

# The UPDATE

## News and Information for Massachusetts EI Providers

April 2015



### Important Dates...Mark your Calendar!

**April 28, 10AM—11AM:** DPH Monthly Webinar: EITC workshops: Embedding a National Curriculum, Overview and Tools

**May 6 & 7:** MEIC Conference, Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel, Marlborough, MA

**June 4:** ICC Meeting; Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel, Marlborough, MA

*Resources Attached: Assessing Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI), How to Apply for MassHealth/CommonHealth, Upcoming Trainings from IHR, Perkins Community—February Newsletter*



### Welcome New Program Directors

**Rhonda Gurley, MS, DS, CEIS** is the new Program Director of the **Eliot Cambridge/Somerville Early Intervention Program**. Rhonda is a DS –A with a Master's degree from Wheelock College in Early Intervention Birth to 3 Special Education. She has worked in the Cambridge and Somerville communities for more than 23 years beginning her EI career at the Tri City Early Intervention Program (serving Everett, Medford and Malden) as an assistant teacher. Rhonda also worked in all four of the child service programs at Tri City in many different capacities. She has been an Adjunct Professor at Wheelock College for the past 18 years in the Early Childhood Education Department at both the Graduate and Undergraduate level. She is currently teaching the Infant and Toddler Curriculum and Program Planning course as well as supervising students in their practicums in both the fields of Childcare and EI and has presented a variety of developmental topics to statewide and national audiences. Please join us in welcoming Rhonda to her new role!

### DPH Updates: Transportation Update

The Department of Public Health and representatives from MEIC will be meeting with Perry Fong, Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), Human Service Transportation Office (HST) to discuss the PT-1 implementation plan and roll for MassHealth members receiving Early Intervention transportation. The first meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 22, 2015. Please forward questions to my attention that you would like addressed at these ongoing meetings. The Department will continue to share updates and respond to questions as the information becomes available.

#### PT-1 Implementation FAQ:

1. In regards to transient children who either move or change doctors (and change EI programs), would their initial PT-1 form still be valid if they have changed pediatricians?  
The PT-1 is valid based on the address of the member and the servicing provider. If either change, there would need to be a new PT-1.

2. Are all MassHealth children eligible for transportation services and therefore require a PT-1?



Not all MassHealth eligibility categories include non-emergency transportation. The categories that do include non-emergency transportation are MassHealth Standard, CommonHealth and CarePlus. If children are covered by another category, they would not qualify for PT-1 transportation.

## BDI-2 Scoring Booklets

The Department is currently in the process of procuring funding for an order of BDI-2 scoring booklets. The order will be placed in mid- to late-April and programs should expect to receive the scoring booklets by the beginning of May.

## ASQ:SE-2

The Department is looking into purchasing ASQ:SE-2 Starter Kits for all early intervention programs. The kit includes paper masters of the questionnaires and scoring sheets, a CD-ROM with printable PDF questionnaires, the ASQ-SE2 User's Guide and a free ASQ:SE Quick Start Guide (English or Spanish). The new edition will be available in the fall.

## NAS Working group

The Department of Public Health, Early Intervention Training Center and members of the EI community will be meeting to discuss the system implications of the recent increase in NAS referrals. The first meeting will be held on Monday, April 27, 2015 from 10am – noon, at the Criterion Valley EIP, located at 375 Fortune Boulevard, Milford, MA.

This first meeting will be an opportunity to further define the goals and objective of the Workgroup with regard to impact to the system.

## Making Respite Happen Conference: Thursday, May 14, 8AM—3PM



## Policy to Practice: Child Groups—Immunization Requirements and Risk

There are several communicable diseases preventable by vaccination. Massachusetts allows for exemptions based on sincere religious beliefs or if the immunization is medically contraindicated (other states allow for an exemption based on "personal/philosophical belief" – this exemption is not recognized in Massachusetts).

The EI Standards require programs to maintain the health and immunization records for each child enrolled in the EI program, not just enrolled in a child group. *"All children enrolled in Early Intervention are up to date on immunizations according to the recommendations of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health unless the child's parent has stated in writing that vaccination or immunization conflicts with his/her sincere religious beliefs or if the child's physician has stated in writing that the vaccination or immunization is medically contraindicated"* (EIOS Health and Safety: XI.C.1.e.). Please note, children who are considered homeless under the definition of McKinney-Vento may not be excluded or have their entry delayed from child group for lack of immunization documentation. Service coordinators will work with families to either facilitate attaining the necessary documentation or assist the family to find a health care provider.

DPH recognizes that the EIOS do not currently address the immunization requirements for community children who participate in groups at the EI center ("primary site") or in community settings ("non-primary site"). DPH strongly encourages programs to maintain consistent requirements of both EI eligible children and community children for immunization records at the "primary sites".

Programs who participate/co-lead groups at “non-primary sites” may want to discuss with their community collaborators what requirements related to immunization documentation exists.

Given current immunization rates, the risk for exposure and contracting a vaccine preventable disease is low. The risk, however small, may still exist for some. The program, with input from their health care consultant, may wish to review the program’s policies, procedures and materials shared with families related to vaccine preventable diseases as part of the program’s health care policies.

Does the information shared with all parents identify or acknowledge;

The importance of immunizations for vaccine preventable diseases

- The risk for contracting any vaccine preventable disease is low due to the high rate of vaccinated children and adults, but does exist in the general population and in all settings. The risk varies depending on a number of factors (for example, exposure, the age of the child and immunization status)
- Some participants in groups (children as well as adults) may not be fully immunized due to religious objection, medical contraindication, or because they have not been fully immunized themselves. The risk applies to the person who has not been fully immunized.
- The program’s policies related to enrolling EI and/or community children who are not fully vaccinated. If the child group is at the EI program (“primary site”) the program may use discretion in developing policies for enrolling community children.
- The program’s policies related to excluding children/adults who appear to have a communicable disease.

The Department of Public Health’s Immunization program offers several resources including:

- Information and fact sheets: [www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/id/epidemiology/factsheets.html](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/id/epidemiology/factsheets.html)
- Schedule and requirements for school age and EEC licensed programs: [www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/id/immunization/school-requirements.html](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/id/immunization/school-requirements.html)
- Information for parents: [www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/id/immunization/vaccine-safety.html#InformationforParents](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/id/immunization/vaccine-safety.html#InformationforParents)  
[www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4017.pdf](http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4017.pdf)

## ***Communities of Practice “Pre-K Literacy and Oral Language Skill Development: What Does High-Quality Pre-K Literacy Instruction Look Like?”***

Presentation by Nonie Lesaux, Ph.D., a Juliana W. and William Foss Thompson Professor of Education and Society at Harvard University.

A distinguished researcher and clinician, Nonie leads a research program that focuses on promoting the language and literacy skills of today’s children and youth from diverse linguistic, cultural and economic backgrounds.

This presentation will focus on the essential role that early educators play in facilitating young children’s early literacy and language development. Through discussion, case studies and classroom application activities, participants will have an opportunity to learn about- What we know about early language and literacy development; The impact and alignment of language and early literacy and oral language skill development in early education settings; The intentional integration of practice and instruction; and Why early literacy is such a critical developmental stage for the child and how it can lead to later child success in school and expanded life opportunities;

The link for registration is: [www.eventbrite.com/e/communities-of-practice-pre-k-literacy-and-oral-language-skill-development-what-does-high-quality-tickets-16316844120](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/communities-of-practice-pre-k-literacy-and-oral-language-skill-development-what-does-high-quality-tickets-16316844120)

**SOLD OUT—SIGN UP FOR WAIT LIST**

Tuesday, May 5, 2015 RSVP BY: 4/28/2015  
9:30-12:30 Merrimack College  
315 Turnpike St North Andover, MA 01845  
Meeting Room B in Sakowich Campus Center

Thursday, May 7, 2015 RSVP BY: 4/30/2015  
9:30-12:30 Kuss Middle School Community Room,  
52 Globe Mills Ave, Fall River, MA 02360

Friday, May 8, 2015 RSVP BY: 5/1/2015  
9:30-12:30 Worcester Public Library,  
Saxe Room – 3 Salem St. Worcester, MA 01608

Thursday, May 14, 2015 RSVP BY: 5/7/2015  
9:30-12:30 Milton Cunningham Hall  
75 Edge Hill Road, Milton, MA 02186  
(Across from Cunningham/Collicot School)

Thursday, May 15, 2015  
RSVP BY: 5/08/2015, 9:30-12:30 EEC-Western,  
1441 Main Street, 2nd Floor, Springfield, MA 01103

## Early Intervention, Regional Consultation Programs, and MA DPH Care Coordination: A Critical and Flourishing Collaboration

By Dalila Hyry-Dermith, Care Coordination Program Statewide Supervisor

Children with complex medical and coordination needs desire support with many transitions in their lives, and it is the responsibility of the organizations that support and care for these children and their families to make sure that key transitions are smooth and effective. One model for collaborative efforts to do exactly that—to support children and families through a key early transition—has been in place for several years in Massachusetts, and it is making a big difference for some pretty important small children.



Leaders from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Care Coordination Program for Families of Children and Youth with Special Needs (DPH Care Coordination) and the Regional Consultation Programs (RCPs) located with Early Intervention programs in each region met to work on a collaborative solution. They developed a system for supporting the transition out of EI (when a child is approaching her/his third birthday) into the public school sphere whereby the RCP passes the wraparound supports "torch" to DPH Care Coordination in order to assure ongoing support for families and children. Components of this collaboration include:

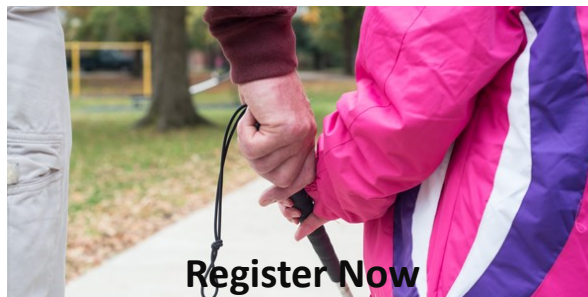
- Monthly conference calls among RCP and DPH Care Coordination staff to identify each child involved with RCP who is making the transition from EI to public school, learn about the child's specific needs, and (when appropriate) assign a DPH Care Coordinator to work with the family.
- Joint home visits between EI professionals, RCP, and DPH Care Coordinators to officially transition the family from EI to DPH support
- Ongoing shared professional development/in-services to share and discuss best practices
- Regular participation by Care Coordination and RCP staff at each other's Program meetings to keep lines of communication open

RCP, DPH Care Coordination, and EI staff are all justifiably proud of this collaboration—it fulfills the spirit in which our programs were created, and most of all, we know it is good for children. For more information about these programs, please visit:

- DPH Care Coordination program: [www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/family-health/care-coordination.html](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/family-health/care-coordination.html)
- RCP Description and locations below
- Listing of RCPs in each region: [www.eiplp.org/documents/RCP11.12.pdf](http://www.eiplp.org/documents/RCP11.12.pdf)

## Specialty Services Update: 2015 Early Connections Conference (click photo)

2015 Early Connections Conference: Celebrating your child's gold medal moments



## Perkins Community Programs' February Newsletter

The Perkins Community Programs February Newsletter highlights the work of the Infant Toddler Program. Perkins has created a team of teachers to specifically work with EI aged children, which has given staff an opportunity to focus on early childhood and family issues. This newsletter should be of interest to parents considering an affiliation with Perkins as well as to staff. Please see the newsletter at the end of this publication.

### ***Data Manager Update: New Federally Required Report***

The Child Count report provides OSEP with the number of IFSP children active on a specified day of the year for all states. As part of this report states have been given the option to also report the number of IFSP children served during a 12-month period of time. This option will now become a requirement for all states. But, in addition, a race/ethnicity breakdown of these children will also be required. One of the monthly error reports sent to programs (Error Report #2: "Missing EIIS Client forms and/or eligibility data – IFSP children") includes an error code for children whose race/ethnicity is missing. As the end of the fiscal year gets closer it will become important to make sure that all IFSP children have this information completed in EIIS. Please remember the guidelines for completing this information from families who intentionally refuse to answer these questions:

#### Parent or Guardian Who Intentionally Refuses to Answer the Ethnicity and/or Race Questions

If the parent or guardian intentionally refuses to answer the ethnicity and/or race questions, then, as a last resort, the service coordinator is required to select and document information as a response to these questions based on observer identification. Observer identification can include the following:

- Use of this child's prior record or sibling information
- Use of first-hand knowledge about the child such as country of birth
- Use of first-hand knowledge about the family such as home language, ancestry and/or family member's country of birth

The Commonwealth requires the service coordinator to make the final decision based on observer identification. The DPH EIIS application will NOT allow the user to move out of the ethnicity/race section until a selection has been made. Therefore, it is imperative that the service coordinator complete this section on the form. Although DPH was permitted to estimate race/ethnicity when it was unknown or missing for aggregate federal reporting in the past, this practice is no longer permitted.

### ***EITC Updates***



**Massachusetts Early Intervention  
Training Center**

#### **UMASS Boston BDI-2 Fidelity Study:**

UMASS BDI-2 Fidelity Study is still accepting video submissions. Please contact Noah Feldman with any questions regarding this process.

#### **Focus for EITC Curriculum:**

The April webinar will review the national curriculum that is being used in EITC workshops, including Building a Community and the Training for Supervisors. It will give an overview of the key concepts and tools discussed for assessment and throughout the IFSP process. This curriculum aligns with our MA EI Mission and Key Principles.

#### **CEIS On-line Documents **UPDATED:****

CEIS on-line documents have been updated on the EI Training Center website so that applicants can access each Entry individually. Either the full CEIS manual or individual entries may be downloaded and saved as needed.

Comments, contributions or feedback, please contact:

Patti Fougere

[Patti.fougere@state.ma.us](mailto:Patti.fougere@state.ma.us)

617-624-5975

# THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION PROGRAM

*There are six Regional Consultation Programs (RCPs) located throughout Massachusetts.*

*The RCPs are collaboration between the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC).*

The RCPs provide:

- Consultation, resource and referral and family support for children 0-3 with complex care needs enrolled in Early Intervention.
- Trainings for caregivers, child care educators, early intervention professionals and public preschool personnel on a variety of topics impacting young children with special needs
- Resource and referral information to public and private preschool personnel to ensure successful preschool inclusion. This information can include:
  - ◆ Child consultation and family support around specific needs as well as support during transition into preschool
  - ◆ Technical assistance regarding specific resources for children with special needs
  - ◆ Contact information about area resources, including a one page, double sided guide

*Please contact your local Regional Consultation Program Coordinator if you would like to hear more about these resources.*

## **Northeast Regional Consultation Program**

### ***Birth-3:***

Rachel Daniels, MS, OTR/L, ATP

Phone: (978) 475-3806 ext. 242

Email: rcp@theprofessionalcenter.org

### ***Preschool aged:***

Christy Murray, MEd, ATP, CEIS

Phone: (978) 475-3806 ext. 243

Email: cmurray@theprofessionalcenter.org

## **Boston Regional Consultation Program**

Lea Wandelmaier, MS, MHC

Phone: (617) 383-6207

Email: lwandelmaier@thomchild.org

## **Metrowest Regional Consultation Program**

Kathy Haran-Kovacs, MEd, CEIS

Phone: (617) 774-1048

Email: kharanko@ssmh.org

## **Southeast Regional Consultation Program**

Sonia Amaral, BA, DS, CEIS

Phone: (508) 996-3391 ext 246

Email: samaral@schwartzcenter.org

## **Central Regional Consultation Program**

Jodi Russell, BSEd, DS, CEIS

Phone: (508) 473-3422 x322

Email: jrussell@criterionchild.com

## **Western Regional Consultation Program**

Karen Cassidy, RN, LCSW

Phone: (413) 783-5500 ext. 116

Email: KCassidy@thomchild.org



## Accessing Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI)

The **Children's Behavioral Health Initiative (CBHI)** is a community-based system of care to serve youth who have behavioral, emotional, and mental health needs.

To be eligible for CBHI services a youth must be:

- a resident of Massachusetts;
- **eligible for MassHealth**, under MassHealth Standard or CommonHealth \*
- under age 21;
- diagnosed with a qualifying, serious emotional, behavioral or psychiatric condition

\* NOTE: See Accessing MassHealth sheet for eligibility (may qualify based on disability if over income) and how to apply for coverage

Once youth are enrolled in **MassHealth Standard** they must select a managed care plan to access behavioral health coverage.  
There are two types of managed care plans:

- a **Primary Care Clinician (PCC)**
  - ◊ All MassHealth Standard members who enroll in the (PCC) plan receive behavioral-health services through MBHP
- **Managed Care Entity (MCE)** must choose one:
  - ◊ **Fallon Community Health Plan**; subcontract with Beacon Health Strategies to manage behavioral health providers.
  - ◊ **BMC Health Net**; manage their network of providers of behavioral health services
  - ◊ **Neighborhood Health Plan**; subcontract with Beacon Health Strategies to manage behavioral health providers.
  - ◊ **Network Health Plan**; manage their network of providers of behavioral health services
  - ◊ **Health New England**; subcontracts with MBHP to manage behavioral health providers

Once youth are enrolled in **CommonHealth** they must call Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP) at 1-800-495-0086 to select coverage

### Children's Behavioral Health Initiative Services

- There are six services designed to help youth have success in the home, at school, and in the community:
- Intensive Care Coordination (**ICC**)
- In-Home Therapy (**IHT**)
- Family Support and Training (FS&T, or "**Family Partner**")
- In-Home Behavioral Services (**IHBS**)
- Therapeutic Mentoring (**TM**)
- Mobile Crisis Intervention (**MCI**)

The CBHI Service Delivery System relies on a **Care Coordination HUB** (ICC, IHT or Outpatient Therapist) who can refer to TM, IHBS or FP (HUB-dependent services), as needed.

**Referrals to CBHI services** can come from:

- Medical providers or outpatient therapists who identify mental health concerns during office visits
- Self referrals from youth and family
- Schools
- Other state agencies supporting the youth and family

**Community service organizations (CSA)** are regional agencies that facilitate access to care and coordinate services for youth with (SED). To find a CSA and CBHI provider near you go to:

**Massachusetts Behavioral Health Access:** [www.mabhaccess.com/](http://www.mabhaccess.com/) or **CBHI Regional brochures** for families:  
[www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/commissions-and-initiatives/cbhi/cbhi-brochures-and-companion-guide.html](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/commissions-and-initiatives/cbhi/cbhi-brochures-and-companion-guide.html)

## How to Apply for MassHealth/CommonHealth

Your child may be eligible for MassHealth/CommonHealth based on **disability not income**. Follow these steps below to apply and learn if your child qualifies for coverage:

1. Submit a MassHealth **application for Health and Dental Coverage**; choose one of the following ways:

- **Apply online**, go to: [www.MAhealthconnector.org](http://www.MAhealthconnector.org)

You can create an online account if you do not already have one

- **Print** application

[www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/masshealth/membappforms/aca-3-english.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/masshealth/membappforms/aca-3-english.pdf)

⇒ **Mail** filled-out, signed application to:  
Health Insurance Processing Center  
P.O Box 4405  
Taunton, Ma 02780

⇒ **Fax** your filled-out, signed application to: **1-857-323-8300**

- **Call** MassHealth Customer Services Center at **1-800-841-2900** or **1-877-MA ENROLL (877-623-6765)**.

(TTY: 1-800-497-4648 for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech disabled)

- **Visit** a MassHealth Enrollment Center (MEC) to apply in person, Monday-Friday 8:45-5:00

333 Bridge St. Springfield, MA	45-47 Spruce St. Chelsea, MA
367 East St. Tewksbury, MA	21 Spring St., Suite 4 Taunton, MA

2. Complete the MassHealth **Child Disability Supplement**: [www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/masshealth/appforms/mads-child.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/masshealth/appforms/mads-child.pdf)

**Mail to:** Disability Evaluation Services  
P.O. Box 2796  
Worcester MA 01613-2796  
Telephone Number: 1-800-888-3420

3. Complete a MassHealth **Medical Records Release Form** for all providers who can speak with MassHealth about your child's disability: [www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/masshealth/appforms/mh-mrr.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/masshealth/appforms/mh-mrr.pdf)

**Mail with** Child Disability Supplement  
Disability Evaluation Services  
P.O Assistance Program, **1-800-862-4840**, to apply for Premium Assistance.  
Box 2796  
Worcester MA 01613-2796

4. Once your child has been approved for MassHealth (can take up to 90 days), call the Premium

The Massachusetts **Family to Family Health Information Center**  
is here to help, contact us with questions about:

- ◇ **Eligibility and related costs**
- ◇ **Completing application for coverage and additional paperwork**
- ◇ **Accessing benefits**



MA F2F Health Information Center  
1-800-331-0688 ext. 301 or [massfv@fcsn.org](mailto:massfv@fcsn.org)



FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN  
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS





Upcoming Training from IHR

## **Introduction to Trauma-Informed Treatment for Substance Use Disorders**

Individuals with substance use disorders have a high prevalence of histories of trauma. Failure to understand the impact of these experiences can lead providers to inadvertently retraumatize clients, resulting in increases in mental health symptoms, behavior problems, and relapse, and in less than optimal treatment outcomes. This introductory day-long training will describe in detail the impact of trauma. Principles and practices of trauma-informed treatment will be presented. Strategies that will improve the effectiveness of treatment will be presented and practiced. Secondary trauma and self-care will also be discussed. Small changes in approach and service delivered can bring new understanding and a new sense of efficacy that enhances the recovery process for clients.

**Boston, Mass. SOLD OUT**  
**Monday, April 27, 2015**  
**8:30 am - 4:30 pm**

[Register for Boston](#)

**Springfield, Mass.**  
**Wednesday, June 3, 2015**  
**8:30 am - 4:30 pm**

[Register for Springfield](#)

## **Providing Trauma-Informed Supervision**

This workshop is for supervisors who have already received an “Introduction” level training on trauma-informed care. To deliver trauma-informed care, supervisors must model trauma-informed interactions in their work with supervisees, and support the development of specific competencies that supervisees need to deliver treatment services in a trauma informed manner. After a brief review of trauma-informed care in general, this workshop will present the principles that should guide supervisors’ interactions with their supervisees as well as the competencies that staff members must develop in order to deliver trauma-informed care. Specific tools will be provided to support the implementation of trauma-informed supervision, and participants will have the opportunity to practice using them.

**Natick, Mass.**  
**Tuesday, May 19, 2015**  
**8:30 am - 4:30 pm**

[Register for Natick](#)



Dear Friend of Perkins Community Programs,

This month's newsletter focuses on our Infant/Toddler Program and highlights one of our many wonderful teachers. There's a critical need for specialized services during the first three years of life for every child who is visually impaired, blind or deafblind, including those who have additional disabilities. These services lay the foundation for successful growth and development. Each year, our teachers work closely with over 500 babies, families – including siblings and extended families – and the early intervention providers in the community.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) contracts with the Perkins School for the Blind for these services, with Perkins' grants and endowment money completing the financial support. Referrals come primarily from DPH Early Intervention (EI) programs. However, we also receive referrals directly from parents, doctors, nurses and others with whom we have strong partnerships. We then help to connect families with their local EI provider and community resources.

**Our program focuses on:**

- Providing infants, toddlers and their families with a coordinated program of home teaching and, for some families, group learning
- Assessing functional vision and development skills and developing lessons that address the goals for the child
- Providing transition services to prepare children to enter preschool at age three
- Collaborating with and providing consultation and training

## Lending Library and the Perkins Adaptive Device Center

We hope that you will turn to Perkins' Infant Toddler Program if you meet a family of a child age birth to 3 with visual impairment or deafblindness. We can help make a difference, in what can be a very overwhelming time for a family.



Sincerely,

**Teri Turgeon**

Director of Community  
Programs



## On Campus

There certainly was a “joyful noise” during the month of December in the Infant/Toddler classroom at Perkins! The Infant/Toddler group brings together children who have a visual impairment, their siblings and parents for a morning session. Offered three times a week, children are assigned to a day that has the best peer group match.

Parents meet as a group, facilitated by a social worker, to learn about resources for vision and additional disabilities, the transition to school process, coping strategies and more while they share with and support each other. In the classroom children work on goals related to vision, movement, language, social skills, etc. with teachers of the visually impaired and long-term volunteers. We are very excited to be piloting a new group in the Worcester area this winter. We appreciate the partnership opportunity with Thom Worcester Early Intervention.

## In the Community



Perkins' Infant/Toddler teachers work with babies and families in their homes, childcare centers or other settings in the community. Teachers work with families to assess their child's functional vision, auditory functioning, tactile skills and movement skills. They work closely with the child's team, including family and early intervention providers, to help them understand the impact of vision loss and to develop the Individual Family Service Plan that addresses the child's abilities and challenges. They develop and provide lessons and activities to address the needs identified. Teachers also assist families to ensure effective medical and educational collaboration. In addition, our Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialists are available to consult on a child's movement and awareness skills. They work with the primary Infant/Toddler teacher to develop activities to encourage increased use of vision and hearing and reinforce safe movement in the child's natural environment.



Ask any family that has come to an on-campus Infant/Toddler Group and they will say that Rosemary has made a huge difference in the life of their child. Since she started teaching in group in 1998, Rosemary has seen changes in the population, with CVI the predominant diagnosis now. She talks about how she has grown over her years and learned from each child, other teachers and the volunteers.

### Featured Teacher: Rosemary Henry-Webson

Rosemary feels blessed by the many volunteers — one long-term volunteer just celebrated her 20th anniversary with group! It's fair to say that most participants feel group is the best day of the week. They come from all walks of life and fit together like a family. Together with another teacher, they work on goals for each child using multi-sensory activities adapted to suit their functional levels. The classroom can be quite busy but if you look carefully there are multiple lessons being conducted.

Rosemary also provides Infant/Toddler services in the community. She describes the importance of working with families and mentoring how to advocate for their child. She has shown parents what their child CAN do and empowers them to share this with others. Rosemary says "We have to believe we are making a difference and we have to believe our kids CAN do things." Rosemary believes, as do we, that Early Intervention can make a difference in the lives of young children.

# Discover what Perkins can offer

## Thursday, March 5th: Free Information Session

Learn about our school and community based programs and services, including social and recreational opportunities.

Starting at 9:30, you will learn about our programs from Perkins' staff, with plenty of time for questions and answers and light refreshments. During your tour, you'll observe classrooms, the cutting-edge Grousbeck Center for Students and Technology, adapted athletic facilities, and the innovative Horticultural Center.

To register or for more information, please contact Martha Simon at [Martha.Simon@Perkins.org](mailto:Martha.Simon@Perkins.org) or call 617-972-7476. If you can't attend this event, ask about future Information Sessions, which are held the first Thursday of each month.

**Please share with others!**