



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

Early Intervention Information and Resources

September/October 2003

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

## **The IFSP Guidance Document: A New Tool for Families and Early Intervention Staff**



A comprehensive, family-centered Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is essential in assuring that your child receives the Early Intervention services and supports he or she requires. Do you know what goes into a well-written IFSP? Parents and Early Intervention providers have a new tool to assist in developing Individualized Family Service Plans—the IFSP Guidance Document. The IFSP Guidance Document was produced by the Program Planning Committee of the Interagency Coordinating Council, an advisory group to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the lead agency for the Early Intervention system.

**What is a family-centered IFSP?** The IFSP is the written plan for providing Early Intervention services to an eligible child that considers the developmental needs of the child and incorporates the family's daily routines and activities, in the context of their culture and community.

**IFSP Development: A Partnership of Family Members and EI Providers :** A team consisting of family members, EI Providers, specialty service providers and others as specified by the family, works together to develop the IFSP. The Guidance Document details the strengths of family members as "skilled

allies in enhancing all aspects of the child's development" and EI Providers as "trained professionals skilled at facilitating child development with clinical expertise in a variety of disciplines". They work in partnership to create an IFSP that reflects discussions with the family, observations and ongoing assessments of the child. The child's daily routine and other information about cultural background and community are considered to ensure that "services are delivered in a way that is supportive rather than disruptive of family values, priorities and routines".

### **Including Everyday Routines, Activities and Places in Your Child's IFSP:**

The Guidance Document contains definitions and questions about family routines ( the usual events that are part of a family's schedule, such as mealtime, bath time, story-time, bedtime), daily activities (what a family does during a typical day—visits to the playground, visits to friends, etc.) and everyday places (the supermarket, childcare, the library, place of worship, etc.). These questions can serve as "conversation starters" to help the IFSP team in identifying ways to embed services into the child and family's daily routine. For example, if going to the supermarket or the playground is a particular challenge, the Service Provider may be able to meet the family there to provide support as part of a therapy session.

*(Continued on page 4)*

### **OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS:**

## ***"Joining Voices: Third Annual Parent Leaders Meeting " - October 16th***

Mass Family Voices at the Federation for Children with Special Needs and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health invite parents to "join voices" on behalf of children with special health care needs. The third annual Joining Voices Conference to Support Parent Leaders in Advocating for Children with Special Needs will be held at the UCC Conference Room in Framingham on October 16th from 9:30 am-3:00 pm.

John McDonough, Executive Director of Health Care for All, a health care advocacy group, will deliver the keynote presentation "How Healthy is Massachusetts?", an update on the state of health care in the Commonwealth and the power of family voices. Parents will have the opportunity to learn more about the "MassHealth Family Coordinating Council", the "Medical Home" initiative, "Early Intervention & Beyond", Legisla-

tive Advocacy—"Real Clout", "Operation House Call", the "Family Support Law", "PPAL Parent Resource Network Line" and the "Family TIES Parent to Parent Program". Updated resource materials will also be available.

For more information or to register online, please visit their website at [www.massfamilyvoices.org](http://www.massfamilyvoices.org), or call (800)331-0688. ext. 210.

Call toll-free (877) 35-EI-PLP



Contact the Parent Leadership Project:

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



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



## Parent Participation Opportunities

### ***Early Intervention Training Center Opportunity***

#### **Seeking Parent Early Intervention Portfolio Reviewers**

**H**ere is a great opportunity for parents to become involved in the certification process for new Early Intervention personnel!

In Massachusetts in order to provide for quality assurance, all providers of Early Intervention services who work more than 20 hours a week are required to be certified as Early Intervention Specialists. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health contracts with the Early Intervention Training Center to conduct the training and certification process for EI personnel.

As part of the certification process, applicants prepare a portfolio of their work experiences and educational background, to be reviewed by a team comprised of an Early Intervention professional, and Early Intervention administrator and a **parent** of a child who is currently receiving or has received Early Intervention services.

The Early Intervention Training Center is currently seeking parents to be part of the Portfolio Reviewer Team. Training consists of two full days of activities and hands-on practice with portfolio review.



The next training is scheduled for October 28th and November 5th from 9:00 am-5:00 pm. Stipends are available for parents who attend the training. After the training, parents will be assigned to a Portfolio Review Panel. Parents receive \$75.00 for each portfolio they review.

For more information, please contact Jenna Wasson at (617) 236-7210 ext. 159 or Jim Young at (617) 236-7210 ext. 158 or call toll-free at (800) 331-0688.

### ***Parent Leadership Project Training Opportunity-October 27th***

#### **Parents Invited to Join EI Program Re-Certification Team by Faith Piaggi**

**T**he Department of Public Health (DPH) re-certifies Early Intervention programs every other year, to assure compliance with EI Operational Standards and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Parents of children who have graduated from Early Intervention are important members of the Early Intervention program re-certification team.

To become a parent team member, par-

ents attend a one day orientation to learn facilitation and teaming skills and how to use their expertise as a family member to collect information. After training, Early Intervention Regional Specialists and parent team members conduct focus groups at Early Intervention programs as part of the re-certification process, with each of the following: family members at the Early Intervention program, EI Program staff, community providers of services to young children and administrators of the

EI program.

The next Parent Team Member Training will be October 27th from 10:00 am-2:00 pm at a location to be determined. Stipends are available to parents for the training and re-certification visits. For more information, please contact Faith Piaggi, at (413) 663-3610 or [faithp1@verizon.net](mailto:faithp1@verizon.net) or the Parent Leadership Project toll-free at (877) 35-EI-PLP.

### ***Parent Information Opportunity***

#### **Public Benefits Training-October 1st**

**P**arents are invited to attend a Public Benefits Programs Training on October 1st at the Worcester Public Library, from 10 am to noon.

Gail Havlicek, Public Benefits Specialist at the Department of Public Health, Division for Special Health Needs, will present updated information on eligibility and the application process for SSI, CommonHealth (MassHealth), Kalleigh Mulligan

Home Care Program, Health Insurance Premium Payment Program (HIPP) and the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief.

Written materials will be provided. The information that will be provided pertains to children from the ages of birth to eighteen with transition issues discussed. Register by September 26th by calling Cindy Stringfellow at (508) 854-4877, ext. 27 or by email at [CSTRINGFELLOW@HMEA.ORG](mailto:CSTRINGFELLOW@HMEA.ORG)

## Parents Making a Difference

### Nancy Wiseman alerts Parents and MDs of "First Signs" of Autism Spectrum Disorders

When Nancy Wiseman's daughter Sarah was 18 months old, she wasn't talking or babbling like other children. She was self absorbed, rigid in behavior, and had difficulties in relating. After being told by Sarah's pediatrician repeatedly "not to worry", Wiseman insisted on a hearing evaluation, which was within normal range. Then, Wiseman self-referred to Pentucket Area Early Intervention, where her daughter was assessed with significant global delays. At two years of age, Sarah was diagnosed with PDD/NOS (Pervasive Developmental Disorder/Not Otherwise Specified), a disorder on the autism spectrum. Sarah was provided additional services through Building Blocks, a provider of specialty services in Massachusetts.

Wiseman's tenacity to get a diagnosis and the proper intervention paid off. Today, at seven years old, after five years of intensive intervention, Sarah is mainstreamed into Pentucket Public Schools. Although she has selective auditory and language processing challenges, as well as mood and attention issues, Sarah is very socially related and she is making solid academic progress at grade level.

Unfortunately, many parents and physicians are not informed about the signs of autism spectrum disorders and diagnosis often comes late. But Wiseman hopes to change that with First Signs, a national nonprofit organization she founded with another parent, Elaine Gabovitch, to educate medical practitioners, clinicians, early childhood educators, and parents

about the early warning signs of autism and other developmental disorders.

Through an integrated mix of press, direct mail, public service announcements, training, and their web site, the First Signs mission is to ensure the best developmental outcome for every child.

Wiseman and Gabovitch developed the First Signs Screening Kit which includes an award-winning educational video, *On the Spectrum: Children and Autism*, screening guidelines and validated screening tools, an Early Intervention referral guide, and a wall chart of developmental milestones.

They have also developed a kit to be mailed to physicians that focuses on the importance of screening at every well visit and referring to Early Intervention when in doubt.

A kit geared for parents includes a checklist of key social, emotional, and communication milestones for every stage from 4 to 36 months, as well as a list of "red flags" that may signal serious problems.

To date, First Signs has piloted a state-wide program in New Jersey and Minnesota, as well a mini pilot in Tallahassee. There are over 30 states interested in the program with 12 actively pursuing grants. The organization plans to create a national model for disseminating key information, the need for routine developmental screening, and the options available to parents of children diagnosed with autism

spectrum disorders.

Wiseman's goal is to improve the frequency and quality of screening of young children from birth through early school years, lower the age when children with autism and other development disorders are identified, and facilitate timely referral to local early intervention programs.

"The high and growing incidence of autism and related disorders demands greater awareness and improved early identification", says Wiseman. "We don't know how to prevent autism or how to cure it, but we do know that early and intensive treatment and intervention can profoundly change the quality of life for children at risk and their families. The key is early detection."

For more information about First Signs, visit their web site at [www.firstsigns.org](http://www.firstsigns.org).

*"Is Your Child Developing in Ways that Puzzle You? Recognizing behavior and language patterns commonly seen in autism and pervasive developmental disorders"*, a brochure produced by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health is available on our website at [www.eiplp.org](http://www.eiplp.org). Click on Basic Information to download a copy.

Do you have questions about your child's development? Talk with your service provider about your concerns.

## Conference Opportunity

### 9th Annual Current Trends in Autism Conference-October 24-26th

The LADDERS Clinic in conjunction with the Autism Research Foundation and Mass General Hospital for Children will present the 9th Annual Current Trends in Autism Conference on October 24-26 at the Sheraton-Newton Hotel in Newton, Massachusetts.

Workshop topics include the Neurobiology of Autism, What MRI Studies are Teaching us about the Physiological Bases for Autism Spectrum Disorders, Using Music to Work with Children on the Autism Spectrum, and Extreme Parenting: Family Life, Autism and the Pursuit of Happiness. For more information, visit [www.Ladders.org](http://www.Ladders.org) or call (617) 414-7012.

## The IFSP Guidance Document: A New Tool for Families and Early Intervention Staff

(Continued from page 1)

**The IFSP Checklist** : The Guidance Document contains an "IFSP Checklist" that includes the essential components of the IFSP. Families can review their IFSP to determine if all elements have been included. One point to remember—the IFSP is an evolving document that should be amended to reflect the changing needs of the child and the family.

For more information about the IFSP Guidance Document, ask your Early Intervention service provider to give you a copy or download a copy, from our website at [www.eiplp.org](http://www.eiplp.org). Click on IFSP Resources.

**The Early Intervention Training Center offers the following free workshops for parents and EI providers:**  
**"Family-Centered Services: Supporting Families in the Real World"** will be presented on October 9th at the Central Office of the Department of Public Health in West Boylston.

**"IFSP: Beyond Nuts and Bolts"** will be presented on October 29th at the Central Office of the Department of Public Health in West Boylston. For more information or to register, visit [www.eitrainingcenter.org](http://www.eitrainingcenter.org) or call toll-free (800)331-0688.



### IFSP Checklist — Does the IFSP:

- ❑ Recognize your child's individual strengths, talents, and developmental needs and support them in the context of your family's day?
- ❑ Identify opportunities where learning can occur within your family's daily routines?
- ❑ Specify ways that services can be provided in everyday routines, activities, and places?
- ❑ Include specialized expertise in adapting and accommodating routines, activities, and places to support your child's full participation and learning?
- ❑ Recognize the role played by your child's siblings, care providers, extended family members, and friends?
- ❑ Plan for developmentally appropriate services and strategies that are relevant to your family life?

### Conference Opportunity

#### Development of the Premature Infant: An Overview –October 14th

The Early Intervention Training Center, in conjunction with Children's Hospital in Boston, will present "Development of the Premature Infant: An Overview" on October 14th from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

**Parents** and Early Intervention providers are invited to attend this free presentation. Featured speakers include Jane Stewart, MD, Director, Infant Follow-up Program, Adre du Plessis, MD

Director of the Neonatal Neurology Program, Pediatric psychologists Jeanine Brescia, PhD and Lois Conde, PhD, Physical Therapists Alice Shea and Priscilla Osborne and Marsha Joselow, LICSW, Social Worker. Competency Education Credits are available for Early Intervention Specialists. Refreshment will be served and registration is required. Please call the Early Intervention Training Center at (617) 236-7210 ext. 159 or email [eireg@fcsn.org](mailto:eireg@fcsn.org).

### Training Opportunity

#### "Every Child Deserves a Medical Home"- November 8th

The American Academy of Pediatrics, Division of Children with Special Health Needs, in collaboration with Shriners Hospital and Massachusetts Family Voices will host an "Every Child Deserves a Medical Home" training on November 8th from 8:00 am - 3:00 pm at Shriners Hospital in Springfield.

A *medical home* is not a building, house or hospital. It is an approach to providing health care that is accessible, family-centered, continuous, comprehensive,

coordinated and culturally competent. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the ideal source of a child's *medical home* is a primary care physician working in partnership with the child's parents. The pediatrician and parents work together to identify and access all medical and non-medical support services to help children and their families achieve their maximum potential. The training program presents practical strategies for providing medical homes for children with special health needs,

with medically-complex or chronic health conditions.

For more information on the concept of medical home, visit [www.medicalhomeinfo.org](http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org). The conference is free for parents and stipends are available for parents who attend. For more information or to register, please call Shriners Hospital at (800) 433-9016 ext. 7081.



## CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

September 25- **Family Support Fair**, Best Western Sovereign Hotel, 10 Riverdale Street, West Springfield, 10:00 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 (413) 783-5500.

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.

October 2- **Building a Community: An Orientation to Massachusetts Early Intervention**-Part 1, McCormack Building, 21<sup>st</sup> floor, Ashburton Place, Boston, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm. A required training for newly hired Early Intervention providers, open to family members of children who receive Early Intervention services. The workshop is free and a stipend is available for **parent** participants. Other dates and locations: Part 2- November 12, Northampton; Part 1 – November 20, Taunton. For more information, call the EI Training Center at (800) 331-0688 or visit [www.eitrainingcenter.org](http://www.eitrainingcenter.org).

October 3– **Basic Rights Workshop**, 10-noon, Worcester. This course presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs covers basic information about state and federal laws to assist parents in planning, decision-making and monitoring of their child’s special education services. Materials are available in Spanish and Portuguese. For more information on location or to register, call (800) 331-0688 or online at [register@fcsn.org](mailto:register@fcsn.org). Other dates and locations: October 7-

Boston; October 8-Swampscott; October 9-Dover; October 14-Hyde Park; October 14-Ashland; October 14-Leominster; October 16-Melrose.

October 4– **Walk Far For N.A.A.R.** Southern New England Walk -Roger Williams Park, Providence, RI. A fund-raising event for the National Alliance for Autism Research. Northern New England Walk-October 5, Manchester, NH. For more information, call (888) 627-NAAR or visit [www.autismwalk.org](http://www.autismwalk.org).

October 12– **MDSC Buddy Walk**, Lake Quannapowitt, Wakefield. 1:00 pm to register, walk starts at 2:00 pm. Join other families for the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress Buddy Walk. For more information or to register, visit [www.mdsc.org](http://www.mdsc.org) or call (800) 664-MDSC

October 16- **Joining Voices Conference**, UCC Conference Center, Framingham. Massachusetts Family Voices and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health will be hosting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Joining Voices Parent Leaders Meeting. There will be a keynote presentation about the state of health care in Massachusetts and parents can learn more about parent/professional opportunities to improve systems of care for children with special health care needs. Updated resource materials will also be available. **Parents** are invited to attend this free conference. For more information, visit [www.massfamilyvoices.org](http://www.massfamilyvoices.org), call (800) 331-0688 or email [MassFV@fcsn.org](mailto:MassFV@fcsn.org).

October 16– “**The Out of Sync Child**”, 7:00-9:30 pm, Occupational Therapy Associates, 124 Watertown Street, Watertown. A lecture about sensory integration dysfunction by author Carol Kranowitz. For more information, call (617) 923-4410 or email [infor@otawatertown.com](mailto:infor@otawatertown.com).

October 20- **Single Parenting: Developing a Network of Support**, 7:00-8:30 pm, Families First Parenting Programs,

99 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge. A four-part series (October 20, 27, November 3 & 10). All single parents face challenges, whether single by choice or by life circumstances. In this series, you will share common parenting issues, learn strategies for developing a network of support, and for fostering a positive relationship with your child. Families First offers parenting programs on many topics. For more information or a complete schedule of events, please call (617) 868-7687 ext. 25 or visit [www.families-first.org](http://www.families-first.org).

October 28-**Turning 3 Workshop**, 7:00-9:00 pm, Somerville. The Federation for Children with Special Needs presents this free workshop that addresses the issue of transition from Early Intervention Services to the Special Education system when a child turns three. Other location and date: October 29-Fitchburg. For more information or to register, visit [www.fcsn.org](http://www.fcsn.org) or call the Federation at (800)331-0688.

November 1-**Twelfth Annual Conference on Learning Disabilities**, 7:30 am – 4:30 pm, Regis College, Weston. The Learning Disabilities Association of Massachusetts and Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes presents this all day conference for **parents** and professionals. For more information visit [www.ldam.org](http://www.ldam.org) or call (781) 891-5009.

### Corrections

In the July/August Edition of the Parent Perspective Newsletter, Hausslein Award team member from Reach Early Intervention Program, Maureen Flaherty was incorrectly identified as Marie Flaherty.

The correct web address for the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress is [www.mdsc.org](http://www.mdsc.org)

We’re sorry!



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

## FAMILY PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES & EI PROGRAM NEWS

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

**Dimock Early Intervention Program (Dimock)** has adopted pieces of the Reggio Emilia approach to childcare which is grounded in the belief that early childhood care is essential for the healthy development of infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers. In this approach, the children are powerful and capable partners in learning and the child is considered to have "100 languages". The staff at **Dimock** works to facilitate child-driven learning by providing a variety of sensory and gross motor activities at the center. The children take the lead in exploring their environment and their interests determine the direction of activities.

**Boston Early Intervention for Children & Families Program** will present an orientation for new families. Several workshops for parents are also planned on topics that include potty training, public benefits, and health care.

**Harbor Area Early Intervention Program (Harbor Area EIP)** is planning an open house in December. Parents, children and community members are invited to attend. A workshop about safety in the home was recently held at the **Harbor Area EIP** and parents learned how to install window guards to prevent accidental falls by children. The guards were donated by the East Boston Neighborhood Health Program. Other recent workshops for parents include one on behavioral issues, CPR training, and an IFSP workshop. **Harbor Area EIP** is planning a day of apple-picking for families at their program. Use of a van for this trip has been donated by a local organization, TSCM. Also in the planning stages, a Thanksgiving Dinner for families at the program.

### **CENTRAL NEWS by Dawn King**

Grab a blanket and a picnic basket — it's the annual **UMass EI and Family Support Program** Family Picnic on September 17<sup>th</sup>. Current and alumni Early intervention families are invited to attend this event. Parents will have the opportunity to talk with other EI parents and to enjoy some entertainment. Sensory tables and toys will be out for all.

New parent contact, Rashni and new parent liaison, Ana Morales, are jumping right in together by planning the next Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meeting. They are looking for interested parents to come with their ideas for fundraising, workshops to bring to **UMass EI** and more!

**Minute Man Early Intervention Program** parent contact, Korine Stephens, will be kicking off a new Parent/Play group for children on the Autism Spectrum, in the Boxborough area. Interested parents should contact Korine directly at (978) 263-9477.

Welcome to Kim Therrien, new Parent Contact for **MSPCC Good Start Early Intervention Program- Worcester**. Kim

and several other parents met together to begin organizing the Parent Advisory Council, (PAC). They had some discussion around the Parent Leadership Project and Hauslein Awards, while their children were all attending playgroup. The group would like to invite all families to get involved and are willing to help with carpooling to and from meetings. For more information, please contact Kim. Lastly, a big thank you to Mary Jones for her time and commitment in her role as parent contact. Mary continues to be the Central Region Parent Representative for the Interagency Coordinating Council.

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

**Tri-City Early Intervention in Medford** has just started a parent-toddler computer group, through a collaborative project with the Malden-Everett Family Network. A Parent and child are paired with another parent and child to learn how to use cause and effect software and use of adaptive switches. The software motivates the children and fosters the development of fine motor and cognitive skills. All of the computers for this program have been donated and students from Malden High School helped to make them operational.

**North Shore Infant & Toddler Program at Cape Ann** Director Kate McCarthy and Parent Contact, Zhenobia Henderson are working on a survey to be sent out to parents in the program. They hope to gauge the level of parent interest in proposed programs. Zhenobia has also written a letter introducing herself to parents in the program, that will be in the mail shortly.

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

How do Early Intervention Program staff, parent contacts and parent liaisons in the southeast region work together to increase communication and share information with families? Let me count the ways:

The **Kennedy-Donovan Center-Attleboro Early Intervention Program (KDC-Attleboro)** has several avenues for getting information out to families. Monthly Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meetings are held and parents have access to information on community and programs events, resources and parent workshops. Parents also have the opportunity to meet each other and to offer ideas and suggestions. The PAC Flash, a monthly flyer that recaps past events and lists future events, is distributed to families by their service coordinators. The PAC Flash is also posted at the center.

**KDC-Attleboro** also produces a quarterly newsletter that details staff news, upcoming events, PAC meetings and other information. The newsletter is distributed through the service coordinators. All families receive A Parent Handbook Guide to Early Intervention when they begin services. Included in this packet is a family support page that includes information about

## FAMILY PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES & EI PROGRAM NEWS — continued

the PAC and about statewide opportunities for involvement with the Parent Leadership Project, Family TIES and the Early Intervention Training Center. Families are also given a questionnaire to return if they are interested in receiving more information on these opportunities.

At the **Taunton Area Early Intervention Program (Taunton Area EIP)**, families receive a copy of the Parent Perspective Newsletter at intake and are given a release to sign if they would like to be placed on the mailing list. They are also given a brochure about the Parent Leadership Project, as well as a list of ways that parents can get involved at the program. Every six months, families are asked through a survey whether they are interested in additional services or support or if they want to become involved in the program.

The **Fall River Area Early Intervention Program (Fall River EIP)** provides copies of the programs newsletter and the Parent Perspective Newsletter to families at intake. **Fall River EIP** also has an active PAC that meets once a month, led by parent liaison, Maria Sousa. The next PAC meeting is October 15th from 10:00 – 11:30 am and transportation and respite care services are available.

**Kennedy-Donovan Center-New Bedford (KDC– New Bedford)** welcomes new Parent Contact Nancy Pinto. Nancy can be reached at (508) 997-1570.

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

**The Child Guidance Center Early Intervention Program in Springfield (Child Guidance EIP)** is trying to start a Parent Advisory Council (PAC). Interested parents are encouraged to

contact their service coordinator or Program Director at (413) 732-7419. Welcome to new **Child Guidance EIP** Program Director Robin Therrien.

Also in Springfield, on November 8th, Shriners Hospital in conjunction with Massachusetts Family Voices and the American Academy of Pediatrics will present “Every Child Deserves a Medical Home” from 8:00 am-3:00 pm. The term “medical home” refers to an approach for providing medical care where a child’s pediatrician and parents work together to identify and access all medical and non-medical support services for the child. This training is geared toward physicians, medical office staff, and parents of children with special health needs. The training is free for parents and stipends are available for parents who attend. For more information or to register, call Shriners Hospital at (413) 433-9016, ext. 7081.

The **Western Regional Consultation Program (WRCP)** will hold two workshops for parents, providers and daycare personnel - a sign language class on October 1st, and a workshop on feeding tubes on November 5th. For more information, call Karen Cassidy at (413) 783-5500.

The **WRCP** will also present a Family Support Fair on September 25th at the Best Western Sovereign Hotel in West Springfield from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm. Families are invited to come and learn about community programs and state agencies that provide support services for families who have children with special needs. For further information, please call Karen Cassidy at (413) 783-5500.

## Family TIES Parent to Parent Needs You!

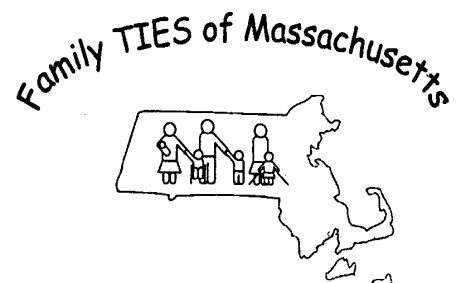
**F**amily TIES coordinators are all parents of children with special needs and bring a multitude of personal experience to our job. We offer information and support to any family who has a child with a disability or chronic illness. All of us have personally benefited by meeting experienced parents who have paved the way for our own families. These parents have passed laws, reorganized systems and changed attitudes so that our children live in a world that is more accepting of their differences and respectful of their rights. We need to pick up where they have left off and at Family TIES, we think one excellent way to do this is to support one parent at a time.

### *What is Parent to Parent?*

When you have a child with a disability or chronic illness, you often feel very much alone. The mission of the Parent to Parent Program is to match parents who have requested to talk to a more experienced parent by diagnosis, age of child, region of state or other special needs. Support parents share their story, listen and offer information and support while respecting confidentiality, culture and individual differences.

We offer support parents free training and ongoing support from Family TIES coordinators.

If you would like to be matched with a parent of a child with similar special needs, or if you have experience that might help another family, please call Joanne Spencer, Family TIES Training and Outreach Coordinator at (800) 905-TIES or (508) 947-1231 or email [famtiesp2p@fcsn.org](mailto:famtiesp2p@fcsn.org).



# 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) 774-6627  
Jocelyn.Woog@state.ma.us

## REGIONAL COORDINATORS

### Boston

Hyacinth Irving  
(617) 436-4037

### Central

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

### Metrowest

Cindy Kaplan  
(617)547-8070  
ckapweiss@yahoo.com

### Northeast

Wendy Lemire  
(877)35-EI-PLP  
WendyLemire912@hotmail.com

### Southeast

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

### West

Faith Piaggi  
(413) 663-3610  
faithpl@verizon.net

## EI PROGRAM RE-CERTIFICATION PARENT COORDINATOR

Faith Piaggi  
(413) 663-3610  
faithpl@verizon.net

# The Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project NEWS

## It's Hausslein Time

The end of summer signals many events—back to school time, leaves slowly changing hues, time for picking apples and pumpkins and...it's application time for the Hausslein Early Intervention Parent Leadership Awards! Do you have an idea for a project that would benefit families enrolled in Early Intervention and your community? The Hausslein Awards, named for influential parent leader, Evelyn Hausslein, were created to give families an opportunity to take leadership roles in creating supports at their Early Intervention programs and in their communities. Awards of up to \$1000 are granted to parent teams to implement their innovative projects. For details on award criteria and to download a Hausslein Award application, visit our website, [www.eiplt.org](http://www.eiplt.org). To receive an application by mail or for more information, call the Parent Leadership Project toll-free at (877) 35-EI-PLP. Please note: applications must be postmarked by October 10th.

## Welcome aboard, Cindy!

The Parent Leadership Project is pleased to welcome Cindy Kaplan as the new Metrowest Regional Parent Coordinator. Cindy has been involved with the Cambridge-Somerville Early Intervention Program PAC (Parent Advisory Council) for one year and has served as the Parent Contact for the Program. She and other PAC members co-wrote a grant and received a Hausslein Award last year. Cindy has two children, ages 4 and 2, the younger of whom receives Early Intervention services and continues to amaze on a daily basis. She looks forward to meeting more parents in the region.

Thank you to Lisa Mayer for covering the Metrowest area over the past year.

**NEXT DEADLINE:** We welcome your input and suggestions for resources and articles. The next deadline is **November 13th**. Please contact your regional coordinator or the newsletter editor, Jocelyn Woog.

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. 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 [eiplt@yahoo.com](mailto:eiplt@yahoo.com).

