



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

(877) 35-EI-PLP ♦ www.eiplp.org ♦ eiplp@yahoo.com

**Early Intervention Information and Resources**

**January/February 2005**

*Families Finding Their Way: Tools for the Journey*

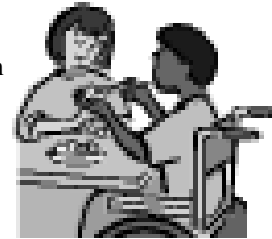
**Finding and Funding Child Care for Children with Special Needs**

**F**inding quality child care or preschool programs in the community may be challenging for all families, but especially for those who have children with special needs. At the recent *Joining Voices* Conference, (a parent meeting sponsored by Massachusetts Family Voices) Child Care Specialist Carol Venancio described resources available to support families who are seeking child care for children with special needs. Venancio, who works as the Inclusion Coordinator at the Preschool Enrichment Team in Springfield, a Child Care Resource & Referral agency serving the Springfield area, also outlined information about subsidies that may be available to help pay for child care.

**Background— The Office of Child Care Services**

The Office of Child Care Services (OCCS) oversees the licensing of child care programs in Massachusetts. Under OCCS Regulations and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), child care providers are required to take applications from all

families and make “reasonable accommodations” to include children with disabilities. This has resulted in more child care providers developing the capacity to serve children with special needs or disabilities.



Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs), funded by OCCS are available to assist parents in finding childcare. They also serve child care providers, employers and community groups. Located in 15 regions throughout the state, CCR&Rs collect data about OCCS licensed child care programs, provide information and referrals to programs and provide counseling to parents on how to identify quality child care programs. In addition, the CCR&Rs offer training, consultation and technical assistance to child care providers. These services

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**Public Hearing on February 3, 2005**

**Parents Invited to Give Testimony on Early Intervention Funding Application**

**T**he Massachusetts Department of Public Health in cooperation with the Interagency Coordinating Council will hold a public hearing on the Commonwealth’s 19th Year Application for funding under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Part C of IDEA (Public Law 105-17) 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 application.

As the lead agent 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. During the hearing, the Department welcomes testimony regarding the proposed budget, as well as any other aspects of the program.

The hearing will be held:

**February 3, 2005**  
**Department of Public Health**  
250 Washington Street, 2nd floor  
Boston, MA 02108

**If you cannot testify in person, written testimony may be sent until March 10, 2005 and should be addressed to:**  
Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
Early Intervention Services  
250 Washington Street, 4th floor  
Boston, MA 02108-4619

Attn: Ron Benham, Director, Division for Perinatal, Early Childhood and Special Health Needs.

**For more information or if you need assistive devices/ services to participate in the hearing, please call Early Intervention Services at the Department of Public Health.**

## Resources

### Federation for Children with Special Needs to hold Annual Conference-March 12th

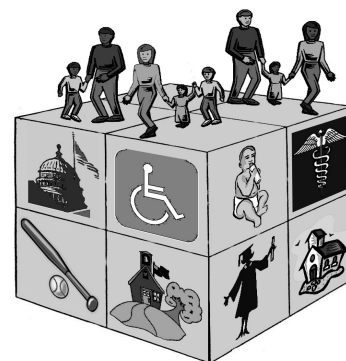
The Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) will host its annual conference on March 12, 2005 at the World Trade Center in Boston.

“Visions of Community 2005”: A conference for Families of Children with Special Needs and the Professionals Who Serve Them” will include workshops on “Revisions to Federal & State Laws Governing Special Education”, “Building Classroom Safety and Acceptance for the Child with Complex Health Care Needs”, “Fostering Friendships for Children with Special Needs”, and “Enhancing Communication at Home with Picture Symbols” among many others. Selected workshops are also available in Spanish and Portuguese.

Michaela D’Aquanni, an Associate Professor of Special Education at Kennesaw State University will deliver the keynote presentation, “Creating Community Using the Vision of a Child”.

Early Bird registration (before February 19) is \$55, afterwards registration is \$65. Limited scholarships are available for parents upon request; please call (617) 236-7210 ext 198. Child care is available on a limited basis for children ages 4 to 12, but requests must be made by February 19.

For further information or to register, call the Federation at (800) 331-0688 or visit [www.fcsn.org](http://www.fcsn.org).



## Free Resource Manual for Families of Children with Special Care Needs

### Directions: Resources for Your Child's Care Now Available

Parents-would you like some tips on how to organize your child's often voluminous medical and school records?

**Directions: Resources for Your Child's Care**, a free manual is now available. It contains strategies to help families organize health and school records, information about caring for your child's special needs, resources, and tips from other parents of children with special health care needs, with the goal of improving communication among families, health pro-

viders and health plans.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health in collaboration with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Fallon Community Health Plan, Harvard Pilgrim Community Health Plan, Neighborhood Health Plan and Tufts Health Plan, have recently published the second edition of **Directions**. Topics also include being prepared for an emergency, making education work for your child and connecting parents and families.

**Directions** may be downloaded in English, Spanish and Portuguese from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health website at [www.mass.gov/dph/fch/directions](http://www.mass.gov/dph/fch/directions). To order a free hard copy in English or Spanish, families may also contact the Massachusetts Health Promotions Clearinghouse by calling (617) 526-0501 x 211 or (617) 536-5872 (TTY).

## Support for Families with Children who have Sensory Processing Disorders

Children who have Sensory Processing Disorder, also known as Sensory Integration Dysfunction often have difficulty effectively processing information from their senses. This difficulty may result in delays in motor skills and problems in self-regulation, attention and behavior.

The Spiral Foundation at OTA (Occupational Therapy Associates) Watertown sponsors a free, drop-in support group for parents of children with sensory processing disorder. SPD-Parent Connections meets the second Thursday of each month at 7 pm at OTA Watertown, 124 Watertown Street in Watertown. For more information, contact Ann Trecker at (617) 923-4410 ext. 112 or visit [www.otawatertown.com](http://www.otawatertown.com) or [thespiralfoundation.org](http://thespiralfoundation.org).

On March 18 and 19, The Spiral Foundation and the KID Foundation will present “Sensational Kids: Clinical Assessment and Intervention Strategies for Children with Sensory Processing Disorders” at the Holiday Inn in Newton. The conference will feature current research and Carol Kranowitz, author of the *Out-of-Sync Child* will speak from the perspective of a classroom teacher. Day one of the conference is designed for parents, therapists, teachers and other professionals and will focus on typical behaviors, as well as intervention strategies for use in the classroom and at home. For more information, please call (617) 923-4410, ext. 102

**Taking Good Care**

**How is My Baby Growing? Development of Infants in their First Year**

**By Susan Murray, M.S.**

**T**hroughout the first year, infants grow at a tremendously fast rate. In fact, by the end of their first year, they have tripled in birth weight, and usually doubled in length. By their first birthday, most infants will be crawling and even taking a first step. They are able to watch and follow people with their eyes and will begin to recognize familiar voices.

Infants learn about the world through touch, sight, sound, taste and smell. They learn about relationships from how people touch and hold them, and from the tones of voice and facial expressions people use when caring for them. This early sense of trust will help them develop positive relationships for the rest of their lives.

Infants use all of their senses to learn about the world. They “talk” with others through actions and sounds, and experiment with objects and noises. They enjoy watching the results of their actions. This is how children learn to make sense of the world and learn to communicate. When babies coo, babble and interact with others they are developing language skills.

Newborn infants do not have regular sleep patterns. By three months of age, most full-term, healthy infants are probably sleeping through most of the night. Having the same bedtime routine each night helps establish good, predictable sleeping patterns. Even after infants have settled into a good sleep-wake pattern, these habits may be disrupted by teething, illness, travel or changes in the family. Soothing sounds, such as running water, the clothes dryer or soft music can help quiet a crying child.

**Ideas for Caregivers:**

- **Respond to babies cries** to help develop their sense of trust and security. Feeling secure encourages infants to try new things.

- **Place babies in new places and positions** so they can see you and others from different angles. The best place for an awake and alert infant is to be on the floor in a safe position. Supervise them on their belly and back. This allows babies to work on all of the muscles needed for crawling and walking.
- **Talk to babies frequently.** Face infants when you are talking to them so they can see you and smile with you. Talk about what you are doing, familiar objects or people. You may even want to echo back their sounds to them. Through this interaction, your baby will be learning the sounds that will lead to the development of language later on.
- **Read to babies.** With time, they will begin to understand that words have meaning and can be labels for objects.

Have you ever wondered how your child is growing and developing compared to other children of the same age? Although no two children grow at the same rate, experts agree that there are “typical” signs and patterns of development. If you have questions about how your baby is growing, ask your Early Intervention service provider or pediatrician. Remember, parents are the most important observers of their child’s development.

*Susan Murray, M.S. is a Clinical Coordinator at Criterion-Heritage Early Intervention Program.*



**Parent Participation Opportunity**

**Program Re-Certification Parent Team Member Training, January 31**

**E**ach year, Early Intervention Programs are certified by the Department of Public Health (DPH) to make sure that programs are in compliance with Massachusetts Early Intervention Operational Standards and Federal law (Part C of IDEA). Parents have an important role working in this process with DPH Regional Specialists to collect information as a team through focus groups at Early Intervention Programs.

Learn more about this great opportunity for involvement. Parents of children who have graduated from Early Intervention are invited to a

parent team member training on January 31 from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm at the DPH Metrowest Regional Office in Canton. After the training, parents are asked to commit up to 10 hours in one month for each program re-certification. **Parents will receive a stipend for their participation in both the training and the re-certification process.**

For more information, please contact Faith Piaggi, EI Program Re-Certification Parent Coordinator at (413) 663-3610 or toll-free at (877) 353-4757

## Finding and Funding Quality Child Care for Children with Special Needs

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are provided free of charge to families.

To find the CCR&R in your region, call (800) 345-0131 or visit the OCCS website at [www.qualitychildcare.org](http://www.qualitychildcare.org).

### **Finding Child care Programs for Children with Special Needs.**

CCR&Rs offer a free “customized” child care referral service to parents of children with disabilities, according to Venancio, and she described the four step process:

1. The family calls the CCR&R in the region where the family lives or is seeking child care and talks with a child care specialist about the child’s needs.
2. With the parents permission, the child care specialist will call and screen potential providers in their database to find one whose training and experience best match the child’s needs. The specialist will also confirm that space is available and that, if necessary, accommodations can be made..
3. The child care specialist will then provide families with referrals to providers with confirmed openings.
4. Families then decide which providers they would like to meet and make appointments to visit. Ultimately, the families make the decision about who can best care for their child. The child care specialist is available to provide information and support to the families and technical assistance on issues of inclusion for providers.

### **Funding Child-care: Subsidies May Be Available**

The CCR&Rs can also provide information on financial assistance and child care subsidies that may be available to families who have children with special needs. Eligibility is based on

income and family need, although there may be a waiting list to receive financial assistance. The OCCS website ([www.qualitychildcare.com](http://www.qualitychildcare.com)) contains an “Eligibility Wizard” tool that can help families to determine if they qualify for assistance.

### **Additional Resources:**

- **Office of Child Care Services (OCCS):** Call (617) 988-6600 or visit [www.qualitychildcare.org](http://www.qualitychildcare.org).
- **Preschool Enrichment Team, Inc,** a CCR&R serving the Springfield area: (413) 736-3900
- **Community Partnerships for Children (CPCs),** funded by the Massachusetts Department of Education, Early Learning Services, is a network comprised of child care providers and preschool programs. Located in 335 communities throughout Massachusetts. Child care scholarships may be available, based on income eligibility Many CPC’s also provide continuing education opportunities for child care providers and parents. To learn about the CPC in your area, contact Early Learning Services at the Department of Education at (781) 338-6353 or visit [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu).
- **Talk to your EI Service Provider about child care programs in your area.** Providers often make visits to local child care programs to provide services to children and may be able to share information.
- **Disability Specific Organizations,** such as local Arcs may also have information about providers who have experience in working with children with specific special needs.
- **ChildCareAware–** the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral : Toll-free (800) 424-2246 or visit [www.ChildCareAware.org](http://www.ChildCareAware.org).

## Beginning Sign Language Classes Offered

**W**ould you like to learn beginning sign for young children? Sign language can often serve as a bridge to communication for children who may have a speech delay or are non-verbal.

Parent, caregivers, child care providers, teachers and Early Intervention specialists are invited to attend a Beginning Sign Language Training sponsored by the Thom Western Regional Consultation Program (WRCP), REACH Early Intervention and Northampton Community Partnerships for Children.

Classes will be held on three Wednesday evenings: January 19 and 26 and February 2 at the Bridge Street School Library, 2 Parsons Street in Northampton. (February 9 is a snow date, in case of bad weather).

The fee for the class is \$40, which includes training and books. However, if your family is currently receiving services from the Thom WRCP, or has received services in the past, you may attend this training free of charge.

For more information, please call Karen Cassidy at (413) 783-5500 ext. 16.

## CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

January 21 and 22, March 4 and 5 and April 8 and 9— **Massachusetts Families Organizing for Change, (MFOFC) 12th Northeast Families Leadership Series**, Courtyard Marriott in Stoneham. MFOFC sponsors this Leadership Series of three two-day sessions as a great way for families to network and build their skills. Session One will focus on family initiative and leadership, advocacy and how to effectively create change. In Session Two “Creating a Vision”, a number of presenters will offer their perspectives on topics including inclusion in schools, supported employment, community living and family support. Session Three will cover policy-making at the local, state, and federal levels. Respite/child care support, transportation and translation will be arranged on an as-needed basis. Families must submit an application to attend this series. For more information, please call Susan Nadworny at Northeast Families Organizing for Change at (781) 665-5179 or by email at [snadw@aol.com](mailto:snadw@aol.com).

January 24— **Bi-polar Disorder and Treatment for Children**. Presented by Applied Behavioral Associates in Framingham. For more information, please call (508) 876-4161.

February 2— **Supporting Parents in Stressful and Uncertain Times**, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, Waltham YMCA, 75 Lexington Street, Waltham.. For more information, please call Families First at (781) 894-7295.

February 4— **Supporting Children’s Play**, 9:30 am to 3:30 pm., Pediatric Development Center, Pittsfield. This workshop, presented by the Early Intervention Training Center, explores the ways that the parents and caregivers can support their child’s engagement in play. For more information or to register, please call Toni Magnussen at (413) 662-3315.

February 9— **Children with Challenging Behaviors and Fragile Emotions**, Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel in Marlborough. The Learning Lab@Lesley presents this conference. Topics include “Taking Care of the Caretakers”, “Surviving and Thriving with Challenging Children”, “The Explosive Child in the Classroom” and “Delivered from Distraction”. For more information, please visit [www.lesley.edu/learninglab](http://www.lesley.edu/learninglab).

**\*\*\*SAVE THE DATES\*\*\***

April 2— **The 2nd Annual Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC) Conference**, Worcester Centrum Center, Worcester. For further details, visit [www.mdsc.org](http://www.mdsc.org).

April 30— **Statewide Family TLC Conference**, the annual meeting of Regional Consultation Programs.

### **The Transition Process: A New Three-Part Series about Services Beyond EI**

**W**ould you like to learn about the transition process from Early Intervention, available resources and options available in the community?

The Federation for Children with Special Needs through three of its programs, the Early Intervention Training Center, The Parent Training and Information Center and Family TIES of Massachusetts is pleased to offer a **free** three part series of parent education workshops. These three workshops, *Continuing the Journey*, *Turning Three* and *Let’s Get Organized* help families to prepare for the transition process, whether to the special education system or to programs in the community.

Workshops are currently scheduled at the following locations:

#### **South Bay Early Intervention Program in Fall River**

January 26 - *Continuing the Journey*, 5:30-7:30 pm  
February 23- *Turning Three*, 5:30-7:30 pm  
March 29- *Let’s Get Organized*, 5:30-7:30 pm  
Please contact Carrie Miele at (508) 856-4202.

#### **U Mass Early Intervention Program in Shrewsbury**

February 2 - *Continuing the Journey*, 6:30-8:30 pm  
March 16- *Turning Three*, 6:30-8:30 pm  
March 29- *Let’s Get Organized*, 6:30-8:30 pm.  
Please call Barbara Hreczuck at (508) 324-1060.

#### **North Shore Infant & Toddler Program and Family Support EI (held at North Shore Arc in Danvers)**

February 2- *Continuing the Journey*, 6:30-8:30 pm  
March 2- *Turning 3*, 6:30-8:30 pm  
Please contact Lara Crosby at (978) 744-7037

#### **Perkins School for the Blind, Watertown**

February 9- *Continuing the Journey*, 10 am-noon  
February 16- *Turning Three*, 10 am—noon  
Please contact Harriet Ward at (603) 772-5240

#### **South Bay Early Intervention Program, Lowell**

February 16- *Continuing the Journey*, 6:00-8:00 pm  
March 16- *Turning 3*, 6:00-8:00 pm  
Please contact Diane Corbin at (978) 452-1736

#### **Criterion Heritage Early Intervention Program, Palmer**

February 16- *Continuing the Journey*, 6:00-8:00 pm  
Please contact Sarah Aasheim at (413) 533-7140

#### **South Bay Early Intervention Program, Brockton**

February 22- *Continuing the Journey*, 5:30-7:30 pm  
March 29- *Turning 3*, 5:30-7:30 pm  
Please contact Lisa Hausman at (508) 580-4691

Additional workshops at other locations are being scheduled. The full workshop schedule is available online at [www.eitrainingcenter.org](http://www.eitrainingcenter.org) or call Heather Tirrell at (617) 236-7210 x 159.

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

## WORKING TOGETHER

### **BOSTON NEWS**

Celebrating the spirit of the season, the **Healthy Foundations Early Intervention Program (Healthy Foundations)** in East Boston held a very well-attended Holiday Party for families at the Revere Youth Center.

**Thom Boston Metro Early Intervention Program** will host an "End of Winter Party" on March 2nd from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at the center, with a potluck dinner for families and staff and "springtime" crafts, games and face painting!

### **CENTRAL NEWS**

**Criterion Middlesex Early Intervention (Criterion Middlesex)** participated in a series of very successful holiday drives this season.. **Criterion Middlesex** paired up with the Salvation Army, who provided turkey dinners and other goodies to families in need for Thanksgiving and the December holidays. **Criterion Middlesex** also partnered with **Criterion's Healthy Families Program** in Framingham to get toys and clothes from Globe Santa. Families in need also received gifts from the Toys for Tots program.

The PAC at the **Community Healthlink Lipton Early Intervention Program (Lipton EIP)** hosted its Annual Holiday Party on December 9th with nearly 250 people in attendance. The children enjoyed making photo ornaments, fruit loop bracelets and necklaces and ice cream cone Christmas Trees. Mr. and Mrs. Claus also stopped by for a visit with the children. A great time was had by all!

Family Story Hour takes place the second Saturday of the month from September to June at **Lipton EIP**. Children listen to stories, make a craft, have snack and enjoy some free play time. This is a great way for families in the program to meet one another. The PAC will also sponsor the Spring Fling Raffle and Dance to be held in April. This adults night out is the primary fundraiser for the PAC. Last year, the PAC raised \$2000 that was used to pay for outings to Davis Farmland in Sterling and Sholan Farms in Leominster for apple picking, as well as other activities.

### **NORTHEAST NEWS**

The **Stoneham- Criterion Early Intervention Program (Stoneham-Criterion)** will begin monthly parent discussions around topics that have been requested by parents. These discussions are being sponsored by the PAC and implemented by EI staff. January's discussion is on Potty Training, February's topic is Discipline, Speech is March's topic and April's topic is Stress Management. These discussions will be held on the third Wednesday of each month from 1:00 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. at the center.

The **Stoneham -Criterion** Annual Valentine's Open House will be held on Saturday, February 12, 2005 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. This event provides parents/caregivers and families

an opportunity to visit the center and participate in entertainment, a craft project and refreshments.

The **Professional Center for Child Development (PCCD)** hosted a "*Let's Get Organized*" workshop facilitated by Family TIES on December 16th.

The **PCCD Regional Consultation Program (RCP)** offers motor and communications equipment (switches, toys and more) through their equipment lending program. Please call Jane Howe at (978) 475-3806, for more information.

The NHL may not be playing, but the local hockey season is going strong! On March 6th, **PCCD** families are invited to the Family Hockey Afternoon with the Lowell Lock Monsters. Tickets are \$12 with a portion of the proceed going to **PCCD**. "Stick" around for the free post-game skate. Please call (978) 475-3806 for tickets.

**Thom Anne Sullivan Center** will present a parent group called "Speech and Language 101" on February 16 from 7:00-8:30 pm. Three speech and language therapists will be available to answer questions about speech development and ways to enhance communication skills

**Thom Anne Sullivan Center** staff and parents worked together to raise funds for the PAC and staff development fund with the annual Pheasant Lane "Simon Evening of Giving" and a Pampered Chef fundraiser.

Families and staff of **Family Support Early Intervention (FSEI)** joined with **Cape Anne Early Intervention** for a Holiday Party in December. The children had a great time doing crafts and visiting Santa, and the parents had a chance to meet each other. **FSEI** will also join with **North Shore Infant Toddler Early Intervention** to present the transitions series. (See Calendar on page 5 for dates). **FSEI** is also planning a Valentine's Party and a Pajama Party to help everyone get through the cold winter months!

**South Bay Early Intervention Program (South Bay)** will host a Winter Festival on Tuesday, January 18th from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm and 3:00 to 5:00 pm. **South Bay** will also host the transition series (see Calendar on Page 5 for dates)

### **SOUTHEAST NEWS**

**Taunton EI Program** hosted their annual Holiday Family Party on December 4th. Over 300 people attended. Families joined in singing songs, face painting, balloon animals and all enjoyed the Scholastic Book Fair. Santa arrived with gifts for every child and also posed for pictures, which the families took home.

Many families from the **Kennedy Donovan Early Intervention Program in Attleboro** were beneficiaries of the Lynn

## FAMILY & EI PROGRAM COLLABORATION

Goodchild Memorial Fund, established in her memory, after she perished in the September 11th tragedy. Proceeds of the fund go to families at **KDC-Attleboro** during the holiday season.

“Parenting for Today” is the topic for a workshop scheduled at **KDC-Attleboro** on January 26. Parent Support Specialist Gina McGarrigle from the Hockomock Community Partnerships for Children will present this workshop, which will feature effective discipline strategies. An Autism Spectrum Disorder Workshop is scheduled for March 3 with autism specialist Barbara Woodland.

Families at the **Greater Fall River Early Intervention Program (GFR-EIP)** enjoyed a Christmas Party on December 8th. Making the holidays brighter for many families, the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) donated \$250 to purchase toys for children at the program. An outpouring of generous donations were also received from the Somerset Union, Carpenters Union, South Coast Credit and the Liberal Club. **GFR-EIP** staff also made food baskets for families in need at the program, in collaboration with the Spencer Borden School and Small Wonders Day Care.

Staff from the **Kennedy Donovan Center Early Intervention Program in New Bedford (KDC-New Bedford)** delivered gifts, decorations and food to over ten families with the help of St. John Newmann Church in Freetown and other generous donations.

On January 24th, **KDC New Bedford** and the **Schwartz Center Early Intervention Program** will work in collaboration to begin a parent/child group in Old Rochester Regional School district, as part of the Department of Education Early Childhood Mental Health Grant. The group will meet at the Sippican School in Marion for six weeks and will focus on music, signing and gross motor activities. It will be co-facilitated by Debby Perreira from **KDC -New Bedford** and Liz Tatro from the **Schwartz Center**.

The **Schwartz Center** held a Holiday Party for children and their families on December 20th. The children enjoyed meeting Santa and having their picture taken. They also received a small gift and visited our "talking" Christmas tree. Shriners also gave the children a stocking filled with gifts and fruit. Our community group children had a special treat with lunch delivered by Domino's Pizza. The **Schwartz Center** participated in a local toy drive which enabled families to receive food and gifts for the holidays. It was a huge success and over 100 children were able to benefit. Several local business participated by "adopting" an EI family to buy them individual gifts, food, and clothing.

Once again, the **Cape and Islands Early Intervention Program** had wonderful community support for its Annual Holi-

day Project. With a 50% increase in the families in need this year, every family received gifts for all children in the family, as well as other requested gifts, such as a microwave, dishes and other household items, gift certificates to food stores and more. Customers and staff from Bank North in branches throughout Cape Cod raised \$20,000 in goods and services! Thanks to other major contributors-Eight Cousins Bookstore and Liberty Commons Rehab Center and to all EI staff, parents and other individuals who made the Project so successful.

### WESTERN NEWS

**Thom Springfield Infant Toddler Services** and the **Thom Western Regional Consultation Program (WRCP)** recently held a Family Holiday Event at the Bethesda Lutheran Church in Springfield. Families and graduate families of both programs came together enjoying meeting other families as well as having photos taken with Frosty the Snowman. **Thom Springfield Infant Toddler Services** recently had their second successful Turning Three: Next Steps transition night. Families and staff came together for information on options for programs and supports for their children and families as they leave EI. Parents were able to meet the school system liaisons from their local schools systems.

**Thom/WRCP** has planned a busy season of upcoming events. On Tuesdays in January from 10:30 am to noon, a group of **WRCP** kids and families will meet at Interskate 91, an opportunity for parent to parent contact and some community fun!

The **Thom/ WRCP** offers parent support group meetings, to share thoughts and ideas at Holyoke Community College on January 25th from 5:30 to 8:00 pm. February 15th is Couples Night with facilitator Ron Baer. INSITE training through the NE Center Deaf Blind Project will be coming to western Massachusetts in May. This training is open to parents of children who have multi -sensory issues. In depth training of 2 1/2 days is scheduled in May and then another 2 1/2 days of training in September or October.

This spring, **Criterion-Heritage Early Intervention Program (Criterion -Heritage)** will host the three-part series, “The Transition Process” offered by the Federation for Children with Special Needs and the Early Intervention Training Center (see description and dates on Calendar, page 5)

On Wednesday, March 2 from 5:30 ? 7:30 p.m., **Criterion-Heritage** will collaborate with the South Hadley Parent Center to co-host a mini-workshop on the disciplining strategy known as “123 Magic.” Please call Sarah Aasheim at 413/533-7140, ext. 42, for more information on either of these events.

## 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

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### Contact Us:

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**(877)-35-EI-PLP**

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

**Visit us on the web:**  
**[www.eiplp.org](http://www.eiplp.org)**

## The Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project NEWS

### Parents...don't miss your chance to help improve the Early Intervention system! The EI Family Survey is now available online!

Families whose children are currently enrolled Early Intervention or "have graduated" within the last year have a unique opportunity to contribute to building a better Early Intervention system, both in Massachusetts and nationally.

The Department of Public Health, lead agency for Early Intervention services, is participating in piloting a Family Survey developed by the National Center for Special Education Accountability and Monitoring (NCSEAM). The survey will eventually be used to provide information to Massachusetts and the federal government about families' perspectives on their participation in Early Intervention

The survey is now available on line at [www.mgtamer.com/surveys](http://www.mgtamer.com/surveys). Please use Survey number 2394a The User name is Child1 and the Password is Family1. Please be sure to list your state of residence as Massachusetts.

If you don't have access to a computer, please call the Parent Leadership Project and toll-free at (877) 353-4757 and ask to complete a survey over the phone.

Make your opinions count! But, hurry...the opportunity to complete the Family Survey ends on January 31st!

**To receive the *Parent Perspective Newsletter*, a free publication, published six times a year by the Parent Leadership Project, call us toll-free at (877) 353-4757 and ask to be added to the PLP mailing list or email [eiplp@yahoo.com](mailto:eiplp@yahoo.com)**

**NEXT DEADLINE:** We welcome your input and suggestions for resources and articles. The next deadline is **March 8**. Please contact your regional coordinator or the email the newsletter editor at [Jocelyn.Woog@state.ma.us](mailto:Jocelyn.Woog@state.ma.us).

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