



**Official Newsletter of the Illinois Subdivision of the Division
for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children**

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Upcoming Events

Council for Exceptional Children 2006 Convention and Expo

April 5th to 8th, 2006

Salt Palace Conference Center

Salt Lake City, Utah

For more information visit
http://www.cec.sped.org/conventions/SaltLake_2006/

or call 888.232.7733

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Another Successful Sharing A Vision Conference

by Amy Santos

The 9th Biennial Sharing A Vision (SAV) conference recently held at the Doubletree Hotel in Oak Brook was a resounding success. From October 19–21 in 2005, a grand total of 1,452 early childhood professionals and family members attended Illinois' premiere early childhood state conference. The majority of the participants were professionals working in pre-kindergarten classrooms, birth to three early intervention programs, and early childhood special education programs. As always, SAV drew participants from all over the state.

Paula Kluth and Lisa Murphy were the keynote speakers at this year's SAV. Both Paula and Lisa brought their unique presentation style that inspired and ener-

gized the attendees. Over the three days, there were more than 100 session workshops, showcasings by state programs, and hot topic discussions. There were also over 50 exhibitors who shared a tight space at the hotel foyer to show off and sell their wares. The food and free premium items were plentiful.

New this year was two fundraisers -- one was to benefit families from Louisiana and Mississippi now living in Illinois who were affected by Hurricane Katrina. Mardi Gras beads were sold in the SAV booth and all of the



An attendee checks out the wide selection of items at the Children's Art Auction.

proceeds went directly to the local charity serving these families. The other fundraiser was to help provide scholarship for professionals and family members attending future SAV conferences. A one-of-a-kind cookbook was put together by members of the conference committee. The cookbook features favorite, easy to make, and delicious foods from appetizers to desserts.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Jennifer Loncola

It's hard to believe that it has been almost four months since the 9th Sharing A Vision conference. Thank you to the many volunteers who helped organize and kept things running smoothly and also to all in attendance. Conference highlights are shared in Amy Santos' article.

Part of IDEC's mission is to promote comprehensive delivery of quality services for all young children with special needs and their families. In order to provide quality services, it is imperative that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and other early

intervention and early childhood programs receive adequate funding. Recently, federal funding for all IDEA programs was cut resulting in a roughly 1% reduction in budgeted money for Part B, Part C, and Preschool grants. In 2006, all three of these programs will receive less money than was allo-

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The IDEC Newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Illinois Division for Early Childhood. Please send your inquiries, comments, and article submissions to:

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CAN NEWS by Debbie Bruns, President-elect and CAN Coordinator

On October 27th, the Senate passed its Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill. The bill funds IDEA @ 18%. The 18% funding level is a reduction from last year's level of 18.6%. In 2004, Congress made a commitment to fully fund IDEA (40%) by 2011. Senators Clinton and Dodd proposed an amendment to increase funding for IDEA, but the amendment failed. The House passed its version of this bill in June. The bill now needs to go to conference to sort the differences. Also, The Senate bill increased funding for Title I by \$100 million

and funding for Head Start by \$31.2 million. The House of Representatives voted against the Labor/HHS/ Education appropriations bill, which included funding for IDEA. The bill failed on a vote of 209-224. All Democrats and 22 Republicans voted against the bill. Many of those voting against the bill cited the inadequate funding levels for education programs.

The final publication of Part B regulations has been delayed, possibly until February 2006. Draft regulations for Part C will follow afterward.

If you are interested in receiving email alerts related to IDEA and other bills and funding affecting early childhood special education, send your name and email address to dabrunsi@siu.edu to be added to the IL DEC CAN list.

Thanks are extended to Sarah Hadden, DEC Governmental Relations Committee, Diana LaRocco, DEC Governmental Relations Committee Chair and Sharon Walsh, DEC Governmental Relations Consultant, for news updates and CAN Alerts.

FAMILY RELATIONS: A family perspective article series on early childhood special education in Illinois by Lisa A. Ellis

Grace*, mother of Tara*, a one and a half year old child with Down syndrome provided me with a unique perspective considering she is a trained special educational professional who came to have a young child with a disability after several years of teaching. "Having a child with Down syndrome has really opened my eyes a lot," Grace told me, "Even though I was a special education teacher teaching [young adults] with learning disabilities I didn't know a lot about Down syndrome. At first I was wary to even go talk to someone. [Children with Down syndrome] can do so much more than I thought and are people just like the rest of us." Grace has been reading a lot about postsecondary education for those with Down syndrome. She finds this inspiring. "I would love to see Tara be able to go to some type of school so that she can get a job that she will enjoy," she added.

Some of the most helpful things with Tara's services include the developmental playgroup they

attend together. Grace finds the routine and socialization to be really beneficial though Tara is still young. And Tara, who is a social butterfly and smiles all the time, really enjoys it!! Other helpful things which have been done include a parent-friendly therapy report, which is given to her at the end of each session at her home or via email. She points out that with so many therapists and things she needs to be working on with Tara it's helpful to be able to revisit this report throughout the week. Handouts are most helpful when they have pictures. However, she warns providers that families don't always have time to read a bunch of handouts. Grace also wishes her therapists gave her more initial direction and "permission" to take part in Tara's sessions. "I took me a while to figure out how much I should be involved. I wish they would have told me 'Come down here and do this with me.' I often didn't want to be in their way but I wanted to learn as well. I definitely wanted to help."



Grace has found many ways to be an advocate for her daughter and others with disabilities. She and her family participate in a support group as well as advocacy events such as the annual Buddy Walk held by the Down Syndrome Network. She is also an advocate for Tara on a daily basis by taking Tara with her wherever she goes. This includes her older sibling's activities and parent volunteering, community events such as library story hours, and activities at church. "This way the kids can get to know her now as *Tara* versus *That Girl with Down Syndrome* as they are growing up together."

*Names changed for confidentiality purposes.

Families interested in participating in this article series may contact Lisa at LAELLIS2@uiuc.edu

2005 Jeanette McCollum Award: Kathy Ellinor honored at 2005 Sharing A Vision Conference

by Micki Ostrosky, IDEC Treasurer

At each *Sharing a Vision* conference, the Illinois Division for Early Childhood selects one person to receive IDEC's *Jeanette A. McCollum Award for Service to the Field*. This award honors Professor McCollum, a leader in research and personnel preparation in the field of early intervention/early childhood special education. Candidates for this award have met the following criteria:

- Be a professional in an agency or an organization in the field of EI/ECSE (birth-8), family member student, or community member, or an area that directly impacts on EI/ECSE (e.g., government) and
- Have made significant contributions on a state, regional, or local level, which have improved or will improve the lives of young children with special needs, their families, or those who work on their behalf. Contributions may be in direct services, personnel preparation, leadership, policy development, research, advocacy, or publications.

There were many outstanding nominees for this year's award, and at the recent SAV conference in Oakbrook, Kathy Ellinor was announced as the 2005 recipient of IDEC's *Jeanette A. McCollum Award for Service to the Field*.

Kathy Ellinor has worked in EI for more than 13 years, wearing many hats across the years. Currently she is the Coordinator for Child and Family Connections in Lee County. One of the many things she has done over her career has been to spearhead a weekend event for the last nine years for families of children with disabilities. This event is a way for families of children with special needs to network, gain information, and enjoy a weekend at a hotel with all meals furnished. This event has grown every year and improved in the process with Kathy's help. This past year Kathy was part of the steering committee for the 2005 Autism Conference held in Dixon, IL. This was a huge success with many organizations and individuals from the area collaborating and close to 900 people in attendance.

Kathy has made significant contributions on the national, state, regional, and local level through her participation. She works tirelessly to assist others learn about services available in Illinois. Kathy is knowledgeable, dependable, attentive, compassionate, honest, and sincerely dedicated. According to her many nominators Kathy brings enthusiastic and a willing spirit to every event in which she participates. She makes everyone feel welcome and important, always displaying high regard for others. Kathy always has a smile and a "can do" attitude. Day after day she makes a difference in the for young children and with their families. She gives 110% to everything she does- she has certainly helped improve the lives of individuals with special needs and their families in Illinois.

Congratulations Kathy!



RESOURCE CONNECTIONS: The Fussy Baby Network by Lisa A. Ellis

The Fussy Baby Network housed at the Erikson Institute in Chicago, Illinois is designed to assist families in the reason for a baby's fussiness, provide parent support and alleviate stress for the entire family. In order to meet these goals the Network provides resources to professionals working with families as well as direct services for families themselves. The network has formed a partnership with University of Chicago and La Rabida Hospital to connect families

to developmental specialists. As a result the network provides the caregiver, usually the baby's mother, with information, support empathy and coaching to help the caregiver-infant relationship. This support is provided to families in many ways including a homevisiting program, drop-in service and the fussy baby WarmLine (888-431-BABY).

This summer the network will be offering their popular group, "Rock A Bye Baby: Soothing and

comforting in the first five

months of life" in two Chicago locations. Find more information about it on their website or contact Karen Benson at 312.893.7221. Also, information about their ongoing workshops and presentations of professionals can be found on their website:

www.fussybabynetwork.org





Preparing Relationship-based Early Intervention Personnel: PREP PROJECT

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Early Childhood/Infancy program in the Department of Special Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has been awarded federal funding to support students interested in attaining a **master's degree in early childhood special education, with an emphasis on working with infants/toddlers with disabilities and their families**. This is a 2 year program of study for full-time students; some students also work toward this degree on a part-time basis.

FOR INQUIRIES:

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Completion of the master's program will provide the student with the coursework and practicum experiences necessary to apply for the **Illinois Early Intervention Developmental Therapist** credential. Future employment opportunities for individuals holding this credential include

- early interventionist in a social service agency that serves infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families
- self-employed service provider in early intervention
- child care provider or early interventionist in an integrated child care setting

Funding is available and consists of a tuition waiver plus waiver of some fees, and a traineeship (10 hours/week; approximately \$666/month compensation). Funding is limited and will be awarded on a competitive basis.

SAV 2004 (continued from page 1)



Micki Ostrosky with first-time attendees (L-R) Tonya Martin, Traci Jeske and Nelly Alcala.

The success of each SAV conference is dependent on the commitment of its volunteers. Fifteen months before the actual conference, a core committee begins planning the conference. During the actual conference, energetic volunteers facilitate sessions, help at the booths, and assist in registrations. Of course, Susan Ferry,

SAV's conference planner extraordinaire is there to bring everyone together!

The 10th Biennial Sharing A Vision conference will be held on October 17-19, 2007 at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield. Mark your cal-



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**Find us on the web at
<http://illinois-dec.org/>**

President's Message (continued from page 1)

cated in 2005. I am sure we all share the disappointment expressed by the national DEC organization regarding this recent turn of events and I hope that despite the setback, we will all renew our efforts to advocate for quality services for all children with disabilities. If you would like to become more involved in governmental relations or policy issues, please contact Diana LaRocco, Chair of DEC Governmental Relations, at dla-rocco@hartford.edu.

As you start a new year and a new journey towards helping young children with disabilities and their families, please remember that IDEC is always looking for additional ways to support its members. If have any suggestions for me, or other members of the IDEC executive board, please feel free to write, send an e-mail, or call.

*You may contact Jennifer Loncola at:
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