

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

Early Intervention Information and Resources

July/August 2003

### *A Year of Family Participation in Early Intervention*

## **Family Rights and Early Intervention Services: Do You Know Yours?**

Families have important rights that follow them throughout their involvement in the Early Intervention system. Procedural and due process safeguards are provided pursuant to Federal law (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and under Massachusetts law (34 CFR 303.400 et. seq). The Massachusetts Early Intervention Operational Standards and Due Process Procedures for Early Intervention Programs, which have recently been revised also contain protections for families.



Would you like to learn more about family rights in the Early Intervention System? Mary Dennehy-Colorusso, Due Process Coordinator at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health will present a series of workshops on

“Due Process-The Basics” to families throughout the state. The training provides an overview of the different procedural safeguards under Part C of IDEA including:

- the right to privacy (confidentiality and release of information),
- the right to review/examine your child’s record,
- the right to refuse some services and accept others (accept or decline without jeopardy),
- prior written notice,
- written and spoken communication in a parent’s native language,
- parental consent, and
- timely resolution of disputes

The workshop features examples of how these safeguards are built into the Early Intervention system and how they relate to all aspects of family participation including the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

For more information on attending a workshop in your area, please contact the Parent Leadership Project, toll-free at (877) 35-EI-PLP or by email at [eiplp@yahoo.com](mailto:eiplp@yahoo.com).

### *Celebrating Parent Leadership:*

## **The Hausslein Early Intervention Parent Leadership Awards Ceremony**

It was a morning of inspiring and uplifting stories, mixed with good cheer as parents, staff from the Department of Public Health and the Parent Leadership Project gathered for the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Hausslein Early Intervention Parent Leadership Awards Ceremony (Hausslein Awards) on June 17<sup>th</sup> at the Holiday Inn in Worcester.

The Hausslein Awards are named in honor of one of the most influential parent leaders in the Massachusetts Early Intervention System, Evelyn Hausslein. When her youngest son was diagnosed with a developmental disability years ago, the Early Intervention program did not exist in its present form. As a parent pio-

neer, Evelyn took her strong values of family-centered care and worked tirelessly to develop services for her son, while also paving the way for countless families who would follow through her efforts and advocacy for children with special needs.

The Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project, through generous funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, created the Hausslein Awards to give families an opportunity to take leadership roles in creating supports at their Early Intervention Programs within their communities.

This year, six parent teams received

Hausslein Awards of up to \$1,000 to implement their projects. Darla Gundler, director of the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project and Suzanne Gottlieb, director of Family Initiatives at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) welcomed the parent teams. Ron Benham, director of the Division of Perinatal and Early Childhood

#### Contact Us :

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Visit [www.eiplp.org](http://www.eiplp.org)



Email [eiplp@yahoo.com](mailto:eiplp@yahoo.com)



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**Resources:*****MDDC “Consumer Empowerment Funds” for Families to Attend Workshops***

The Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC) provides “Consumer Empowerment Funds” to individuals with developmental disabilities or their families who are Massachusetts residents, to attend conferences or other events in Massachusetts or another state.

Through the “Consumer Empowerment Funds” program, the MDDC seeks to promote the empowerment of individuals with disabilities and their families, to achieve independence, productivity, integration and inclusion.

Family members can apply for funds up to \$500 per year to attend training in self-advocacy, educating policymakers and

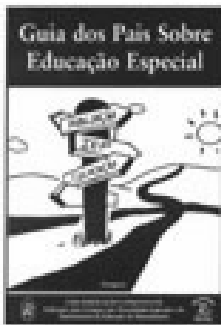
citizenship leadership skills, training to access services and supports, as well as parent training and information under Part D of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

For more information, please call or write to Harold Lieberman at the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council, 1150 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts, 02169 or call (617) 770-7676 extension 100.

To download a mail-in application form, visit the MDDC website at [www.state.ma.us/mddc/cefp](http://www.state.ma.us/mddc/cefp)

**Family TIES Translated Materials Now Available/  
A Parents Guide to Special Education Published in Spanish and Portuguese**

Family TIES (Together in Enhancing Support) of Massachusetts, the statewide information and referral network for families of children with special needs, is pleased to announce the compilation of available materials that have been translated into other languages. The materials, which include topics such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and publications from the Department of Public Health and the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, have been translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Khmer, Laotian, Vietnamese, Chinese and more. The complete list of materials is available from the Family TIES Coordinators. To find the Family TIES Coordinator in your region, call toll-free (800) 905-TIES or visit [www.massfamilyties.org](http://www.massfamilyties.org).



*A Parents Guide to Special Education*, written by the Federation for Children with Special Needs in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Education is an essential resource for parent on the special education system in Massachusetts. The *Guide*, which contains information on special education laws, timelines and procedural safeguards, is now available in Spanish and Portuguese. To receive a copy, call the Federation of Children with Special Needs toll-free at (800) or download the *Guide* in PDF file format at their website at [www.fcsn.org](http://www.fcsn.org).

**Conference Opportunity****First International Conference on Family-Centered Care, September 4-6th**

Family-centered care is an approach to health care that recognizes the important role of families working in collaboration with health care providers in the care of their children. The Institute for Family-Centered Care is a non-profit organization that provides leadership to further the understanding and practice of family-centered care.

On September 4-6, the Institute for Family-Centered Care will sponsor the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Family Centered-Care, “Advancing the Quality of Health Care in the 21<sup>st</sup> Cen-

ture” at the Sheraton Boston Hotel. There will be presentations on innovative health care programs that are dedicated to collaboration with patients and their families, as well as presentations by hospitals, community-based programs, physician practices, and schools of medicine and nursing.

For more information or to register call the Institute for Family-Centered Care at (301)652-0281 or visit their website at [www.familycenteredcare.org](http://www.familycenteredcare.org)

**One Parent's Perspective:****De Springer on Attending the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual MEIC Conference**

I learned about the opportunity to attend the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium Conference (MEIC) from Riverside Early Intervention Parent Contact Deborah Marcus and through an email from Jocelyn Woog, Communication Specialist at the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project. The Department of Public Health, through the Parent Leadership Project, sponsored one parent from each Early Intervention program throughout the state to attend this two-day conference in Marlborough on April 30 and May 1.

When I think back to my high school years, "home economics" was a course required for girls to graduate, and "shop" was required of boys. Neither gender was required to take a course in child development. I realize now how much I could have benefited from a class in this subject. But, now that I have a child, there is little time or opportunity to read those wonderful books!

Thanks to the Early Intervention system, our family has had a crash course over the past year, learning behavioral, educational, sensory and other current best practice strategies to deal with our child's developmental challenges. Improving the quality of care for young children with special needs or others at risk is a primary objective of the MEIC conference. I was pleased to attend this conference to learn more about a variety of topics. It is a conference where not only the professionals, but also parents can educate themselves. There were over 500 participants. Among them, I saw several therapists and educators from my program including my

child's speech therapist, who was learning how to utilize sensory techniques in her discipline.

This year's theme and keynote address was "Celebrating Diversity: Exploring Infant, Toddler and Family Development." I was reminded listening to this talk of the diverse environments the EI staff must encounter hourly as they go from home visit to home visit. The talk highlighted the challenge of language: how certain words communicating the needs of a child can scare some parents away and/or move others to action. The EI worker must be perceptive and versatile to adapt to each family's varied situation.

After the keynote speech, there were over 30 seminars from which to choose: *Parent Leadership – Finding Your Way*; *Sensory Integration in Childcare Settings*; *The Child with Special Needs*; *The Grief That Keeps Giving*; *A Buddhist Approach to EI Practice*; *Public Benefits: What They Are and How to Get Them*; *Parenting When You Are Depressed*; *The NICU and Beyond*, to name just a few.

I attended *Activities to Support Brain Development in Young Children*. Encircling the conference room were stations with interesting hands-on, homemade, interactive and sensory-based ideas. I also attended *This Child's Behavior Puzzles Me! Could He Be on the Autism Spectrum?* This talk gave information about identifying Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), which according to some reports is the third most common childhood disability now occurring in 1 out of every

250 children. There is also work being done by the Department of Public Health to better educate our doctors to first signs of ASD.

My favorite talk was given by Senator David P. Magnani. With just a few suggestions, the Senator clearly and ardently outlined how to successfully advocate and get the ear of your local legislator. According to the Senator, letters from constituents are powerful and do get counted. Beyond writing a letter, families can host a coffee for their legislator to help them understand their cause, making arrangements for coverage in the local newspaper and by a photographer (a picture is worth a thousand words!) As a follow-up after the event, writing a letter to the editorial page, is a good way to thank the participants and spread coverage of the event.

At the Parent Dinner, sponsored by the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project, the question was posed "how do we get more parents involved?" There was fellowship, conversation and brainstorming to generate ideas. The old adage "you get back what you put in" is appropriately applied to raising our children, and to our experience in the Early Intervention System. I would strongly encourage other families to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity offered by the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project, next year.

*De Springer and her family receive services from Riverside Early Intervention at Needham.*

## Bubble Night at Children's Hospital Boston... July 25th

Come to the garden at Children's Hospital in Boston from 5 pm to 7 pm on Friday, July 25<sup>th</sup>. Children of all ages who receive or have received services through Children's Hospital are invited to enjoy bubbles of all shapes and kinds along with crafts and music. The event is supported by Junior's Rainbow Connection, a charitable group founded as a support network for families and friends of terminally ill children. Junior's Rainbow was established in memory of Arthur "Junior

Juice" Baker, who succumbed to Menkes Disease at the age of 14 months. Volunteers or donations are gratefully accepted. For more information, contact Junior's Rainbow at (978) 744-6421 or the Center for Families at (617) 355-2058.



## Celebrating Parent Leadership —

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Health (DPH), commented that the high quality of work by this year's award recipients reflects the commitment that families bring to the service system on behalf of their children. After welcoming the parents, Evelyn Hausslein, shared anecdotes and insights on parenting her children and on becoming an advocate for children with special needs. Evelyn congratulated the award winners after their presentations. Each parent team was also presented with a certificate in recognition of their achievement, as well as a flowering plant, to thank them for their hard work.

Evelyn encouraged the parents to take the skills they learned from implementing their projects to others in new service systems in the community, such as a Special Education Parent Advisory Council. According to Evelyn, "parent leadership can happen anywhere, anytime, any how. If you have an idea, keep knocking on doors and try hard."

The projects that received Hausslein Awards were as varied as the communities served by each Early Intervention Program:

### **Creating a "Chain of Learning" - Skillful Parenting Workshops at Boston Metro Early Intervention**

The Parent Team from Boston Metro Early Intervention Program in Roslindale, represented by Susan Batson, had the concept to start a chain of learning for parenting skills. Acknowledging that, "the only people who find parenting to be easy are those without kids," Susan and the parent team members used their Hausslein Award to fund a six-week workshop series on "Skillful Parenting". The workshops covered topics including understanding challenging behaviors, setting limits and building self-esteem. Parents in Early Intervention and from the community were invited to attend. In turn, it was hoped that parents would share the information with other parents. Childcare was also provided at Boston Metro Early

Intervention Program. Parents learned new skills and techniques that they were able to try out at home between sessions, and had the opportunity to share what worked, as well as their challenges.

### **Building a Meeting Place for Parents - The Maverick Street Reading Room at Lipton Early Intervention**

Parents from Lipton Early Intervention in Leominster have a new place to meet thanks to the vision and hard work of parent team members Susan Lowthers and Sheila Corrado and others. They used their Hausslein Award to purchase shelving and supplies to transform an unused room at the center into a warm and welcoming place for parents to meet each other or to bring siblings while their other children are receiving group services. Parent volunteers have used their new space to hold a Saturday morning play group with a different theme each week. The Maverick Street Reading Room also contains a bulletin board where parents can learn about upcoming events at the center and in the community, as well as a lending library for books and videos on topics including sign language and child development.

### **"Parent Mondays" at Cambridge-Somerville Early Intervention Program**

Parents can be a tremendous source of information and support for each other, but finding a way to connect parents can sometimes be a challenge. Parent team members Cindy Caplan and Kathy Kelts (who is also a Social Worker at Cambridge-Somerville Early Intervention Program in Somerville) created "Parent Mondays" as a fun and informative way to bring Early Intervention parents and caregivers together. The Hausslein Award was used to provide dinner for participants, honorariums for speakers, as well as small stipends to help parents with the cost of childcare. The first Monday of each month, was designated as the time for the Parent Advisory Council to meet to plan programs for parents and to ensure that parents have a voice in the op-

eration of the Early Intervention program. Parents' Night Out was held on the second Monday of each month, featuring lectures on topics of interest including "Promoting Healthy Sleep Habits", "Speech and Language Development from Birth to Three", "Alternative Therapies for Children" and "Positive Discipline for Young Children". Parents enjoyed meeting and networking with other Early Intervention parents. The fourth Monday of the month featured a Parent Support Group where parents could share their stories, successes and challenges of parenting a child who has special needs. The Support Group was facilitated by a social worker who is also the parent of a child receiving Early Intervention services.

### **Wrightslaw "Boot Camp" Special Education Law Seminar-Reach Early Intervention Program and the Down Syndrome Resource Group of Western Massachusetts**

Parent team members Marie and Tom Flaherty, and Amy Dorval from Reach Early Intervention Program in Northampton in collaboration with Laurie Houle Isham, president of the Down Syndrome Resource group of Western Massachusetts received a Hausslein Award to help fund a seminar on Special Education laws. The two-day seminar featured attorney Peter Wright and Pamela Wright, a psychotherapist who are authors of "Wrightslaw: Special Education Law" and "Wrightslaw: From Emotions to Advocacy-the Special Education Survival Guide". Parents, educators and advocates learned about Special Education laws including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) writing Smart IEP's (Individualized Education Programs) and Tactics and Strategies for Effective Advocacy. Over 170 people from several states attended.

## The Hausslein Early Intervention Parent Leadership Award Ceremony

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### “Cape Ann Web” – Reaching out to Families through Cyberspace

Families at Cape Ann Early Intervention Program in Beverly have a new way to access information about Early Intervention services, program and community events and to communicate with each other. Parent team members Susan Ross, Jayne Gordon and Program Director Martha Levine created Cape Ann Web” as a central place for parents, caregivers and community members to learn about opportunities and to facilitate communication of information. The website contains information on services, a “message board” for parent to parent support and advice, a lending library for toys and books, links for legislative updates and for the Parent Advisory Council (PAC). Perhaps, best of all, parents can surf the site on their own schedule. Parents who don’t have a computer at home can access the website from a computer that has been donated to the Cape Ann Early Intervention Program. Visit them at [www.nsar.org/capeann/frame.html](http://www.nsar.org/capeann/frame.html).

### Building Bridges for Communication-Riverside Early Intervention Program at Needham

One goal of Early Intervention is to teach children the skills they need to actively participate in community activities. For toddlers who are non-verbal, active participation may be more challenging. The Parent Team represented by Deborah Marcus, designed a two-part program to teach parents and childcare providers in the community strategies to bridge the gap in communication skills so that non-verbal toddlers can be active participants in circle time or other classes. Part one of the workshop included a presentation by a speech and language pathologist and a special needs teacher on sign language, gestures, and using props (toys and pictures) for circle time. Participants learned how to sign some common songs including “Mr. Sun” and “ Monkeys Jumping on the Bed”. On the second night, parents got down on the floor and participated in a lively demonstration circle time by a provider of pre-school programs in the community. Using props, such as bells, puppets and stars, participants learned a variety of ways to actively engage non-verbal toddlers during circle-time or playgroups in the community. Parents also learned how community providers can make simple accommodations so that all children can actively participate in programs.

In a fitting tribute to the parents who received Hausslein Awards this year, Darla ended the ceremony by reciting the “Power of One”

#### Power of One

Author Unknown

One song can spark a moment  
 One flower can wake the dream  
 One tree can start a forest  
 One bird can herald spring  
 One smile begins a friendship  
 One handclasp lifts a soul  
 One star can guide a ship at sea  
 One word can frame the goal  
 One vote can change a nation  
 One sunbeam lights a room  
 One candle wipes out darkness  
 One laugh will conquer gloom  
 One step must start each journey  
 One word must start each prayer  
 One hope will raise our spirits  
 One touch can show you care  
 One voice can speak with wisdom  
 One heart can know what is true  
 One life can make a difference



### OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

**D**o you have an idea for a project that would benefit families enrolled in Early Intervention or your community? The four main criteria for the Hausslein Awards are:

- the project must be parent-driven,
- it must meet the needs of families in Early Intervention,
- the project must be a new program or new component of an existing parent-initiated program, and
- it must demonstrate collaboration between families, EI program staff and the community.

It’s not too early to start planning to apply for a Hausslein Award in the fall. The application is available on our website, [www.eiplp.org](http://www.eiplp.org). Select Parent Participation Opportunities and click on the Hausslein Early Intervention Parent Leadership Awards. To receive an application by mail or for more information, call the Parent Leadership Project toll-free at (877)35-EI-PLP. Applications must be postmarked by October 10th.

## FAMILY PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES & EI PROGRAM NEWS

### **BOSTON NEWS by Hyacinth Irving**

**Boston Metro Early Intervention Program** held an “open house” in June with many families and staff in attendance. Children enjoyed a reptile show, music, bubbles, a storyteller and a chance to see fire trucks up close.

Parents, staff, and community friends enjoyed a Community Lunch at the **Harbor Area Early Intervention Program** to thank supporters of the Program. Entertainment was provided by a two-year old who sang at the event.

At **Dimock Early Intervention Program** playgroup, parents and toddlers are working on important sensory issues while having fun with activities such as face painting. The children also enjoy visits from animals that come to the Center as part of a Pet Therapy Program once to twice a month.

### **NORTHEAST NEWS by Wendy Lemire**

**The Boston Regional Early Intervention Program in Medford (Boston Regional-Medford EIP)** is pleased to welcome new parent contact Lisa DePalma. **Boston Regional-Medford** has just completed a very successful Parent Support Group with an associated child group that was run by the local Family Network. Through funding by Project Playgroup, the groups met one evening each week, for the past three months (PJ's were optional so the children could go right home to bed!) Everyone celebrated the group's completion with a pizza party.

Summer play groups are in full force at **Boston Regional-Medford** with “Babble and Banter” a play group for toddlers with a sibling group, run in collaboration with the Massachusetts Family Network. The Annual Family Picnic is scheduled for later this summer.

At the **Professional Center for Child Development in Andover (PCCD)**, the Two by Two Community Developmental playgroups, were treated to a visit from the Andover Fire Department. After the regular fire drill, the children were invited to walk around, climb on and sit in the big red fire truck. The Two by Two playgroups are composed of children who are receiving Early Intervention services and children from the community.

The **PCCD** Parent Advisory Council recently hosted a “hike” picnic at the Old North Bridge in Concord. Many of the children had complex medical needs, with several who used wheelchairs. The families enjoyed the opportunity to be together and to experience the beautiful surroundings. Also in the planning stages, summer picnics for two of the parent support/ educational groups, for families who have children with Down syndrome and families who have children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

On September 30, **PCCD** will host a Turning 3 Workshop in

collaboration with the Federation for Children with Special Needs. The workshop will address the issue of transition from Early Intervention services to the special education system. It will be held at the Professional Center for Child Development, 32 Osgood Street in Andover. For more information or to register, contact Ellen Waddill at (978)475-3806 ext. 217.

The **Family Support EI Center in Danvers (FSEIC)** welcomes new Parent Contact Holly Potter! On August 21st, **FSEIC** will host their annual family and staff cookout from 5:30 to 8:00 pm. It's a fun and relaxing way for families in Early Intervention to get to know each other.

### **SOUTHEAST NEWS by Timothy Pelletier**

On June 9th, children and families from the **I.H. Schwartz Center for Children Early Intervention Program (Schwartz Center)** and the **Regional Consultation Program** participated in the Special Olympics with the **Kennedy Donovan Center-New Bedford (KDC-New Bedford)**. The event was held at the YMCA Camp in South Dartmouth and all children received medal for their motor skill achievements.

Artwork from the children at the **Schwartz Center** was displayed at “AHA! Night!” in downtown New Bedford, and there was a silent auction with proceeds to benefit the Center.

Two upcoming workshops are scheduled for July — on July 16th, the **Schwartz Day School Program** and **Regional Consultation Program** will present a workshop on “Therapeutic Nutrition for Children with Special Needs” for parents and professionals. Parents and professionals are invited to a workshop on “Pediatric Dysphagia” at the Community Room at the Silver City Galleria Mall. The workshop will discuss feeding and swallowing disorders and how to minimize feeding problems. For more information, call the Schwartz Center at (508) 996-3391.

The **Kennedy-Donovan Center-Attleboro Early Intervention Program (KCD-Attleboro)** had their Annual Ice Cream Social, with over 70 families and staff attending. Bliss Brothers Dairy in Attleboro donated ice cream and the Stop and Shop donated a gift certificate to buy toppings and paper goods. The children enjoyed making their own sundaes, creating spin art masterpieces, and playing in the water table!

Coming up on September 20th at **KDC-Attleboro** - the Rodman Ride for Kids, a one-day cycling tour that raises money for children's programs. Riders can choose 25, 50 or 100 miles and more riders are needed!

Summer's the perfect time for a barbeque for a good cause. On August 20th, the **Taunton Area Early Intervention Program (Taunton EIP)** will have a Chicken Barbeque to raise funds for the benefit of families who need therapeutic equipment and sup-

## FAMILY PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES & EI PROGRAM NEWS — continued

plies. For more information, call Debbie Howland at (508) 880-0202.

The **Kennedy Donovan Center-New Bedford Early Intervention Program (KDC-New Bedford)** recently finished up two community parent/child groups — one conducted in English at the Wareham Public Library and one in Spanish.

Put on your dancing shoes for the **KDC-New Bedford 10th Annual Rock-a-thon** on August 5th from 9:30-2:00 pm at the corner of Hawthorn and County Streets. Admission and refreshments are free, and the children will enjoy the music, entertainment and face painting! For more information, call (508) 992-4756.

### **WESTERN NEWS by Faith Piaggi**

The Western Regional Consultation Program (**WRCP**) had a roller-skating party on June 8th. Twenty families attended this fun event. High school students and providers came to lend a hand and to provide extra support to families.

The **WRCP** presented a three session Beginning Sign Language workshop for Infants and Toddlers". Parents and sib-

lings attended and learned a new way to communicate with their loved ones. The classes were so well-received that they will be offered again in the fall.

On June 8th, the **Regional Consultation Program** had its annual conference in Northampton. Parents, Early Intervention specialists and daycare providers learned about the wide range of benefits and supports available to families with children who have special needs.

A Family Support Fair will be held at the Best Western Sovereign Hotel in West Springfield on September 25th from 10 am to 1:00 pm. Families are invited to come and learn about state and community agencies that provide services to caregivers within the western region of the state. For more information, please call Karen Cassidy at (413) 783-5500 or Maria Denesha at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health at (800) 445-1255.

## CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

July 29- **Discussion of Impact of Budget Changes and Cuts on Children and Families**, 5:30 – 8:00 pm, Easter Seals Office, 484 Main Street, Worcester. Staff from the Children's Quality Initiative and families from around the state will meet to discuss the impact of recent budget cuts, and explore ways in which to share experiences with elected officials and others in the community. For more information or to RSVP call Stacey Auger at (617) 275-2935 or by email at [auger@hcfama.org](mailto:auger@hcfama.org)

August 22-24 **National Down Syndrome Congress Annual Convention**, Adams Mark Hotel, Philadelphia, PA. For more information, contact the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress at [www.mdsc.com](http://www.mdsc.com)

September 4-6 – **First International Conference on Family-Centered Care**, Sheraton Boston Hotel, Boston. This conference will showcase innovative health care programs that are dedicated to collaborative efforts with patients and

their families. It will provide sessions across settings and presentations from hospitals, community-based programs. Family-led organizations, physician practices, and schools of medicine and nursing. For more information, contact the Institute for Family-Centered Care at (301)652-0281 or visit [www.familycenteredcare.org](http://www.familycenteredcare.org).

September 13– **Western New England Walk F.A.R. for NAAR**, Ashley Reservoir, Holyoke, MA. The National Alliance for Autism Research (NAAR) has a series of walkathon fundraisers scheduled around Massachusetts and Southern New England. Other events– September 13th, Greater Boston Walk, Artesani Park in Brighton; September 20th, Southern New England Walk, Roger Williams Park, Providence, R.I. For more information, call NAAR at (888)627-NAAR.

September 14 -**Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress Annual Family Picnic**, noon- 5 pm, Cochituate State Park, Natick. For more information, visit

[www.mdsc.com](http://www.mdsc.com)

September 25– **Family Support Fair**, Best Western Sovereign Hotel, 10 am-1:00 pm. Parents and caregivers are invited to come and learn about state and community agencies that can provide services for families in western Massachusetts. For more information, please call Karen Cassidy at the Western Regional Consultation Program at (413) 783-5500 or Maria Denesha at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health at (800) 445-1255.

September 30-**Turning 3 Workshop**, The Professional Center for Child Development, 32 Osgood Street, Andover, 7:00-9:00 pm. This free workshop presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs addresses the issue of transition from Early Intervention services to the special education system. For more information or to register, contact Ellen Waddill at (978)475-3806 ext. 217.

# 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 specialist, an EI program re-certification parent coordinator and six regional coordinators. Please feel free to contact any of them with your thoughts, suggestions, and concerns.

## STATEWIDE DIRECTOR

### Darla Gundler

Toll-free (877) 35-EI-PLP  
(800) 445-1255, Ext. 1157  
Darla.Gundler@state.ma.us

## COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

### Jocelyn R. Woog

(781) 774-6611  
Jocelyn.Woog@state.ma.us

## REGIONAL COORDINATORS

### Boston

Hyacinth Irving  
(617) 436-4037

### Central

Dawn King  
(508) 842-1636  
dawnking@townisp.com

### Metrowest

vacant

### Northeast

Wendy Lemire  
(978) 459-7349  
wlemire@comcast.net

### Southeast

Tim Pelletier  
(508) 673-5814  
tpellet23@hotmail.com

### West

Faith Piaggi  
(413) 663-3610  
faith\_p@netzero.net

## EI PROGRAM RE-CERTIFICATION PARENT COORDINATOR

Faith Piaggi  
(413) 663-3610  
faith\_p@netzero.net

## The Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project

Look for the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project at the First International Conference on Family-Centered Care on September 4-6. The Parent Leadership Project will co-sponsor a hospitality suite with other parent partners. We hope to see you there!

## NEWSLETTER NEWS

The **Parent Perspective** Newsletter will now be produced six times a year, July/August, September/October, November/December, January/February, March/April and May/June. Submissions for upcoming events that fall between Newsletter issues may be posted on our website, [www.eiplp.org](http://www.eiplp.org) or on our list serv. Check in often for the latest Early Intervention news, events and information.

**NEXT DEADLINE:** Do you have a story idea, an event that you would like to share with other families in Early Intervention or an article that you would like to submit for the *Parent Perspective Newsletter*? We welcome your input and suggestions for resources and articles. The next deadline is **September 11th.**

To contribute calendar listings, program news or any other information, please contact your regional coordinator or the newsletter editor, Jocelyn Woog. Contact information for the staff of Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project as listed in the left hand column.

The *Parent Perspective* newsletter is produced by the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project, through funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. This **free** publication, written by parents, is for parents of children who are or have been enrolled in Early Intervention, EI staff and interested others. **To be added to our mailing list**, call the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project toll-free at (877) 35-EI-PLP or email [Jocelyn.Woog@state.ma.us](mailto:Jocelyn.Woog@state.ma.us) or [eiplp@yahoo.com](mailto:eiplp@yahoo.com).

