspectiva de los padres*) de 2008-2009. Al igual que el año pasado, en cada número les daremos información actualizada sobre la implementación de la **Encuesta Familiar del NCSEAM** (*National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring*) o Centro Nacional de Supervisión de la Educación Especial) y contestaremos sus preguntas. En primer lugar seguramente querrán saber de qué se trata la **Encuesta Familiar**. Es una manera de medir las respuestas de las familias a las siguientes preguntas:

¿Usted está satisfecho(a) con sus servicios de intervención temprana? ¿Le están ayudando a...?

- ...conocer sus derechos?
- ...comunicar las necesidades de su niño?
- ...apoyar su desarrollo y aprendizaje?

El gobierno federal exige que los programas de Intervención Temprana Parte C hagan estas preguntas a las familias y preparen informes con sus respuestas. Toda familia inscrita en Intervención Temprana durante al menos seis meses recibe una **Encuesta Familiar** de su Coordinador de Servicios cuando se revisa el Plan Individualizado de Servicios Familiares (IFSP, por sus siglas en inglés) a los seis meses. Nuestro objetivo es asegurar que todas las familias completen una **Encuesta Familiar** una vez al año. La encuesta le da la oportunidad de informar al Departamento de Salud Pública (la agencia principal de la Parte C de los servicios de Intervención Temprana), a la Oficina de Programas de Educa-

ción Especial (OSEP, por sus siglas en inglés) del Departamento de Educación, y a su propio programa de Intervención Temprana, cómo le parece que nos estamos desempeñando para el logro de los tres objetivos mencionados anteriormente. Sus comentarios son muy importantes y ayudarán a mejorar los servicios de Intervención Temprana para usted y para otros niños y familias. Por favor, complete la encuesta con **lápiz** y envíela en el sobre provisto con franqueo y dirección de destino.

### Preguntas comunes sobre la encuesta familiar

1. Ya completé una Encuesta Familiar el año pasado. ¿Tengo que volver a hacerlo?

*Sí, tenemos la obligación de presentar un informe anual a la Oficina de Programas de Educación Especial sobre la opinión de la familias en cuanto a la ayuda brindada por sus programas de Intervención Temprana para lograr los objetivos enumerados más arriba. Sus respuestas podrían cambiar de un año a otro según como le haya ido a su niño en el cumplimiento de los tres objetivos.*

2. He recibido una Encuesta Familiar, pero no entiendo qué debo hacer.

*Por favor, dirija sus preguntas e inquietudes a su Coordinador de Servicios. Aunque él o ella no puede ayudarlo a llenar la encuesta, con mucho gusto le explicará el propósito de la misma y le dará ideas de dónde puede conseguir ayuda.*

## **Parent Leadership in the Community:**

### **Growing Parent Leaders from the Ground Up: 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.*

#### **What does Parent Leadership mean?**

For some parents, "leadership" can sound exciting and interesting. It can mean a chance to use their skills and talents in a way that benefits other children and families in Early Intervention. For other parents, "leadership" may sound a bit intimidating. They may think it will take too much time or that they'll be expected to add more things to their busy schedules. So, who is a parent leader? Well, if you've ever shared a resource with a family or provider, or if you've attended a PAC meeting at your EI program, or even if you've just thought about "giving back" to EI – then you are on the path to parent leadership!

Parent leadership is a process that takes a family member past involvement with his or her own child and services to the broader Early Intervention System. As a parent leader, you can connect with other families with similar interests within the EI system and beyond.

Effective parent leaders continually ask questions and collect information from a variety of sources. They talk with other families. They want to know what is working and what is not and how to learn from experiences in order to improve the system. The path to leadership may look different for each person, and there is no one "right" way to be a parent leader.

#### **Parent Contacts**

One of the ways that families can choose to become involved in their Early Intervention program, above and beyond the services they receive on their IFSP, is to become a Parent Contact for their EI program. Parent Contacts connect with the EI Parent Leadership Project and become valuable participants in Project activities. Their involvement encourages other families to participate in all aspects of the Early Intervention system, and network effectively to support one another. In accordance with Early Intervention Operational Standards, the Parent Leadership Project seeks to have at least one Parent Contact for each of the 59 Early Intervention programs in Massachusetts in order to expand support for all families receiving Early Intervention services.

#### **Who is a Parent Contact?**

A Parent Contact is a family member who is currently receiving Early Intervention services for his or her child. This family member volunteers to receive information from the EI Parent Leadership Project and share that information with other families in their Early Intervention program and community.

#### **Why Become A Parent Contact?**

Parent Contacts receive and share information about skill-building workshops, new programs for children and opportunities to be involved in the Early Intervention system. Family members who volunteer their time as Parent Contacts can get to know more about their own Early Intervention program and the wider EI community as they share information with other families. Each spring, Parent Contacts from around the state are invited to attend the Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium (MEIC) Conference. Their registration and hotel costs are covered by the Parent Leadership Project through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. This conference brings together families of children in EI and providers for two days of learning and networking and is a wonderful opportunity to develop leadership skills!

#### **What Do Parent Contacts Do?**

Since each Early Intervention program is unique, and each family member who volunteers as a Parent Contact brings a unique set of skills and talents to the role, Parent Contacts can choose a variety of ways to fulfill their roles. The basic role of a Parent Contact is to create a link between Early Intervention programs and families, providing families with the opportunity to learn more about the Early Intervention system and the ways in which they can get involved in that system.

#### **How Can I Become a Parent Contact?**

Speak to your Service Coordinator to see if your program already has a Parent Contact. If they do, ask to get in touch with that person and learn more about what they are doing and other opportunities for involvement. Family members can also contact the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project at 1-877-353-4757 or email [eiplt@yahoo.com](mailto:eiplt@yahoo.com) for more information about becoming a Parent Contact.



*Padres líderes en la comunidad*

## **Cómo formar padres líderes desde las bases: 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? ¿Cuáles son algunas de las maneras en que los padres y las familias 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.*

### **¿Que significa ser un padre líder?**

A algunos padres la idea de “liderazgo” les parece estimulante e interesante. Es una oportunidad de aprovechar sus habilidades y talentos para ayudar a otros niños y familias que reciben servicios de Intervención Temprana. Para otros, la noción de “liderazgo” es un poco intimidante. Les parece que les tomará mucho tiempo o que añadirá más trabajo a sus ya recargados horarios. Entonces, ¿qué es un padre líder? Bueno, si usted alguna vez compartió un recurso con otra familia o con un proveedor, si fue a una reunión del consejo de padres asesores de su programa local de Intervención Temprana o si contempló la posibilidad de retribuir la ayuda que ha recibido, entonces ¡ya está encaminado a ser un padre líder!

Ser padre líder es un proceso que nos lleva más allá de las necesidades y servicios de nuestros propios hijos para llegar al sistema más amplio de Intervención Temprana. Como padre líder, usted puede relacionarse con otras familias con intereses similares, tanto dentro como fuera de la red de Intervención Temprana.

Los padres líderes eficaces hacen preguntas y obtienen información de una variedad de fuentes en forma constante. Hablan con otras familias. Les interesa saber qué cosas funcionan y cuáles no, y cómo aprender de sus experiencias para mejorar el sistema. El camino al liderazgo puede ser diferente para cada persona. No hay una sola manera “correcta” de ser padre líder.

### **Padres de contacto:**

Una de las maneras en que las familias pueden participar en su programa de Intervención Temprana, además de recibir servicios a través de su plan familiar, es convertirse en padre de contacto. Los padres de contacto trabajan con el Proyecto Padres Líderes del programa de Intervención Temprana y juegan un papel importante en sus actividades. Esto alienta a otras familias a participar en todos los aspectos del sistema de Intervención Temprana y a establecer redes de apoyo mutuo. Según las normas de funcionamiento del programa de Intervención Temprana, la meta del Proyecto Padres Líderes es que haya por lo menos un padre de contacto en cada uno de los 59 programas de Intervención Temprana de Massachusetts a fin de aumentar el apoyo a todas las familias que reciben servicios.

### **¿Quién es un padre de contacto?**

Un padre de contacto es una persona que recibe actualmente servicios de Intervención Temprana para su hijo. Este familiar se ofrece voluntariamente a recibir información del Proyecto Padres Líderes y a compartirla con otras familias de su programa de Intervención Temprana y su comunidad.

### **¿Cuáles son los beneficios de ser un padre de contacto?**

Los padres de contacto reciben y comparten información sobre talleres de capacitación, programas nuevos para niños y oportunidades para participar en el sistema de Intervención Temprana. Al compartir información con otras familias, los familiares que se ofrecen como padres de contacto llegan a conocer mejor su propio programa de Intervención Temprana y la comunidad más amplia de IT. Cada primavera, se invita a los padres de contacto de todo el estado a participar en la conferencia del Consorcio de Intervención Temprana de Massachusetts (*Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium* o MEIC). El Proyecto Padres Líderes cubre los costos de inscripción y hotel a través del Departamento de Salud Pública de Massachusetts. Esta conferencia de dos días reúne a familias de niños que reciben servicios de Intervención Temprana y a proveedores para aprender y relacionarse. Además, ¡es una gran oportunidad para desarrollar habilidades de liderazgo!

### **¿Qué hacen los padres de contacto?**

Como cada programa de Intervención Temprana es único y cada familiar que se ofrece como padre de contacto tiene habilidades y talentos especiales, los padres de contacto pueden hacer su trabajo de maneras diversas. La función básica de un padre de contacto es tender un puente entre los programas de Intervención Temprana y las familias para darles la oportunidad de informarse mejor sobre el sistema de IT y las maneras en que pueden participar en él.

### **¿Cómo puedo convertirme en un padre de contacto?**

Hable con su Coordinador de Servicios para ver si su programa ya tiene un padre de contacto. Si ya hay uno, comuníquese con esa persona y averigüe qué está haciendo y qué otras oportunidades hay para participar. Los familiares también pueden comunicarse con el Proyecto Padres Líderes del programa de Intervención Temprana llamando al 1-877-353-4757 o escribiendo a [eiplp@yahoo.com](mailto:eiplp@yahoo.com) para obtener más información sobre cómo convertirse en un padre de contacto.



## WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

**Mass. Families Organizing for Change** — October 4 at the Holiday Inn in Marlboro. Mass. Families Organizing for Change will hold their Second Annual Conference, “Stone Soup: Bringing Together a Community”. The conference is designed to help people with disabilities and their families become more committed to their community. For more information, visit the website at [www.mfofc.org](http://www.mfofc.org).

**Family-Centered Services** — October 14 at the Department of Public Health office in Canton from 9am to 3:30pm. Using family systems theory and a strength-based approach, this workshop explores how EI specialists and families can develop strong relationships that reflect the diversity of communities. Families are welcome to attend. For more information or to register, visit the EI Training Center website at [www.eitrainingcenter.org](http://www.eitrainingcenter.org) or contact Laura Guida at 508-752-7313.

**Basic Rights** — October 15 at the Professional Center for Child Development from 7-9pm. 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 or to register, contact the Federation for Children with Special Needs at 1-800-331-0688.

**Building a Community** — October 23 at the Schwartz Center for Children from 9am to 4pm. This orientation for EI specialists provides an overview of the Massachusetts EI system and is presented by a team of three facilitators, including EI Training Center staff, a parent, and DPH staff. Families are welcome to attend. For more information or to register, visit the website at [www.eitrainingcenter.org](http://www.eitrainingcenter.org) or contact Laura Guida at 508-752-7313.



**SAVE THE DATE! Joining Voices Conference** — November 5 at Indian Meadows in Westborough. The Joining Voices Conference is sponsored by the Massachusetts Family-to-Family Health Information Center. This is a free day of learning and networking for families with children and youth with special healthcare needs (including mental, behavioral and emotional needs). Workshops will include skill-building sessions where families can learn strategies to

advocate for needed medical services and supports and become effective partners in decision-making. More information, contact the Family-to-Family Health Information Center at 1-800-331-0688, ext. 210 or email [massfv.org](mailto:massfv.org).

## Measuring Early Childhood Outcomes: Why is it Important?



Measuring child outcomes tells us how Massachusetts Early Intervention programs make a difference for the children and families we support and serve, and how we can improve Early Intervention services. It also provides data to be used in federal reporting which shows the value of EI services and that resources and funding for EI makes a difference.

The Department of Public Health, Lead Agency for Part C Early Intervention services has brought together a group of stakeholders to provide input and guidance on how best to measure and report meaningful child outcome data as a part of every day practice. The Stakeholders group is made up of EI providers, family members and DPH staff.

Over the course of several meetings, this group has devel-

oped a mission and vision statement for the process and evaluated a number of methods used to collect outcome data. As of now, the group is learning about the Child Outcome Summary Form (COSF), a tool currently used by the majority of states. The COSF is a seven point scale measuring three core functional child outcomes. These outcomes are:

- Children have positive social relationships
- Children acquire and use knowledge and skills
- Children take appropriate actions to meet their needs

The Stakeholders group will continue to meet and will make final recommendations regarding tools, training needs and impact on families to DPH. Watch for more information about this exciting initiative in future issues of the *Parent Perspective* newsletter.

## Hausslein Awards, Continued

*(Continued from page 1)*

Intervention services. Ann explained that the process of applying for the Hausslein grant greatly expanded her own horizons. When she originally wrote the grant, she wanted to find a way to talk to other parents. She found this networking opportunity through her music and movement friends and realized that writing grants was not as difficult as she imagined. The parent team was able to secure an additional \$5000 in funding from a local road race, which allowed them to expand the program to include more children. Ann also organized a grant writing workshop for friends so that they could learn more about the process of writing grants. Because of all her work with the project, Ann has recently been offered a job in grant writing. Suzanne Gottlieb commented that "this kind of project connects the community . . . by creating opportunities for all children."

Darla Gundler, Director of the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project, presented award certificates and plants to participants. She explained how all the Hausslein projects are different because of the unique needs of families at the community level. Darla also explained that the recent changes to the Hausslein award requirements assisted teams in creating collaborative opportunities with other programs in local communities.

The Hausslein Parent Leadership Awards support a wide range of activities that assist families in building their leadership skills. In this shared effort, parents provide the idea and the energy, and the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project provides the financial and parent-to-parent support that is needed. The main requirements of an award proposal are:

- ✦ it must be parent-driven
- ✦ it must meet the needs of families who are currently or have been enrolled in the Massachusetts EI system
- ✦ it must be a new program or a new component to an existing parent-initiated program
- ✦ it must demonstrate collaborations between families and other members of the community
- ✦ at least one team member must present their project to the broader EI community

The application for the 2008-2009 Hausslein Parent Leadership Awards will be available on the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project website at [www.eiplp.org](http://www.eiplp.org) or by calling the project toll free at 1-877-353-4757.

### *Opportunity Knocks:*

## Families Participate in Early Intervention Competency Review



**T**he competency review process began in November 2007 with a letter from Ron Benham, Part C Coordinator for Massachusetts Early Intervention, announcing the community-wide process for competency review.

The competency indicators provide the foundation for the Massachusetts Certification for Early Intervention Specialists system (CEIS). 42 members of the EI community, including parents, EI staff and staff from Early Childhood programs, came together to form workgroups that would review the current competencies and make recommendations for changes.

Bette Surette, a parent of two children who have received Early Intervention services, became a part of the workgroup reviewing competencies related to Service Coordination and IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan). Bette has been involved in the Early Intervention system as a Portfolio Review and a Focused Monitoring Parent Team member and was excited to expand her knowledge of the system by participating in this process. "It was interesting to hear the many different perspectives on what the competencies mean to people," she said.

As the parent of young children, Bette welcomed the opportunity to contribute to a "more meaningful" understanding of the

current Massachusetts Early Intervention system. Bette attended several meetings with her workgroup and was happy that the process allowed for coordinating the meetings with her children's schedules. "We met a couple of times, then were able to continue our work through conference calls and emails," Bette said. She says the members of her workgroup, as well as the larger overall competency review team, were very accommodating and encouraged her to be a full participant in the process. "I really enjoyed this process and am looking forward to the next steps!"

In June 2008, the workgroups finalized their recommendations for wording for all new competencies. These competency indicator recommendations are now posted for public review on the EI Training Center website at [www.eitrainingcenter.org](http://www.eitrainingcenter.org). Families, EI providers and other interested community members are invited to review the recommendations and make comments. Forms are available on the website, along with more information about the public comment period.

Following the public comment, the recommendations will be presented to the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC), which serves as advisor to DPH. The ICC is made up of parents, EI providers and other community partners.

## Working Together — Western Region

**Thom Westfield Infant Toddler Services (WITS)** held their annual “Picnic and Reunion” on August 4th. This event is a great way for families and staff to get together, and staff are always happy to see the EI “grads” that attend as well.

The program is developing a partnership with Special Olympics called “Young Athletes Program”. This is a physical activity and skill development program designed to introduce families and children ages 2 1/2 to 8 to Special Olympics. The Young Athletes Program addresses two specific levels of play: Level 1 includes physical activities designed to develop fundamental motor, tracking and eye-hand coordination play, and Level 2 concentrates on the application of these skills through a sports skill activity program consistent with Special Olympics Sports play. The program comes with lesson plans, skill kit, videos, training guides and materials. Thom Westfield Infant Toddler Services is incorporating this great program into playgroups and home visits.

On September 21st, the Annual Mellanie Blair Golf Tournament will be held. This is a huge event for the WITS program and has grown from a backyard get-together to a major happening! Mellanie’s parents and friends have supported the program for many years, and 20 year old Mellanie will be in attendance to inspire the participants and oversee the excitement.

For the past year, **Pediatric Development Center (PDC)** has led a community group, twice each week, for those parents and young children who are currently enrolled in the FLIP (Family Literacy in Pittsfield) Program. Some of the children are enrolled in EI and others are community peers. This group is primarily focused on the young parents and their mental health support needs as well as developmentally appropriate activities for infants and toddlers.

PDC has staffed the group with Infant Mental Health specialist Laurie Shaw, who has a Developmental Specialist/Social Work background. Co-Leading the group is PDC Social Worker, Julie LeBlanc. FLIP staff participating in the group include their social worker, Debbie, who brings to the mix her expertise regarding these particular families as well as the fully established relationships and rapport she’s developed with each parent in the program. With group attendance stable at 10 – 12 parents and children, it’s an extremely busy and productive event!

PDC staff offer new and innovative tasks each session, along with specific hand-outs for each parent for carry-over at home. They also counsel parents regarding stressful events taking place in their lives that might impact on their child’s life as well. The sense of trust in the group creates a “safe haven” for mothers who have been identified as emotionally fragile.

This community collaboration has been very successful for both agencies! The group began in September of 2007 and is going strong. Parent feedback has been positive and they share with

FLIP staff, about their excitement in learning specific and appropriate teaching skills and tasks that will enhance the development of their young children. This alone has been reported by FLIP staff as one of the most exciting benefits of the collaborative group effort. Parents are learning from the group leaders, learning from their peers in the group and best of all, are learning to trust their own parenting instincts.

We’re very excited to begin the second year of this special collaboration!

In June, **Criterion Heritage Early Intervention Program** held a Family Ice Cream Social for all the children and families enrolled in the program. The social is a great way for families to be introduced to activities in their community and for children to practice their skills! The program also welcomes new PAC (Parent Advisory Council) chair Kelly St. Claire. Kelly is working on planning several fall activities for families!

**Thom Springfield Infant Toddler Services** is offering a parent workshop, “Turning Three Years Old: Planning for Transition from Early Intervention”, open to all families of children in Early Intervention. The workshop will answer many of the questions parents may have, including: What services are available to children over three? What are the eligibility requirements for the programs? What comes next after EI? These questions and others will be answered by a panel of representatives from community programs for children and families. The workshop is being offered on October 20th from 6-7:30pm. For more information, contact Tracie at 413-783-5500.

**Thom Western Regional Consultation Program (WRCP)** held a Summer Get Together at the Log Cabin on August 7. The indoor barbeque and dance was a huge success as families shared experiences and resources and had lots of fun with their children!

This fall, the WRCP will be holding a Beginning Sign Language Part II workshop at the Chicopee Library. The workshop will be held on four nights, Sept. 25, Oct. 2, Oct. 9 and Oct. 16 from 6:30 to 8pm and is open to all families and providers who have a beginning knowledge of sign language.

On November 14, the WRCP will host the Annual Regional EI Conference. An Annual Family Skating Party is scheduled for November 16 from 3:30 to 5:30 at Interskate 91 in Wilbraham. All children and families enrolled in the WRCP are invited to attend this fun event!

Thom WRCP has recently received a grant from the Ronald McDonald House Charities to purchase Augmentative and Alternative Communication equipment for the EI programs in Western MA. The WRCP will provide a regional training for EI providers. Stay tuned for more information!

# 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/Training Coordinator and Collaboration and Outreach Coordinator. Please feel free to contact any of them with your thoughts, suggestions, and concerns.

## Statewide Director:

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## Education/Training Coordinator

Vacant



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**NEXT DEADLINE:** We welcome your input and suggestions for resources and articles. The next deadline is **September 26** . Please call our toll-free number (877) 353-4757 or email the newsletter editor at [Brenda.allair@state.ma.us](mailto:Brenda.allair@state.ma.us).

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