



The Parent Leadership Project's Parent Perspective

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"Change happens—Make it Count!"

Issue 116 – Winter 2018

How I Became "Ba-Ba:" Navigating Infant Hearing Loss

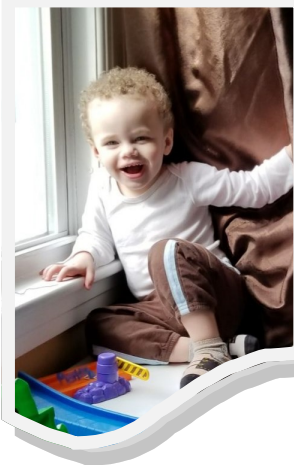
By "Baba" Frank Natale

Greetings! My name is Frank. I thank you for allowing me to share my family's EI journey with you.

After struggling with infertility for five years my wife and I were forever blessed with the birth of our son, Evan.

Evan failed two infant hearing screening tests while in the hospital. This was not surprising as he was wide-awake and crying the whole time. The test requires the newborn to be "still" and "asleep". However, we had to schedule a full-blown hearing booth analysis. During the two month wait for the appointment Evan was always alert and interactive. He reacted normally to the sounds of our voices, the closing of a door, and the ring of the cell phone.

Our shock was profound on the day he was diagnosed with permanent, moderate hearing loss; also known as "sensorineural" hearing loss (hearing loss of the inner ear). Our dream of raising our baby "multi-lingual" (my wife is



Indonesian) seemed shattered.

Our family, our friends, even our pediatrician was in "shock" as Evan showed no signs at that age of any impairment. To all he was as "normal" as any other baby in our family circle. However, a myriad of different tests all confirmed the same thing: permanent hearing loss. We were told that Evan could not hear "soft" or "high pitched" sounds like the letter "p" or the chirping of birds.

Upon the advice of our audiologist, Evan began Early Intervention (EI) at the age of 3 months.

We were overwhelmed. We were scared. We were told that Evan might never learn to properly speak a single language much less two.

At that time, we did not even know what "EI" was or that it existed. There were so many things to navigate and understand all at once.

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Big Changes at the EIPLP (Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project)

Goodbye! And a very big Thank You to Darla Gundler! It is with heavy hearts that we announce that Darla Gundler, Director of the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project (EIPLP) has left the EIPLP after over 20 years of service. Darla has taken her many talents, skills and passion for family engagement to the Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC) at the University of Connecticut which is a technical assistance center funded by the US Department of Education where she has become the Collaboration Coordinator working to provide resources and supports to strengthen state early childhood systems.

The EIPLP will miss Darla very much and wish her great success as she continues to support children and families at a national level. Please join us in wishing her heartfelt **congratulations!**



Welcome Roxanne Hoke-Chandler! The EIPLP is very pleased to welcome Roxanne to the role of Statewide Family Engagement and Collaboration Coordinator. Roxanne brings a breadth of experience and knowledge to this new position. As the Director of Family Engagement at the Federation for Children with Special Needs, she conducted workshops for families and professional development for educators on parents' rights and options, and on promoting family engagement in their children's education. Roxanne's passion is in serving hard to reach and underserved populations. Along with speaking at forums on childcare, literacy, health care disparities, and parents' rights for children with special needs, she has worked as adjunct faculty at UMass Boston in its Early Education and Care in Inclusive Settings program. Roxanne's greatest passion, however, is being a mother to her two daughters.



NCSEAM Family Survey Update

Thank you for completing a Family Survey last year. In 2017, you returned **4548** Surveys; for a return rate of 37.3%. This is very consistent with how we have done for the past few years. The Department of Public Health (DPH) appreciates your help in gathering this important information.

Your responses on the Family Survey help to evaluate how effective Early Intervention services are for families. Your feedback matters. It is used to report Family Outcomes, and supports DPH, and local Early Intervention (EI) programs to work to continuously improve our Massachusetts Early Intervention system.

In 2017 we learned that:

- **86.7%** feel that Early Intervention services helps your family know your rights;
- **84.2%** say that Early Intervention services helps your family effectively communicate your children's needs;
- **93.6%** feel that Early Intervention services help your family, help your children develop and learn.

Our next NCSEAM Family Survey distribution is in March 2018. If your family has received Early Intervention for at least **six** months and did not fill out a Survey in October 2017, you should receive one from your Service Coordinator. Remember you should only be given **one** Survey each calendar year. Look for yours and please take a few minutes to complete it using a **pencil**. Then simply return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided.

Please continue to share your thoughts and feelings about the impact of Early Intervention services for your children and family with your own EI program and with DPH.

Family Survey Frequently Asked Questions

1. Do all families in EI have to fill out the Family Survey?
Yes. The Family Survey goes out in October and March. The goal is that every family whose child is in Early Intervention for at least six months completes a Family Survey. Every family completes one a year.
2. What are Family Outcomes?
Family Outcomes are the results children and families experience through being in Early Intervention. Outcomes tell us how well EI services are working for families and their children.

Información de la encuesta para las familias de NCSEAM

Gracias por completar la Encuesta Familiar el año pasado. En 2017, ustedes devolvieron **4548** encuestas, lo que equivale a una tasa de devolución del 37.3 %. Esto concuerda con lo que hemos hecho en los últimos años. El Departamento de Salud Pública (*Department of Public Health*, DPH) agradece su colaboración para recopilar esta información importante.

Sus respuestas en la Encuesta Familiar nos ayudan a evaluar qué tan eficaces son los servicios de Intervención Temprana para las familias. Sus comentarios son importantes. Los usamos para informar los Resultados Familiares; además brindan apoyo al DPH y a los programas de Intervención Temprana (Early Intervention, EI) para poder trabajar de forma continuada en la mejora de nuestro sistema de Intervención Temprana de Massachusetts.

En 2017, aprendimos lo siguiente:

- El **86,7%** siente que los servicios de Intervención Temprana ayudan a sus familias a conocer sus derechos.
- El **84.2%** dice que los servicios de Intervención Temprana ayudan a sus familias a comunicar eficazmente las necesidades de sus hijos.
- El **93.6%** siente que los servicios de Intervención Temprana ayudan a sus familias a que sus hijos se desarrollen y aprendan.

Nuestra próxima Encuesta Familiar NCSEAM se distribuirá en marzo de 2018. Si su familia recibió servicios de Intervención Temprana durante al menos **seis** meses y no completó la Encuesta de octubre de 2017, recibirá una encuesta de su Coordinador de Servicios. Recuerde que debe recibir **una** encuesta por año calendario. Pida la suya y tómese unos minutos para completarla con **lápiz**. Luego, simplemente devuélvala en el sobre con estampilla y dirección que recibió.

Siga compartiendo con el Programa de EI y con el DPH su opinión y sentimientos sobre el impacto que los servicios de Intervención Temprana tienen en sus hijos y su familia.

Preguntas frecuentes sobre la encuesta para las familias

1. ¿Todas las familias en EI tienen que completar la Encuesta Familiar?
Sí. La Encuesta Familiar se distribuye en octubre y marzo. La meta es que las familias que tengan hijos en Intervención Temprana durante al menos seis meses completen una Encuesta Familiar. Cada familia completa una encuesta por año.
2. ¿Qué son los Resultados Familiares?
Los Resultados Familiares son los resultados que los niños y las familias experimentan al estar en Intervención Temprana. Los resultados nos muestran en qué medida EI está beneficiando a las familias y a sus hijos.



Receive our Newsletters, Events & Opportunities more quickly!

Email us at eiplp@live.com and ask to be added to our email list!

HELP the EIPLP meet our goal of "750 likes!" on Facebook



How I Became "Ba-Ba:" Navigating Infant Hearing Loss

By "Ba-Ba" Frank Natale

Evan received his infant hearing aids at 5 months old. The doctor told us that he had to wear them at ALL times. Well, he wanted nothing to do with his hearing aids. He would rip them out every time after a few seconds. He never wore them that first year.

I still remember holding Evan in my lap, facing me, when he was six months old. He had begun to say "Mama!" and we were so thrilled. As I cradled my baby boy in my lap, I looked him in the eye and said "Papa, Papa" while I pointed at my chest. His eyes shifted away from mine and I noticed that he was staring at my lips as he struggled to formulate and mimic the words I was saying to him.

I watched in amazement as his little mouth and lips struggled to copy what I was saying. Suddenly he blurted out "BA-BA!" Everything clicked for me in that moment. He could not clearly hear the letter "p" and when one reads lips the letter "p" and "b" are the same. I was not "Papa". I had become "Baba".

EI has thankfully been with us every step of this journey. We feel so blessed to be surrounded by so many caring and knowledgeable professionals. Our EI program connected us with a local American Sign Language (ASL) Program at no cost to our family. A deaf tutor came to our home once a week for 20 weeks and taught us ASL while Evan

played in the same room. To our utter amazement and delight, Evan spontaneously began signing as well!

Evan just turned 2 years old and is not showing any delays. He is becoming fluent in three languages – English, Indonesian, and ASL! I am confident that the ASL in no way hindered his development of spoken language. On the contrary, I truly believe it has helped.

Other parents have asked me what I have learned:

- ♥ Don't be afraid to ask questions. If you don't understand then ask again, and again.
- ♥ Follow your instincts – pick and choose what resources feel best to you.
- ♥ Understand the commitment aspect of certain programs and make sure you are ready and able to respect that commitment (20 weeks of ASL was a lot of work and time).
- ♥ Respect that children within EI often can compensate and learn in ways that we are not even aware of and that we do not fully understand.

My heart melts every day now when I come home from work and I hear a little boy's voice call out, "Baba!! Baba!!"

Yes, all is well. May I always be "Baba."

Cómo me convertí en "babá": cómo afrontar la pérdida de audición en niños por Babá Frank

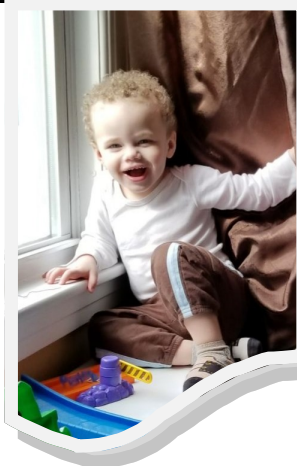
Por Frank Natale

¡Hola! Mi nombre es Frank. Les agradezco por dejar que les comparta la experiencia de mi familia con Intervención Temprana.

Después de luchar contra la infertilidad durante cinco años, mi esposa y yo nos sentimos inmensamente bendecidos con la llegada de nuestro hijo, Evan.

Evan no logró pasar dos exámenes de audición para bebés mientras estábamos en el hospital. No fue una sorpresa porque estuvo despierto y llorando todo el tiempo y estas pruebas requieren que el recién nacido esté "quieto" y "dormido". No obstante, tuvimos que programar un análisis completo en una cabina de audición. Durante los dos meses que tuvimos que esperar para el examen, Evan siempre se mostró alerta e interactivo. Reaccionaba de forma normal a los sonidos de nuestras voces, al cerrarse una puerta y al sonido del celular.

Nuestra sorpresa fue muy grande el día en que le diagnosticaron pérdida moderada y permanente de la audición, también conocida como pérdida "sensoneural" de la audición (pérdida de la audición del oído interno). Nuestro sue-



ño de criar a nuestro hijo para que sea "multilingüe" (mi esposa es de Indonesia) parecía haberse destrozado.

Nuestra familia, amigos e incluso el pediatra estaban en "shock" porque Evan no había mostrado signos a esa edad de ninguna discapacidad. Para todos era tan "normal" como cualquier otro bebé de nuestro círculo familiar. Sin embargo, después de un sinnúmero de pruebas, se llegó a un mismo diagnóstico: pérdida permanente de la audición. Nos dijeron que Evan no podía oír sonidos "suaves" o "agudos" como la letra "p" o el chirriar de los pájaros.

Siguiendo el consejo de nuestro audiólogo, Evan comenzó con Intervención Temprana (Early Intervention, EI) a los 3 meses de edad.

Nos sentíamos abrumados. Teníamos miedo. Nos dijeron que quizá Evan nunca aprendería a hablar adecuadamente un idioma, mucho menos dos.

En ese momento no sabíamos qué era "EI" ni siquiera que existía. Había tantas cosas que teníamos que procesar y entender a la vez.

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Cómo me convertí en "babá": cómo afrontar la pérdida de audición en niños por Babá Frank

Por Frank Natale

Evan recibió sus audífonos para niños a los 5 meses de edad. El médico nos dijo que tenía que usarlos en TODO momento. Pues bien, Evan no quería saber nada con sus audífonos. Se los sacaba después de unos segundos de habérselos puesto. No los usó ese primer año.

Recuerdo un día que tenía a Evan sobre el regazo, mirándome, cuando tenía 6 meses de edad. Ya había comenzado a decir "mamá" y estábamos fascinados. Mientras me cía a mi hijo sobre el regazo, lo miré a los ojos y dije "papá, papá" a la vez que me señalaba a mí mismo. Su mirada se alejó de la mía y me di cuenta que me estaba mirando los labios y que se esforzaba para formular y copiar las palabras que yo le decía.

Miré asombrado cómo se esforzaba para mover su pequeña boca y los labios y copiar lo que yo decía. De repente dijo "BA-BA". Fue en ese momento que me di cuenta. No podía oír bien la letra "p" y al leer los labios las letras "p" y "b" parecen iguales. No era "papá". Me convertí en "babá".

Afortunadamente, EI nos acompañó en cada paso. Nos sentimos muy bendecidos de estar rodeados de tantos profesionales atentos y experimentados. Nuestro programa de EI nos conectó con un programa de Lenguaje de Señas Americano (American Sign Language, ASL) sin ningún costo para nuestra familia. Un tutor sordo nos visitó en nuestra casa una vez a la semana durante 20 semanas y nos enseñó ASL mientras Evan jugaba en la misma habitación.

Para nuestro asombro y alegría, Evan espontáneamente comenzó a hablar con señas también.

Evan acaba de cumplir 2 años de edad y no muestra ningún retraso. Está comenzando a hablar con fluidez tres idiomas: inglés, indonesio y ASL. Estoy seguro de que el ASL de ninguna manera entorpeció su desarrollo del lenguaje hablado. Al contrario, de verdad creo que lo ayudó.

Otros padres me han preguntado qué fue lo que aprendí. Les digo lo siguiente:

- ♥ No tengan miedo de hacer preguntas. Si no entienden, pregunten una y otra vez.
- ♥ Sigan sus instintos: elijan los recursos que les parezcan mejor.
- ♥ Entiendan que algunos programas requieren compromiso y asegúrense de estar preparados y dispuestos a respetar ese compromiso (20 semanas de ASL requirieron mucho trabajo y tiempo).
- ♥ Respeten el hecho de que los niños en EI a veces pueden compensar y aprender de formas que nosotros no tenemos en cuenta y que no comprendemos en su totalidad.

Se me derrite el corazón todos los días cuando llego a casa del trabajo y escucho a mi pequeño hijo llamarme diciendo: "¡Babá! ¡Babá!".

Sí, todo marcha bien. Quizás siempre seré "babá".

Northeast Regional Consultation Program (RCP) Empowering Families Through Fun

The Northeast Regional Consultation Program at The Professional Center for Child Development hosts 6 to 7 family events each year to help empower families to get out and join in. Having a child with complex health care needs can be difficult and often families feel isolated or apprehensive. During RCP activities families are encouraged to network, develop friendships and share experiences.

The most recent Family Night Out was to Jordan's in Reading and was a great success. 85 people enjoyed "Liquid Fire Works" (fountains of water, lights and sounds dancing to music), an adventure ropes course, ice cream and most of all community.

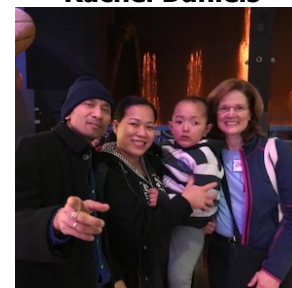
Cassidy Riding the Firetruck



Connor and his Dad, Tim, Enjoy the Beanstalk



Sophia and her family smile along with the NRCP Director, Rachel Daniels



"We went to Jordan's furniture event and we were happy to bring Sophia to a fun place with lots of things for her to look at. She loved the water with the lights and she had a lot of joy on her face from this. Sophia saw other kids and had a lot of fun. We feel excited when there is something we can bring her to." - Chan

Amelia and Early Intervention

By Heather Iandoli

Amelia's story began as a 24 week, 1 pound 8 ounce, micro-preemie. After 80 very long days in the NICU, our miracle baby was able to come home where she belonged. Upon leaving the NICU, we headed into a world of unknowns. Along with our new world came a referral to the Kennedy-Donovan Center Early Intervention Program.

When Amelia first started Early Intervention (EI), she was 4 months old and had only been home with us for about 2 months. At that time, she weighed just over 9 pounds and was not active at all. She could not hold her head up and tummy time was a big challenge along with everything else. Through her time in EI, Amelia has worked with both development specialists and physical therapists. Little by little, she began making progress. Soon she was holding her head up, mastering tummy time, and rolling over. With lots of work and patience, Amelia started to crawl, and finally at almost 19 months she began to walk. Her speech developed a bit slow as well, but now she is talking up a storm, joining 2 and 3 words together.

We are fortunate to have the services available that we do! I strongly believe that our little miracle would never have caught up so quickly if it were not for the amazing Early Intervention staff we work with. Amelia is now a 25-pound, non-stop walker and talker, who celebrated her 2nd birthday on February 3rd. She loves dancing, climbing, and coloring. We owe so much to the Kennedy-Donovan Center and their Early Intervention Program!!

I love what our EI program stands for and what it does for families so much so, that I decided to go back to work and I am working at the Kennedy-Donovan Center South Central Early Intervention Program as an Administrative Assistant. I am happy to have become a Parent Liaison and look forward to see what all of "our" futures hold.



Amelia's 1st Day of EI



Amelia's Today

Amelia y la Intervención Temprana

por Heather Iandoli

La historia de Amelia comenzó como una bebé microprematura de 24 semanas que pesó 1 libra y 8 onzas. Después de 80 largos días en la Unidad Neonatal de Cuidados Intensivos (NICU), pudimos llevarnos nuestro pequeño milagro a casa, donde pertenece. Una vez que dejamos la NICU, nos dirigimos al mundo de lo desconocido. Además de este mundo lleno de cosas desconocidas, obtuvimos una derivación al Programa de Intervención Temprana del Centro Kennedy-Donovan. Cuando Amelia comenzó con Intervención Temprana (Early Intervention, EI) tenía 4 meses de edad y solo había estado 2 meses en casa con nosotros. En ese momento, pesaba apenas un poco más de 9 libras y no era para nada activa.

No podía mantener la cabeza erguida y ponerla boca abajo era todo un desafío, al igual que todo lo demás. Durante el tiempo que estuvo en EI, Amelia trabajó con especialistas en el desarrollo y con terapeutas físicos. Poco a poco, comenzó a mostrar progresos. Poco tiempo después pudo mantener la cabeza erguida, ponerse boca abajo y darse la vuelta. Después de mucho trabajo y paciencia, Amelia comenzó a gatear y, finalmente, a los casi 19 meses de edad, comenzó a caminar. Su habla se desarrolló más lentamente, pero ahora habla muy rápido y junta de 2 a 3 palabras.

Somos afortunados de tener estos servicios disponibles. Creo firmemente que nuestro pequeño milagro jamás habría progresado tan rápido si no hubiera sido por el increíble personal de Intervención Temprana que trabajó con nosotros. Amelia ahora pesa 25 libras, camina y habla sin parar, y acaba de celebrar su segundo cumpleaños el 3 de febrero. Le encanta bailar, trepar y colorear. Le debemos muchísimo al Centro Kennedy-Donovan y a su Programa de Intervención Temprana.

Me gustan tanto los valores del programa de EI y lo que hace por las familias que decidí volver a trabajar: estoy trabajando como asistente administrativa en el Programa de Intervención Temprana Centro-Sur del Centro Kennedy-Donovan. Estoy feliz de haberme convertido en una Intermediaria de Padres y espero con ansias lo que nos deparen "nuestros" futuros.

Federation for Children with Special Needs

www.fcsn.org

Turning Three—Provides information about the required process for transitioning a child from Early Intervention (EI) to special education.

Basic Rights—Provides families with the foundation knowledge needed to understand other special education workshop topics.

An IEP for My Child—Explains the Individual Education Program (IEP) document, its development, how to articulate a vision, write measurable annual goals, monitor a child's progress and understand how the document will support a student.



Massachusetts Early Intervention Training Center

Watch the Early Intervention Training Center calendar for up-to-date opportunities...providers, families and caregivers are all welcome to participate in the online courses available! www.eitrainingcenter.org

Early Intervention in Massachusetts

Massachusetts Early Intervention (EI) is a statewide program for infants and toddlers – birth to 3 years old who have developmental delays or are at risk for a developmental delay. EI services, also known as Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are overseen by the MA Department of Public Health. Part of the funding for EI and assurance that services comply with IDEA comes from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) a part of the federal Department of Education. The Massachusetts Part C program reports back to OSEP on how well we are meeting the needs of children and families receiving EI services.

In 2014, the Department of Public Health, Part C Early Intervention system introduced a new EI mission and Key Principles to guide the work of local EI programs.

Core Values of MA EI

Respect—*Recognizing each group of people has its own unique culture, big or small, and honoring the values and ways of each family's neighborhood, community, extended family and individual unit.*

Individualization—*Tailoring supports and services with each family to its own unique needs and circumstances.*

Family-Centeredness—*Basing decisions with each family on its own values, priorities, and routines.*

Community—*Realizing that each family exists in the context of a greater community, and fostering those communities as resources for supports and services.*

Team Collaboration—*Working as equal partners with each family, and the people and service systems in a family's life.*

Life-long Learning—*Viewing that early intervention supports and services are a first step on a journey for each child, each family, and each provider..*

The MA EI System Mission Statement

Massachusetts Early Intervention is a viable system that builds upon supports and resources for family members and caregivers to enhance the development and learning of infants and toddlers through individualized, developmentally appropriate intervention embedded in everyday activities.

The 7 Key Principles that support the work of Early Intervention in Massachusetts.

1. Infants and Toddlers develop and learn through meaningful everyday experiences and interactions with familiar people in familiar places.
2. ALL families with the necessary supports and resources can enhance children's development and learning.
3. The primary role of the Early Intervention Specialist is to establish relationships and foster equal partnerships with family members and caregivers to enhance development and learning through the IFSP process.
4. Interventions must be based on developmentally appropriate practice, current research, and appropriate laws and regulations.
5. The Early Intervention process, from initial contacts through transition, must be collaborative and individualized to reflect the child's and family members' priorities, learning styles and culture.
6. The service coordinator ensures that the family's priorities, needs and concerns are addressed through the IFSP team, coordinates the IFSP process and facilitates collaboration among all IFSP and community team members.
7. IFSP outcomes must be functional and based on children and family's needs, family identified priorities, and input from all members of the child's IFSP team.

To learn more about Massachusetts Early Intervention, please visit the EIPLP website at www.eiplt.org or the Early Intervention Division website at www.mass.gov/orgs/early-intervention-division. If you would like to learn more about how you can get involved at a state level, please email us at eiplt@live.com.

DPH Spotlight

Big Changes in the Bureau of Family Health & Nutrition (BFHN)

The Bureau of Family Health & Nutrition (BFHN) is part of the Department of Public Health (DPH) that focuses on Infancy, Children, Families, Early Intervention, Nutrition, Pregnancy and Maternal Health.

Thank you, Ron! Ron Benham, Director of the Bureau of Family Health & Nutrition, retired from his position on February 28, 2018.

Ron has been the Part C Coordinator, and provided leadership to the MA Early Intervention system for over 35 years. He was a strong advocate on the national level to support adequate funding and resources for states in the implementation of Early Intervention Programs. In his role as the Bureau Director, he provided direct oversight for 4 Divisions; WIC, Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs; Perinatal, Infancy and Early Childhood; and Early Intervention.



Congratulations, Craig! Craig Andrade has been appointed as the new Director for the Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition. Welcome!

Craig, LATC, RN, DrPH, was formerly the Director of the Division of Health Access (DOHA) within the Bureau of Community Health and Prevention here at

DPH. DOHA Programs include Adolescent Health and Youth Development, School Health Services, School-based Health Centers, the Sexual and Reproductive Health Program, the Office of Oral Health, the State Office of Rural Health and the Primary Care Workforce Center. Craig is also a founding member of the Bureau of Community Health Access & Promotion (BCHAP) Racial Equity Leadership Team. Previously, Craig was Associate Dean of Health and Wellness and Director of Student Health Services at Wheaton College in Norton, MA. He also served as a critical care and public health nurse at Boston Medical Center; as nurse manager and head athletic trainer at Buckingham Browne & Nichols School in Cambridge, MA; and owner/operator of Active Health, a private health and fitness company. Craig has a doctorate in public health from Boston University and is a registered nurse, athletic trainer, strength and condition specialist, and massage therapist. His research interests include behavioral risk management and resilience-building among children, adolescents and young adults.



What's New at Family TIES of Massachusetts?

Family TIES of Massachusetts is excited to introduce the *Topic Sheet Series*. These are one-page, resource materials for specific topics by categories like Accessibility, Advocacy, Child Care, Family Support and Special Health Needs. An example of two in the Accessibility category would be Home or Van Modification Funding. Be on the lookout as we continue the development of this project.

Another exciting announcement is that the new *Directory of Resources* has been printed and is now available!

If you are interested in either of these free tools, please reach out to your Regional Coordinator. Their contact information can be found on the Family TIES website at www.massfamilyties.org.

Family TIES is a statewide parent-to-parent information and support network for families of children special health needs, chronic illnesses or disability, and their professional partners. We are a proud Alliance Member of Parent to Parent USA, a national organization that provides technical assistance to parent-to-parent programs across the country. Family TIES of Massachusetts is a project of the Federation for Children with Special Needs, with funding from and in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Division for Children & Youth with Special Health Needs.

Congratulations, Patti! Patti Fougere, BA, MBA, CEID has become the Acting Director for MA Early Intervention effective February 4, 2018.



Patti has over 20 years of experience in the field of early intervention. She is currently the Acting Director, Early Intervention at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Family Health & Nutrition. She is responsible for the day-to-day operations, management of compliance monitoring and technical assistance to community Early Intervention Programs throughout the Commonwealth. In this role, she develops,

manages and maintains the MA Early Intervention general supervision system to ensure compliance with federal Part C IDEA and DPH Early Intervention Operational Standards to improve outcomes for children and families. She also develops and conducts in-service training, program workshops, conferences, and seminars for EI providers, families receiving services, as well as state and community groups.

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 Coordinator of the EIPLP, a Statewide Family Engagement and Collaboration Coordinator, a Media Coordinator, a Statewide Monitoring Coordinator and a Statewide Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator. Feel free to contact any of them with your thoughts, suggestions, and concerns.

EI Parent Leadership Project Team

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NEXT DEADLINE: We welcome your input, suggestions for resources and articles. The next deadline is **May 15, 2018**. Please call our toll-free number (877) 353-4757 or email the newsletter editor at kris.levine@state.ma.us.

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