



The Parent Leadership Project's *Parent Perspective*

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Early Intervention Information and Resources

March/April 2008

Paths to Leadership: Becoming a Parent Leader

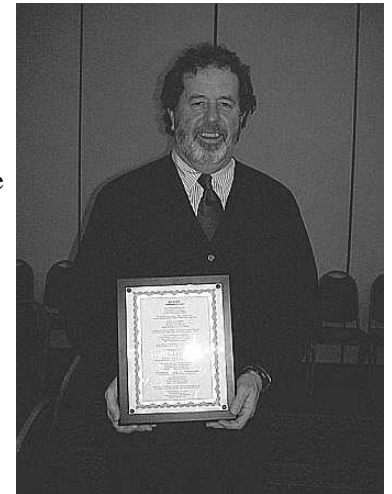
DPH Honors 25 Years of Service To Children and Families

On Thursday, March 13, the Massachusetts Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) gathered to honor the achievements of Ron Benham, Director of the Division for Perinatal, Early Childhood and Special Health Needs. Ron has been active in the Early Intervention system for many years and celebrated his 25th year of service to the Department of Public Health. Many of Ron's past and present colleagues were present to recognize his achievements and share their memories of working alongside Ron to create an Early Intervention system that is responsive to the needs of children and families.

Since 1983, Ron has been part of the development of the Early Intervention system in Massachusetts. He was one of the founding members of the Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium, and is also a founding member of ITCA, the National Infants and Toddlers Coordinators Association, an organization of Part C directors who work together to support Early Intervention on a national level. Ron has worked to make Massachusetts a leader in providing Early Intervention services to children and families.

Many at the meeting spoke highly of Ron's commitment and dedication to infants and toddlers and to family involvement.

Amy Young, ICC Co-Chair and parent, shared that Ron's support and inspiration led her and Darla Gundler, along with several other parents across the nation, to found the Early Intervention Family Alliance (EIFA), a grassroots organization advocating for infants and toddlers with disabilities. Leslie Gaffney, a parent and founding member of TrachCare, presented Ron with a poster filled with photos of children who have benefited from the program, which was started with funds from a Haussein Parent Leadership Award.



Speaking to the group, Ron shared his thoughts on his achievements: "I am and have been proud to be a public servant, and I am happy to be able to work to support the children and families of the Commonwealth."

Opportunity Knocks

Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium Conference: *Families and Providers Learning Together*



Families—are you interested in learning more about the Early Intervention system? Do you want information about infant and toddler development? Join with other parents and Early Intervention providers across the state at the Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium (MEIC) Conference to network and gather information!

The 29th Annual MEIC Conference will be held on May 7&8 at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel in Marlborough. A variety of topics will be presented. Sessions include: "Special Children, Special Families", "Living and Working with Children with Food Allergies", "Sign and Song", "Legislative Advocacy in Early Intervention" and many others. The Parent

Leadership Project also hosts a Parent Networking Dinner on Wednesday night for families to relax, enjoy a special meal, and network with each other.

Parent Contacts are able to attend the conference free of charge through the generous support of the Department of Public Health. Several Early Intervention programs throughout the state are still in need of a Parent Contact.

For more information about the conference or for information about becoming a Parent Contact for your Early Intervention program, contact the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project at 1-877-353-4757.

NCSEAM Family Survey Information



Families, thank you for continuing to complete and return the NCSEAM Family Survey. Your support and the support of Massachusetts Early Intervention Programs and staff are making this effort a success. In fact, we are doing so well, that the Department of Public Health has had to order more Surveys. Keep up the good work!

This month, EI programs will receive an individualized report that summarizes your responses. For us at DPH it is an exciting event. Thanks to your participation, we are able, for the first time, to offer system-wide information about the value of EI services based entirely on family feedback. Here's what you told us in Surveys completed between September and December 2007.

74.9% report that EI services helped you know their rights
71.6% report that EI services helped you effectively communicate your children's needs
85.9% report that EI services helped you to help your children learn and grow
 The DPH will be working with you and with your EI program

to find ways to do even better as we go forward.

Family Survey Frequently Asked Questions

1. How can I let my EI program know if I have ideas about improving services?

Talk to your Service Coordinator about your ideas. Find out if your program has an active Parent Advisory Council (PAC). If so attend meetings and share your thoughts. If not, ask about helping to get one started.

2. Will my child lose services or my family be considered trouble makers if I say things could be better?

Absolutely not! Early Intervention in Massachusetts is a family-centered service. Your EI program actively seeks your involvement and wants to know what you think. The program appreciates your input and ideas and will use the information you share to improve services and supports for your family and for all the families enrolled in the program.

Información Sobre La Encuesta Familiar NCSEAM



Agradecemos a las familias por seguir contestando y enviando la encuesta familiar del *National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring* (NCSEAM, Centro Nacional de Supervisión de la Educación Especial). El apoyo de todos ustedes y de los programas de

Intervención Temprana (IT) de Massachusetts está permitiendo que esta iniciativa sea todo un éxito. De hecho, la respuesta ha sido tan grande que el Departamento de Salud Pública ha tenido que imprimir más encuestas. ¡Sigamos por este buen camino!

Este mes, los programas de IT recibirán un informe individualizado que resume las respuestas del público. Esto es algo que a nosotros, el personal del Departamento de Salud Pública, nos entusiasma mucho. Gracias al alto nivel de participación podemos ofrecer por primera vez datos sobre el valor de todos los sistemas de Intervención Temprana, basados enteramente en las respuestas de las familias. Esto es lo que ustedes nos informaron en las encuestas de septiembre y diciembre de 2007.

El **74,9%** informó que los servicios de IT los ayudaron a conocer sus derechos

El **71,6%** informó que los servicios de IT los ayudaron a comunicar eficazmente las necesidades de sus niños

El **85,9%** informó que los servicios de IT los ayudaron a apoyar el aprendizaje y el crecimiento de sus niños

El Departamento de Salud Pública trabajará con ustedes y con su programa de IT para encontrar maneras de mejorar aun más en el futuro.

Preguntas comunes sobre la encuesta familiar

1. Si tengo ideas para mejorar los servicios, ¿cómo puedo comunicarlas a mi programa de IT?

Hable sobre sus ideas con su Coordinador de Servicios. Averigüe si su programa tiene un Consejo Asesor de Padres (Parent Advisory Council, PAC) en actividad. De ser así, asista a las reuniones y comparta sus sugerencias. Y si no lo hubiera, pregunte cómo puede ayudar a formar uno.

2. Si digo que los servicios podrían mejorarse, ¿podría llevar esto a que mi niño pierda servicios o a que se considere que mi familia está tratando de crear problemas?

¡Decididamente no! El programa de IT de Massachusetts es un servicio centrado en las familias. Su programa de IT busca activamente su participación y está interesado en saber lo que usted opina. Agradecemos sus comentarios e ideas y usaremos esta información para mejorar los servicios y apoyos para las familias de usted y de todas las personas inscritas en el programa.

One Path to Leadership . . .

Finding Your Way: One Parent's Journey to Leadership

by Michelle Gaudet

Parent Leadership means different things for different families. It can be chairing a large meeting, giving your opinion about a policy or program or deciding to learn everything you can about your child's particular diagnosis. What's the same for every family is that becoming a parent leader is a journey. Here's how one family took a step on the path.

My name is Michelle Gaudet, and I am the parent of two boys. Both of my boys have been diagnosed with epilepsy. My experiences with Early Intervention began when my oldest son, Joe, was eighteen months old. I heard about a free toddler playgroup, and eagerly signed us up. This was one of the first times I had the opportunity to observe Joe around his peers. I was disheartened to see Joe unable to do many of the things the other eighteen month olds were doing and to hear him cry the entire hour and a half that the playgroup took place.

At first I thought maybe Joe was having trouble with becoming a big brother, as his new baby brother was only one month old. Yet week after week of playgroup, I witnessed the same thing with Joe, hoping each time it would be better. Finally, I went to the leader of the group and said, "I think something is wrong." She was a social worker for Early Intervention and suggested that Joe be evaluated. It was then that our wonderful journey with EI began. Joe loved playtime with Lauren, his occupational therapist, and I loved watching Joe participate and interact. I also enjoyed reading the notes that Lauren would write for us at the end of every session. We even signed up for another playgroup that was offered through EI. It was a much smaller group, and the teachers were trained to support young children with special needs.

While Joe attended his group, I was able to participate in a parent group. We had the opportunity to ask questions, discuss issues, vent, cry, or say whatever was on our minds. It was very comforting for me to realize that I was not the only one who had a child who was "different".

Yet I failed to look beyond EI, when Joe would be turning three. I really thought that Joe would be okay, and I started looking at private preschools for him. Lauren answered my countless questions about the transition from EI. She had me fill out forms and sign paperwork to give to our public school system. I also asked parents who had been through the transition process about their experiences and if they had any advice. It was a very anxious time for me. I needed to know whether Joe would be going to a private preschool with typically developing kids, or the public preschool with other children who had special needs.

My biggest stumbling block was that I was not familiar with the special education laws. Fortunately, another parent told me about training offered by Federation for Children with Special Needs. I was able to learn about the laws and understand more about the meetings. Throughout the transition process, I maintained a relationship with our EI program. I was happy to use my training to talk with other families about transition. I told them that I once sat in the very same seat, with the same questions and concerns they have for their child, who was approaching age three. I told them what I did to prepare for the transition process, and what I wished I had done differently. I strongly recommended networking with other parents, and learning the language and eligibility of the special education system. I also recommended staying organized with their child's paperwork, both medical and educational, and having copies of everything. Most importantly, I reminded them that they are the experts on their child and an important part of the team working to identify the right services and supports for their child.

Personally, I will be forever grateful for the knowledge and expertise of my son's team at school, in particular, his special education preschool teacher. She noticed Joe having staring spells, and he was diagnosed with epilepsy two months later. We finally had an answer as to why Joe was presenting with global developmental delays.

Joe is now a thriving kindergartener. My journey with Joe has led me to a wonderful professional role. I am now the Metrowest Regional Parent Coordinator for Family TIES of Massachusetts. I provide support, information, and referrals to families who have children with special needs, age birth to 22. I am able to share my own experiences and answer questions they may have. I am grateful to have the opportunity to give back to other parents what was so generously given to me.

Michelle and Richard Gaudet are the lucky parents of two handsome boys. Their oldest son, Joe (age 5 1/2) was diagnosed with Epilepsy at age 3. Their other son, Daniel (age 4), also has Epilepsy. "Both boys bring such joy to us. We are privileged to be their mom and dad."



ENCONTRANDO TU MANERA: "El camino de un padre hacia el Liderazgo"

El significado de ser un padre líder es diferente para cada familia. Puede consistir en presidir una reunión grande, dar la opinión sobre una política o programa o decidir que uno se informará lo más posible sobre el diagnóstico específico de su niño. Lo que tiene en común para todas las familias, sin embargo, es que para convertirse en padre líder hay que transitar un camino. Éste es el relato de cómo una familia dio un paso en esa dirección.

Me llamo Michelle Gaudet y soy madre de dos varones. A los dos les han diagnosticado epilepsia. Mis experiencias con el programa de Intervención Temprana (*Early Intervention* o EI, en inglés) comenzaron cuando mi hijo mayor, Joe, tenía 18 meses de edad. Me había enterado de un grupo de juego gratuito para niños pequeños y, con gran entusiasmo, lo inscribí. Fue una de las primeras oportunidades que tuve de observarlo con niños de su edad. Al ver que Joe era incapaz de hacer muchas de las actividades que los otros niños de 18 meses hacían y que se pasó la hora y media entera llorando, me sentí bastante descorazonada.

Al principio lo atribuí a que Joe estaba pasando un momento difícil al adaptarse al papel de hermano mayor; mi segundo hijo estaba por cumplir un mes de edad. Pero, aunque esperaba que las cosas mejoraran, semana tras semana seguía observando lo mismo en el grupo de juego. Finalmente, le dije a la líder del grupo —una trabajadora social del programa de Intervención Temprana— que me parecía que había algo que no estaba bien, y ella me sugirió que lo hiciera evaluar. Y así comenzó nuestra maravillosa experiencia con los servicios de Intervención Temprana. A Joe le encantaba jugar con Lauren, su terapeuta ocupacional, y a mí me fascinaba verlo participar e interactuar con ella. También me gustaba mucho leer las notas que Lauren nos escribía al fin de cada sesión. Nos anotamos además en otro grupo de juego ofrecido por el programa de Intervención Temprana. Era un grupo mucho más pequeño y los maestros tenían capacitación especial para apoyar a niños con necesidades especiales.

Mientras Joe asistía a este grupo, yo participaba en un grupo para padres donde podíamos hacer preguntas, tratar diferentes temas, desahogarnos, llorar y expresar libremente nuestras inquietudes. El darme cuenta de que no era la única persona con un niño “diferente” fue un gran consuelo para mí.

Pero cuando Joe estaba por cumplir tres años, no consideré otras opciones aparte de la Intervención Temprana. Estaba convencida de que le iría bien y empecé a buscarle un jardín de infantes privado. Lauren contestó mi interminable lista de preguntas sobre la transición a la próxima etapa y me pidió que completara formularios y firmara documentos para el sistema de educación pública. Pregunté a otros padres que habían pasado por esta transición acerca de sus experiencias y les pedí consejos. Fue un período de gran ansiedad para mí. Tenía que

saber si Joe iría a un jardín de infantes privado con niños de desarrollo típico o a uno público con otros niños con necesidades especiales.

Mi obstáculo principal era que no estaba informada sobre las leyes de educación especial. Por suerte, otro padre me contó sobre los talleres que ofrecía la Federación para Niños con Necesidades Especiales (*Federation for Children with Special Needs*). Y fue así que me enteré de las leyes y entendí mejor cómo funcionaban las reuniones. Durante el proceso de transición, mantuve la relación con nuestro programa de Intervención Temprana. Y con gusto pude aprovechar lo que había aprendido en el taller para hablar con otras familias sobre el proceso de transición. Les expliqué que yo había pasado por lo mismo que ellos, que había tenido las mismas preguntas e inquietudes con respecto a mi propio hijo, que estaba por cumplir tres años. Les conté lo que hice para prepararme para la transición y qué cosas, en retrospectiva, hubiera hecho de forma diferente. Les recomendé firmemente que se relacionaran con otros padres y que se informaran sobre la terminología y los requisitos del sistema de educación especial. También destacué la importancia de mantener bien organizado el papeleo de sus hijos, tanto médico como educativo, y de guardar copias de todo. Y, lo que es más importante, les recordé que como padres ellos son los expertos en lo que respecta a su hijo y forman una parte importante del equipo dedicado a identificar los servicios y apoyos que necesita.

A nivel personal, estaré siempre agradecida por el conocimiento y la experiencia del equipo escolar de mi hijo y, en especial, con su maestra de educación especial en el jardín de infantes. Ella fue la que notó que Joe tenía episodios de ausencias y, gracias a eso, dos meses más tarde le diagnosticaron epilepsia y finalmente logramos entender el motivo de sus retrasos generales de desarrollo.

Joe es hoy un alumno exitoso de jardín de infantes. Mi experiencia con él me ha llevado a una maravillosa función profesional. Soy coordinadora regional de padres en la zona oeste de Massachusetts para el programa Family TIES. Do apoyo, información y recomiendo servicios a familias de niños con necesidades especiales, desde el nacimiento hasta los 22 años. Puedo contestar preguntas y compartir mis propias experiencias. Agradezco mucho la oportunidad de ayudar a otros padres de la misma manera en que, en su momento, otros me apoyaron tan generosamente a mí.

Michelle y Richard Gaudet son los afortunados padres de dos varones hermosos. Al mayor, Joe, de cinco años y medio, le diagnosticaron epilepsia a los tres años de edad. Su hermano menor, Daniel, de cuatro años, también tiene epilepsia. “¡Los dos muchachos nos dan tanta alegría! Es un verdadero privilegio ser su padre y madre.”

WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

An IEP for My Child — April 30 from 6-8pm at Thom Boston Metro EI in Jamaica Plain. Offered by the Federation for Children with Special Needs, this workshop takes parents step-by-step through the development of the IEP (Individual Education Program). *Note: This workshop is offered on a variety of dates and locations throughout the state. For more information, contact the Federation at 1-800-331-0688.*

The Challenging Young Child — May 5th from 5:30 to 8:30 at Rom's Restaurant in Sturbridge. The Central Regional Consultation Program, in collaboration with Thom WRCP and Child Care Connection, is sponsoring this workshop. Presented by Jeanine Fitzgerald, the workshop will help families understand, work with and nurture all young children. The event includes dinner and discussion for parents, EI providers and Early Childhood Providers and is FREE to families of children enrolled in the RCP. To register, contact Joan Rafferty at 978-632-4432 x14 or email jrafferty@critterionchild.com.

Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium (MEIC) Conference — May 7 and 8 at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel in Marlborough. This conference brings together Early Intervention staff, early childhood providers and families of children who are receiving Early Intervention services to learn about child development and the Early Intervention system. For more information, please contact the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project at 1-877-353-4757.

TAKING CARE OF OUR CHILDREN



TAKING CARE OF OURSELVES

25th Annual New England Regional Seminar
For Children with Visual Impairments
and Their Families
(Birth—7)

Saturday, May 3, 8:30am to 3pm
Perkins School for the Blind
175 North Beacon St.
Watertown MA

This is a New England wide opportunity for parents of children with visual impairments or deafblindness to attend informational workshops and network with other families of children with similar visual conditions. Childcare and lunch will be provided. For more information, contact Tom Miller at PreschoolProgram@Perkins.org

Family TIES of Massachusetts: *Together In Enhancing Support*

Family TIES of Massachusetts is a statewide information and referral and parent-to-parent network for families whose children have special health care needs, disabilities or chronic illnesses and their providers. All staff are parents of children with special needs, which helps us realize that the most powerful source of support is other parents. Sharing information provides family members with knowledge and skills that help to improve our children's opportunities.

The Seaport World Trade Center was blossoming with opportunities to meet friends, new and old, and cultivate new ideas as the Federation for Children with Special Needs hosted its annual conference on March 1st. Like a garden, there was something for everyone, as more than 650 parents and professionals attended 36 educational sessions, offered in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Cantonese.

Rich Robison, Executive Director of the Federation for Children with Special Needs, was honored by families at the conference for his national achievements. He was also acknowledged as a long-time friend and supporter of family leadership.

The topic range was broad, including education and special education issues, issues related to special health care concerns,

increasing knowledge around specific topics such as transition to adulthood and mental health concerns, and building leadership skills. Best of all, PowerPoint presentations for most of the sessions are available through the Federation website (www.fcsn.org/events).

A large exhibit hall showcased many resources for families of children with special needs, including a variety of recreational opportunities, books, therapeutic equipment and organizations.

Planning for next year's conference is already underway. Please share your ideas with Family TIES, and be sure to join us next Spring to meet other families.

The Regional Coordinators have updated Support Group Listings for all regions – and the 11th Edition of our Directory of Resources for Families of Children and Youth with Special Needs (yes, the PINK BOOK!). For your copies or ideas on making connections in your community, contact the staff of Family TIES of Massachusetts (800-905-TIES or www.massfamilyties.org).

FAMILY TIES
of Massachusetts



Together In Enhancing Support

Children with Special Health Care Needs: Durable Medical Equipment Access Study

Does your child have special health care needs? Does your child need special equipment such as a wheelchair, oxygen or feeding tube? Are you interested in participating in a study to help improve services for families?

The Massachusetts Consortium for Children with Special Health Care Needs invites parents to participate in a research study about families' experiences getting durable medical equipment (DME) for their children.

DME — or durable medical equipment — are products that can be used over an extended period of time, are used at home, and are designed to fulfill a medical need. Some examples are wheelchairs, hospital beds, and feeding pumps.

The process for getting DME can involve a lot of people — you and your child, the child's pediatrician, specialists, physical therapists, home nurses, your insurance company, the DME vendor and manufacturer, and many others. That can make the process complicated! The DME Access Project wants to see where the process is working smoothly for families, and where it could be improved.

To be eligible for the study, you must be the parent or guardian of a child birth to age 18, and your child must have a new recommendation or prescription for a piece of durable medical equipment.

Families who participate in the study will be asked to use a special online diary to track their child's DME until it is delivered to the home. For example, you would write down when you spoke to the pediatrician, or when you received a letter from the insurance company or had a visit with your child's physical therapist. If you prefer, you can use a paper diary instead.

Participating families will help improve the health care system and will also receive a stipend and fun incentive prizes!

To learn more about this study, please contact Chris Fluet at 617-574-9493 or cfluet@neserve.org.



Opportunity Knocks

Join the Team! Family Members Needed for Focused Monitoring



The Department of Public Health (DPH) is currently recruiting family members whose children will be graduating from Early Intervention before July 2008 to participate in the focused monitoring process onsite at Early Intervention programs. Interested family members will need to attend two orientation trainings which will be held

in May or June of 2008. Families who are interested in participating in the focused monitoring process will need to commit to two onsite visits.

An onsite visit consists of a pre- onsite phone conference call, desk audit meeting (a review and discussion of data related to a specific Indicator), and two or three full days onsite at an EI program. The purpose of the onsite visit is to gather specific program information to identify strengths and/or any areas of

concern. A stipend is available for family members participating on the focused monitoring team.

Most program assignments are within the region in which you live. However, family members will not be assigned to the program from which their child graduated or any program with which they were involved.

The current scheduling cycle for focused monitoring onsite visits is changing from a calendar year to a state fiscal year, which runs from July 1st to June 30th. Following the state fiscal year will provide consistency with the state's federal reporting timelines.

For more information on the focused monitoring process or how you can be involved please contact Faith Piaggi at the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project toll-free 1-877-353-4757 or by email at faith.piaggi@state.ma.us.

Working Together — Central Region

On January 28, **Criterion-Middlesex Early Intervention Program** held a “Meet and Greet” for families in the program who have children with Down syndrome. Kelly Short, SLP, and Kristen Keane, PT, facilitated the event. In addition to nine families whose children are enrolled in Early Intervention, the event was also attended by Jean Papagni and Patty Mahoney, two representatives of First Call, a program affiliated with the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress. Parents shared information, resources and stories with one another. A group email list was developed and distributed in an effort to encourage on-going communication for families.

On April 8, **Criterion-Middlesex Early Intervention** will host their annual Spring Fling Party, an open house event where families and children can participate in a variety of games and activities.

On Tuesday, April 29th from 6:30-8:30pm, a screening of *Including Samuel*, a documentary film by photojournalist Dan Habib, will be shown at Hebert Auditorium at Quinsigamond Community College. The screening is free to families and is being co-sponsored by the **Central Regional Consultation Program**, Metrowest Regional Consultation Program and Quinsigamond Community College. A panel discussion with Dan Habib and special guests will follow the screening. For more information or to register, please contact Rhonda Laine at 978-632-4432 ext. 55 or email Joan Rafferty at jrafferty@criterionchild.com.

Minute Man Arc’s Early Intervention Program was recognized as a national leader in the early identification and treatment of children with a diagnosis on the Autism Spectrum. In November, Alex Chatfield, Director of Early Intervention, joined with Debbie Bauch, Clinical Director of the Astra Foundation, Brianna Macke, Kristin Forsberg and Judy Hanselman to present the program’s approach at the 11th Annual Conference of the Interdisciplinary Council on Development and Learning Disorders (ICDL) in Washington, D.C. The title of the presentation was “Embracing DIR (Developmental, Individual-difference, Relationship-based model) in Early Intervention.”

The highlight of the presentation was an overview of the experience of one child who recently graduated from Minute Man Arc EI. The child received EI services including an intensive program of Floortime to address his diagnosis of Pervasive Developmental Disorder. The team is very grateful to the child’s parent, who supported their efforts and gave permission to use their family’s experience as the centerpiece of the presentation.

Criterion Valley Early Intervention Program is excited to announce that they have opened a large satellite site located at 86 Church Street in downtown Whitinsville. The program will be able to offer this completely renovated space to families in the Central Region for a variety of events. The location puts the program in close proximity to towns in the western part of their

catchment area. Families in those towns will now have closer access to child groups, parent support, meetings and community activities. In addition to two large, colorful classrooms, the new site has a parent meeting room, a small conference room and ample office space for all staff. Criterion Valley invites anyone who is in the Whitinsville area to stop in and visit.

UMass Early Intervention Program hosted a “Turning Three” workshop to provide families with information about transitioning from Early Intervention. The program will also participate in UMass Memorial Children’s Medical Center’s 13th annual Teddy Bear Clinic. Families will have the opportunity to learn about children’s health and safety. Children can bring in their favorite teddy bears and dolls for a physical exam with a doctor. The UMass EI Program will be offering gross and fine motor activities as well as a developmental checklist that can be helpful to parents in recognizing important developmental milestones. The Teddy Bear Clinic will be held on April 5th at the Greendale Mall from 10am to 3pm.

Community Healthlink Lipton Early Intervention has been busy offering many opportunities for families. The PAC sponsored trips to Davis Farmland and Sholan Farms, covering all admission costs for families. On April 4th, the program will hold their annual Spring Fling Dance and Raffle. This is the primary fundraising event for the program, and the money raised will allow continued support of family outings, additions to the Parent Library, the Parent Scholarship to the MEIC conference in May, and staff wish list items for home visits and group sites. “Meet Your Town’s Special Education Contact”, an opportunity for parents to speak with their town’s special education contact in small groups, will be offered on April 15th at the program’s offices in Leominster.

KDC South Central Early Intervention Program is planning a move to a new building in early summer. The new building will allow for increased group services and an expanded community preschool program. CVS Charitable Foundation awarded a \$15,000 grant to assist with cost for an accessible play space.

KDC South Central will be hosting a Transition Night on May 1 from 6-7:30pm. Parents whose children will turn three between June 2008 and December 2008 are invited to attend. Child care will be provided. For more information or to register, please call 508-765-0292.



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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Communications Coordinator

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On the web: www.eiplp.org

EI Focused Monitoring Parent Coordinator

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Education/Training Coordinator

Vacant



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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 **May 12**. Please call our toll-free number (877) 353-4757 or the email the newsletter editor at Brenda.allair@state.ma.us.

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