



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

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 3

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

Greetings! We have a lot of great information in this issue of the IDECE Newsletter. First, check out the re-designed IDECE website at <http://idec.crc.uiuc.edu/index.html>. We've got a new look, and hopefully the website has been re-organized in a way that will make it easier to find information that might be of interest. Second, we're gearing up for IDECE elections. We need to fill the Vice President and Treasurer positions. So watch your email for the electronic ballot which should be coming soon via the IDECE listserv. Third, there is a membership promotion in full swing! Professional members who join DEC or who renew their DEC membership by May 31, 2008 will save \$10 off the CEC portion of their dues. In addition, they will receive a coupon from DEC for \$10 off any DEC product. If you combine this with the "joint membership" option, you can save money on dues this year. Check the IDECE website for more details. Lastly, in this issue we are running on article on Response to Intervention (RtI), including information about a frequently referenced RtI model for preschool-aged children called "Recognition and Response." There is a wealth of information in this article, with references and links to additional resources. My appreciation and thanks go to Robin Miller Young for this thoughtful and comprehensive article. If you would like to see this type of in-depth article included in future newsletters, please let our newsletter editors know. We are always open to suggestions and innovative ideas!

You may contact Mary-alayne Hughes at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, College of Education: mahughes@uiuc.edu, phone (217) 333-0260, or fax (217) 333-6555.

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

Upcoming Events

IL Council for Exceptional Children

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IL Association for Education of Young Children

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Division of Early Children

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Parent Involvement by: Peggy Geraghty

One of the greatest rewards of working in the field of early childhood special education is witnessing the growth and development of a child who many believed would never make any gains. I have found that in order for a child to make gains, big or small, parents must be actively involved in their child's educational process. The beauty is that parental involvement can take many forms; there is

no "cookie cutter" approach to achieve it. Gaining parent involvement may be easy when working with some students; however, for other students it may take creativity on the part of the teacher to get parents invested in their child's education. The teacher sets the tone of a classroom and sending the message that parents are an important part of the team will have many positive returns. In

the end, the time and attention given to parent involvement will facilitate positive growth in the child, a greater understanding of the child's strengths and needs, and the collaborative development of the child's IEP. Here is a helpful list of approaches to achieving positive parent involvement.

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

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POSITIVE SOLUTIONS FOR FAMILIES: Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention

The Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and is affiliated with the University of South Florida. The Center provides resources for professionals and family members on evidenced-based recommendations for a variety of topics. The focus of the center is to help improve the social emotional outcomes for young children with delays or disabilities, as well as children who are at risk for developing adequate social emotional behaviors. Information and resources are available for social and emotional development, positive behavior, challenging behavior, research, interventions and family support.

Resources from the center include handouts on various topics. Copying and distribution of the documents is encouraged. One of the handouts: *Positive Solutions for Families* provides eight tips for dealing with young children with challenging behavior. The tips are helpful for both educators and parents. Tip number one: *Keep Expectations Realistic*. It is important to know and understand a child's abilities and limitations. Tip number two: *Plan Ahead*. Make sure to plan ahead to set the child up for a successful experience. Tip number three: *Clearly State Expectations in Advance*. Children cannot read minds. Provide clear instructions so that the child knows what he or she should do.

Tip number four: *Offer Limited, Reasonable Choices*. Providing choices allows children to have some control and helps children learn to make decisions and accept the consequences. Tip number five: *Use "When...Then" Statements*. A contingency statement is a simple instruction that tells a child what he or she must do to earn a desired consequence. Tip number six: *Catch the Child Being Good!* Provide immediate, specific, positive attention for the appropriate behavior. Tip number seven: *Stay Calm*. Remaining calm will reduce the risk of strengthening inappropriate behavior. Tip number eight: *Use Neutral Time*. Neutral time is when everyone is calm and is able to think, talk and listen. Neutral time provides an environment where new skills can be taught.

The handout, *Positive Solutions for Families*, is available at www.challengingbehavior.org. Permission to copy the handout is not required. It is available in English and in Spanish.

Submitted by: Cindy Navin O'Meara



Membership Matters! Come and join us!!!

Dear IDEC Members:

SAVE ON MEMBERSHIP!

Between April 1 and May 31, 2008 professional members who join DEC or who renew their DEC membership will save \$10 off the CEC portion of their dues. In addition, DEC will send them a coupon for \$10 off any DEC product!

Please use the attached membership form which was made especially for this promotion.

<<...>>

If you use this form, please mail it to CEC (further instructions are on the form). The form is also available on the DEC web site at www.dec-sped.org. Just click the link to "Membership".

Members may also renew/join **online** at www.cec-sped.org and use the special Promotion Code (DECSPR08).

(Members must use the special form or promotional code to renew/join between April 1 and May 31. The offer can not be combined with any other offer. This offer is for new and

renewing professional members only.)

Consider taking advantage of this limited promotional offer, and please spread the word to others who you think might be interested in joining!

You might also want to check out CEC's "joint membership" option. **Joint membership** provides all the benefits of Professional membership for two persons. The pair of members receive one set of CEC professional publications (**TEACHING Exceptional Children and Exceptional Children**), but maintain two separate "files" so that each can join different divisions. Here is some information from the national DEC office about [how to access the joint membership application](#):

a. Print two copies of the applicable membership application. The first application should be filled out for the primary member. You should write "Primary" on the top of the form and fill it in completely including payment information. In the

payment computation section, list the CEC portion of the dues and then add any divisions below that. To see what the dues structure looks like for joint memberships, here is a link to the page on CEC's web site that lists dues amounts for joint memberships: <http://www.cec-sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Membership/Dues>

b. The second application should be filled out for the secondary member. You should write "Secondary" on the top of the form and fill it in completely, excluding payment information. The secondary member gets to choose divisions too.

c. Then, send both forms with one payment (CEC joint membership dues plus the division dues for both people.) to CEC using the address/fax number on the form.

---- For example in Kansas (yah Jayhawks!) for professionals with both people joining DEC the computation would be: \$206+\$35+\$35 ----

Response to Intervention (RtI) comes to Illinois Early Childhood Programs!!

Many IDEC members have expressed curiosity about the Response to Intervention (RtI) movement and how it might impact the early childhood field here in Illinois, so let's talk about it!

What is "Response to Intervention (RtI)"?

Response to Intervention (RtI) refers to a general and special education service delivery model designed to positively impact student achievement of essential skills. Generally, the RtI service delivery model is defined as one in which high-quality instruction and/or interventions matched to student needs is/are provided and important educational decisions are made using student learning rate over time and level of performance. This frequently used definition comes from the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDE) document, authored by George Batsche and others. Copies may be ordered from the www.nasde.org website at a cost of \$15 each. The core RtI principles include the following, also excerpted from the NASDE document. One (1), we can effectively teach all children; two (2), interven-

tion should occur early when the first signs of learning difficulties arise; three (3), a multi-tiered model of service delivery should be employed; four (4), a problem-solving method to make decisions within a multi-tiered model should be used; five (5), research-based scientifically validated intervention/instruction should be used to the extent available; six (6), student progress should be monitored to inform instruction; and finally (7), instructional and programmatic decisions should be based on data. Other resources on RtI are also available from the NASDE website. The Council for Exceptional (CEC) supports the RtI service delivery model and resources on RtI are located on the CEC website (www.cec.sped.org; look under "News and Issues", then "Current Special Education Topics", and the "Response to Intervention").

What is the status of Response to Intervention (RtI) in the state of Illinois?

The state of Illinois formally adopted an RtI service delivery model when new special education rules and regulations were adopted in June 2007. The state of Illinois

"RtI Plan" can be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/pdf/rti_state_plan.pdf. During Spring 2008, districts must conduct a "self-assessment" of their ability to implement an RtI service delivery model. District officials must submit their completed district self assessment no later than May 23, 2008, to the Illinois State Board of Education by emailing it to rtiselfassessment@isbe.net. A Webinar was held on April 11th, 2008 to help districts conduct their self-assessment according to an ISBE template, and the Webinar is posted on the ISBE website with the PowerPoint presentation; a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section is to be developed and posted very soon. Each district's plan must be ready for implementation by January 2009.

How will this apply to preschool-age children?

Although the RtI model will not be mandated for implementation around the state for preschool-age children, tiered instructional models that include these core principles represent "recommended practice" in early childhood programs.

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"Walk a Mile in My Shoes"

It is important to try and gain an understanding of what a parent of a child with special needs is experiencing when they are asked to entrust their child to another individual. Sending your child off into the world for the first time can be a very scary experience, even for parents of typically developing children! As a result, parents may respond in a way that can be interpreted as overbearing, non-trusting, or absent all together. These responses are not to be taken personally, but should be used as a guide in how to approach the parent in order to help them understand the work you are doing with their child. Ask them questions that will allow them to share with you their knowledge of their child. Staying engaged with the parents during these interactions will let them know you value their input. Rephrase what they tell you, let them know you appreciate getting this knowledge from them, and build on the strategies they know have worked for their child. Be authentic and engage with families in a way that let's them know you are looking forward to working with them and their child.

"Everyone's Invited!"

Invite the parents in to observe and/or participate in your classroom. Let them see the strategies you are using when working with their child. As you model appropriate ways to encourage participation and independence, promote positive behavior, and facilitate communication, parents will gain a better understanding of how to carry over these techniques to the home environment. Having a parent in the classroom can also help you get to know the child better. The father of one of my current students volunteers in the classroom a few days a month. In the classroom, his daughter was non-verbal, had limited attention to tasks, and showed very little preference for any toys/materials. Knowing his daughter better than anyone else, he was able to provide the classroom staff with ideas to motivate, encourage, and challenge her. His presence eased his daughter's fears of being in a new environment and increased her level of participation. His input supported her progress in the classroom.

Providing consistency across environments will further strengthen a child's skill development

"Communication is the Key"

Open communication is a critical component of team building. Finding a way to communicate that works for both you and the parent is essential to maintaining a cohesive team. What works for one parent may not work for all, which creates a need for flexibility on your part. It is important to set up communication lines as soon as possible and remain consistent with your follow-through. Effective communication can be done via phone, email, a daily notebook, daily activity sheets, and/or classroom newsletters. Parents should be kept up to date with classroom activities, effective strategies, changes in routine, and signs of growth; conversely, let parents know what types of information you want from them and how often you want and/or need feedback from them about their child's life outside of school. Communication does not have to be done on a daily basis with every student, regarding every area. It should not overwhelm you, but fit naturally in your routine. Simply making an effort to communicate shows the parent that you respect their place on the team.

"Ask the Experts"

It can be challenging to find resources that will help strengthen your classroom curriculum. When working on different units of study, make sure to take a look at the talent and knowledge that is available in your own classroom community. You most likely have parents with an abundance of expertise in a variety of areas right at your fingertips. All you have to do is ask! Send out a survey at the beginning of the year asking parents about their hobbies, talents, jobs, and creative strengths. You can then utilize their knowledge throughout the year to help enhance topics of interest you are doing in your classroom. For example, a parent of one of my students was a dentist in the community. We had been learning about the dentist and invited her in to speak. She brought in toothbrushes and toothpaste for all of the children,

taught them how to take care of their teeth, and invited them to her dentist office. We were able to take a field trip to her office and see the special dentist chair, the various tools she uses, and the mask and gloves she wears when cleaning teeth! The students were so excited by the experience that they created a dentist office of their own back at school. This is an amazing way to include parents in the classroom and can easily keep teaching fresh and enjoyable for you.

"Don't Forget the Positive ☺"

When working with children with special needs, both parents and teachers can easily get caught up in the "negative." We often focus on the child's disability, their deficits, or how they compare to their peers without disabilities. Whereas special educators would take this information and use it for goal development purposes, parents may take this negative focus as limited hope for their child. For this reason, it is crucial that we also emphasize the positive: the child's strengths. If parents feel that you can see the good in their child and that you are invested in their child, they will put their trust in you. They will feel safe with their child receiving special education services and will be more open to taking part in the educational process. Teachers and parents should make an effort to communicate any progress or gains both at school and at home. Even the smallest accomplishment can be a huge feat for the child!

At the early childhood level, we are laying the foundation for future learning. Involving parents in the educational process will have a positive effect on the child's interest in learning and level of success. Parent involvement takes creativity and time. Valuing parent input, maintaining open communication, and encouraging participation in classroom activities are a few ways to achieve positive parent involvement. Establishing a strong relationship with parents at the early childhood level, will positively influence their level of involvement throughout their child's educational career.

RtI cont.

One frequently referenced RtI model for preschool-age children is the "Recognition and Response" model being developed at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute of the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. One of the "Recognition and Response" co-authors is Virginia Buysse, President Elect of DEC. You can access it at the FPG website: www.fpg.unc.edu/~randr/. Furthermore, "Recognition & Response" is consistent with practice guidelines and program standards endorsed by the early childhood field, such as [National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\) Early Childhood Program Standards](#), [Division of Early Childhood \(DEC\) Recommended Practices](#), [Head Start Program Performance Standards](#) and [Head Start Child Outcomes Framework](#). A Webinar on "Recognition and Response" is available through www.nectac.org (National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center). One of the other "Recognition and Response" authors, Mary Ruth Coleman, is also the immediate Past President of CEC. She stated quite eloquently in Niagara Falls at the 2007 DEC Conference that in the early childhood vision, adults "recognize" that some children are going to have difficulty experiencing success with the recommended general preschool curriculum and instructional practices so then the adults "respond" to the children in order to help them be more successful; in the RtI models developed for older children, the responsibility seems to lie with the student to respond to instruction. For more information, read Mary Ruth's comments at the RtI location on the CEC website noted above. All IDEC members are encouraged to ask about development of their district's RtI plan and to see about including provisions for "recommended EC practices" to be included in the plan for our young learners

Are there any local resources for Pre-school RtI models?

Yes, several different models are currently being developed around the state. In March, 2008, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) held Early Childhood (EC) Coordinator Roundtables in Joliet and Springfield. At these meetings, panel presentations were conducted by staff from the following districts; Indian Prairie District # 204 (LuAnn Shields, Pam Laubenstein, Lisa Snow and Robin Miller Young; e-mail contact: LuAnn_Shields@ipsd.org), Valley View U-365 (Donna Nylander and Lisa Cipriano; e-mail contact: nylanderd@vvsd.org), and North Suburban Special Education District (NSSED) (Nancy Kind; e-mail contact: nkind@nssed.org), on current, preliminary efforts to create tiered models of instruction that include the RtI principles noted above. Maureen Whalen of Woodford County Special Education Cooperative was invited but unable to attend, and she is happy to reply to requests for information about their program (contact: mwhalen@schools.mtco.com). In addition to the EC Roundtables, ISBE, Division of Early Childhood will be offering ongoing professional development focusing on preschool RtI, so look for more opportunities to learn about this topic through ISBE technical assistance projects, STARNET and IRC. Also, the DEC's national conference to be held in Minneapolis, MN in Octo-

ber 2008 will have EC RtI and Problem-solving as a theme. Think about going! More information can be accessed at the DEC website: <http://www.dec-sped.org>.

How can we get more information on RtI in general?

Remember that Response to Intervention (RtI) is just one keyword that will describe this change in service delivery models. You should also be alert to other key words, such as "Problem-solving", typically a four-step process interdisciplinary teams use to (1) determine how a student's (or group of students) performance of essential skills is discrepant from a desired level, (2) generate possible solutions to improve student performance, (3) decide on an intervention plan and then implement it with integrity, and then (4) to review student(s) progress to determine efficiency and effectiveness of the intervention. Using the terms "Tiered Instructional Model," "Progress Monitoring," and "Early Intervening Services" will also help you tap into the sources of information that might be helpful.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS: A number of PowerPoint presentations that have been conducted at recent conferences can still be accessed by the sponsoring organization. Check the following locations for more information:

A. www.illinoiscec.org The Illinois Council for Exceptional Children (ICEC). There is a wonderful PowerPoint of the conference double session held in November 2006 by Dr. Judy Hackett and Dr. Tim Thomas on RtI, especially as it is envisioned to be implemented across Illinois. After accessing the website, look under "Conventions", and then click on the first page of their PowerPoint.

B. www.iaase.org The Illinois Alliance of Administrators in Special Education (IAASE) have presentations on RtI that may be viewed. They host several well-attended conferences around the state several times a year. After logging on, check the PowerPoint presentations for September 2007 conference held in Tinley Park, in particular.

C. www.nasponline.org/ The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). There are many resources here, though some are "Members Only", such as downloading the presenters' PowerPoints from the recently held conference (April 2008) in New Orleans. Find a colleague who is a NASP member and ask them to help you locate the needed resources.

D. www.ilispa.org/ The Illinois School Psychologists Association (ISPA) is the repository of resources from the Flex Delivery System and up-to-date state of Illinois RtI resources. Go to the home page, and click on the "RtI" icon on the bottom of the page.

E. www.dec-sped.org The Division for Early Childhood (DEC of CEC); look under "Conference" and then "Highlights from Last Year", for PDF documents of presentations from the Fall 2007 conference held in Niagara Falls.

F. www.rtisummit.org/ Many different professional groups were brought together in December 2007 by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to assist states with RtI implementation.

WEBSITES: Here is a list of websites that may have useful resources:

A. <http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/illinoisaspire.htm> This is the website for a large federally funded "State Personnel Development Grant" administered by the state of Illinois to "increase the capacity of school systems to provide early intervening services, aligned with the general education curriculum, to at-risk students and students with disabilities". Through this website, you will be able to locate Regional Coordinators who can help you with RtI questions.

B. <http://www.studentprogress.org/> This website was designed to help educators learn how to monitor students' progress; it is funded by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

C. <http://www.rtinetwork.org> A website that just came "on-line" sponsored by several national education organizations, with support from the National Center for Learning Disabilities. It has a "Pre-K" section that includes a nice visual of the similarities and differences of the elementary and Pre-K RtI ("Recognition and Response") models.

D. www.fpg.unc.edu/~npdci/ A website for the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion located at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill), it includes many resources on professional development for early childhood educators interested in inclusion and RtI.

E. www.interventioncentral.org A wealth of information on RtI topics, including assessment tools and instructional strategies to meet the needs of struggling students. You can join his list-serve by logging onto the website and adding your e-mail address.

F. www.rti4success.org Another resource on the basics of RtI, sponsored by the American Institute for Research.

LIST-SERVES: Here is a list of some additional list-serves you may want to join:

ilispa@sbcglobal.net Respondents from around Illinois and the Midwest ask and answer questions about development and implementation of RtI models, preschool through high school. Operated by the Illinois School Psychologists Association (ISPA), though you do not need to be an ISPA member to join the list-serve.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NASP-RTI/> A list-serve operated by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) though you do not need to be a NASP member to join. Members ask and answer questions about RtI from across the country.

Conference Updates!

The Illinois Association for the
Education of Young Children

GROWING FUTURES

A Statewide 3-day Early Childhood
Conference

September 25-27, 2008

Hilton-Downtown, Springfield, IL

For more information visit:

<http://www.illinoisaeYC.org>

Division of Early Childhood

Renew Your Energy

24th Annual International Confer-
ence on Young Children with Spe-
cial Needs and Their Families

October 27-30, 2008

Minneapolis, Minnesota

For more information visit:

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

RtI (cont. from page 4)

Npdci-news@listserve.unc.edu A list-serve affiliated with the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion located at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (UNC-CH), noted above.

TRAINING AND PRINT RESOURCES:

Many local, state, and national professional organizations are offering training modules on RtI related topics at annual conferences or as special "stand alone" training sessions; check also for articles in the "practitioner" publications of these organizations as well as the data-based articles in peer-reviewed journals. Larger Illinois districts and special education "cooperatives" (i.e., www.sased.org) are also sources for training. The Illinois Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Conference Program Committee is working hard to secure speakers on various components of RtI for the Fall 2008 conference to be held November 6, 7 and 8 at the Eaglewood Resort in Itasca. Check the website periodically as more information will be posted as it becomes available.

A brief listing of published references on RtI, Recognition and Response, and tiered instructional models is presented below. More on RtI resources in the next IDEC newsletter!

Batsche, G., Elliott, J., Graden, J.L., Grimes, J., Kovaleski, J.F., Prasse, D., Reschley, D.J., Schrag, J., & Tilly III, W.D. (2005). *Response to intervention: Policy considerations and implementation*. Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Directors of Special Education.

Chandler, L., Miller-Young, R., Nylander, D., Shields, L., Ash, J., Bauman, B., Butts, J., Black, K., Geraghty, P., Hafer, M., Lay, A., Mitera, B., Richardson, D., Steffen, K., & Summers, D. (2008). Promoting early literacy skills within daily activities and routines in pre-school classrooms. *Young Exceptional Children*, 11, 2-16.

Coleman, M. R., Buysse, V., & Neitzel, J. (2006). *Recognition and response: An early intervening system for young children at risk for learning disabilities. Executive Summary*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG CD Institute.

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VanDerHeyden, A.M., Snyder, P.A., Broussard, C., & Ramsdell, K. (2007). Measuring response to early literacy intervention with preschoolers at risk. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 27, 232-249.

Young, R.M., Chandler, L.K., Shields, L., Laubenstein, P., Butts, J., & Black, K. (May/June 2008). Project ELI: Improving early literacy outcomes; An early literacy and language initiative that works. *Principal*.

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