



The Parent Leadership Project's *Parent Perspective*

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Early Intervention Information and Resources

September/October 2005

Growing Parent Leaders

The Early Intervention Training Center: Opportunities for Parents and EI Providers to Learn Together

Parents of children in Early Intervention and Early Intervention providers have the unique opportunity to learn about the Early Intervention system together through workshops offered by the Early Intervention Training Center (EITC) newly housed at Education Development Center, Inc.

The EITC is a key participant in the Early Intervention system. Center for Children and Families, at Education Development Center, Inc. has recently been awarded a three year contract with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the lead agency for the Early Intervention system to develop and deliver training and professional development opportunities as well as support to the EI certification process. Currently, the EITC is in the process of conducting a needs assessment of the Early Intervention provider community. Based on these results, the EITC will focus on developing future training opportunities and Web-based educational events.

The EITC is committed to a “family-centered” approach in its workshops. Family participation goes beyond just attending workshops. In an integral part of its training plan, the EITC is in the early stages of developing a core group of parents who will co-present workshops with EI professionals. Parents will

receive a stipend for their participation.

In “Building A Community,” parents and EI specialists learn about the core values of the EI system -- the federal and state laws that are the foundation for EI services and the evolution of the EI system. Other workshops include “Service Coordination: Supporting Families’ Priorities and Needs” and “IFSP: Beyond the Nuts and Bolts”. Parents may attend these sessions free of charge.



The EITC Web site, www.eitrainingcenter.org, is the key source for information and registration for workshops. Parents may view the schedule for September through December and register online to attend. Parents and EI professionals may also register on the Web site to receive email updates.

Parents who are interested in the opportunity to co-present EITC workshops are encouraged to contact the Parent Leadership Project, toll-free at (877) 353-4757 or by email at eiplp@yahoo.com

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: Does your family have an emergency plan ?

With the recent natural disasters on the Gulf Coast wrought by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, awareness of the importance of emergency preparedness has increased greatly. Is your family prepared for an emergency?

Family TIES of Massachusetts, a statewide referral and support network for families of children with special needs, has been involved in activities relating to Emergency Preparedness. In collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), an extensive survey of parents was conducted in 2003. Statewide focus groups were held in 2005. Parents were polled on issues relating to emergency planning for their children with special health care needs. They had an opportunity to share specific areas of concern. The results were clear — the majority of families have not developed a written plan of action for emergencies such as a fire at home, a long-term power outage, or community-based emergencies, and would like help in doing so.

Family TIES developed an Emergency Preparedness packet of materials, which includes information gathered from the American Red Cross, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Additional materials include a Family TIES-developed identification tool for children, information on Autism-related emergencies, and the **Disability Indicator Form**. This form, when filed with local police, fire department or other emergency agency, will alert 9-1-1 responders that a member of your household has special needs. You can download a copy of the Disability Indicator Form from the *What's New* section of the Family TIES website at www.massfamilyties.org.

To learn more about completing the Disability Indicator Form or other issues on Emergency Preparedness, please contact your Family TIES Regional Coordinator at (800) 905 -TIES.

Opportunity Knocks**DPH Seeks Early Intervention Portfolio Reviewers**

Would you like to be trained as an Early Intervention Portfolio Reviewer?

In the Massachusetts Early Intervention system, the Department of Public Health (DPH) requires candidates who are seeking Certification as Early Intervention Specialists (CEIS) to submit a portfolio of their work.

The portfolio is then reviewed to assure compliance with certification criteria. The Massachusetts certification system specifically requires the input of a parent whose child is enrolled in EI, a peer or EI Specialist and a program administrator in the review process.

In the spring of 2006, DPH is planning a training for parents, peers and administrators who are interested in reviewing portfolios.

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The commitment includes:

- Two 6-hour training days
- A monthly individual portfolio review (1-2 hours)
- A monthly team meeting for group portfolio review (in person or by telephone: 1-2 hours)

This is a great opportunity to learn more about the professional development of EI Specialists and to make a contribution to the EI system in Massachusetts. All reviewers receive a stipend for their time.

For more information, please contact the Parent Leadership Project toll-free at (877) 353-4757 or by email at eiplp@yahoo.com.

Free Training**United Families for Change Family Leadership Series**

United Families for Change (UFC) is a grass-roots, multi-cultural coalition of families in Western Massachusetts who have come together to bring about positive changes for people with disabilities and their families. UFC will present the Family Leadership Series - four two-day workshops spread over a six-month period. The series is designed to support families in helping their family member with a disability to have a good quality of life.

The workshops will focus on developing leadership and advocacy skills by sharing information and supporting families to expand the hopes and dreams for their family member. Families will receive training in communication and negotiation skills as

well as an overview of the state and federal legislative process and new legislative initiatives.

The workshop dates are November 18 & 19, 2005 and in 2006, January 20 & 21, March 24 & 25, and April 28 & 29. Families must attend all four workshop sessions, which will be held at the Best Western Sovereign Hotel in Springfield. This workshop series is **free**. UFC will pay for hotel accommodations, meals, reimbursement for respite/child care and travel. Interested parents must complete an application by November 1.

For more information, please contact Gwen Gosselin at (413) 562-4885 ext. 12 or email ufc1991@mcsnet.org.

Free Workshop**Public Benefits for Children with Special Health Care Needs-October 27**

The Western Massachusetts Consortium invites parents and providers to a free event, "Building Connections to Build Better Care" on October 27 from noon to 3 pm at the Baystate Medical Center, 759 Chestnut Street in Springfield. Participants will learn about initiatives to form a regional network where parents and professionals caring for children with special health needs can connect, share resources and have a voice in statewide planning.

Gail Havelick, SSI & Public Benefits Specialist at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health will present an information session for participants to learn more about public benefits that are available to families of children with special health care needs.

This event is free of charge. A light lunch will be available. Please RSVP by October 21 to Karen Cassidy at (413) 783-5500 or Faith Piaggi, toll-free at (877) 353-4757.

The Western Massachusetts Consortium, part of the Consortium for Children with Special Needs, is a state level forum for information exchange and collaboration among health care providers, families, health plans, the higher education community and policy-makers. For more information about the Consortium, please visit www.neserve.org

Taking Good Care...**The Benefits of Infant Massage**

By Katherine Trant, M. ED. Certified Infant Massage Instructor

Infant massage has been practiced in Europe and Asia for centuries and has received increased attention over the past fifteen years in the United States. Vimala McClure brought the practice to America in the 1970s after observing mothers stroking their infants and small children in India. After practicing what she witnessed on her own child, Vimala began to teach other parents about the practice and benefits of infant massage.

Parents touch and hold their children daily but infant massage is slightly different. It involves making time to focus solely on your baby and interact with them as you read each other's cues. Babies begin communicating with their caregivers from birth, long before they learn to "talk". Infants communicate both happiness and displeasure using eye contact, facial expressions, and body movements. Infant massage helps parents and caregivers recognize and read the various cues babies give them.

Infant massage also has many other emotional, as well as physical benefits for the baby and the adult. Massage promotes bonding and attachment through touch. The firm pressure relaxes the infant and the repetitive movements of the massage help relax the caregiver. Massage can also increase parents' confidence in their parenting skills because they are better able to read their babies cues. Physically, parents and caregivers often feel less stress overall by giving regular massages, which can lower blood pressure. For the infant, massage provides numerous benefits for physical development. It increases body awareness and helps to improve muscle coordination. It stimulates the nervous system and brain functioning. Massage also increases circulation, which results in strengthening the circulatory, immune, digestive, and GI systems, assisting weight gain. It also reduces discomfort from gas and constipation, helping infants to move their bowels. Regulation

of sleep and the infant's sensory system are other benefits of regular massages.

Studies have shown that infant massage is especially beneficial to premature infants. Research from Dr. Tiffany Field and the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami found that premature infants who received 45 minutes of massage daily (three 15 minute massages) for 10 days gained 47 per cent more weight than the group of premature infants who did not receive massage intervention. They also found that the massaged infants were awake and active for longer periods and performed better on the Brazelton Scale, a developmental assessment.

Additional resources:

- The book *Infant Massage: A Handbook for Loving Parents* by Vimala McClure
- International Association of Infant Massage: www.iaim.homestead.com

For more information about how infant massage may benefit you child, ask your Early Intervention service coordinator

Katherine Trant, M. Ed. is a Developmental Educator at the Professional Center for Child Development in Andover.

**Opportunity Knocks****Seeking Parent Participants for DPH Focused Monitoring Team**

The Department of Public Health (DPH), lead agency for the Massachusetts Early Intervention System will begin a new initiative for evaluating whether Early Intervention programs are providing services to families in compliance with state and federal laws. DPH will move from a process called Program Re-Certification to a new system to be known as Focused Monitoring. This is in accordance with recent changes under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004), the federal law that authorizes Early Intervention services. In the new Focused Monitoring system, a team consisting a DPH Regional Specialist, and a parent will visit EI programs to look at key indicators of performance to determine

whether the program is performing as required.

DPH is seeking parents to be part of the Focus Monitoring team. This opportunity is open to parents of children who have transitioned out of Early Intervention, or who will be transitioning out before January 2006. Parents will receive training and compensation for their time.

For more information, please call Faith Piaggi at (413) 663-3610 or call the Parent Leadership Project toll-free at (877) 353-4757.

Evelyn Hausslein teaches "Kitchen-Table" Grant Writing Workshop

The Parent Leadership Project kicked off a busy fall season of events with "Kitchen-Table" Grant Writing presented by Evelyn Hausslein. A group of fourteen parents and professionals from across the state gathered at the Evergreen Center in Milford on September 14, to learn the basic elements of writing a grant proposal.

The workshop also covered the process of completing the application for the Hausslein Early Intervention Parent Leadership Awards (Hausslein Awards). Named in honor of Evelyn Hausslein, one of the most influential parent leaders in the Massachusetts Early Intervention System, the Hausslein Awards were created to give families the opportunity to take leadership roles at their Early Intervention programs and within their communities.



Funded through generous support by the Department of Public Health, parent teams can apply to receive up to \$1,000 to implement their projects. Four of the main criteria of the award are as follows:

- they must be parent-driven;
- they must meet the needs of families in EI;
- they must be a new program or new component of an existing parent-initiated program;
- they must demonstrate collaborations between families and members of the community.

The Hausslein Early Intervention Parent Leadership Award application is now available on our website or call toll-free (877) 353-4757 to receive a copy by mail. There is still time to apply. But hurry - **the deadline is Friday, October 14.**

WORKING TOGETHER: FAMILY & EI PROGRAM COLLABORATION

BOSTON NEWS

Criterion - Mattapan Early Intervention Program

(Criterion-Mattapan) welcomes Leslie Roane as the new parent liaison at the program. The Parent Leadership Project sponsored Leslie to attend the Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium Conference in earlier this year.

The Parent Leadership Project also wishes to welcome Joanne Williams, another parent from **Criterion-Mattapan** who will serve as the Parent Representative to the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) for the Boston region.

Healthy Foundations Early Intervention Program in East Boston (**Healthy Foundations EIP**) hosted two "Family Fun Days" in August, one at Piers Park in East Boston and one at Sonny Meyers Park in Revere. The events were open to the community. Families at **Healthy Foundations EIP** enjoyed the opportunity to meet each other while participating in fun summer activities like face painting, water play, bubbles, and shaving cream painting.

On September 15, the Federation for Children with Special Needs, Family TIES of Massachusetts, the Care Coordination Program of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health

(DPH), the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project and the DPH Greater Boston Regional office co-sponsored a Basic Rights workshop for families who have children with special needs or complex medical needs. The workshop presented information about families' rights and responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Massachusetts special education law. The workshop was designed to teach parents how to be effective partners with their child's school.

Put on your walking shoes and join other families for the 7th Annual Boston Families for Autism Walk on October 1, from 10 am to 4 pm. Participants will walk 5 miles around Franklin Park (Shattuck Hospital/Circuit Street). If you would like to walk, sponsor a walker or send a donation, please contact Boston Families for Autism, at (617) 327-9486 or visit www.Bostonautism.org.

CENTRAL NEWS

The Parent Leadership Project will host a Central Regional Parent meeting on October 3 from noon - 2:00 pm at **MSPCC-Worcester Early Intervention Program (MSPCC-Worcester)**. This is an opportunity for parents to get together with others in the region as well as learn about opportu-

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CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

October 4 - Advocating for Your Child (Spanish), 10:00 am-noon, The Arc of Greater Lawrence. This workshop, to be presented in Spanish by the Autism Support Center, will cover how to keep accurate records, work with the school and effective communication. For more information, please call (978) 975-8587.

October 6 - Basic Rights Workshop, 10-noon, United Home for Children, Dorchester. The Federation for Children with Special Needs presents this course that covers basic information about state and federal laws to assist parents in planning, decision-making and monitoring their child's special education services. For more information or to register, please call the Federation at (800) 331-0688 or visit the website at www.fcsn.org. Other date and location: 10/12-Medford; 10/14-Aquinnah; 10/29-Natick

October 18 - "What to look for in a Preschool for your Child," 7-8:30 pm, The Professional Center for Child Development, Andover. A workshop for parents who may be considering preschool. This workshop will cover: Staffing, environment, size of school, types of preschool, what to look for in a good teacher, choosing a preschool. Facilitated by Melanie Shipon, MEd. RSVP to Ellen at 978-475-3806 ex. 217.

October 19 - **Building a Community: An Orientation to Massachusetts Early Intervention** – Part 1, Bay Cove Early Intervention Program, Dorchester. The Early Intervention Training Center presents this workshop (see story on page one). Learn about core values and the evolution of the EI system, operational standards, state and federal laws. For

more information or to register visit www.eitrainingcenter.org. Other dates/locations: Part 1 – 11/3-North Shore Arc, Danvers; Part 2 – 11/16, Criterion-Heritage Early Intervention Program, South Hadley.

October 22 - 9th Annual Great Beginnings Conference, "Integrated Developmental Therapies," Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel, Marlborough. Criterion Child Enrichment presents this conference for those working in the field of early childhood education with children from birth to six and their families. For more information, please visit www.criterionchild.com

October 22 - 8th Annual Western Massachusetts Buddy Walk, 10 am at Stanley Park in Westfield. The Down Syndrome Resource Group of Western Massachusetts presents this event. Join other walkers in supporting individuals with Down Syndrome in this fun family activity. Visit www.dsresource.org or call (413) 586-8196 or toll-free (800) 337-7791.

October 28 & 29 - 11th Annual Current Trends in Autism Conference, Dedham Hilton. Neurobiological and clinical research, as well as strategies for interventions have advanced dramatically over the past several years. Conference faculty will report on what is now known, how what is known can be applied to the education and care of those with autism, and what direction future research needs to take in order to advance knowledge and understanding of this disorder. For more information, please visit www.ladders.org.

November 3 – Turning Three Workshop, 7-9:00 pm, The Professional Center for Child Development, Andover. Presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs, this workshop covers the process of transition to special education. For more information, contact the Federation at (800) 331-0688 or visit www.fcsn.org.

Regional Parent Networking Meetings

The Parent Leadership Project is pleased to present a series of meetings for parents to meet, connect, share information and learn about resources.

Central Region - October 3, noon– 2:00 pm MSPCC-Worcester Early Intervention Program. Please call Faith Piaggi toll-free at (877) 353-4757 or email FaithP1@verizon.net to RSVP and to get directions.

Metrowest Region – October 24, 7-8:30 pm Riverside Early Intervention, Highland Avenue, Needham. Please call Jocelyn Woog to RSVP at (877) 353-4757 or email eiplp@yahoo.com.

Western Region - October 20, 6-8 pm Criterion Heritage Early Intervention Program, 30 Old Lyman Road in South Hadley Please RSVP to Faith Piaggi toll-free at (877) 353-4757 or email faithpl1@verizon.net

Stay tuned for additional dates and locations!



For on-going support group information in your area call Family TIES at (800) 905-TIES

WORKING TOGETHER

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nities for involvement within the EI system. Please call Faith Piaggi toll-free at (877) 353-4757 or email Faith P1@verizon.net to RSVP and for directions.

METROWEST NEWS

Wayside Beaverbrook Early Intervention (Wayside Beaverbrook) recently held a Turning Three workshop, covering the process of transition from Early Intervention at age three.

Thom Mystic Valley Early Intervention Program (Thom Mystic Valley EIP) hosted two parent workshops over the summer. Parents enjoyed attending "Let's Get Organized" presented by Family TIES of Massachusetts. The Federation for Children with Special Needs presented a "Turning Three" workshop. **Thom Mystic Valley EIP** will present a Boardmaker "Make and Take Night" later this fall.

Would you like to meet other parents of children in EI who live in your region? **Riverside Early Intervention at Needham (Riverside-Needham)** will host a Metrowest Parent Networking Meeting on October 24 from 7 to 8:30 pm at 255 Hillside Avenue in Needham. Parent Leadership Project staff will present statewide resources and opportunities for involvement in the statewide Early Intervention system. Refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to Jocelyn Woog at (877) 353-4757 or email eiplp@yahoo.com.

Thom/Charles River Early Intervention (Thom Charles River EIP) has been actively involved in education and outreach activities this fall. Judy Sleeper, Clinical Coordinator, presented to the Metrowest Chapter of the organization Mothers & More. Membership includes 150 mothers from Belmont, Cambridge, Arlington, Lexington, Winchester and Watertown. The mothers learned about how to access available resources in the community.

Thom Charles River EIP assistant Johana DeGloria (a former parent) attended Latinos en Accion recently in Waltham, a Latin community event. As part of Historic Waltham Days Johana and Jackie, EI program staff, met with parents and young children on the Waltham Common. Their children, Mikey and Jasmine (who are kindergartners) passed out a brochure about Early Intervention to families! Mikey even met with the Mayor to say thanks for "making me have so much fun."

NORTHEAST REGION

The **Professional Center for Child Development (PCCD)** in Andover has a busy fall season planned. On October 14, **PCCD** will host an Early Intervention new family orientation from 10 to 11:30 am at the Lawrence site at 130 Parker Street. At this informational session families will learn about EI services, eligibility, the annual fee, resources including the Parent Leadership Project, the Regional Consultation Program, what happens

after EI, and support groups offered at **PCCD**. Please RSVP to Isis at (978) 866-5070.

PCCD will present "What to look for in a Preschool for Your Child," a workshop for parents who may be considering preschool on October 18 from 7 to 8:30 pm at the Andover site. Please RSVP to Ellen Waddill at (978) 475-3806. A Tour and Open House for prospective families and professionals at the **PCCD** Developmental Day School will be held October 18 from 10 to 11 am. The Day School serves children between the ages of three and seven with multiple disabilities and/or complex health care needs and their families. Please RSVP to Sue at (978) 475-3806 ext 210.

On Sunday October 23, put on your running shoes for the 13th Annual Trot for Special Tots 5 K road race and walk to benefit **PCCD** at 32 Osgood Street in Andover. The event begins at 10 am followed by a costume parade, cookout and award ceremony. **PCCD** will host a Turning 3 Workshop at the Andover site on November 3 from 7 to 9 pm. Please RSVP to Ellen Waddill at (978) 475-3806 ext. 217.

On August 23, the families at **Criterion-Stoneham Early Intervention Program (Criterion-Stoneham EIP)** enjoyed the annual Family Picnic at Ipswich River Park. Many current and alumni families attended the event which included entertainment by Sean Dennehy. A wonderful time was had by all! Thank you to all of the EI staff that helped make it such a great success. PAC activities will resume in October. "The Importance of Touch" will be the October discussion topic on the second Wednesday of the month. November will follow with a discussion about Reflexology on the third Wednesday of the month. Please call the Program Secretary at (781) 935-3855 to RSVP.

South Bay Early Intervention in Lowell (South Bay-Lowell) welcomes clinical supervisor Dilnavaz Barnboat to the program. **South Bay-Lowell** will begin a Visitation and Support Program this fall for children in foster care, ages from birth to three years of age, their siblings and biological caretakers. The program will offer a toddler play group for children and their parents. Parents will also be offered education and support to develop positive discipline strategies, transition planning, nutrition and child development, with the goal of reuniting the family. Parents, foster parents and DSS workers can make referrals to the program. For more information, please contact program director Diane Corbin at (978) 452-1736.

SOUTHEAST NEWS

The **Taunton Area Early Intervention Program (TauntonArea EIP)** will hold the 11th Annual Spaghetti Supper & Huge raffle on Friday, October 14 at St. Joseph's Church Hall, 499 Spring Street, Dighton. Dinner which includes spa-

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FAMILY & EI PROGRAM COLLABORATION

ghetti, meatballs, salad, drinks, fruit salad, fresh baked rolls, and endless supply of homemade desserts, will be served from 5 to 6:30 pm with a raffle of items from 6:30 to 7:30. Please call Debbie at (508) 880-0202, ext. 333 to reserve tickets. Some tickets will be available at the door.

The Down Syndrome Support Group at **South Bay Early Intervention in Brockton** has organized a Buddy Walk for Saturday, October 1, to help raise awareness about Down Syndrome and other developmental disabilities. The goal of the walk is to promote advocacy and inclusion for people with Down Syndrome, and developmental disabilities. The walk will be held at Island Grove Park in Abington and begins at 2:00 pm. For more information, please contact Jessica Melville at (781) 308-2101 or Dawn Nichols at (508) 584-1158.

On September 26, Karen Douglass, Southeast Regional Coordinator from Family TIES and Jocelyn Woog, Communications Coordinator for the Parent Leadership Project presented information at an EI Family Resource Night at **Kennedy Donovan Center in Attleboro (KDC-Attleboro)**.

Families and staff from **KDC-Attleboro** will once again participate in the Rodman Ride for Kids. The event, scheduled for October 1, is a one-day cycling tour that raises money for many non-profit organizations, including **KDC-Attleboro**. For more information about participation or sponsorship, please call (508) 226-6035.

On October 19, Tammy Cahill, MS, CCC-SLP, EI Transition Coordinator, will present "Transition Night" for families at **KDC-Attleboro**, whose children will be turning three within the next 6 months. Parents are invited to attend a free workshop, "Parenting: The Ultimate Team Sport." to be presented by behavioral specialists from the Community Partnership for Children on October 26th.

WESTERN NEWS

Thom Springfield Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program (Thom SIT EIP) and the **Thom Western Regional Consultation Program (WRCP)** are working collaboratively with the Holyoke Chicopee Springfield Early Head Start program to increase participation of children with special needs (birth to 3) in Head Start and other community programs as part of a five year grant called the Hilton Early Head Start Special Quest Program. In August, a Special Quest conference was held in Alexandria, Virginia. Lynn Dehneh, a former WRCP parent was part of the Holyoke Chicopee Springfield group.

The **Thom WRCP** hosted an end of summer get together for the past and present families. Thirty families enjoyed great food, fantastic music by Bill Arnold, a former WRCP parent and a wonderful DJ and Taffy the clown got the children clowning around. **Thom WRCP** is sponsoring sign language classes this fall in many locations in Western Massachusetts.

Instructor Lynn Dehneh will lead the groups. For more information, call Karen Cassidy at (413) 783-5500.

Families at **Thom WRCP** are invited to the Annual Skating Party, Sunday, October 23 from 3:30 to 5:30 pm at Interskate 91. Skating Group will resume on Tuesday mornings from 10 to 11:30 am in October. Welcome to new **Thom WRCP** parent coordinator Maria Reyes. She will work with Novlette Wilson to provide outreach and information to Spanish speaking families. Maria is a parent of a beautiful daughter who received EI services.

Criterion-Heritage Early Intervention in South Hadley (Criterion-Heritage EIP) has several upcoming events. On October 4, a Basic Rights Workshop will be presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) from 6 to 8 pm. FCSN will also present an IEP Writing workshop on October 25 from 6 to 8 pm.

Two great upcoming Parent Leadership Project events at **Criterion Heritage**. Come meet other parents in EI at the Western Regional Parent Meeting on October 20 from 6 to 8 pm. (See details on page 5). Learn how to be a partner and advisor to your EI program at the Essential Allies Training (date to be announced).

Criterion-Heritage EIP plans to launch an evening social networking/support group. Parents will have the opportunity to connect with each other, enjoy mutual support and share ideas to cope with the challenges of raising young children with special needs. All events will be held at the **Criterion-Heritage South Hadley Center**, 30 Old Lyman Road. Please call Sarah Aasheim, (413) 533-7140, ext. 242, for more information or to register.

The Down Syndrome Resource Group of Western Massachusetts and the Berkshire County Arc (BCARC) will be hosting a family support group meeting for parents and caregivers of individuals with Down Syndrome. The meeting will be held on October 5 at 6 pm at the BCARC office at 395 South Street in Pittsfield. Please RSVP to mtiffany@bcarc.org. For more information, please visit www.dsresource.org or call (413) 586-8196 or toll-free at (800) 337-7791.

The Down Syndrome Resource Group of Western Massachusetts and the Malone family of Charlemont are pleased to present an appearance by the cast and creators of "Signingtime," who created a sign language DVD series for children on October 8. For details, please visit www.signingtimefoundation.org/pressroom/hometown.html or call (413) 586-8196 or (800) 337-7791.

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, a Focused Monitoring Parent Coordinator, a Training Coordinator and a Collaboration and Outreach Coordinator. Please feel free to contact any of them with your thoughts, suggestions, and concerns.

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The Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project **NEWS**

Join the PLP List Serv

Would you like to share information, receive late-breaking information about workshops or opportunities for involvement, pose questions or perhaps just chat with other families in Early Intervention? The PLP list serv is another great way to connect parents.

It's easy to join. Just send a blank email to eiplp-suscribe@yahoogroups.com. You will receive confirmation by return email shortly thereafter. Click on the link contained in the email to complete the subscription process.

We would like to hear from you – Do you have a story idea or a resource to share or other suggestions? Please contact the Parent Leadership Project toll-free at (877) 353-4757 or by email at eiplp@yahoo.com.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE: Meet the Parents who serve on the Massachusetts Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC)

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: The next deadline is November 15.

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.

