



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

Volume 16, Issue 3

## Message from the IDEC President...

Robin Miller Young

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at

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

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

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### The “Miseducation of Preschoolers” . . .

How would you describe the current state of early childhood education in Illinois? What do you see on the horizon in terms of ALL children participating in high quality early childhood environments? The heart-felt mission of the IDEC members is to ensure that ALL young children are engaged in developmentally appropriate early childhood environments, including well-trained and properly certified staff who provide differentiated instruction/interventions to meet each child’s needs. However, the current state of early childhood education in Illinois is in crisis due to grossly inadequate funding of services for our state’s youngest and most vulnerable learners. The phrase “miseducation,” first coined by David Elkind (1987), will apply to the plight of young children across Illinois, if the current funding situation does not change immediately.

When Dr. Elkind created the term, he was describing inappropriate educational and parenting efforts of pushing down the elementary school curricular and instructional practices into the preschool years. While some of that kind of “miseducation” may exist in some places in Illinois, today I am writing about a different kind of “miseducation” that will, nonetheless, result in grossly harmful and long-lasting impacts on our children, families, and communities. The

“miseducation” will be “missed education;” that is, young children will miss purposeful, intentional, effective, and efficient instructional experiences designed to give them the crucial skills and knowledge needed to be successful students and independent adults. The remainder of this message briefly describes ways in which the current economic and financial crises are creating a “miseducation” for three groups of young children across Illinois.

**“Typically Developing” Children:** The spiraling-downward economy is limiting the number of families who can afford to send their typically developing preschoolers to programs, creating a risk of “miseducation” for these children. There is an increase in the number of families who have both parents working to make ends meet, so they need full-time day care, rather than a part-day preschool experience for their young child. In other cases, a significant loss of family income means that money previously spent on preschool tuition and expenses is now going for food, rent, and health care. Some more cynical readers might ask, “Why should we care about enrolling ‘typically developing’ children in preschool experiences? If they are just fine today, why should we concern ourselves with these children?”

These children may be “just fine today,” but that doesn’t mean they will be fine in a few months, at the end of the year, or next year. We need to have children who

seem to be “average” and “typical” participating in high quality early childhood experiences in order to ensure that they continue to gain essential skills and knowledge over time. Most children continue to gain new skills and knowledge at acceptable rates and they will reach developmental milestones in a predictable sequence and on-time. However, what about those children who seem to start out with an acceptable growth rate, and then start to experience delays and/or start to demonstrate atypical growth patterns. How will we know about them and provide more strategic instruction and intervention as soon as these learning difficulties are noted if these children are not in high quality early childhood programs where regular screenings and progress monitoring occur?

**“At-risk” Children:** Children who are “at-risk” of developing disabilities are also “at-risk” of “miseducation” if there aren’t programs, classrooms, teachers, and parent-training sessions to address the needs of these children and their families. As stated in the Ounce of Prevention’s Advocacy Alert dated 3-12-10, Governor Quinn’s proposed budget calls for cutting the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) by \$54 million! These children have been learning how to sit in a circle and answer questions about a story read aloud to them, to wait a turn to tell the teacher what happened next in the story, to count the number of classmates present that day, and to point to objects whose names rhyme. What will happen to the at-risk children who have received services from the grant? While they have made early academic and social-emotional gains from the program, has their at-risk status vanished? Many of these children will still be at-risk in the Fall, so where will they go, and who will work with them to ensure that the gains they have achieved are maintained? What about those children who are at-risk, but have not yet been identified and served? Will we simply not know about them until they arrive for kindergarten, ill-prepared to successfully navigate the elementary schooling and classroom environments and curricula?

**Children with Disabilities:** Some children develop skills so slowly or gain skills in such an atypical

manner that they are identified as having a disability during the early childhood years. The parents of these children have a right to expect that their service delivery system includes a full continuum of placement options, including opportunities to participate meaningfully in the same general education environments in which “typically developing” children participate. Children with disabilities will experience a “miseducation” if districts decrease the number of inclusive settings in which to meet their educational needs and limit placement options to self-contained settings. Within our state, we have made slow but steady progress in developing a greater number of schooling and educational opportunities for “blended” and “inclusive” classroom options that benefit ALL participants. There needs to be enough money targeted at creating, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining unified service delivery systems so that children with disabilities have access to a full continuum of placement options. It is their legal right to expect these options and our moral obligation to provide these options. Who will advocate for the families of children with disabilities to have “blended” options so that their children can develop positive social relationships, to acquire and use knowledge and skills, and to take appropriate actions to meet their needs alongside typically developing peers?

This “President’s Message” does not end with answers to the questions that have been posed. It ends with one last question . . . . ***What are you going to do so that the young children in Illinois do not experience a “miseducation?”***

*Robin Miller Young*

Elkind, D. (1987). *Miseducation: Preschoolers at Risk*. New York: Knopf.

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### Presentation Materials on RTI, ECO, and other Early Childhood Issues

Presentation materials and slides from **2009 OSEP National Early Childhood Conference, Strengthening Partnerships to Improve Early Learning and Development for Young Children**, which was held on December 5-9, 2009, in Arlington, VA. are now available from the website,

<http://www.nectac.org/~meetings/national2009/mtgpresentations.asp>

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## IDEC Nominations Needed!

Dear IDEC Members:

Looking for a way to get more involved in advocating for young children with delays/disabilities and their families? IDEC has leadership positions available in which **YOU can make a difference!**

Currently, there are two positions that need to be filled by election: **Vice-President** and **Treasurer**. The elected officers will begin their terms on July 1, 2010.

The **IDEC Vice-President** cycles through three other positions (President-Elect, President, Past President), thus committing to four years of participation. Although this sounds like a long time, it works to the Vice-President's advantage with regard to working with and being mentored by the other officers currently in these positions. The Vice-President gradually assumes more responsibility for leadership rather than being immediately thrust into the position of President. As outlined in the IDEC By-Laws, specific tasks of the Vice-President include the following: (a) serve in the President's place and with his/her authority in the case of absence or inability of the President and President-Elect; (b) accept designated responsibilities that will provide training experiences that offer advancement to the office of President-Elect and President; and (c) serve as Chair (or Co-Chair) of a committee on the Sharing A Vision (SAV) state conference planning committee, assisting the President-elect as necessary. The Vice-President also serves as the liaison with the Illinois Council for Exceptional Children (ICEC).

The **IDEC Treasurer** serves a two-year term. Per the IDEC by-laws the tasks include the following:

- Make an annual report of the financial status of the subdivision to the Executive Board and at the annual business meeting.
- Prepare and submit an annual budget for approval by the Executive Board and at the annual business meeting.
- Arrange for an annual audit at the conclusion of the fiscal year, June 30, by a certified public accountant.
- Serve as the fiscal agent for the bi-annual state conference, "Sharing a Vision" (SAV).
- Be responsible for the Subdivision banking and all phases of bookkeeping.
- Function as the Chair of the state conference SAV Budget Committee and supervise development of the budget.
- Present the state conference SAV budget to the Executive Board for approval.
- Have check writing privileges along with the IDEC President.
- Annually renew the articles of incorporation for 501(c)3 status.

If you are interested in one of these positions or know an IDEC member who might be interested, please let us know by Wednesday, **March 31, 2010**. You may contact me or any of following members of the IDEC nominating & elections committee listed below:

Julie Evans, [evansjulia83@gmail.com](mailto:evansjulia83@gmail.com)

Deborah Bruns, [dabruns@siu.edu](mailto:dabruns@siu.edu)

Kristy Herrell, [Kristy\\_Herrell@ipsd.org](mailto:Kristy_Herrell@ipsd.org)

Submitted by Julie Evans, IDEC Past President

## Interested in getting paid while you earn your Master's degree?



The Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program in the Department of Special Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has been awarded federal funding (**PREP 2 Project**) to support students interested in earning a master's degree, with an emphasis on working with young children, ages birth to six, with disabilities and their families. This is a 2 year full-time program on the Champaign-Urbana campus. There are no online courses at the present time. If accepted into the program, funding consists of a traineeship stipend, a tuition waiver, and waiver of some fees. Funding is limited and awarded on a competitive basis. Attached to this funding is a service obligation to be fulfilled after completion of the degree.

Interested individuals should apply to the graduate program in the Department of Special Education.

Deadline for receipt of admission applications: **April 1, 2010** for enrollment beginning Summer 2010 or Fall 2010. For more information about the application process and admission deadlines, visit: <http://education.illinois.edu/sped/AdmissionsMasters.html>. Applicants should indicate their interest in the PREP 2 project in the goal statement component of the application materials.

For more information, contact **Mary-alayne Hughes**, Project Director, [mahughes@illinois.edu](mailto:mahughes@illinois.edu)

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**April 30 and May 1, 2010**

**Doubletree Hotel and Conference Center**

**Bloomington, Illinois**

This is an expansion of the Illinois Trainers Network Conference

Sponsored by Gateways to Opportunity, INCCRRA, and DHS

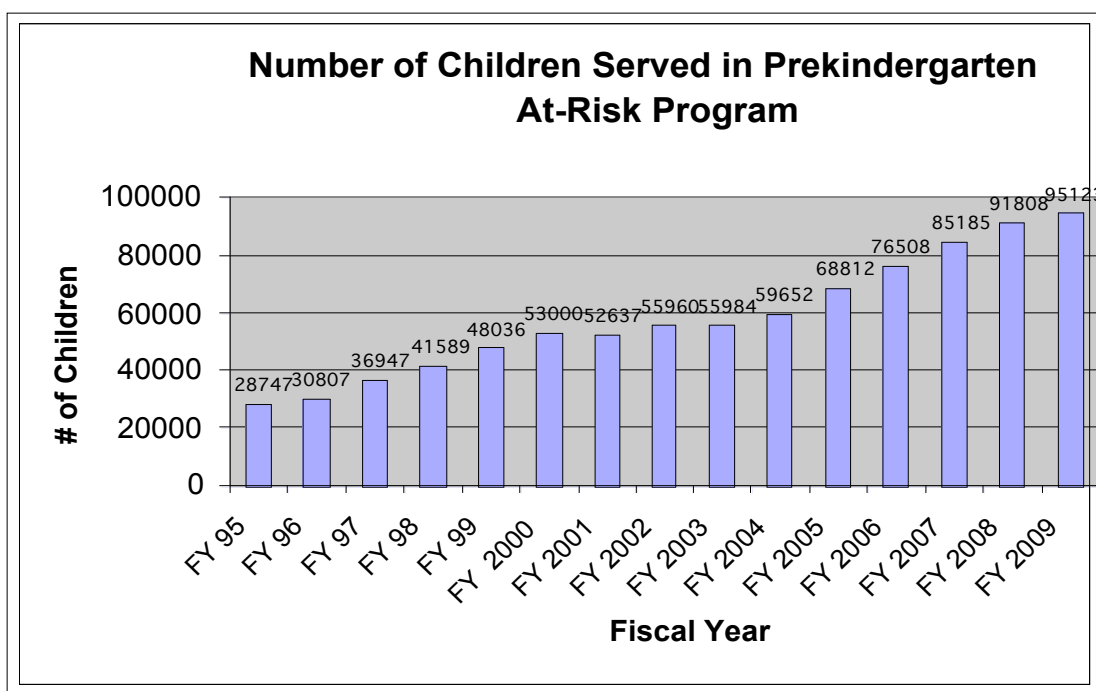
For further information, contact Libby Mitchell, [lmitchell@inccrra.org](mailto:lmitchell@inccrra.org)

## Prekindergarten in Illinois: Then, Now .... and Is There a Future?

by Maury Lyon

Ronald Reagan wanted to do away with the Department of Education. The story now is that he set up a commission to show all the problems and something very different happened. *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative For Educational Reform*, the title of the 1983 report of President [Ronald Reagan's National Commission on Excellence in Education](#), was the contemporary blast at the education of America's youth. It ended up not getting buried with many past blue ribbon commissions. Instead it led to some reform. Legislatures wanted some action.

In Illinois School Reform legislation changed many practices. Administrator training and teacher evaluation was changed. Children at certain grade levels were to be tested with the Illinois Goal Achievement Program (IGAP predated ISAT). Basic skill and area tests were introduced for those pursuing school certification. New programs were introduced including Prekindergarten At Risk of Future Academic Failure. It began with 99 programs funded at a total of \$12 million. Of the new programs it has grown the most in terms of both children served and total program cost.



The high point for the program with respect to both numbers and funding was the Fiscal Year 2009. **Over 95,000 preschoolers were being served.** Seven years earlier the program had moved out from under the radar and was projected by an Illinois blue ribbon study group headed by the then First Lady of the state to become a Universal Preschool program supervised by the governor's office. Those practitioners in the field were mobilized to fight the governor's proposal. By then the governor was too hurt politically on other fronts to fight back. Prekindergarten as it evolved under the supervision of the State Board of Education continued.

The next governor would soon get his turn. Big targets do not stay under the radar and young children make wonderful political props.

With the legislative support of the broad-based Early Learning Council many of the previous Universal Preschool pieces reemerged as Preschool for All. They were all very agreeable pieces. In an ideal world we would love to have quality free services available. But it is not an ideal world.

The new program which, while predicated on admirable goals and led to three years of program expansion demonstrated on the previous graph, had three underlying problems.

- Diluted the focus on at risk children
- Diluted the resources
- Demonstrated questionable sustainability

And now after the few years of growth we can say:

- There has been growth of the children served
- There are accountability measures in place to assure quality in times of large growth
- There has NOT been an answer to the question of financial sustainability

The program's problem with being financially unsustainable was exacerbated by the economic downturn across the country. A state budget which assumed yearly growth went into decline. The political axiom that rising tides lift all boats does not tell us what to do when the tide recedes and fails to rise again.

**The tide is out and we cannot let it ground our children.** The programs which serve them are being threatened by limited budgets. If state government is going to continue funding the prekindergarten program it will be because the professionals who work with the children assumed a necessary advocacy role. Children cannot speak for themselves. They do not have the resources of the road construction or casino lobby.

**Advocacy is central** as it is viewed as what professionals do in their field. As professionals it is very important for us to follow the ISBE mission statement "... **provide leadership, assistance, resources and advocacy so that every student is prepared...**" We should help them advocate for prepared children.

We must not be shy and wait for someone else to keep the pressure on elected leaders to become leaders. The children cannot speak for themselves, so we need to do it for them and help their parents know how to do that too.

When does advocacy become lobbying, a behavior some may find abhorrent?

**Lobbying is the active support for specific legislation. We need to advocate for full funding.** We need to **share our stories** demonstrating the need. We need to **help our parents know who to call** and how to overcome their reluctance. It does not matter how the legislators and executives reach the end of supporting the young child who is at risk... they need to just get it done.

*Maury Lyon coordinates Early Childhood Programs in Knox County, Illinois, and more importantly, is the parent of four children and grandparent of two children. Dr. Lyon is a firm believer in practitioners being advocates for the children with whom we work.*

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## Conferences for Parents of Children with Vision Impairment

### Southern Illinois Conference - Saturday, March 27, 2010

Rend Lake Market Place, Mt. Vernon

Register online [www.morgan.k12.il.us/isd/hvc](http://www.morgan.k12.il.us/isd/hvc)

### Northern Illinois Conference - Saturday, April 24, 2010

Center for Sight & Hearing - Rockford, Illinois

Contact Michele Westmaas, [Michele.Westmaas@illinois.gov](mailto:Michele.Westmaas@illinois.gov) for registration information.

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## Special Quest Inclusion Videos and Resources

Special Quest Birth-Five provides training materials and resources to support inclusion for early childhood programs. Through the Head Start/Hilton Foundation Training Program educators may request training DVDs **free of charge**. They have a variety of DVDs for those working with infants and toddlers.

Special Quest recently announced the release of their newest video series, the **Preschool Inclusion Series**. There are four videos on DVDs with training scripts and handouts. To download training materials, view previews of videos, or to request a free set of DVDs, go to:

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

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## NECTAC Database of Inclusion Resources

The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) has developed a searchable online database of resources derived from over 110 presentations at the 2007-2009 national Inclusion Institutes. You can search by year, presenter name, or topic to find PowerPoint presentations and handouts. This should be a useful resource for faculty members, professional development providers, and others who want to share relevant and current information related to the inclusion of young children with disabilities and their families. Check it out at

<http://www.nectac.org/search/presentationfinderInclu.asp>.

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## Illinois AEYC Statewide Early Childhood Conference



September 30 - October 2, 2010

Crowne Plaza Hotel - Springfield

For further information, check the website,

<http://illinoisaeyc.org/conferences>

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## IDEC Response to Call for Comments on Transition Bilingual Education

Please note that the following letter was submitted by the IDEC Governing Board (GB) on behalf of IDEC members regarding the proposed rules and regulations of Public Acts 95-793, the Transition Bilingual Education (TBE) program. We wanted to express our concerns regarding aspects of the proposed rules and regulations that would unfavorably impact preschool programs. The entire letter was sent out to IDEC members on the IDEC listserv on 2-20-10; this newsletter article does not include the side-by-side table of the proposed rules and regulations with the specific IDEC comments. The entire letter is posted on the IDEC website for your review. Comments and questions about the letter should be directed to Robin Miller Young, IDEC President at 630-375-3030 or [Robin\\_MillerYoung@ipsd.org](mailto:Robin_MillerYoung@ipsd.org).



The Illinois Subdivision of the  
Division for Early Childhood (IDEC)  
of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)  
<http://illinois-dec.org>

Date: Monday, February 15, 2010

To: Shelley Helton, Agency Rules Coordinator, ISBE  
100 North First Street, S-493  
Springfield, IL 62777-0001  
Comments submitted electronically via [rules@isbe.net](mailto:rules@isbe.net)

Re: Public Act 95-793 (effective on 1-1-09):  
Proposed Rules and Regulations; 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

The Illinois Subdivision of the Division for Early Childhood (IDEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the largest organization in the state of Illinois composed of parents and professionals working to “promote policies and advance evidence-based practices that support families and enhance the optimal development of young children birth through age eight who have or are at risk for developmental delays and disabilities.”

We represent 200+ members including many public school employees, such as Directors of Special Education, Directors/Coordinators of Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) and Preschool for All (PFA) programs, Directors/Coordinators of Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Programs, teachers of children with disabilities and those who are at-risk of developing disabilities, and specialists such psychologists and social workers. We also represent faculty from many universities and colleges across the state of Illinois (University of Illinois – Urbana/Champaign, University of Illinois – Chicago, Loyola University, DePaul University, Southern Illinois University, Northern Illinois University, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago State University, Elmhurst College, etc.) who are conducting research on a variety of early childhood topics and conducting pre-service and in-service training on assessment and instructional issues, including the impact of children’s diverse backgrounds and language proficiencies on their schooling experiences and levels of independent functioning. Our members also include individuals who work in the state of Illinois Early Intervention (EI) system, including EI service providers,



developmental therapists and specialized therapy providers (SLPs, OTs, PTs), and the state of Illinois Early Childhood Staff Development network (STARNET). Our membership also includes parents of children with disabilities, and children who are at-risk of developing disabilities. The IDEC has been the Illinois voice for families of children who have disabilities or are at-risk of developing disabilities for almost 20 years. We work collaboratively with many different partner organizations in Illinois including the Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children (Illinois AEYC) and Illinois Head Start.

As President of IDEC, I am writing on behalf of our organization to express our concerns regarding the above-referenced proposed rules and regulations as they would apply to Illinois preschool children. Our primary concerns fall into the following areas; supporting information is provided in the table below.

1. Harmful Assessment and Eligibility Decision-Making Procedures: The assessment procedures suggested for ascertaining children's eligibility for the Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program and the process for entering children into services are in direct opposition to NAEYC's (National Association for the Education of Young Children) positions and DEC's (Division of Early Childhood) "Recommended Practices" for understanding children's learning profiles and developing programs to meet their needs. A screening process conducted with an instrument designed for "screening" purposes should NOT be used to determine the student's eligibility for any kind of specialized services. Eligibility for any instructional program other than the general education program should be conducted by a multi-disciplinary team that includes parents and professionals; it should be based on data gathered from a variety of sources, including assessment instruments that meet the technical adequacy requirements (standardization, reliability, and validity) for eligibility decision-making purposes. Additionally, the rights of parents and families to be engaged in the data-collection and decision-making process are significantly limited as proposed. Procedures to ensure that parents are informed about the assessment process, to ask questions about the process, to say that they don't want their child tested, etc. are not described in the proposed rules and regulations (Section 228.10 and 228.15).

2. Unilateral Program Placement: It is not appropriate to require particular preschool placements, curricula, or instructional strategies based on one characteristic or demographic criterion (e.g., English Language Learners). Rather, services and program placements should be determined based on examination of the strengths and needs across developmental domains and early academic skills of each child (Section 228.15).

3. Unrealistic Certification Requirements: The Illinois teacher training institutions are not prepared to have teachers achieve ELL certification within the proposed timeframe (Section 228.35).

4. Unnecessary Certification Requirements: As proposed, there are unnecessary certification requirements for teacher assistants and program administrators that purportedly would meet the needs of ELLs; this purported benefit has not been substantiated (Section 228.35).

5. Teachers for Children with Disabilities: Many Early Childhood programs, including the state of Illinois Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) and Preschool for All (PFA) programs, are blended with Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) programs so that young children with disabilities can be educated with their typically developing peers. Many districts engage in this practice to meet the IDEA mandate of educating young children with disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Early Childhood teachers who teach typically developing children and those who have disabilities are required by law to have a Type 04 certificate and an Early Childhood Special Education approval or Early Childhood Special Education certification. Given the current strain on state, federal, and local resources, we do not want administrators to be forced to choose between teachers who have ECSE approval or certification and teachers with ELL or ESL endorsements (Section 235 Early Childhood Block Grant).

6. Local Control: More local control should be built into the proposed rules and regulations. A “One-size-fits-all” program enrollment approach denies the local districts the opportunity to ascertain and then meet the needs of their own children (Section 228.25).

7. Unfunded Mandate: The proposed rules and regulations do not include funding to help programs meet the new requirements. This constitutes an unfunded mandate that will be very difficult for school districts in Illinois to meet and might result in the loss of services to other children as administrators reallocate funding to meet this mandate (Section 228.5).

8. State of Illinois Collaboration: We propose that future efforts to develop rules and regulations regarding the identification and provision of service delivery to young children, whether typically developing, at-risk of developing disabilities, or already identified with disabilities be conducted collaboratively among the state of Illinois Divisions for Early Childhood, Early Childhood Special Education, and ELLs.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration of our comments.

The letter was submitted electronically, so it is not signed in this version. A signed version is available.

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## Want to Get Back on Schedule?

Donna Nylander, principal of Valley View Early Childhood Center, Romeoville, Illinois, shared an article she read recently in the January/February issue of *Experience Life* which gives tips for getting your life balanced. The short article, “Back on Schedule,” is filled with time-saving tips and helpful resources.

The first step to managing your schedule, is to prioritize tasks. Once you have done that, then:

- **Build in Buffer Zones** - Plan extra time when scheduling an activity. This will give you some mental and physical transition time.
- **Know When You Work Best** - Plan more difficult tasks during the part of the day when you have more energy and leave the least important tasks for low energy times.
- **Understand Your Limits** - Since most of us don’t know how much time it takes for routine tasks, time yourself doing the same task on three occasions. Then take the average to use as a guideline for scheduling. Or just start by doubling the time you think it should take to complete a task. That way you will have extra time to get a start on the next task.
- **Harness the Power of Technology** - Turn off your social networking tools, such as phone ringer and email alerts, when you start work.
- **Fight the Urge to Multitask** - Experts say multitasking is not the productivity maximizer that people think. The human focusing system is binary, so if you have more than one ball in the air, all but one will be in free fall.
- **Honor the Priority of the Moment** - Don’t let work, family, and self-care time run together. Designate specific time for each.

The editor of *Experience Life* has given us permission to include this summary of the article here and a link to the full article. Check it out at

<http://www.experiencelifemag.com/issues/january-february-2010/whole-life/back-on-schedule.html>

It will be well worth your time!

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**Tenth National Early Childhood Inclusion Institute**



**May 17-19, 2010**

**The William and Ida Friday Center  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina**

**Keynote Speakers: Barbara Bowman and Ann Turnbull**

**For further information, check their website:**

**<http://www.nectac.org/~meetings/inclusionmtg2010/mtghomepage.asp>**

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**Upcoming STARNET Region I and III Workshops**

**Fostering Young Children's Friendships**

**Barbara Wolfe**

**April 26, 2010**

**Bloomington, Illinois**

**Sit Still, Pay Attention, Listen to Me:  
Understanding and Developing Attention Skills**

**Jill Moli, Conscious Discipline**

**April 30, 2010**

**Freeport, Illinois**

**For further information and to register, go to  
STARNET Regions I and III website, [www.starnet.org](http://www.starnet.org)**

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**National Association for the Education of Young Children**

**Professional Development Institute**

**June 6-9, 2010**

**Phoenix, Arizona**

**<http://www.naeyc.org/institute/>**

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## RtI Early Childhood Summit

by Robin Miller Young

*Where could you find the most enthusiastic educators, the brightest researchers, and the most passionate school leaders talking about the application of RtI principles into early childhood settings?*

These individuals gathered in Albuquerque, New Mexico at the First Annual RtI Early Childhood Summit, sponsored by the Center for RtI in Early Childhood (CRTIEC), a federally funded institute housed at the University of Kansas (UK). The Summit was held in conjunction with the Division for Early Childhood's (DEC) annual conference in October 2009. Several of the 22 presenters were from Illinois and two of them have provided brief summaries of their Summit presentations to share with the IDEC members. Robin Miller Young (Prairie Children Preschool, Indian Prairie SD # 204) was one of only two public school employees invited to present at the Summit who is currently working in an early childhood setting engaging in RtI practices for three- to five-year-olds. The second presenter was Lynette Chandler, Northern Illinois University (NIU), who has been a program development collaborator, consultant and researcher with early childhood programs in Illinois school districts for many years. The *PowerPoint* slides that accompanied each presentation can be viewed by logging into the CRTIEC website at [http://www.crtiec.org/rti\\_summit/October14thProgram.shtml](http://www.crtiec.org/rti_summit/October14thProgram.shtml), then highlighting and clicking on each individual person's name.

**Robin Miller Young**, Student Services Coordinator at Prairie Children Preschool (PCP), IPSD # 204, joined Virginia Buysse (University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill) and Susan Landry (University of Texas Health Science Center) on an afternoon panel. Virginia has developed and conducted research on the “Recognition and Response” model used in pre-K settings. Susan is helping to put RtI practices into place in early childhood settings across Texas. These three women addressed the topic, “How will RtI Work in Early Childhood Education?”

Robin shared “a – ha” moments with the participants by describing various insights the PCP staff members experienced as they moved into RtI practices. These included:

1. taking ownership and initiating progress monitoring practices linked to instructional decision-making in their classrooms after voluntary involvement in an early language and literacy initiative;
2. recognizing the benefits of combining Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) with differentiated early academic instruction to enhance students' engagement and success with the learning process; and
3. implementing a four-step Problem-Solving Model, with an emphasis on matching interventions to students' needs and evaluating intervention effectiveness and efficiency. The model is similar to the one developed by the National Association of State Directors of

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**CEC 2010 Convention & Expo**

**April 21-24, 2010**

**Gaylord Opryland - Nashville, Tennessee**



Special Education (NASDE) and aligned with the state of Illinois ASPIRE (Alliance for School-based Problem-solving and Intervention Resources in Education) grant.

She also shared leadership strategies for planning and executing system-level changes to develop an RtI model in local settings (i.e., “scaling up” the initiative), and program evaluation strategies such as examining student outcomes on Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs) to look for program-wide positive impacts of the RtI initiative components.

**Lynette Chandler**, Professor and Associate Department Chair, Department of Teaching and Learning (NIU), spoke on a “Measurement Panel” to address questions of screening and progress monitoring with preschoolers. Her colleagues included Scott McConnell from the University of Minnesota, Amanda VanDerHeyden, a private consultant, Hugh Catts, University of Kansas, and Sheri Hauptert, Heartland Area Education Agency, Iowa. Lynette’s contributions, titled “Measurement in Early Childhood RtI Models: Lessons Learned from the Field,” described her work collaborating with staff from Prairie Children Preschool and an Early Reading First project in Georgia.

She shared thoughts about the various ways that data from General Outcome Measures (GOMs), like the IGDIs (Individual Growth and Development Indicators), might be used, how to help staff members and colleagues to accept these kinds of measures as valid and helpful to our progress monitoring efforts, and to address misunderstandings about GOMs, such as the IGDIs.

As she disputed each myth she made clear the following truths about the IGDIs;

1. the IGDIs should be used to determine which children might need some additional assessment in order to develop more strategic instruction (Tier 2), as the IGDIs do NOT tell you what to teach in Tiers 2 and 3;
2. GOMs, such as the IGDIs, are appropriate and useful in our work in early childhood and correctly serve some specific purposes in conjunction with a variety of other tools;
3. the term universal “screening” as used in the RtI models to describe monitoring a whole class of children three times a year is NOT identical to the child find preschool “screening” with which most early childhood educators are familiar; and
4. the IGDIs can be helpful in the educational processes for children with disabilities.

For more information on resources to help you create a high quality early childhood program (Tier 1) within a multi-tiered service delivery model, that includes “universal screening,” progress monitoring of children’s growth and development of essential skills, a collaborative problem-solving process to match student rate of learning over time, and current performance levels with developmentally appropriate, effective and efficient interventions, stay tuned! The **Illinois Division for Early Childhood** (IDEC) of the **Division for Early Childhood** (DEC) of the **Council for Exceptional Children** (CEC) will be bringing you more resources so you can effectively and efficiently meet children’s needs in your classroom, and across your program.

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## Disability is Natural

Kathie Snow is an amazing presenter and advocate. Her website contains articles and resources to help us think of “disability” in a new way.

<http://www.disabilityisnatural.com/>

She recently added **The World Would Be a Better Place If.....**

**.....Everyone presumes competence in children and adults with disabilities.**

Just one of the items on her list that she updates regularly.

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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.

For further information, contact:

Dr. Therese Wehman, Program Director

(630) 617-3231

Email: [theresew@elmhurst.edu](mailto:theresew@elmhurst.edu)

or

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