



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

Volume 16, Issue 4

Message from the IDEEC President...

Robin Miller Young

Inside This Issue:

President's Message...	1
CONNECT.....	3
Masters Program.....	4
RtI in Illinois.....	5
Listening Tour.....	6
Tots-n-TECH... ..	8
Foster Letter.....	9
EI Comments.....	10
Elmurst Program.....	12

**Find us on the
web
at
[http://illinois-
dec.org/](http://illinois-dec.org/)**

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

Linda Robinson
Newsletter Editor
32 Horrabin Hall
Macomb, IL 61455
309-298-1634 ext.250
309-298-2305 fax
L-Robinson1@wiu.edu

Advocating For Children and Families at the Federal Level

In recent weeks, I had two opportunities to present the IDEEC members' view points in national-level advocacy efforts. What a privilege it was to be able to represent your concerns and highlight the tremendous work you are doing across our state to support effective programming and services for children and their families!

Meet with Congressman Bill Foster:

First, I met with Congressman Bill Foster (D-14th District) on Saturday, April 10, 2010. I was able to arrange a 10-minute meeting with him to let him know about our organization and the importance of following DEC policy recommendations in national-level policy development activities. I wrote a cover letter about IDEEC and included that in a folder of brief policy notes from the DEC website, as well as the latest issue of the IDEEC newsletter. The cover letter is included in this newsletter (page 9) for your review.

I was favorably impressed with his knowledge on the cost-benefit analysis of early intervention. He quoted statistics on how money spent on early intervention and early childhood saves future dollars due to the preventative benefits of the money spent in children's early years. He and I also talked briefly about different ways to ascertain the effectiveness of special

education programs; I was especially pleased that he knew about "growth models" versus a static look at effectiveness. I was able to describe ways that early childhood programs were working hard to meet children's needs and the ways we are piloting measurement of programmatic success with "growth models."

We also talked briefly about upcoming efforts to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA; recently knows as the "No Child Left Behind" version of the original act) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as well as recent bills to support programming around children's social and emotional learning.

Our brief, fast-paced exchange came to an end much too quickly, but he did take the folder of materials I had brought and IDEEC has now made an entre' into a relationship with one member of Congress.

"Early Learning Listening Tour" –

Standards and Assessment: The second advocacy effort occurred on Tuesday, May 11, 2010, when I joined Kristie Pretti-Frontczak, DEC Vice President, Ted Burke, Director of the Illinois EI Training Program and DEC Governing Board Member, and Chelsea Guillen, newly appointed EI Ombudsman, at the "Early Learning Listening Tour" on Standards and

Assessment in downtown Chicago. This was the last of four "Listening Tour" events held this spring, each one on a different topic including "Understanding P-3 Structures," "Workforce and Professional Development," and Family Engagement." The tour event was co-hosted by Jacqueline Jones, Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Early Learning, U.S. Department of Education (DOE), and Joan Lombardi, Deputy Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). It represents a stronger collaborative partnership between the two departments than has been seen in previous administrations. One single document that includes the comments submitted by DEC to the Listening Tour on all four topics can be viewed at www.dec-sped.org/uploads/docs/policy_advocacy/listening%20Tour%20document/DEC%20Listening%20Tour%20Comments%202005%2018%2010.pdf. Written input from presenters and speakers provided to the U.S. DOE on each of the four days will be posted in the future at <http://ed.gov>. The day's activities were divided into several parts; two of these are described briefly below.

Part I: Invited Speakers: Invited presentations were conducted by four speakers; first, Sam Meisels (smeisels@erikson.edu; 312-893-7100) who is the President of the Erikson Institute, a graduate school in child development located in downtown Chicago and the site of this tour event, spoke passionately on "Standards, Assessments, and Young Children." He emphasized his perspectives on "Policy Implications" for each of the four purposes of assessment: screening, instructional improvement, program evaluation, and accountability. One of his primary concerns is that National Reporting System (NRS) is no longer in effect, but he fears that some kind of national testing program, like the NRS for preschoolers may yet be proposed.

The second speaker, Linda Espinosa (Espinosal@missouri.edu; 573-882-2659) spoke on

"Assessing Young Dual Language Learners (DLLs): Challenges and Opportunities." She addressed issues of language dominance and policy implications around developing instruments (she acknowledged that there are basically no appropriate instruments available), training and developing standards in Head Start Documents for assessment of DLLs.

The third speaker Kathleen Hebbeler (Kathleen.Hebbeler@SRI.com; 530-758-7483) who is best known to us for her work with the Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center, talked about "Toward a Unified Vision of Assessment for Young Children." She mentioned wasted resources, including assessments done for eligibility purposes that do not lead to IEP development, and described "construct irrelevant variance" when a child knows the concept, but they don't get credit for the knowledge because they can't point, speak, attend to the tester, or understand the instructions, etc. Even with observational assessments, she promoted use of well-defined scoring criteria. She talked about floor effects and sensitivity, the importance of developmental trajectories, "Age-anchored" versus norm-referenced assessments, and her "wish list" of design specifications for the next wave of assessment instruments.

Finally, Catherine Scott-Little (mescottl@uncg.edu; 336-256-0132) conducted a presentation titled "Early Learning Standards: Variations across States and Issues to Consider." As indicated by the title, she described research she and her colleagues have conducted on the number of states who have learning standards (preschoolers) and early learning guidelines (infants and toddlers). She closed her remarks reviewing the pros and cons of having national ELS standards. She thinks it is a worthwhile project, but said that we cannot overlook the complexity of the implementation and that it would require significant resources to do it. (continued on page 3)

Illinois AEYC Statewide Early Childhood Conference



September 30 - October 2, 2010

Crowne Plaza Hotel - Springfield

Preliminary program available and registration now open!

<http://illinoisaeyc.org/conferences>

Part III: Public comments:

There were approximately 14 people who had pre-registered to speak for 5 minutes during the public comments time. Kristie Pretti-Frontczak, DEC Vice President, spoke eloquently from the DEC comments referenced above about using the DEC “Recommended Practices” in developing national-level policies and especially emphasized the role of the family in all aspects of the assessment process. From the beginning of the day, she was among the few people to emphasize the role of the family in the assessment process. Ted Burke’s comments were delivered by Chelsea Guillen; in those remarks, he talked about the role of assessment in the Early Intervention (EI) eligibility and progress monitoring processes, and described difficulties faced with the current system and proposed reform efforts (see pages 10-11 in this issue).

I was one of the later speakers, and chose to address “Innovative and Successful Approaches to Improving Early Learning Outcomes” as a theme for my remarks on “Standards and Assessments.” A summary of my remarks are printed on pages 6-7 in this newsletter and have been posted in their entirety (with references) on the IDEC website for your review. It appeared to me that I was the only person at the event who represented leaders in the field who were actually talking with family members about their needs, conducting IEPs (I had done three the previous day) in which data were

used to make instructional plans for a child, completing ECO forms, reviewing data collected across an entire preschool to inform school-wide planning efforts, and coaching staff members into using instruments that met technical adequacy standards. These assessment activities were conducted within system’s initiatives known as “Inclusion,” data-based decision-making linked with a tiered-instructional model (RtI), and building a “Seamless Continuum” from birth to age eight. Upon request, my comments were sent to the CEC office and may be included in an upcoming CEC Policy Brief.

My year as President of Illinois Division for Early Childhood (IDEC) is coming to a close and I was delighted that two of the last activities of my term were to represent you, our members, to help us achieve our mission at the local-, state-, and national-levels 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.” Thank you for allowing me to represent you in these advocacy activities.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Miller Young

CONNECT Module on Inclusion Now Available



Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at University of North Carolina recently opened their CONNECT: The Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge Module website to the public. Module 1, which focuses on identifying and solving a dilemma related to inclusion for preschool children, has been reviewed by a panel and tested in workshop and university classroom settings. The Module contains content organized around a five-step process, downloadable activities in pdf format, and videos from parent, teacher, and support staff perspective as well as videos of a case study child participating in classroom activities. There is also an overview video on their evidence-based approach to professional development. CONNECT Module 1 can be found at

<http://community.fpg.unc.edu/connect-modules/connect-modules>

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: **November 15, 2010 for Spring 2011** admission; and **April 1, 2011 for Summer 2011 or Fall 2011**. 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

Center for Early Literacy Learning Guidebooks Available



The Center for Early Literacy Learning, a research-to-practice technical assistance center funded through U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, has developed guides for families and practitioners to promote early literacy experiences for infants, toddlers, and preschool children.

CELLpractices Practice Guides Especially for Parents contains 67 guides which have been tested and finalized. *Practice Guides Especially for Practitioners* contains 66 guides that are still in draft form on the website. Each guide includes the following content areas:

- What is the practice?
- What does the practice look like?
- How do you do the practice?
- How do you know the practice worked?
- Suggestions for specific activities related to the topic of the guide. For example, Homespun Fun guide for parents includes Reading Every Day; It's the Right Time to Write!; and Tried-and-Tested Fun.

Guide pages can be downloaded and printed individually or in sets at the CELL website:

<http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/index.php>

CELL also has reviews of literacy research and papers on evidence-based practices in early literacy.

Response to Intervention in Illinois Pre-K: How Do We Respond?

by Brian Michalski

Response to Intervention (RtI) has definitely been the “buzz” for the last couple of years. Let's be clear, RtI is a federally funded initiative that is not required at the state Pre-K level (at least at this time). In summary, **Response to Intervention** integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavior problems. With RtI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities (<http://www.rti4success.org>).

Though not required at Pre-K, early childhood professionals from across the state heeded the call to necessary action in order *to respond appropriately* to Response to Intervention, so as not to feel the push-down philosophy that unfortunately occurs all too often at the Pre-K level. Last year, at the request of the Illinois State Board of Education Division of Early Childhood, a focus group, led by three STARNET specialists and myself, met with a group of 25 early childhood professionals from across different communities and agencies to discuss how we would respond to meet the needs at the early childhood level. The group continued meeting via conference calls to discuss concerns and solutions.

Some of you may have attended one of the sessions presented by the researchers at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG), North Carolina who presented a model in response to RtI called *Recognition and Response*.

During the course of the last year or so, the Illinois Resource Center: Early Childhood (IRC:EC) office in collaboration with Illinois STARNET offered three RtI webinars providing an overview of RtI. This webinar was presented by Dr. Lynette Chandler from Northern Illinois University.

In addition, a survey was sent via email to professionals to receive input from those across the state. We asked, and you provided input, ranging from many questions about what you were looking for.

What's happening next? Save the date, September 30, 2010 for the Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children conference. IRC:EC, STARNET, and Head Start are sponsoring an RtI preconference day with a panel discussion made up of individuals from across the state who will be sharing information about how they implemented RtI appropriately at their program. This preconference day will be for those professionals who already have a basic knowledge and understanding of RtI. For more information and registration, refer to the www.illinoisaeYC.org website. You do not need to attend the full conference to attend the preconference workshop day. Space is limited.

Finally, you may want to check out a great website resource called the **RTI Action Network**. They are committed to the effective implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) in school districts nationwide. <http://www.rtinetwork.org/Pre-K>.

Brian Michalski is the Director of Professional Development at the Illinois Resource Center: Early Childhood, a project of The Center in Arlington Heights, Illinois. He oversees the professional development for ISBE funded at-risk prekindergarten programs throughout the state. For questions or comments, Brian can be reached at bmichalski@cntrmail.org



The Illinois Subdivision of the Division for
Early Childhood (IDEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

To: Office of the Secretary, Department of Education
Office of the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Resources

From: Robin Miller Young, Ed.D., NCSP
President, Illinois Division for Early Childhood (IDEC)
Robin_MillerYoung@ipsd.org, RRMMYoung@aol.com

Re: Early Learning Listening Tour: Standards and Assessment; Chicago, IL May 11, 2010
“Implementing Innovative and Successful Approaches to Improving Early Learning
Outcomes for Children, Birth through Grade Three”

Date: May 18, 2010

Presented below are highlights of the comments I submitted to the US Department of Education’s “Early Learning Listening Tour” as a registered “Public Speaker” on Tuesday, May 11, 2010 held in Chicago, IL.

Good afternoon, my name is Robin Miller Young, President of the Illinois Division for Early Childhood (IDEC) a subdivision of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). I am here today to share with you perspectives from the collective experiences of preschool principals and assistant principals, early childhood program coordinators, early childhood center directors and other Illinois “in-the-field” leaders who are developing, implementing and sustaining innovative practices that are improving learning outcomes for young learners across our state and across our nation. Please consider ways in which you can support development of policies and practices that would be congruent with the following 12 recommendations.

1. NAEYC and DEC Supported Recommendations: Early childhood policy and practice recommendations for “Standards” and “Assessments” should always be aligned with NAEYC position statements, and the “Recommended Practices” of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC).
2. Early Learning Standards: Leadership in the early childhood field is required to develop, implement, and update various standards documents so we can deliver effective and efficient services to all children. They provide a common target for us all. Specifically, states should develop and hold educational programs accountable for using Early Learning Standards regarding what students should know and when they should know it to guide program development, delivery, evaluation, and accountability.
3. Assessment Tools Linked to Early Learning Standards: Innovative service delivery system initiatives such as "Inclusive" programs, tiered instructional models linked to data-based decision-making ["Response to Intervention (RtI)"], and a “Seamless Continuum from Birth to Age Eight” will require us to ensure that our assessment tools are linked to the Early Learning Standards.
4. Assessment Tools Must Meet Technical Adequacy Standards: Additionally, the tools we use to make decisions within these service system initiatives (screening, progress monitoring, eligibility determination, program planning, evaluation and accountability) must meet agreed-upon technical adequacy standards (e.g., *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, AERA, 1999) including instructional validity (see Snyder et al, 2008), so we can use the results with confidence.
5. Assessment Must Be Conducted to Answer a Specific Question about a Student or Group of Students: Professionals should use a multi-informant, multi-method, multi-trait approach so the assessment is comprehensive, yet focused and time efficient. Use records review, observation, interview and testing (RIOT) as needed to answer the question(s) you need to know about a student or group of students.

6. Curriculum-based Measurement (General Outcome Measures - GOMs) and Curriculum-based Assessment (CBA - Mastery Models): We need to have quick and easy “indicators” regarding the children’s progress toward long-term predictors of programmatic success (e.g., GOMs such as IGDIs and Preschool Numeracy Indicators - PNIs), as well as information on how they are progressing through the specific curricula (e.g., discrete skills in a specific curricula).

7. Early Childhood Assessment Tools that Support a Seamless Continuum: Tools that allow us to connect from early intervention (EI) through preschool and into the early elementary years are necessary for some purposes, as are tools that can be used with all types of children (e.g., typically developing children, children with disabilities, ELLs, etc.). A few, such as Ages and Stages can perform this function, as well as the Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs); others are reportedly in the development stages.

8. Efficient Data Collection that Leads Easily to Decisions for Individual Children and Groups of Children: Early childhood school leaders need data that are easily collected and displayed visually, so the data can be easily compared to the decision-making criteria. The data also need to be easily aggregated across various sub-groups of a school/program.

9. Leadership Needed to Operationalize the DEC Concept Paper (2009) on Developmental Delay (DD) as an Eligibility Category: We need leadership enacted at the national, state, and local levels to understand how to use the ideas of "rate of improvement" over time and "level of performance" in order to shift into a newer definition of DD. This will involve tools/measures, as well as teaming and decision-making processes.

10. New Environmental, Curricular, and Instructional Tools Need to Meet Standards too: As new tools are being developed to provide data on other essential parts of the instructional process (e.g., Math Environmental Checklist developed by Robin Hojnoski, etc.), those tools need to be developed according to standards for those types of tools/measures.

11. Interventions Need to Meet Standards Too: The interventions we put into place need to have met some type of "scientific" or "evidence-base" criteria. The standard now is that a certain amount of research, values and wisdom can be used to substantiate our choice of an intervention. Over time, we need to raise the bar and make the criteria stronger on the side of research. We also need to ensure that a social validity standard is met (treatment integrity and treatment acceptability).

12. Staff Development at the Pre-service and In-service Levels Needs to be Conducted: Early childhood professionals (teachers, SLPs, OTs, PTs, Social Workers, Psychologists, etc.), need training in the above-referenced ideas. They also need to know how to write-up an assessment report and how to share the information with parents and teammates.

Policies and practices that can be enacted at the federal, state and local levels would continue enhancing the learning outcomes for ALL students.

Respectfully submitted,

(Not signed, as this was submitted by e-mail)

Robin Miller Young, Ed.D., NCSP

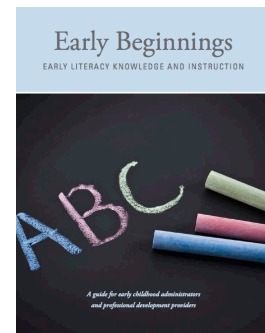
Using Assistive Technology to Support Socialization



Tots-n-TECH, a collaborative project from Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia and Arizona State University in Tempe, publishes a free online newsletter several times a year. The latest issue focuses on strategies for using assistive technology to support socialization. Content is based in part on materials developed by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning. Ideas for using social stories, picture schedules, feelings charts, cue cards, and first-then boards are included, along with tips for choosing and using assistive technology. The June 2010 newsletter can be viewed or downloaded from the website, <http://tnt.asu.edu/>.

National Institute for Literacy Early Childhood Publication

Early Beginnings is a 16-page booklet based on the research findings from the 2009 publication, *Developing Early Literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel*. It is available to view or download from the National Institute for Literacy website, www.nifl.gov. Free print copies may still be available for a short time.



National Institute for Literacy

The Institute posted the following message on their website recently concerning publications distribution:

Publication Distribution Comes to a Close at the Institute

As the National Institute for Literacy prepares to close in September 2010, it is making available all remaining hard copies of its scientifically based publications developed for parents, caregivers, and educators. These federally funded resources remain ranked among the top 10 most-requested publications by the U.S. Department of Education.

Visit the [Publications](#) page to view the list of publications still available in hard copy. Copies can be ordered (by title) by calling EDPubs at 1(800) 228-8813 (TDD/TTY 1-877-576-7734; e-mailing edpubs@edpubs.ed.gov or faxing 1(703) 605-6794.



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

Date: Saturday, April 10, 2010
To: The Honorable Bill Foster
Re: Advocacy on behalf of children and families

We are:

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:

- public school employees, faculty from many universities and colleges across the state of Illinois who are conducting research on a variety of early childhood topics and conducting pre-service and in-service training,
- 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)
- parents of children with disabilities, and children who are at-risk of developing disabilities.

National Issues:

- Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
- Reauthorization of IDEA
- Positive Behavior for Effective Schools Act (H.R. 2597) and the Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act (H.R. 4223.) These bills were introduced by Representatives Hare (IL-17) and Kildee (MI-5), respectively, in the 111th Congress.

Dr. Robin Miller Young, President
Illinois Division for Early Childhood (IDEC)
Member, National Association of School Psychologists
99 Atkinson Dr., Sugar Grove, IL 60554
(work) 630-375-3030, Extension 1118; (home) 630-466-4774
Robin_MillerYoung@ipsd.org; RRMMYoung@aol.com

Sharing A Vision 2011 Planning Has Begun!

Co-chairs Carol Weisheit and Sharon Doubet will meet with the conference committee chairs on July 1st in Springfield at the Crowne Plaza. There is still time to join a committee, so please contact Carol at carol.weisheit@mac.com if you are interested in being part of this dynamic group of people!!!



United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Chicago Standards and Assessment

May 11, 2010

The following comments are provided by Ted Burke, Director of the Illinois Early Intervention Training Program at United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Chicago (UCP Chicago). Since 2002 the Illinois Early Intervention Training Program has conducted over 1500 statewide training and education programs and served over 50,000 early intervention workshop participants in cities across Illinois and through access to over 100 hours of online learning opportunities. In addition to training, we also provide consultation and technical assistance to the Illinois Early Intervention system regarding the state's process for measuring and reporting child outcomes.

On behalf of UCP of Greater Chicago, I want to thank you for this opportunity to provide comment. I speak to you today representing an Illinois perspective on assessment in Part C programs, but understand the Illinois' concerns around assessment are not unique to just Illinois. The face of early intervention has changed over the years, yet the players have much remained the same: families, children and service providers. Over the years we've trained providers we continue to ask and answer the questions:

- How do we make assessment meaningful and use it to build intervention strategies and supports that help children and families in their everyday routines and activities?
- What is global assessment and how does it help us understand a child's unique skills, abilities, and strengths so that IFSPs can be developed that are truly individualized and meaningful?
- What are the different factors, such as culture and environment, which can impact assessment?
- How can we help providers of all disciplines understand the key principles and best practices for meaningful assessment of very young children and their families?

Some of the barriers we come across in answering these questions for the field include:

- The results from most current assessment instruments do not easily convert to state criteria for determining eligibility. For example, in Illinois we use percent delay to determine eligibility, yet most of the instruments used by providers in the field do not provide for a method of conversion of the information to percent delay.
- The results from most assessment instruments are not divided into the three functional child outcomes required by the Office of Special Education Programs which each state has to report upon. The information from the assessment instruments is usually separated into developmental domains and needs to be converted into the functional outcomes.
- In states like Illinois, where a vendor model is used in Part C, the difficulty in determining the effectiveness of early intervention is even more magnified than in states using more traditional program models for service delivery. The lack of provider supervision and administrative supports

makes it difficult to assess, with any sort of consistency, the effectiveness of early intervention on a statewide system level.

To address these barriers UCP of Greater Chicago supports the recommendations of the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children recommendations that all assessments:

- Implement and promote assessment practices that involve shared experiences between families and professionals. Any decisions impacting the child or the family should be based on multiple sources of information, including that obtained from observations and interactions with children and their family members.
- Must be individualized. Young children are individuals, and therefore, their programs and performance data must be individualized.
- Must be conducted in the everyday environments in which children play and participate in an effort to lead to beneficial outcomes. Assessment practices should be conducted in familiar settings, with familiar people and objects, doing familiar things.

Additional recommendations we would like to see include:

- Support and funding for the research of current assessment tools and possible development of new assessment tools which are tied to evidence based practices, help providers develop appropriate intervention plans which support child development based on the unique characteristics of families and their visions and priorities, and document program effectiveness.
- A federal focus for additional research, training and guidance for early intervention professionals on using informed clinical opinion as a part of the assessment process to promote family and professional partnerships. Rather than relying on a single assessment tool or approach, data gathered from multiple methods including observations, tools and different routines should be used to determine how best to support a child's learning and development.
- Support and continued funding of projects like the Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) Center to give states the support and technical assistance needed to best implement the current OSEP requirements for reporting the developmental progress on the three functional child outcomes in order to determine the effectiveness of early intervention. Additionally, continued research into additional methods and/or tools to help states determine the effectiveness of their early intervention programs is strongly encouraged.
- Adoption of a universal set of assessment standards to be used as a guide for all Part C early intervention professionals. These standards must be developed within a collaborative framework including representation of key stakeholders and representatives of the professional organizations which represent the early learning workforce (e.g. DEC, CEC, NAEYC, ZERO TO THREE, ASHA, AOTA, ITCA, APTA), policymakers, and families.

UCP of Greater Chicago hopes you take into account our input and recommendations as policies are developed and funding decisions made related to ensuring that young children and their families have the supports necessary to be successful within their community. We thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback.

Contact Information:

Ted Burke, Director
Illinois Early Intervention Training Program
UCP of Greater Chicago
7550 W. 183rd Street
Tinley Park, IL 60477

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

or

Ms. Sarah Kleiner
Associate Director of Adult and Graduate Admission
(630) 617-3306

Email: sarahk@elmhurst.edu

Elmhurst College
190 Prospect Avenue
Elmhurst, Illinois 60126
www.elmhurst.edu

DEC • 2010



**THE 26TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON YOUNG
CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS & THEIR FAMILIES**

October 14-17, 2010
Kansas City, Missouri

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