



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

Volume 16, Issue 2

## Message from the IDEC President...

**Robin Miller Young**

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### Find us on the web

at

[http://illinois-  
dec.org/](http://illinois-dec.org/)

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### Dear IDEC Members . . .

The 2009 SharingAVision Conference is history! Now, how are we going to use our new skills and knowledge to take the lead in shaping the field; furthermore, how are we going to engage in "shared leadership" so that the children in Illinois achieve *Endless Possibilities*? Taking a cue from David Letterman, here is my "Top Ten" list of "Shared Leadership" strategies for IDEC members to engage in to achieve *Endless Possibilities*!

10. Participate in the IDEC elections: We will be looking for new faces to join the IDEC Board early next year, so please consider contacting Julie Evans at [jevans@isbe.net](mailto:jevans@isbe.net) about serving on the nominations committee and/or running for office.

9. Learn about "RtI in Illinois Pre-K Programs": Send a "thank-you" note to Lynette Chandler for the terrific webinar she conducted TWICE as part of an IRC offering, to educate participants on ways in which "universal screening," tiered-instructional models, and data-based decision-making are being embedded into early childhood programs. Check with Lynette ([lchandler@niu.edu](mailto:lchandler@niu.edu)) to see about getting a copy of her PowerPoint.

8. Apply for a mini-grant: Pair-up with a colleague and write a mini-grant. Some STARNET regions offer mini-grants. Check out your local STARNET website for more information. The

North Region (Region II) offers "Do-It-Yourself" study groups. Complete an application and submit it by April 1<sup>st</sup>; you can get up to \$300 to pay for a speaker, a facilitator and study materials, etc., for a group of at least four people.

7. Mentor/"coach" another professional: Take in a student teacher, invite a first-year colleague out for coffee and conversation, and/or lend some advice from the school of "hard knocks" to someone who could benefit from your experience.

6. Attend the upcoming LINC session at IAASE: Dr. Erika Hunt from ISU will be conducting a session on "Building a Seamless Continuum to Bridge the Gap between Early Childhood and K-12 Education Programs" at the Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE) 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Winter conference at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield, IL, mid-January, 2010. More information is located at [www.IAASE.org](http://www.IAASE.org).

5. Deliver comments on the Proposed Bilingual Education Rules and Regulations: Public Act 95-793 became effective on 1-1-09 and it "requires school districts to provide bilingual education services under Article 14C of the Illinois School Code to students enrolled in preschool programs established by districts." So, ISBE has been developing the rules and regulations for putting that law into place. Right now, there are

proposed rules and regulations and the "comment period" about the proposed rules and regulations is open until February 15, 2010. The proposed changes will: (1) define how children will be screened; (2) determine how language-support services will be provided; (3) offer transitional bilingual instruction to preschoolers; and (4) identify qualifications for certain teachers in transitional bilingual preschool classrooms. Learn more about the rules by logging onto [www.isbe.net/rules/proposed/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/rules/proposed/default.htm); see sections on "Transitional Bilingual Programs" (Part 228) and "Early Childhood Block Grant" (Part 235); read the "Summary of Action" and the "Text of Rule Making." Submit your comments to [rules@isbe.net](mailto:rules@isbe.net).

**4. Submit a Presentation Proposal for Illinois AEYC:** IDEC members are encouraged to check out the link to the web page with proposal forms and information at [www.illinoisaeyc.org](http://www.illinoisaeyc.org). You are also invited to contact Mary Wonderlick, IDEC Governing Board Member and Chairperson of the ILAEYC Program Committee, at 312-492-9819 or by e-mailing her at [wonderlick.ecsepro@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wonderlick.ecsepro@sbcglobal.net). A "Presentation Proposal" form can be found at their ILAEYC link above. Please consider sharing your knowledge and expertise at this terrific professional development event, to take place September 30 through October 2, 2010 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield, IL.

**3. Write a Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Success Story:** This is it! Your chance to write a "[CEC Success Story](#)." CEC is collecting stories for its annual policy publication, the "Federal Outlook for Exceptional Children," which is distributed to policymakers as a tool to advocate for increased special- and gifted-education funding. Share how critical funding is to the development of children

with exceptionalities -- submit your story by Dec. 31st. Maureen Lowry-Fritz, IDEC Governing Board Member, wrote one of the first DEC Success Stories about her daughter Tess . . . way to go, Maureen!

**2. Share Your Expertise at DEC 2010:** The "Call for Presentations" has come out for the DEC conference to be held in Kansas City, Missouri, October 14-17, 2010. Illinois' own Amy Santos is the co-chair again, to coincide with her year as DEC President. Please log on to [www.dec-sped.org/conference](http://www.dec-sped.org/conference) and check-out the 2010 call for proposals. The theme is "Young Children and Families – the Heart of it All" and proposals are due January 15, 2010.

**1. Plan SAV 2011:** Please consider joining Carol Weisheit ([CJ-Weisheit@wiu.edu](mailto:CJ-Weisheit@wiu.edu)) and Sharon Doubet ([sdoubet@ilstu.edu](mailto:sdoubet@ilstu.edu)) the SAV 2011 Conference Co-Chairs to plan for the Fall 2011 SharingAVision conference. Work will be getting underway soon, so please contact Carol and/or Sharon with ideas and offers of ways for you to get involved.

Please engage in one of these "Shared Leadership" strategies, or think of another idea, and help our field achieve *Endless Possibilities* for Illinois children.

Warmest regards,

*Robin Miller Young*

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## **Developing a Comprehensive Feeding Plan for Young Children with Feeding Difficulties**

**Workshop by Dianne Koontz Lowman**

**Sponsored by STARNET Regions I, III, and IV**

**January 14, 2010 in Springfield ([www.starnet.org](http://www.starnet.org))**

**January 15, 2010 in Cartersville (<http://roe.stclair.k12.il.us/starnet>)**

The focus of this workshop is to help teams develop a comprehensive plan for feeding children with oral-motor and sensory-based feeding difficulties. Content will include an overview of the components of a feeding plan, including working with the family, positioning, dealing with issues of respiration, sensory processing, oral motor skills, and sensory aspects of mealtimes.

Dr. Lowman is the Early Childhood Coordinator with the Training and Technical Assistance Center at James Madison University in Virginia.

# **Our Family's Experience with Early Intervention**

**by Sara and Travis Edwards**

Our two small children, Ethan and Elissa, go outside and ride their bikes. Ethan rides his scooter around the neighborhood. They drive their motorized fire truck in circles around the driveway. This past summer we were thrilled to watch Ethan play T-ball in our community. Why am I writing about my children doing “normal” things that every child does? Ethan (6 years old) and Elissa (4 years old) have Leber’s Congenital Amaurosis. They have no vision – except for some light perception. They are participating in activities that we never thought they would be able to do. They do these activities, and much more, because of the therapies we got for our children through Early Intervention.

When we received our son’s diagnosis, we were devastated. We quickly realized, however, that we could not just sit back and not do something. It was scary for us to not know where to turn, what questions to ask, just not knowing in general. Our pediatrician quickly referred us to receive an evaluation for Ethan and we soon entered the world of Early Intervention. That is when we started to realize what Ethan would be able to accomplish regardless of his visual impairment.

At first, Early Intervention was scary too. We didn’t know what to expect. We had different therapists coming to the house to work with Ethan in different areas of development. It was hard to look over the evaluations and see where he “should” be for his age. After working with the therapists however, we learned that these delays in development were not long lasting if we continued with therapy. The therapists gave us ideas of what we should do with Ethan at home in between therapy sessions. Over time, we started to see Ethan do activities that brought tears to our eyes. It was so exciting to see him develop, at his own speed, but he succeeded!

Then almost three years later, when we thought it was time for us to be “graduating” from Early Intervention, we had Elissa. We knew right away that she had Leber’s as well. So we had to start the evaluations and therapies all over again. This time it was easier because we knew that Early Intervention helped her brother accomplish his goals, so we were certain it would do the same for his little sister. We were not disappointed.

Now that both of our children have “graduated” from Early Intervention, we look back and think about what it meant to our family. In a general statement, it meant everything to our family. One of the therapists told us right from the beginning “treat your child like a ‘typical’ child first, vision impaired second.” That was possibly one of the greatest pieces of advice we were given. The same therapist also told us “they may be delayed now, but by the time they enter Kindergarten they will be on a level playing field with their peers.” We found that to be true when Ethan entered Kindergarten last year and we see it proving to be true for Elissa as well as she prepares for Kindergarten next fall. Would that be true if we had not had Early Intervention? We don’t believe so.

Early Intervention was a success for our family because, first, we accepted our children’s visual impairments. The therapists became part of our family. They took the time to get to know our children – their strengths, weaknesses, likes, dislikes. The therapists also took the time to talk to us as parents. They answered our questions. They heard our concerns. They shared our fears. They worked on the same goals that we had as parents for our children. The therapists gave us additional resources (websites, reading material, activities) that were beneficial. We were also able to connect with other families that were traveling down the same road as us – they were able to give us a support system.

We understand Early Intervention can be scary for parents at first. There are a lot of unknowns – strangers working with their children, evaluations, paperwork – just to name a few. The strangers will not be strangers for very long. They will become part of the family – perhaps even a life line. Our children are active, happy and as “normal” as they can be...and we thank Early Intervention and all the therapists that helped our children and family. For those families who “graduate” from Early Intervention, we hope you have the same results.

*Sara and Travis Edwards live in Hudson, Illinois with their two children.*

## FCTD Collaborates with SEAT Center to Understand Family Technology Use Patterns

The Family Center on Technology and Disability has collaborated with the Special Education Assistive Technology (SEAT) Center at Illinois State University to create an online survey to identify family preferences and needs for computer-based technologies. We are asking all interested family members to participate in the survey at:

<https://forms.coe.ilstu.edu/sed/TakeSurvey.aspxPageNumber=1&SurveyID=86L1872>

Professionals who work with family members are encouraged to share the survey link with interested family members with whom they work. The findings will be presented on the FCTD website late in January.

Contact Dr. Sharon Doubet at [sdoubet@ilstu.edu](mailto:sdoubet@ilstu.edu) with any questions. Thanks!



### **Family Center on Technology and Disabilities**

News and Notes - monthly online newsletter

Online Discussions

Assistive Technology Resources

2009 AT Resources CD-ROM

AT Success Stories

[www.fctd.info](http://www.fctd.info)

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### **Illinois AEYC Statewide Early Childhood Conference**



**September 30 - October 2, 2010**

**Crowne Plaza Hotel - Springfield**

**Call for Presentations available on website,**

**<http://www.illinoisaeyc.org/conferences/index.htm>**

**Proposal deadline: January 8, 2010**

## **I.E.P.: Involve. Every. Parent.**

**By Maureen A. Lowry-Fritz, J.D., M.A.**

I've never been what one would call a "jock." As a kid, I was small, weak, and pretty clumsy. I tried to play softball one summer, but it ended miserably. I realized quickly that sports were not "my thing." I eventually surrendered to my lack of athleticism.

Now, I don't have a lot of regrets in life. I try to live in the moment and make the most of each opportunity. But, I have to admit, that I regret not playing team sports because I have always longed to be on a *team*. As the saying goes, "be careful what you wish for."

On November 13, 1999 at 1:15 p.m., I suddenly found myself catapulted onto a team in a way I had never imagined. At that moment, my daughter had her first of what would be countless epileptic seizures. These seizures have continued for years, and negatively affect virtually every aspect of her life...particularly her education.

The first seizures led us to a pediatrician, who led us to a developmental pediatrician, who led us to the Early Intervention program. Early Intervention led us to speech therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists and developmental therapists. The Early Intervention experience ended, and we found ourselves in the world of Early Childhood Education at our local preschool.

And there I was...unwittingly recruited to be a member of my daughter's IEP Team. I was stunned. I didn't sign up for the team. I never tried out. No one checked my credentials or qualifications to make sure I could handle the job. But here I was. I had been recruited.

When the shock wore off, I had a decision to make about my role on the team. Would I be an active team member? Or just a spectator?

I immediately knew my answer. I didn't want to be the team's water girl or the towel girl. While such roles are important to a team's well-being, they are not leadership roles. And where my daughter's education is concerned, I need to play a leadership role.

I had to learn as much as I could, and share what I learned. I had to build a relationship with my teammates based on mutual respect. I had to help guide the team toward the prize. In this case, the prize would not be a trophy or gold medal. The prize would be my daughter's ability to fully reach her academic potential.

I am honored to have been recruited to her team, and I live every single day of my life trying to be worthy of my spot on her team. All parents can – and should – become involved in their child's education. All parents should be active members of their child's IEP Team.

However, there are many parents out there who are not getting involved in their children's education. Some parents feel intimidated. Some feel inadequate. Some feel they lack the necessary knowledge and skills. Some don't realize that they have a right to participate. Still others know they have the right to participate and feel fully capable of contributing, but feel "shut out" by teachers and administrators.

I have been fortunate that my daughter's educators, administrators, and related service providers have been very receptive to my input and insight regarding my daughter. They value my role as the world's foremost expert on "Tess." They always consider my viewpoint, and oftentimes they even seek my opinion on a variety of matters.

I encourage other school professionals to similarly solicit and embrace parental involvement in special education. Pursuant to the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB), parents have the right to participate in their children's educational programming. Each of these federal laws affirmatively requires school to permit parental involvement.

However, there is another reason to involve parents, and it is even more important than a legal mandate.

Simply put, **parental involvement works!**

Research shows that, "the evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: families have a major influence on their children's achievement in school and through life. When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more."

(Henderson, Anne T. and Mapp, Karen L., *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, 2002, p. 7)

Now is the time for all school districts, schools, administrators, teachers, and related service providers to cultivate parental involvement in education – particularly special education.

What follows are seven practical strategies that education professionals can utilize to generate and sustain parental participation in special education.

### **1. Positive, Prepared, and Professional**

You've no doubt heard the expression, "You get more flies with honey." I think that is true for almost any relationship. I am a firm believer that IEP Teams can achieve more success by cooperating and collaborating with the school than by yelling, threatening, bullying or pointing fingers.

Participating in a professional manner is simply a matter of common sense and human civility. It's the old golden rule: treat others in the way that you would like to be treated. It's acting in a way that would make your mother proud!

Educators can help parents understand the child's educational development by coming prepared to the IEP meeting. General education and resource/special education teachers should consider bringing copies of the student's work to the IEP meeting. Viewing examples of the student's work product enables the parent to truly understand the child's academic abilities. Moreover, these completed assignments help parents understand the teacher's point of view about the student's abilities. Related service providers should consider bringing notes, written observations, and examples of what the child works on during speech, occupational therapy, and physical therapy sessions. This permits the parents to have a better understanding of how "minutes" are being utilized.

Educators should also ask the parents what their short- and long-term vision is for the child. When educators understand the parents' perspectives, communication is more effective and insightful. When parents feel that teachers welcome their insight, they are more likely to participate in the special education process.

Finally, educators and administrators should attempt to end each IEP meeting on a positive note. Even if the team experienced some tension and/or disagreement throughout the meeting, refer to a matter upon which you did agree. Point to that agreement as an example of how the team was able to successfully reach consensus. This will set a tone for the next time the team meets.

### **2. Acknowledge Challenges...Then Overcome Them**

I am a big fan of the public school system. Public schools have a tremendous obligation to develop and educate children. In the past hundred years or so, the responsibilities of American public schools have grown exponentially. And I firmly believe that – given the constraints under which they operate – they are doing a good job with an overwhelming task.

School districts operate under a number of significant constraints. And no one is more aware of these constraints than teachers and administrators themselves. School districts have inadequate amounts of money. Schools have limited space. They have limited staff members. They are not always able to provide adequate personnel development opportunities.

What does this have to do with getting parents involved? Simple! By collaborating with parents, educators can develop creative ways to provide services. Parents bring insight and ideas on how to understand, support, and teach their children. Many of these ideas are simple (and inexpensive!). By involving parents in the dialogue, educators may find innovative ways to overcome the constraints of the public school system.

### **3. Respect Parents' Knowledge and Experience**

I look for the good in everyone at the IEP table. I expect a lot from my teammates, and I am rarely disappointed. Each person at the IEP table has some area of expertise that I don't have. I need each and every one of them to help my child learn.

Likewise, my teammates understand that I have knowledge and expertise that they do not have. I have spent the past eleven years getting to know my daughter and what "makes her tick." Almost everything about my daughter is instinctive to me. I like to say that while I may not have a Master's Degree in special education, I do have a Ph.D. in "Tess." This is simply not the case for her teachers. How could it be? In most cases, they meet her in August, and say goodbye the following June.

Therefore, teachers should seek out the parents' opinion on the student's abilities, strengths, weaknesses and needs. Parents have valuable information and insight that could be incredibly helpful to a teacher battling the learning curve on dozens of children. In most cases, parents are more than happy to help the teacher understand the "ins and outs" of their child.

Maintain positive home-school relationships throughout the school year. Assume and expect the best from parents. Show your teammates that you respect their position and expertise. Give them frequent and sincere thanks for what they bring to the table.

### **4. Tackle Conflicts As They Arise**

Disagreement can be a good thing. It is a sign that thinking people believe in their ideas. Disagreements are inevitable at IEP meetings. The key to handling disagreements is remaining calm, rational and open-minded.



When you disagree with a parent at an IEP meeting, really try to understand their viewpoints. Try to understand why they are saying what they are saying. And then explain why you are saying what you are saying. Then, take the best points from each of your perspectives, and collaborate to develop a creative solution.

Sometimes disagreements get heated. At times, parents feel they are going to “lose it.” If you sense that this is happening, offer the parents the opportunity to “take a break.” Show them where to find water, snacks, or coffee. Or, offer to let them have the conference room to themselves for a few minutes.

When you start up the meeting again, remind the parents of what the Team has already agreed upon. This will start some momentum for more positive discussions.

### **5. Negotiate Prior to the IEP Meeting**

At an IEP meeting, you should know what you expect to be accomplished. Parents and educators should begin developing the child’s IEP two weeks before the IEP meeting. Parents and educators should collaborate during the two-week period, in order to develop mutually acceptable goals, supports, and accommodations.

My daughter’s IEP Team is very receptive to this strategy. Prior to the meeting, they provide me with “drafts” of my daughter’s IEP goals and Program Description. I read them and comment on them, and send them back to the appropriate team member. Together, we write and re-write portions of the IEP until we agree upon a final product.

When we actually sit down at the IEP meeting, a significant portion of the IEP has already been developed through collaboration and partnership. This allows us to start the meeting from a very positive place.

### **6. Educate Yourself on the Child’s Disability**

Parents are in a prime position to understand a child’s disability. They accompany the child to doctor appointments and private evaluations. They invest hours in the library and on the Internet researching the child’s disability. They work right next to their child during homework assignments, long-term projects, and test preparation. They grow to understand the child’s academic strengths, weaknesses, and learning style.

Parents also develop an understanding as to how the child’s disability affects her educational abilities. Over time, parents become experts on their child. Teachers, administrators and therapists simply do not have the time or resources to develop such a broad understanding of each student, each disability, and each educational impact. Therefore, they should encourage parents to share their unique knowledge and perspective with their teammates.

### **7. Rapport Is The Key!**

Like most kids, my children are in school for thirty-five hours per week. They spend more waking hours away from me than they do with me. But I still consider myself to be their primary and most important teacher.

My fellow IEP team members know this. And they respect me for it. Because of my role as my children’s primary teacher, educators are very responsive to my input, suggestions, and requests. Parents should actively participate in the education of their children. I urge educators to encourage parental involvement.

Parents and teachers must build a rapport with each other, so that they can effectively communicate about the student and the student’s needs. Using phone calls, e-mails, a notebook system, or other preferred communication method, teachers and related service personnel can regularly touch base with parents. This creates a reciprocal relationship through which information can be shared and progress updates provided. Additionally, educators should permit parents to volunteer in the classroom. This provides the teacher with valuable assistance, and simultaneously permits the parent to understand how the child functions in the classroom. Then, when parents and teachers communicate, they are working off of a common vantage point.

### **Conclusion**

Following these seven suggestions can be difficult at times. As with any worthwhile endeavor, this job can be challenging and exhausting. Let your dedication to the child keep you motivated as you follow these rules, and you will create valuable and effective partnerships with parents.

**P**repared, positive & professional  
**A**cknowledge challenges...then overcome them  
**R**espect parents’ knowledge and expertise  
**T**ackle conflicts as they arise  
**N**egotiate prior to the IEP meeting  
**E**ducate yourself on the child’s disability  
**R**apport is the key

As former Secretary of Education Rod Paige stated, “Schools can’t improve without the help of parents.” (USA TODAY, April 8, 2002, Page A-13) This has never been more true than it is right now. By working together, parents and educators can help children reach their fullest potential.

*Maureen Lowry-Fritz, J.D., M.A. is a parent of a child with special needs and is a special education lawyer who provides law information to both families and schools. She helps IEP teams develop and foster cooperative and professional relationships between parents and educators.*

## **Illinois is Inspiring Innovation**

In a recent joint policy brief by ZERO TO THREE and the Ounce of Prevention Fund, Illinois is one of four states used as an example of creative state financing structures. The article, *Inspiring Innovation: Creative State Financing Structures for Infant-Toddler Services*, by Julie Cohen and Barbara Gebhard (ZERO TO THREE), and Ann Kirwan and Brandy Jones Lawrence (Ounce of Prevention Fund) can be downloaded from ZERO TO THREE website,

[http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/Ounce\\_brief\\_Oct6B.pdf?docID=9642](http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/Ounce_brief_Oct6B.pdf?docID=9642)

## **Inclusion Publication**

*Impact*, a publication by the Institute on Community Integration & Research and Training Center on Community Living at University of Minnesota, features Early Childhood Education and Children with Disabilities in their Summer/Fall 2009 issue. There are a variety of short articles on inclusion. Impact can be downloaded at

<http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/221/221.pdf>

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## **Announcing a New Online Course Offered in 2010!**

### **SPED 459SE: Promoting Social And Emotional Competence for Preschool Children**

#### **Instructor: Dr. Tweety Yates**

This 10 week online course will be offered from Jan. 11 through March 22, 2010 by the Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) through the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Course participants can receive CPDUs, CEUs, or 4 hours of college credit.

For information about registration see:

<http://education.illinois.edu/programs/online/csefel>

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**Chicago Metro AEYC Conference**

**Hyatt Regency McCormick Place**

**January 28-30, 2010**

<http://www.chicagometroaeyc.org/opening-minds>





## Kay Henderson Is Recipient of JAM Award!

Every two years, IDEC selects an individual to receive the Jeanette A. McCollum Service to the Field Award. This individual through his or her professional career must meet the high standards of professional practice set by Jeanette A. McCollum. Jeanette is a leader in research and personnel preparation in the field of early intervention/early childhood special education, professor emeritus at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, and has contributed significantly within Illinois and to the International Division for Early Childhood (DEC). A committee selects individuals from nomination letters submitted by those in the early childhood field. This year Kay Henderson, the ISBE Early Childhood Administrator received the award during the Sharing A Vision Conference in October.

Early in her career, Kay was one of the founders of the Illinois Support and Technical Assistance Regional Network (STARNET) system for early childhood special education professionals. She was the lead Preschool Resource Specialist for Regions I and III in Macomb, and she was also involved in the development of the "Apple" magazine video conferencing. After departing STARNET, Kay became a consultant for the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and currently is the Administrator of ISBE's Early Childhood Division. Throughout her tenure at ISBE, she has been a generous supporter of the Sharing a Vision statewide conference and the Illinois Resource Center, thus enabling hundreds of early childhood professionals to benefit from high quality professional development activities, including presentations, workshops, and technical assistance.

Kay also has made an impact on the Illinois early childhood community through her continuous work in state-funded Pre-K and Birth-to-Three programs. Currently, she works closely with the Governor's office through her participation on the Early Learning Council where she advocates strongly about the importance of early learning. She was instrumental in coordinating the development of Illinois' Early Learning Standards and was committed to the development of the kindergarten standards. Donna Nylander, principal of Valley View District 365U Early Childhood Center, wrote the following in her nomination letter: "Through her work at ISBE, Kay continues to be a tireless voice for young children....Illinois is a respected state and is continually ranked as one of the top three states for quality preschool programming in the country due to her vision and contribution for our youngest learners."

IDEC congratulates Kay Henderson for her work and advocacy on behalf of all young children and their families!



If you need guidance in ways to use technology with young children or would like to learn more about using Web 2.0 technologies for yourself, check the resource information on NAEYC's Technology and Young Children Interest Forum website,

[www.techandyoungchildren.org](http://www.techandyoungchildren.org)

You will also find information there to join the early childhood technology listserv ECETECH and to join in the **Tech Tools Showcase** project (<http://ecetech.wikispaces.com/>) which includes blogs, wikis and other webwonders.

## National Resources

### **Disability Scoop - [www.disabilityscoop.com/](http://www.disabilityscoop.com/)**

This nationally focused online news organization provides the latest information on topics related to developmental disabilities. Find resources and sign up for email news at their website.

### **LD Online - [www.ldonline.org](http://www.ldonline.org)**

This website serves as a leading resource for information on learning disabilities and ADHD. The site contains articles, multimedia presentation of information, a monthly advice column, personal essays, children's writings, and a directory for services and products.

### **National Center for Learning Disabilities - [www.ncld.org](http://www.ncld.org)**

The Center provides information to parents, professionals, and individuals with learning disabilities; promotes research and programs to foster effective learning; and advocates for policies to protect and strengthen educational rights and opportunities. Information on learning disabilities, resources for home and school, and archived issues of *LD News*, a monthly online newsletter, can be found on their website.

### **RTI Action Network - [www.rtinetwork.org](http://www.rtinetwork.org)**

As a program of the National Center for Learning Disabilities, the Network's goal is to guide educators and families in the large-scale implementation of RTI. A section of their website is devoted to Pre-K with links to resources for early childhood.

### **Pre K Now - [www.preknow.org](http://www.preknow.org)**

This public education and advocacy campaign provides targeted financial and technical assistance to advocates and other leaders working to secure policy changes and public funds that will improve the availability and quality of state-funded Pre-K programs. Their website includes short videos, links to research, state profiles, and information targeted specially for advocates, policymakers, community leaders, educators, and families.

### **ZERO TO THREE - [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)**

This national nonprofit organization informs, trains, and supports professionals, policymakers, and parents in their efforts to improve the lives of infants and toddlers. Their website contains information on a variety of topics, ranging from brain development to play, for families and early intervention personnel. The organization publishes a bimonthly journal and sponsors an annual conference in Washington, D.C.

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### **CEC 2010 Convention & Expo**

**April 21-24, 2010**

**Gaylord Opryland - Nashville, Tennessee**



**Deadline for Early Bird Discount: January 15th**

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## Thinking about Advanced Study in Early Childhood Special Education?

Check out the Master's degree program in Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) at Elmhurst College. The Master's in ECSE is an innovative, interdisciplinary, collaborative program designed to prepare professionals for the growing needs of the rapidly emerging field of early childhood special education.

Graduates of this program will gain an understanding of the developmental process, the relationship and impact of a disability upon development, and the practices that create effective supportive living and learning opportunities for young children with special needs. At the heart of this program model is the philosophy of family-centered care. This graduate 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 on the faculty who is also the parent of a child with special needs. This parent co-teaches courses, collaborates with field site placements, and supervises students in their work with families. The Master's program requires 37 semester hours and adheres to the cohort model.

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