



The Parent Leadership Project's Parent E-Perspective

(877) 35-EI-PLP www.eiplt.org eiplt@live.com

"Ways to get Involved—Ways to Share!"

December 2015

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Sampling of our FaceBook & Twitter Posts

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3 Simple Steps to Fight the Flu

By Rebecca Vanucci,
Immunization Outreach Coordinator in the
Bureau of Infectious Disease
[Mass Public Health Blog \(reprint\)](#)

The flu is a serious disease that affects the body's breathing system, including the nose, throat, and lungs. The most common symptoms include fever, cough, and sore throat. Symptoms can also include body aches, headache, chills, runny nose and feeling very tired.

Follow these [three steps](#) to help fight the flu:

1. Get your flu vaccine every year! CDC recommends everyone over 6 months of age get an annual flu vaccine. Some people, like young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 and older, are at higher risk of complications from the flu.
2. Take everyday precautions, such as covering coughs and sneezes, staying away from people who are sick, proper hand washing, and staying home yourself when sick.
3. Take flu antivirals if your doctor prescribes them. Antivirals are different from antibiotics. Antivirals can help make the illness milder and shorten the time you are sick.

In the meantime, check out our newly-updated flu website at www.mass.gov/flu for more information about flu and what you can do to stay healthy this flu season!

Toy Safety Tips for the Holidays!

By Alicia High, Health & Human Services Coordinator
[Mass Public Health Blog \(reprint\)](#)

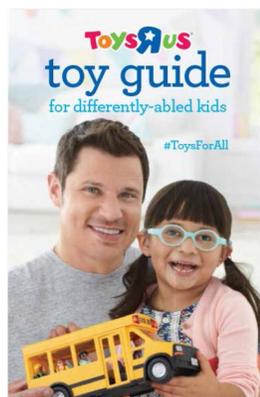
As you get ready for the hectic holiday season, we are reminded about important decisions that should take place before purchasing toys for children. Let's keep children safe by following these toy safety tips:

- Avoid toys with small balls and parts for children under age 3.
- If any piece or removable part can fit inside a toilet-tube roll, it is unsafe for a child under
- Don't forget to check the 'eyes' of stuffed toy animals—if they can be pulled off, avoid that toy for young children
- Check toys for age warnings. If buying an age-appropriate toy for an older child but there is a younger child in the house, make sure the younger child does not have access to the toy.
- Avoid high-powered magnet sets such as Buckyballs and Buckycubes for children under age 14. If swallowed, magnets can cause injury, and in some cases, ingestion requires surgical removal.
- Get the right size helmets and safety gear for children using bikes, scooters, skateboards, and skates.
- Check your children's toys often for breaks and damages. Immediately discard any broken toys and/or parts. Broken toys can have sharp edges and cause injury.
- Keep deflated balloons away from children younger than age 8. Immediately discard broken balloons.
- Store toys on a shelf or bin to avoid injuries from tripping and falling.

Most importantly, it is always a good idea to visit the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) at <http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Safety-Education/Safety-Guides/Toys/> for more information on toy safety.

Let's make this a safe holiday season for you and your family.

Safety tips adapted from the CPSC.



"This complimentary, one-of-a-kind resource speaks to a child's individual needs and offers qualified toy recommendations based on research from the National Lekotek Center, a nonprofit organization that evaluates all of the toys featured in the *Guide*. Over the years, Toys"R"Us has worked with many celebrities who have served as the "face" of the *Guide*. This year's cover features Nick Lachey, father of two, philanthropist, multi-platinum recording artist and television personality."


 March 5, 2016

Visions of Community

Visiones de la Comunidad

Visões da Comunidade

Viên Anh Công Đông

年度社區展望

The Federation for Children with Special Needs hosts the Visions of Community conference every March. It is an excellent opportunity to attend workshops, learn about resources and network with parents and professionals. Check out their website at www.fcsn.org/voc to learn about workshops. Registration should be available soon with an "early bird" discounted rate and the opportunity for scholarships for families on a first come, first serve basis.

He Said...

*After attending the Visions of Community Conference 2015
by Anthony Micalizzi (Reprint from March 2015)*

Have you ever been so emotionally overwhelmed by the greatness and passion of humanity? Have you ever been so moved by something that your eyes fill up with tears, you get that lump in your throat and can no longer hold back that cry? My name is Anthony Micalizzi and that's what exactly happened to me this past March while attending the "Visions of Community" Federation for Children with Special Needs conference held in Boston.

I am a father of a son with severe disabilities and didn't know it. My son Anthony Jr. has an undiagnosed neuromuscular disorder and is non-verbal and non-ambulatory. It is because of him and my wife Kristin, that I was at this event for the first time. As sat in the Auditorium listening to the Keynote Presentation given by Dr. Bill Henderson and Dr. Joe Petner, I realized that we are living the life of parents of a disabled child, who knew? We do not see my son as having a disability, we see him as Anthony, and listening to the challenges and life struggles that we as families have to go through, and have gone through, really hit home with me. I was so overcome with emotion that I actually had to excuse myself to regain my composure. Wow, what a great feeling that was!

Hearing Bill, Joe and the others speak made me feel so grateful for their accomplishments and pioneering the way for others. It is because of their generosity, perseverance and beliefs that our Anthony has so many options for education, resources, living a normal lifestyle and being part of the community today.

In addition to the Keynote, there were so many other great things to see and people that I met. I truly enjoyed learning about all the resources available to us and found our break-out sessions to be equally informative. I can't speak highly enough about my experiences and have already begun looking forward to next year's event.

**Receive up to the minute
information and opportunities.**



Receive this newsletter electronically!
E-mail your name and e-mail address
to: eiplp@live.com. Thanks!

She Said...

*After attending the Visions of Community Conference 2015
by Kristin Micalizzi (Reprint from March 2015)*

This past March I had the pleasure of attending the annual Federation for Children with Special Needs "Visions of Community" Conference for the third time. I now look forward to this informative, enriching and empowering day all year. This year's conference was particularly special because I was able to secure care for my four children so that my husband could join me. I am always coming home with so much information and so many stories that it was a real pleasure to have him by my side.

The keynote speakers seemed to almost be handpicked for us! Dr. Joe Petner and Dr. Bill Henderson delivered a powerful presentation titled "We've Only Just Begun: How far we've come in special education and how much further we need to go." It was inspiring to hear them chronicle how they created whole school inclusive communities and improved opportunities and outcomes for students with disabilities. This was timely for us as we have recently advocated to have our own 6-year-old son included in our town's general education Kindergarten for next year. I was also quite moved by the showing of the video "I Am 766" that highlighted the groundbreaking work that was done to institute Chapter 766, the Massachusetts law which guarantees the rights of ALL young people with special needs to an educational program best suited to their needs. It is both comforting and humbling to bear witness to the people who have literally paved the way for children and families with special needs.

The remainder of the day was filled with networking, resources and fantastic breakout sessions. I learned a wealth of information from the "experts", who not only included the presenters and exhibitors but also the other parents and participants (providers, practitioners, educators etc.) I drove home feeling rejuvenated and enthused to continue advocating for my son and our family. I was also so thankful that my husband was there to experience this with me.

These opportunities are so important to families and I am grateful that I had to chance to participate once again. I am already excited for next year!

"Like" Us on Facebook
"Follow Us" on Twitter

"If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far go together:" Lessons learned at the 2015 OSEP Leadership Conference
By Samuel Caraballo

A sampling of our Facebook and Twitter posts...

#DidYouKnow...that Part C is the part of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) that provides early intervention services? And Part B provides special education and related services to eligible children from 3 - 21 years old. Check out this video of Secretary Arne Duncan, Department of Education <https://www.facebook.com/ED.gov/videos/10153735180589320/?fref=nf>



Social-emotional learning starts at birth! <http://commonwealthmagazine.org/.../social-emotional-learnin.../>



#MotivationalMonday



With the holiday's around the corner...check out these gift ideas for 3 year olds http://www.toddlerapproved.com/.../favorite-gifts-for-3-year-...



#DidYouKnow that the EIPLP has a newly designed website? Check it out! www.eiplp.org



In July I had the awesome opportunity to represent Massachusetts' Early Intervention parents at the OSEP Leadership Conference, (Office of Special Education Programs), celebrated in Washington DC. Through this event, I was able to meet and connect with other families and national leaders involved in the implementation of early intervention and special education services across the country. Learning about ongoing regional initiatives helped me appreciate the vital role that Early Intervention (EI) plays, not just in Massachusetts, but the entire nation.



However, our work is not over just yet! There are many regional and national challenges ahead of us. Increasing fiscal pressures and the need for more efficient data collection tools are some of the hurdles we still need to overcome. Fortunately, the Massachusetts Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC), has recognized these challenges and is actively seeking to address these issues. Nevertheless, the OSEP conference helped accentuate the need for greater parent participation in the decision-making process at the federal level.

As parents navigating complex medical and educational systems, we are often told by our government agencies that "we know are children best." If that statement is true, then we need to continue finding ways to incorporate such wealth of "knowledge" into our current service strategies, at all levels – including federal. Parental inclusion and participation at events such as the OSEP Conference is a crucial first step toward collaborative objectives.

I'll close by sharing an African proverb quote by several panelists throughout the conference:

"If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far go together."

We certainly go far when we empower our children, their families, and their providers. Let us keep pressing on toward that goal!

Samuel Caraballo was appointed to the Massachusetts Interagency Council by Governor Deval Patrick in May 2014 to serve as a Parent Representative for the metro-west region. He is the proud parent of three children, all of whom have received Early Intervention services.

RESOURCES

Welcome to the Web Page for the
PARENT LEADERSHIP PROJECT
*...your source for information about the
 Massachusetts Early Intervention System*




Autism E-News




**FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN
 WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**
 Informing, Educating, Empowering Families



[MA Family-to-Family Health
 Information Center](#)




EIFA
 Early Intervention Family Alliance



THE PARENT LEADERSHIP PROJECT

The EI Parent Leadership Project (EIPLP) strives to develop an informed parent constituency, promote leadership and lifelong advocacy skills for parents and family members, facilitate family participation to ensure that Early Intervention Services are family-centered and support EI programs to identify, train and mentor families to take on roles across the EI and Early Childhood system. 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 Director, a Media Coordinator, a Statewide Monitoring Coordinator and a Statewide Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator. Please feel free to contact any of them with your thoughts, suggestions, and concerns.

EI Parent Leadership Project Team

Darla Gundler
 Director
 413-586-7525 Ext. 3157
darla.gundler@state.ma.us

Kris Martone-Levine
 Media Coordinator
 978-851-7261 Ext. 4057
kris.levine@state.ma.us



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

Faith Bombardier
 Statewide Onsite Monitoring
 Coordinator/EI Regional Specialist
 413-586-7525 Ext. 3119
faith.bombardier@state.ma.us

Liz Cox
 Statewide Training and Technical
 Assistance Coordinator
 413-586-7525 Ext. 3116
liz.cox@state.ma.us



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To receive the *Parent Perspective Newsletter*, a free publication, published four times a year or the Parent E-Perspective published at least two 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@live.com

NEXT DEADLINE: We welcome your input and suggestions for resources and articles. The next deadline is **December 31, 2015**. Please call our toll-free number (877) 353-4757 or email the newsletter editor at kris.levine@state.ma.us.

The ***Parent Perspective*** newsletter is published by the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project, through funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. If you would like to be removed from this mailing list, please contact eiplp@live.com