



The Parent Leadership Project's *Parent Perspective*

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Early Intervention Information and Resources

Feb/Mar 2008

Paths to Leadership: Becoming a Parent Leader

National Recognition for a Massachusetts Parent Leader

Many families who have had children in Early Intervention can point to Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project Program Director Darla Gundler as the person who helped them begin their own journey to leadership. The parent of an Early Intervention graduate, Darla has been a powerful voice on behalf of families, encouraging family participation and leadership at all levels of the Early Intervention system. To recognize her achievements and her commitment to parent-professional partnerships, Darla Gundler was recently awarded the 2007 IDEA Infant Toddler Coordinators Association (ITCA) National Parent Leadership Award.

Since 2003, this award has been given to family leaders who have made significant contributions to the Part C Early Intervention System. Darla's own journey to leadership began when her daughter was enrolled in Early Intervention and has continued for 14 years. She became active in the Parent Advisory Council at her Early Intervention Program and soon joined the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) as a Parent Representative. For the past ten years, Darla has been the Director of the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project, mentoring parents and family members across the state and

supporting them as they develop life long leadership skills and become involved in systems of care. Darla is a regular participant and family leader at the national level as well, ensuring that the family voice is heard at the Office for Special Education Programs (OSEP) conference in Washington, D.C. and at numerous other events across the country. Her understanding of the Part C Early Intervention system and her experience as a family leader led her to become one of the founding members of the Early Intervention Family Alliance (EIFA), a national group of family leaders dedicated to improving outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities.



The Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project, along with the Department of Public Health and the many families of children in Early Intervention congratulate Darla and celebrate the recognition of her achievement.

Opportunity Knocks

Visions of Community 2008

On Saturday, March 1, the Federation for Children with Special Needs will host the 2008 Visions of Community Conference at the World Trade Center in Boston. The conference will feature 39 sessions with topics including special education, assistive technology, creating partnerships and family support. Many of the sessions will be presented and/or translated in Spanish, Portuguese and Cantonese. Families and professionals will have opportunities to network, gather information and share resources.

The Federation has made arrangements for free round trip transportation to and from the World Trade Center from various sites across the state. Buses will be leaving from Holyoke, Worcester, Taunton and Lawrence. Seating on the buses is limited, and is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Families interested in accessing the free transportation MUST pre-register by contacting the Federation at 1-800-331-0688 ext. 196 or email conf2008@fcsn.org.

A limited number of partial scholarships are available to family members to help with the cost of registration. For information about the scholarships, please call the Federation at 1-800-331-0688 ext. 198 (English), 197 (Portuguese) or 199 (Spanish) and leave a message.

Child care for children ages 3 to 14 is also available at the conference. Families registering for the conference must indicate on the registration form that they will need child care.

Registration forms can be downloaded from the Federation for Children with Special Needs website at www.fcsn.org.



FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

NCSEAM Family Survey Update



Families, we are so pleased to report that **665** Family Surveys were returned by the end of the year. Thank you for your support of this important initiative. In February 2008, we will use the information you provided to report to the Federal government about the value and impact of Early Intervention

services for children and families in Massachusetts from your perspective. In addition, each EI program will receive feedback from the Surveys that will help them to improve the services and supports they offer to you.

Families will continue to receive a Survey at each six month IFSP review. Please fill out your Survey and return it in the envelope provided. This is an on-going initiative. The Department of Public Health, lead agency for Part C Early Intervention services, must report to the Federal government every year. EI programs report to DPH and conduct continuous quality improvement activities based on the information you give.

Family Survey Frequently Asked Questions

1. My child has been enrolled in EI for six months, but we moved and are now in a new program. When will I get

my Family Survey?

You will receive a Survey after you have been with your new program for six months. We want the information you provide to reflect your experience in your current program to ensure that your responses are helpful to the program where you are receiving your services.

2. Will the changes to EI eligibility keep me from filling out a Family Survey?
No, every family who has been enrolled in an EI program for six months will still receive a Family Survey whether the review is for an eligibility evaluation or for an IFSP review.
3. I'm still confused about the Family Survey and why it's important. What should I do?
Talk to your service coordinator and ask for more information and help in understanding the process. You may also call the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project toll free line: 1-877-353-4757 to talk with another parent.

Novedades del Cuestionario de Familia NCSEAM



Familias, nos complace mucho informar que para fin de año se habían recibido **665** encuestas familiares. Gracias por apoyar esta importante iniciativa. En febrero del 2008, usaremos la información que han provisto para informar al gobierno federal acerca

del valor y el impacto de los servicios de Intervención Temprana a niños y familias de Massachusetts, desde la perspectiva de ustedes. Además, las encuestas ofrecerán información a los programas de Intervención Temprana que ayudará a que mejoren los servicios y apoyos que le brindan.

Las familias seguirán recibiendo una encuesta cada seis meses cuando se revise su plan individualizado de servicios. Por favor, complete la encuesta y envíela de vuelta en el sobre provisto. Esto se hace en forma continua. El Departamento de Salud Pública, agencia principal para la Parte C de los servicios de Intervención Temprana, debe presentar un informe anual al gobierno federal. Los programas de Intervención Temprana informan al Departamento de Salud Pública y llevan a cabo actividades continuas de mejora de calidad en base a la información que usted da.

Preguntas comunes sobre la encuesta familiar

1. Mi hijo ha estado inscrito en Intervención Temprana hace ya seis meses pero nos mudamos y ahora estamos

en un programa nuevo. ¿Cuándo recibiré mi encuesta familiar?

Usted recibirá una encuesta después de que haya estado en su programa nuevo durante seis meses. Queremos que la información que usted dé refleje la experiencia suya en su programa actual para asegurar que sus respuestas sean útiles al programa en que usted recibe servicios.

2. ¿Impedirán los cambios en los requisitos de elegibilidad que yo complete una encuesta familiar?
No, toda familia que haya estado inscrita en un programa de Intervención Temprana durante seis meses seguirá recibiendo una encuesta familiar ya se trate de una revisión para evaluar elegibilidad o de una revisión periódica del plan individualizado de servicios a la familia.
3. Todavía estoy confundido con respecto a la encuesta familiar y por qué es importante. ¿Qué debo hacer?
Hable con su coordinador de servicios y pida más información y ayuda para entender el proceso. Para hablar con otro padre, también puede llamar a la línea telefónica sin cargo del Proyecto Padres Líderes del programa de Intervención Temprana (Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project): 1-877-353-4757.

One Path to Leadership . . .**Finding Your Way:
One Parent's Journey to Leadership**

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

My name is Kim O'Connell, and I am a parent representative for the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC). Participating on the ICC and hearing from the wide variety of agencies and individuals who serve on the Council and advise DPH about the Early Intervention system has been a great learning experience for me.

As an ICC member, I was invited to attend the National Early Childhood Conference in Washington, D.C. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) within the U.S. Department of Education hosts this conference. Families, state agency Part C and Early Intervention staff from around the country all took part in the Conference.

Prepare yourselves for an absolute feast of acronyms! The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) was a co-sponsor of the conference. Other examples were Infant-Toddler Coordinators Association (ITCA) and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). There was an orientation for first-time attendees, which helped me to get a basic understanding of all these acronyms, although there were times when I or other first-timers would have to say "huh?" and ask for a translation.

Many of the sessions focused on service providers, but there were a number of sessions that I found appealing as a parent. At a breakout group, we shared information on our state resources for addressing parent advocacy. While at the conference I joined a group of parents, mostly from Washington State, for a tour of Capitol Hill and a visit to speak with their state representative. They suggested that I contact Senator Kennedy to see if we could meet with him. "But I've never done this before!" I said to Amy Young, Massachusetts ICC Co-Chair. "It's easy," Amy replied, "Just call up Molly, his secretary, and say 'I'm a constituent from Massachusetts and a parent representative from the ICC. I'd like to visit to speak with the Senator about Early Intervention, Part C regulations, and the reauthorization of Part C in 2009.'" Unfortunately Senator Kennedy wasn't available, but I had a great time on the tour, met the assistants to Senator Adam Smith of Washington, and learned that it really wasn't so hard to get in touch with our legislators.

The closing presentation was one of my favorite parts of the conference. "The Dance of Partnership: Why Do My Feet



Hurt?" was presented by Janice Fialka, social worker and parent of a young adult with special needs. With both insight and humor, Janice walked us through the many partnerships she has had with professionals and others working with her son. One partnership began when her son Micah said "I want to go through the same door as all of my friends." The work of partnering with school professionals to make that possible began. There were many metaphors for the types of partnerships we go through during our lifetimes: Short-term versus long-term dance partners involved in our children's care, times when we need to "sit one out," times when we or others may not be very graceful in the dance of partnership. Janice noted that the key is to stay curious about each other as participants in the partnership dance that serves children who need our assistance. Sometimes professionals need to reinterpret when parents may seem to be in a "place called De Nile" (denial). Janice's husband said he really was just in a place of hope, still hoping for possibilities to be reached for and realized.

Coming home from this conference I feel more knowledgeable about the bigger world of Early Intervention and empowered to contact my state and national representatives, to keep the needs of EI and Part C funding on their minds. I have been amazed at what parents and caring professionals have been able to accomplish from grassroots beginnings. A highlight of the Conference was the chance to meet Martha Zeigler, a parent and the founder of the Federation for Children with Special Needs!

Many thanks to Darla Gundler for taking care of all the details that made the trip so easy and encouraging me to be an active participant in the conference. My thanks to the other Massachusetts ICC participants who shared their experiences and advice with me to make this conference a useful and meaningful experience.

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

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

Me llamo Kim O'Connell y soy representante de padres en el Consejo Coordinador entre Agencias (Interagency Coordinating Council o ICC). Participar en el Consejo y oír de la amplia variedad de agencias e individuos que sirven en él y asesorar al Departamento de Salud Pública sobre el sistema de Intervención Temprana ha sido para mí una gran experiencia de aprendizaje.

Como miembro, me invitaron a la Conferencia Nacional sobre la Primera Infancia celebrada por la Oficina de Programas de Educación Especial (OSEP) del Ministerio de Educación de los Estados Unidos en Washington, D. C. Participaron familias, la agencia estatal para la Parte C y el personal de Intervención Temprana.

¡Prepárense ahora para una verdadera fiesta de siglas! La conferencia fue coauspiciada por el Centro Nacional de Asistencia Técnica para la Primera Infancia (NECTAC). Otros ejemplos fueron la Asociación de Coordinadores para Bebés y Niños Pequeños (ITCA) y Memorando de Entendimiento (MOU). La orientación para los que concurríamos por primera vez me ayudó a empezar a entender todas estas siglas, aunque más de una vez yo y otros primerizos nos quedamos boquiabiertos pensando "¿Qué?!" y tuvimos que pedir una traducción.

Muchas de las sesiones se concentraron en los proveedores de servicios, pero varias me resultaron interesantes como madre. Trabajamos en grupos pequeños y compartimos información sobre nuestros recursos estatales para abogar en favor de nuestros niños. Durante la conferencia, fui con un grupo de padres, en su mayoría del estado de Washington, a un tour del Capitolio y una cita con el representante de su estado. Me sugirieron que me comunicara con el senador Kennedy para ver podía reunirse con nosotros. "¿Pero es que nunca he hecho algo así antes!" le dije a Amy Young, codirectora del Consejo de Massachusetts. "Es fácil" me dijo Amy, "llamas a Molly, su secretaria y le dices que eres de Massachusetts, que eres representante de padres en el Consejo y que te gustaría hacer una cita para hablar con el senador sobre el programa de Intervención Temprana, las regulaciones de la Parte C y la reautorización de la Parte C en 2009". La-

mentablemente, el senador Kennedy no estaba disponible, pero la pasé muy bien en el tour, conocí a los asistentes del senador de Washington, Adam Smith, y aprendí que no es nada difícil ponernos en contacto con nuestros legisladores.

La presentación de cierre fue una de mis partes favoritas de la conferencia. Janice Fialka, trabajadora social y madre de un adulto joven con necesidades especiales, presentó "La danza de la cooperación: ¿por qué me siento herida?" Con conocimiento profundo y humor, Janice nos contó sobre las muchas relaciones de colaboración que ha tenido con profesionales y otras personas que trabajan con su hijo. Una de estos lazos comenzó cuando su hijo, Mica, dijo: "Quiero entrar por la misma puerta que todos mis amigos". Así fue que comenzó a colaborar con los profesionales de la escuela para convertir esto en realidad. Usó muchas metáforas al referirse a los tipos de colaboración que atravesamos en la vida: "parejas de baile" a corto y largo plazo que participan en el cuidado de nuestros niños, ocasiones en que nos conviene "no bailar esta canción", momentos en que nosotros o los otros tal vez no nos movamos con tanta gracia en la "danza de la colaboración". Janice observó que la clave es mantener la curiosidad por el otro como pareja de baile en una danza de colaboración que sirve a niños que necesitan nuestra ayuda. A veces, los profesionales tenemos que reinterpretar las cosas cuando los padres parecen estar en un estado de negación. El esposo de Janice dijo que él estaba realmente en un lugar de esperanza, aguardando aún alcanzar y convertir en realidad ciertas posibilidades.

Después de esta conferencia me siento mejor informada sobre el mundo más amplio de la Intervención Temprana y preparada para comunicarme con mis representantes estatales y federales para recordarles la necesidad de financiar los servicios de Intervención Temprana y la Parte C. Me quedé sorprendida por lo que los padres y profesionales que se preocupan han sido capaces de lograr empezando desde las bases. Un punto de especial interés de la conferencia fue la oportunidad de conocer a Martha Zeigler, madre y fundadora de la Federación para Niños con Necesidades Especiales.

Muchas gracias a Darla Gundler por ocuparse de todos los detalles y hacer que el viaje fuera tan fácil y por alentarme a participar activamente en la conferencia. Agradezco también a los otros participantes del Consejo de Massachusetts que compartieron experiencias y consejos para hacer de esta conferencia una experiencia útil y significativa.



WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

Visions of Community 2008 — March 1 at the Seaport World Trade Center, Boston. Sponsored by the Federation for Children with Special Needs, this conference provides an opportunity for families of children with special needs and the professionals who work with them to learn, network and share information. Registration is required, and there is a cost associated with this conference. A limited number of scholarships are available. More information, including a registration form, can be found on the Federation for Children with Special Needs website at www.fcsn.org or call 1-800-331-0688.

Basic Rights/Turning Three — March 13 from 7-9pm at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Sturbridge. This training, offered by the Federation for Children with Special Needs, provides families with an introduction to their rights and responsibilities under federal and state special education laws. The workshop will also highlight the difference between Early Intervention and publicly funded preschool programs for children with disabilities. For more information or to register, please contact the Federation at 1-800-331-0688.

Navigating the Maze — March 27 from 9am to 3:30pm at the Summit View Meeting House, 555 Northampton St., Holyoke. This day-long conference offers families and professionals the opportunity to learn about public benefits and programs available to support children with special needs. Information about programs from the Department of Public Health and the Department of Mental Retardation as well as mental health resources will be discussed. Lunch will be provided and registration is free for families. Pre-registration is required by March 17. Please call by March 7 to request interpretation. For more information or to register, please contact Karen Cassidy at 413-783-5500.

AGBell Conference — March 28 at the Holiday Inn Select in Woburn. The Massachusetts Chapter of Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will host their annual conference. The conference will focus on "How to Achieve Spoken Communication and Literacy Outcomes for Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing." For more information, contact Joanne Travers at 978-312-1200.

An IEP for My Child — April 2 from 7-9pm at the Professional Development Center in Springfield. This workshop takes parents step-by-step through the development of the IEP for students in special education. For registration information, contact the Federation for Children with Special Needs at 1-800-331-0688.

Turning Three — April 3 from 6-8pm at Dimock Early Intervention Program. This training helps families understand the differences between Early Intervention and publicly funded preschool for children with disabilities. Discussion includes eligibility for special education and the parents' role in the transition process. More information is available by contacting the Federation for Children with Special Needs at 1-800-331-0688.



Community Resources for People with Autism 18th Annual Conference — April 8 from 8:30am to 4pm at the Log Cabin Banquet & Meeting-house in Holyoke. This conference brings together families and professionals to learn how best to support children with autism at home, school and in the community. Registration is required, and a limited number of scholarships are available to families. For more information, contact 413-529-2428.

SAVE THE DATE! 25th Annual New England Regional Seminar for Children with Visual Impairments and their Families — May 3 at Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown. This conference for families of young children (birth to age 7) with visual impairments offers information on a wide variety of topics. More information will be available on the Perkins website at www.perkins.org.

Statewide RCP Roller Skate Party



Saturday, April 12th from 5:30 to 7:30pm
Roll On America, 90 Duval Rd. Lancaster

Families of children enrolled in RCP Programs across the state are invited to attend. Siblings are welcome! Free skating and pizza for families. The rink is open to shoes, skates, wheelchairs, strollers and walkers. Many families attended last year's event with their child's shiny new "wheels"! For more information, please contact Karen Cassidy at 413-783-5500.

Working Together—Boston Region

Bay Cove Early Intervention once again enjoyed a wonderful partnership this holiday season with a group known as the “Fifty Families” in Lincoln, MA. Ten years ago, one couple, Tucker and RL Smith, started getting a few letters to Santa from the Boston post office to fulfill children’s requests. Each year, they invited more of their friends to participate with them in this holiday tradition. Eventually they were coordinating the efforts of fifty families in Lincoln to provide gifts for children in Boston. Several years ago, Dan Boynton, the founder of Bay Cove Human Services, spoke to his church in Lincoln, which is also the Smith’s church, about the needs of some of the families served by Bay Cove Early Intervention. Tucker and RL decided this would be a perfect fit for the “Fifty Families” project, so they invited Bay Cove EI to identify families who could use some extra help during the holiday season. EI staff filled out gift tags with children’s first names and a suggested developmentally appropriate gift. These tags were then distributed to the fifty families in Lincoln, who bought the gifts, wrapped them and delivered them to the program the week before Christmas. Staff then delivered the gifts to parents who could give them to their children in whatever way was appropriate for their family’s tradition.

Since that first year, the number of families in Lincoln who participate has grown to 102 families. This year the group filled 240 gift tag requests for entire families who otherwise might not have had much reason to celebrate the holidays. One member of the donor group sent warm bathrobes and jackets for moms, others sent cases of disposable diapers and wipes; still other sent Stop and Shop gift cards so families could enjoy a special holiday dinner. On Dec. 14, in the lull between snow storms, a caravan of ten big SUVs pulled up at the program and spent the next hour unloading hundreds of beautifully wrapped gifts purchased for specific families. The folks who came to deliver the gifts then met with program staff who were able to let them know how wonderful it is to feel the support of the larger community and to convey the thanks of the families who have been so appreciative of this support as well. As one Early Intervention parent said, “It is great to know that you are not alone; that some one out there cares about me and my child.”

Children’s Community Early Intervention is offering an oral motor and feeding group to meet the community’s needs and requests for more support around feeding disorders among the birth to three population. The group will be run by two experienced Speech Language Pathologists (SLP) and will introduce fun activities that will target individual oral motor and feeding needs of the children as well as train the parents in different techniques to use at home. Children will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of motor activities to address gross and oral motor development as well as allow for playful food

exploration to concentrate on a functional component of feeding. Therapists from other disciplines will be available to consult, including physical and occupational therapists. A screening by an SLP will be conducted prior to beginning the group. Families who are interested in learning more about the group can contact Holly Cavender-Wood at 617-971-2477 or Alicia Greene at 617-971-2472.

The **Thom Boston Regional Consultation Program** is excited to announce that they are the recipients of a \$10,000 grant to provide child-specific Augmentative Communication and Assistive Technology consultations, support and equipment through an equipment loan program. The grant will benefit Boston RCP children and families. An Assistive Technology team, including an Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist and Speech Language Pathologist, has been created. Trainings will also be provided to EI staff to learn more about Assistive Technology for infants and toddlers.

In the past year, **Boston RCP** has hosted many events for families and community members, including Medication Administration trainings, an ice cream party, and first aid/CPR training. Upcoming family events and trainings include an RCP Winter Party for Parents to be held on Saturday, February 9. This will be an opportunity to meet other RCP families and enjoy refreshments. A feeding and G-tube training will also be offered this spring. In April, families from Boston RCP are invited to join other RCP families throughout the state for a Statewide Rollerskating Party in Leominster. For more information about any of these events, please contact Boston RCP office at 617-383-6207 and speak with Brie Tupper.



Public Hearing for Early Intervention Funding Application

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health in cooperation with the Interagency Coordinating Council will hold a public hearing on the Commonwealth's 22nd Year Application for funding under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Part C of IDEA is the federal law that provides funds to assist states in providing Early Intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities. In order to receive these funds, the state needs to submit an annual application.

As the lead agency for Early Intervention Services, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health encourages anyone with an interest in the Early Intervention system to testify in person at the hearings, including members of families with young children, professionals who serve young children and families, and officials from any state agencies with responsibilities for services for children and families. Written testimony will also be accepted.

Hearings will be held on **March 6, 2008 from 10am to 1pm** at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, 250 Washington St., Boston in the Public Health Conference Room, 2nd Floor. A second meeting will be held on **March 7, 2008 from 10:30am to 1:30pm** at Criterion Heritage Early Intervention, 30 Old Lyman Rd., South Hadley.

Written comments may be sent until April 9, 2008 and should be addressed to:

Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Early Intervention Services
250 Washington St, 5th Floor
Boston MA 02108-4619
Attn: Ron Benham, Director, DPECSHN

For additional information, directions or to request assistive devices/services, please contact Darla Gundler, ICC Staff, at 1-877-353-4757 (TTY: 1-800-769-9991).

Family TIES of Massachusetts: *Together in Enhancing Support* by Mary Castro Summers

Family TIES of Massachusetts is a network for parents of children with special needs. As parents of children with special needs, we realize that the most powerful source of support is other parents. Sharing information provides family members with knowledge and skills that help to improve our children's opportunities.

As the parent of a young child, do you wonder where to find fun, educational, social opportunities for your child? Have you heard of the Family Networks, funded by the Massachusetts Department of Education? Across the state, there are 42 centers that offer programs for children from birth to age 6 and their parents. Services include facilitated parent/child playgroups

and activities, staffed drop-in centers, parent educational workshops on a wide variety of topics, support groups, and community service activities. They also offer leadership opportunities through their Parent Advisory Councils. For more information, visit <http://www.watertown.k12.ma.us/wfn/othernetworks.html>.

For more ideas on making connections in your local community, contact the staff of Family TIES of Massachusetts (800-905-TIES or www.massfamilyties.org)



Transition Training and Information: Supporting Families

Transitioning from Early Intervention can be a time of anxiety for some families. Learning more about the process can ease those fears and help families look forward to their child's new experiences. Many EI programs sponsor transition activities to help families find information.

KDC in Attleboro supports the families in its EI program by hosting a Transition Night. Their recent training was presented by Tammy Cahill MS-SLP, Early Intervention Transition Coordinator. The workshop discussed the process of leaving EI and moving to the local public school system, transition timelines and community resources for support and advocacy. School representatives were invited to attend to answer families' questions. Parents who attended the event said,

"Transition Night was a nice opportunity to bridge EI, parents and schools." Families were also happy to learn more about the process, "The timeline for transition and what evaluations and meetings need to take place was most helpful. I received a lot of insight on planning for the meetings." Many families also expressed that meeting some of the preschool teachers was a nice part of the evening.

Other transition resources for families include:

- *A Guide For Families: Best Practices in Early Childhood Transition*, available at [http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs/EECTransitionGuideForWeb\(3\).pdf](http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs/EECTransitionGuideForWeb(3).pdf)
- "Turning Three" Workshop, Federation for Children with Special Needs

THE PARENT LEADERSHIP PROJECT

The Parent Leadership Project was created to support parents whose children receive early intervention services. The Project's main goal is to promote lifetime advocacy, leadership skills and the development of an informed parent constituency, which will encourage early intervention services to be increasingly family centered. The Project is a parent driven endeavor, which continually seeks family involvement and input regarding the needs of families enrolled in Early Intervention and is implemented by parents whose own children have received EI services. The Project staff consists of a Statewide Director, a Communications Coordinator, an EI Program Focused Monitoring Parent Coordinator, Education/Training Coordinator and Collaboration and Outreach Coordinator. Please feel free to contact any of them with your thoughts, suggestions, and concerns.

Statewide Director:

Darla Gundler
Toll-Free 877-35-EI-PLP
800-445-1255 Ext. 1157
Darla.gundler@state.ma.us

Contact Us:

Toll-Free: 877-35-EI-PLP
Email: eiplp@yahoo.com
On the web: www.eiplp.org

Communications Coordinator

Brenda Allair
413-586-7525 Ext. 1162
Brenda.allair@state.ma.us

EI Focused Monitoring Parent Coordinator

Faith Piaggi
413-663-3610
faithp1@verizon.net

Collaboration and Outreach Coordinator

Jada Carlson
978-851-7261 Ext. 4058
Jada.carlson@state.ma.us

Education/Training Coordinator VACANT



23 Service Center
Northampton MA 01060

Save the Date!

29th Annual Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium (MEIC) Conference Wednesday & Thursday, May 7-8, 2008

Please mark your calendars for this conference! PARENT CONTACTS, look for further information in your mail!

This conference will offer families, Early Intervention providers and other early childhood professionals opportunities to network, share information and learn more about the needs of infants and toddlers.

Interested in more information? Contact the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project at:

1-877-353-4757

