



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

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 1

Upcoming Events

DEC Annual Conference 2007

October 25-28

NAEYC International Conference 2007

November 7-10

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A Message from the IDEC President Mary-alayne Hughes, Ph.D.

I am very excited to serve this year as President of the Illinois Division for Early Childhood (IDEC). I also have to be honest and say that I am overwhelmed – but in a good way! There are so many marvelous things happening in the early childhood field this year, and I'd like to tell you about a few of them.

Welcome to the technology age! IDEC has a listserv for members, and if you haven't received email messages recently, then please notify Bethany Morris, beth-any.morris@dec-sped.org, at DEC's national office. Bethany manages the subdivisions' listservs, and she will know how to assist you. In addition to our listserv, IDEC also maintains a website, and I urge you to bookmark it on your computer.

Our newsletters are published on this website (no more paper copies -- we're saving a few trees!) and there are additional resources and links to a wide variety of resources. For example, Building the Legacy: IDEA 2004, <http://idea.ed.gov/>, is a portal that provides updated information about IDEA Part B (ages 3 to 21) and Part C (birth to three). It is a valuable resource for keeping up to date about the federal law and its regulations.

Several exciting conferences are on the horizon! The Illinois Sharing A Vision (SAV) conference will be October 17 -19 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield, Illinois. As with past conferences, this one will provide lots of opportunities for learning, sharing, networking and having fun! This year there will also be several new items: a special Family Concert featuring Dot Kane, and a booklet entitled Proud Moments.

For this project, the SAV Family Committee invited families and professionals to share their stories about collaborating on behalf of young children with special needs, and these stories have been compiled into a booklet that will be distributed at the conference. In addition, don't forget to attend the **IDEC annual meeting on October 18** from 11:45 to 1:00 pm in the Ruby room. Tweety Yates (IDEC member and Past President of DEC) and Susan Fowler (IDEC member and President-elect of CEC) will talk about national issues. We will also provide information about the outcome of the ballot on the proposed amendments to the IDEC Constitution. So come join us for dessert, discussion and door prizes! For more details about the conference,

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DEC RECOMMENDED PRACTICES BY Lynette Chandler

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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DEC promotes policies and advances evidence-based practices that support families and enhance the optimal development of young children who have or are at risk for developmental delays and disabilities (DEC Mission Statement).

The DEC Mission Statement identifies the goals of our international organization and of our Illinois subdivision (IDEC). DEC has developed a set of recommended practices that provide guidance to help us meet our shared goals. The Recommended Practices book provides information about effective

practices that promote learning and development for young children and that support partnerships between families and providers (Sandall, Hemmeter, Smith, & McLean, 2005). These practices can be used by families, providers, administrators, and other individuals working

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IDEC PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (continued from page 1)

be sure to check out the SAV conference website at <http://sharingavision.org/conf/2007/sav07.html>. Also, please consider volunteering for the 2009 conference planning committee. By participating, you have an opportunity to help shape the conference, and it is also a great way to network with others who share a vision for young children and their families.

At the national level, DEC's 23rd Annual International Conference on Young Children with Special Needs & their Families will be in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada on October 25 through 27. For a preview of the diverse sessions, posters, and workshops, check out the following website: http://www.dec-sped.org/conference/about_the_conference.html. I am also very proud to announce that Micki Ostrosky, IDEC Treasurer, has been awarded DEC's Merle B. Karnes Service to the Division Award which Micki will be receiving at the DEC conference. This award is given to a DEC member who has made a significant contribution to

DEC in the areas of leadership, service, research, advocacy, or publications. The award is given in honor of Dr. Merle Karnes who served DEC for many years as a member of the Executive Board and as the founder and first editor of the Journal of Early Intervention. What a wonderful accomplishment for Micki and how proud we are to have her as an IDEC member!

We are also lucky to have a third conference opportunity that will be close to home. The annual conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) will be held in Chicago on November 7-10. As with the other conferences I mentioned, this will be a wonderful opportunity to share ideas and learn new concepts and skills. Further information

can be found at <http://www.annualconference.naeyc.org/>.

Communication and collaboration are our IDEC themes this year! In August 2007, board members from

IDEC and the Illinois Developmental Therapy Association (IDTA) held a meeting to discuss ways in which we could learn about each other and support each other's efforts on behalf of young children with special needs and their families. IDEC and IDTA also collaborated in submitting a mini-grant proposal to DEC for funding (\$1000) to continue these collaborative efforts between our two organizations. In the next few weeks, we should receive notification of whether or not we will be awarded the minigrant, so keep your fingers crossed!

Wow, there are so many opportunities for IDEC members this year! I know that there are many professional and personal challenges in our work, but I continue to believe that now is a great time to be in this field, and that together we're better! I've only mentioned a few of the exciting things that are happening in Illinois, but I'd like to hear about others. So if you know of items that deserve recognition, please submit them to me or to the IDEC Newsletter Co-Coordinator: Lashorage Shaffer, lashaffel@uiuc.edu, and Hasan Zaghawan, zaghlawa@uiuc.edu.

Membership Matters! Come and join us!!!

The [Division for Early Childhood \(DEC\)](#) of the [Council for Exceptional Children \(CEC\)](#) is a nonprofit organization advocating for individuals who work or on behalf of children with special needs, birth through age eight, and their families.

Founded in 1973, DEC promotes publications and advances evidence-based practices that support families and enhance the optimal development of young children who have or are at risk for developmental delays and disabilities.

Here's a sampling of membership benefits:

- Access to CEC publications such as, Exceptional Children, Teaching Exceptional Children, and CEC Today Plus, DEC Publications such as the Journal of Early Intervention and Young Exceptional Children.
- Discounts on resources and materials specifically for special educators.
- Professional development opportunities, such as the CEC Annual Convention and Expo and the DEC Conference.
- Networking opportunities for professional support.
- Online Member-Only discussion forums
- Discounts on services such as Car Insurance, car rentals and professional insurance

More information about membership can be found at:

<http://www.dec-sped.org/membershipbenefits.html>

Early Language and Literacy-Danville (ELL-D) by Jeanette McCollum

Early childhood faculty at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign are excited to announce that they and their partners in Danville have received a 3-year grant from the Department of Education to implement an Early Reading First project in 12 classrooms located in 4 different kinds of early childhood settings in Danville.

ELL-D (Early Language and Literacy for Danville) represents a collaboration among Danville District 118, Danville Area Community College, the Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative (ECAP) at the University of Illinois, and 4 early childhood centers (school district pre-K, Head Start, community agency child care, and community college child care). Classrooms will implement the TROPHIES Pre-K Curriculum to develop skills in oral language, phonological awareness, concepts about print, alphabetic knowledge, and pre-writing skills, organized and sequenced within 5 units (25 themes) that teach important core content. Teachers will receive intensive professional de-

velopment via regularly scheduled Teacher Institutes. Trained Literacy Coaches will also assist teachers to integrate TROPHIES into the broader-based early childhood curriculum in their classrooms. Funds from the grant will also be used to upgrade the literacy focus of each of the classrooms by purchasing materials and integrating literacy throughout each classroom setting and schedule.

Children will be screened using both a broad developmental screening and emergent literacy screening tools. Progress will be monitored monthly using curriculum-based assessment, and also bi-monthly with the IGDIs. A tiered approach to monitoring and differentiated instruction, implemented by trained "Mentor Pals," will be used to provide more intensive instruction to children identified as needing additional assistance in order to learn at the same rate as their peers.

A centralized Family Center will be developed to support

family participation. Families will participate in many types of events designed to increase their ability to enhance their children's emergent literacy and concept development, provided by a Family Liaison.

The grant will be managed by 5 participating early childhood faculty from the University of Illinois. All five will serve as Component Facilitator for designated aspects of the project design and will be actively involved in personnel development, technical assistance, and project governance. The comprehensive evaluation plan includes quasi-experimental research on child outcomes, with follow-up into Kindergarten and 1st grade.

This grant provides a way to enhance literacy instruction through collaboration in an effort to improve educational services to young children and to identify helpful practices and strategies that will be of use to other teachers and other programs.



Thinking About Advanced Study in Early Childhood Special Education??

Check out the Masters Degree Program in Early Childhood Special Education at **Elmhurst College**. The Masters of ECSE is an innovative, interdisciplinary, collaborative program designed to prepare professionals to meet the increasing needs in the rapidly emerging field of Early Childhood Special Education.

Graduates of this program will possess an understanding of the developmental process, the relationship and impact of disability upon development, and the practices which create effective supportive living and learning environments for young children with special needs. At the heart of this program model is the philosophy of family-centered care. This gradu-

ate program has unique features that embrace our commitment to young children and their families. These include providing opportunities for students to learn directly from families by participating in our "Family Mentor Program". A second feature is a Family Support Specialist who is a parent of a child with special needs on the faculty. This parent co-teaches courses, collaborates with field site placements and supervises students in their work with families. The Masters Program requires 37 semester hours and adheres to the cohort model to fulfill course requirements and strengthen cohesion and student-centered practices.

For Further information contact:

Dr. Therese Wehman, Program Director

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e-mail theresew@elmhurst.edu

Or

Ms. Sarah Kleiner, Director of Graduate Admissions,

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Elmhurst, IL. 60126-3296

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Preparing Relationship-based Early Intervention Personnel:

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:

Contact:

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PREP Project Coordinator

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or

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PREP Project Co-Principal Investigator
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Completion of the master's program will provide the student with the core content requirements that are necessary to apply for 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/toddlers with disabilities

--self-employed service provider in early intervention

--child care provider or early interventionist in an integrated child care setting

Funding is limited and will be awarded on a competitive basis. This funding consists of a tuition waiver plus waiver of some fees, and a traineeship (10 hours/week; approximately \$666/month compensation). Interested individuals should apply to the graduate program in the Department of Special Education and explain in their goal statement why they are interested in working with infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. They should also indicate their interest in participating in the PREP Project.

Deadline for Fall 2008 admissions is April 1, 2008.

Resource Corner: Websites to Visit

Illinois Maternal & Infant Coalition

<http://www.ilmaternal.org>

Illinois Early Childhood Collaboration

<http://www.ilearlychildhoodcollab.org>

The Illinois Early Care & Education
Professional Development Network

<http://www.ilgateways.com>

Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse

<http://www.eicclearinghouse.org>

CONGRATULATIONS TO...



Michaelene Ostrosky
will be honored at the
2007 DEC conference
with the prestigious
**Merle B. Karnes
Award.**

in early intervention and early childhood special education.

The DEC Recommended Practices build upon the NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practices (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Copple & Bredekamp, 2006) that serve as a foundation for all early care and education settings. The DEC Recommended Practices are based on the belief that high quality caregiving environments and experiences are important for all children. However, additional specialized practices often are needed in order to meet the individual and unique needs of young children with developmental delays and disabilities and their families.

| Direct Service Strand | Indirect Support Strands |
|--------------------------|--|
| Assessment | Policies, Procedures, and Systems Change |
| Child-focused Practices | Personnel Preparation |
| Family-based Practices | |
| Interdisciplinary Models | |
| Technology Applications | |

The specialized practices are described in the DEC Recommended Practices book. The Recommended Practices are divided into five direct services strands and two indirect support strands.

The strand chapters provide several types of information including:

1. **Introduction.** This section provides a brief discussion about the strand topic, how the Recommended Practices in the strand relate to practices in other strands, and it describes the guiding principles that serve as the foundation for the practices within each strand. The introduction also describes the categories or “take-home” messages into which the practices are divided. For example, the practices within the Family-based strand are organized within four guiding principles: (1) families and professionals share responsibility and work collaboratively, (2) practices strengthen family functioning, (3) practices are individualized and flexible, and (4) practices are strengths- and assets-based. The “take home messages” provide a framework for organizing and thinking about the Recommended Practices that are provided in each strand.
2. **The Practices.** Each Recommended Practice is defined and several examples illustrate the “practice in

action” across a variety of settings, programs, services, children, and families.

3. **Glossary and Resources.** This section provides definitions of key terms used in the strand information and position statements, checklists and other measures, print materials, videotapes/DVDs, and websites.

The DEC Recommended Practices were developed from three important sources of information. First, they include evidence-based or research-based practices that lead to high quality, effective learning experiences for young children with developmental delays and other special needs. Second and third, the practices represent the collective wisdom and values of families, providers, administrators, and higher education faculty and other DEC members.

The practices can be employed in a variety of settings including the child and family’s home, self-contained and inclusive caregiving and educational programs, and other community-based settings and programs. They also apply to infants and toddlers and young children with developmental delays and other special needs and their families. Higher education programs may use the practices described in the direct services strands and the Personnel Preparation strand to identify strategies for teaching preservice courses and providing clinical experiences and to identify competencies to be met by students within their programs. Agencies, organizations, and individuals can use the practices described in the policies, procedures, and systems change strand to plan and advocate for the use of recommended practices at local, state, and national levels.



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The DEC Recommended Practices are especially helpful for evaluating the quality of early intervention/early childhood special education programs and services. The DEC Recommended Practices Workbook (Hemmeter, Smith, Sandall, & Askew, 2005) can be used to evaluate whether practices within each of the strands are being

implemented and how well they are being implemented. The workbook also can be used to examine practices across strands that are related to specific activities including, (a) developing goals for children, (b) monitoring child progress, (c) supporting children's communication, (d) preventing and addressing challenging behavior, (e) inclusion, and (f) diversity. Throughout the United States, many programs have used information obtained from the workbook guided recommended practices evaluation to develop program improvement plans. Several states have adopted the recommended practices as standards for programs that provide services to young children with special needs and their families to meet and have used the workbook to document progress in meeting those standards.

Meeting the individual and unique needs of children with developmental delays and other special needs is an important and often challenging endeavor. The DEC Recommended Practices provide guidance to help us provide high quality, responsive environments and experiences for young children with developmental delays and other special needs and their families. For more information on the DEC Rec-

ommended Practices book and workbook as well as other resources available from DEC, visit www.dec-sped.org or come to the DEC booth during the Sharing A Vision conference in Springfield on October 17-19.

Bredenkamp, S., & Copple, C. (1997). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs* (revised Ed.). Washington, DC: NAEYC.

Copple, C., & Bredenkamp, S. (2006). *Basics of developmentally appropriate practice: An introduction for teachers of children 3 to 6*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

Hemmeter, M.L., Smith, B.J., Sandall, S., & Askew, L. (2005). *DEC recommended practices workbook: Improving practices for young children with special needs and their families*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Sandall, S., Hemmeter, M.L., Smith, B.J., & McLean, M. (2005). *DEC recommended practices: A comprehensive guide for practical application in early intervention/early childhood special education*. Longmont, CO: Sopris

Conference Updates!

**The world's largest
early childhood edu-
cation conference is
coming to a city near
you!**

**2007 NAEYC Annual
Conference & Expo**

**Location: Chicago,
Illinois**

November 7-10

www.annualconference.naeyc.org

DEC 2007

"Cross New Borders"

The 23rd Annual International
Conference on Young Children
with Special needs and Their
Families

October 25-28, 2007

Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada

Sheraton on the Falls & Brock



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**Find us on the web
at**

<http://illinois-dec.org/>