



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

Volume 20, Issue 1

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## Message from the IDEC President...

Sallee Beneke

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### Inside This Issue:

IDEC Board.....	2
Licensing Update.....	3
Rec. Practices.....	8
EI Training Program....	9
New DEC Exec Dir.....	11
Puerling Review.....	12
ExceleRate Illinois.....	15
B2K.....	15
DEC Conference.....	16

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### Find us on the web 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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Dear IDEC Members,

In July I took over as president of Illinois DEC. What an honor! For those of you who don't know me, I have worn many hats in the field of early childhood (e.g., special ed. Teacher, pre-k at-risk teacher, center director, lead teacher, lab school director, and STARnet Resource Specialist). I earned my PhD in Special Education in 2010, and I am currently a professor of early childhood education at St. Ambrose University.

Your board has been busy! Highlights from the July meeting include:

- The Sharing a Vision conference is just around the corner (October 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>), and promises to be the best IDEC-sponsored conference yet,
- Our IDEC website has recently been updated and given a fresh look. Visit <http://illinois-dec.org/> and connect with internet links to useful resources, Young Exceptional Children and Journal of Early Intervention.
- We are working hard to collaborate with other early childhood organizations in Illinois. For example, we are co-sponsoring a Sharing a Vision pre-conference session with STARnet and IRC on the inter-relatedness of movement, child development, and academic readiness in early childhood. We have also added a liaison to the Illinois Developmental Therapists Association (IDTA).

At the July meeting we also continued our ongoing discussions about methods for increasing membership and ways to increase benefits of membership for our current members. If you have a great idea regarding membership or benefits, please share it with a board member or email me at [BenekeSalleeJ@sau.edu](mailto:BenekeSalleeJ@sau.edu). If you are not sure who serves on the IDEC board? You can view a list on the IDEC website.

In closing, I would like to thank Connie Shugart for the wonderful job she did as president of IDEC for the 2012-2013 year. Connie now serves as past president on the Board, and I look forward to working with her to support the teachers, families, and children we serve.

Sincerely,  
Sallee Beneke



## Meet Your 2013 - 2015 IDECE Board

### Executive Board

President - Sallee Beneke

President Elect - Amy Cocorikis

Vice President - Amanda Quesenberry

Past President - Connie Shugart

Treasurer - Elizabeth Cambray

Secretary - Mary Wonderlick

### Standing Committees

Membership	Pam Reising-Rechner Carol Weisheit
Communications	
Publication	Mindy Ely
Student	Natalie Danner Christine Davis
Gov. Relations	Julie Evans
Family Participation	<i>Open</i>
SAV Conference	Carol Weisheit Denise Henry

### Interagency Liaisons

ICEC	Amy Cocorikis
ISBE	Pam Reising-Rechner
ISBE Workgroup RtI	Jeannette McCollum
ISBE Workgroup ECO	Nancy Kind
Early Learning Council	Evelyn Green
IAASE	Joyce Senters
ECSE Faculty	Lynette Chandler
DEC	Susan Connor
IDTA	Benny Delgado
NAEYC: At Risk & Spec Needs Int Forum	Mary Wonderlick

### Ad-Hoc Committees

Jeanette McCollum Award	Connie Shugart
Nomination and Election	Julie Evans
Past President Council	Bernie Laumann

# **UP-DATE ON** **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR LICENSING**

## Early Childhood Advisory Group (ECAG) on Early Childhood Teacher Licensing

WHO: ECAG was created by the Illinois State Board of Education's (ISBE) Preparation and Evaluation division to assist development of the new Early Childhood Professional Educator License (PEL). The ECAG has been meeting for almost two years, and the group's work will be coming to a close soon. Past agendas and some minutes are posted at the following link: <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/prep-eval/htmls/ecag.htm>.

The Center for the Study of Education Policy's (CSEP) staff members are facilitating ECAG's work for ISBE through a grant from the McCormick Foundation. The CSEP staff members include Lisa Hood and Erika Hunt, Senior Policy Analysts, and Laura Kalmes, a researcher and evaluator.

Linda Tomlinson, former Assistant Superintendent, served as a link to ISBE; since summer 2013, Vicki Philips has served as the link between ECAG and ISBE.

WHERE/WHEN: Thursday, September 12, 2013 in the Bone Student Center, Illinois State University (ISU), Normal, IL was the occasion for the most recent ECAG meeting.

MINUTES: The following report was developed for IDEC members, based on minutes taken by Laura Kalmes, CSEP staff member. Documents developed and discussed by the ECAG group are available by contacting the report writer, Dr. Robin Miller Young, IDEC Past President, at [RMYoung@Rockford.edu](mailto:RMYoung@Rockford.edu); office phone = 815-226-4162.

I Welcome was given and introductions were made.

II Review of ECAG Work

A. English Language Arts (ELA):

1. A draft version of the Early Childhood Educator content standards for English and Language Arts (ELA) had been previously developed by an ECAG subcommittee and shared with the committee as a whole. A few additional revisions had been made since the last meeting and these were quickly reviewed.

2. Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (IPTS) discussion: The ELA subgroup reviewed the drafted ECAG ELA standards alongside the IPTS and NAEYC standards to look for areas of redundancy. The group made some minor changes to the ELA standards to ensure there was no repetition with IPTS.
3. The ELA group decided two sections previously included in the ELA standards, “meeting the needs of diverse learners” and “professionalism” did not need to be included in the content standards because they were adequately covered in IPTS.
4. Assessment standard - ELA group decided the assessment section does not need to be included in the ELA content standards; however, the group also decided the early childhood standards, as a whole, should have its own assessment section independent from IPTS. ELA group revised its assessment section to apply to all content areas of ECAG standards.

**B. Math standards:**

1. The draft Math standards are still in the process of being revised by the subgroup, following input from the ECAG as a whole. Additional work will be done to edit the standards so they will align more coherently with the language used in the ELA standards.

**C. Science/social studies standards:**

1. ECAG members reviewed different options for science/social studies standards and discussed whether to rely on student learning standards alone.
2. Group members stressed importance of incorporating “processes of inquiry” into science/social studies language, but examined IPTS and found inquiry repeatedly referenced in it. Therefore, the group agreed additional standards related to inquiry do not need to be incorporated.
3. Group reached consensus on language for science and social studies standards, provided below:

**Language for Early Childhood Endorsement Programs (Birth through grade 2)**

- b) Each candidate for an endorsement in early childhood education shall complete a 32-semester hour major in early childhood education offered by an Illinois program approved for the preparation of early childhood education teachers pursuant to Subpart C of this Part. The program shall include:

- 2) Coursework that addresses at least three areas of sciences defined by the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards and New Generation Science Standards (e.g., physical, life, and earth and space);
- 3) Coursework that addresses the ten thematic strands defined by the National Council for Social Studies (culture; time, continuity, and change; people, places and environments; individual development and identity; individuals, groups, and institutions; power, authority, and governance; production, distribution, and consumption; science, technology, and society; global connections; civic ideals and practices) as they relate to the disciplinary standards (history, geography, civics and government, economics, and psychology).

D. Standards related to English Language Learners (ELLs):

1. The ELA and math ECAG draft standards did receive feedback based on applicability to English Learners. This feedback was received just before the meeting, and the groups did not have an opportunity to review the feedback. This will be additional work to undertake before the next meeting.

### III Gateways to Opportunity alignment

A. Crosswalk review

1. Joni Scritchlow (INCCRRA) provided introduction to Gateways to Opportunity. Gateways entitlement assists in improving the continuity between two- and four-year teacher training programs, thereby assisting with articulation. Gateways also helps ensure *children's* experiences in Preschool for All programs and community-based programs are better aligned.
2. ECAG group was presented with a crosswalk created by a collaborative effort of INCCRRA, DHS, and ISU CSEP staff. Crosswalk examines alignment among Gateways to Opportunity level 5 benchmarks, NAEYC standards, and IPTS to clarify the relationship and commonality among these standards, where some are stronger and others weaker as they relate to early childhood needs.
3. Crosswalk review reveals Gateways benchmarks have a strong emphasis in areas of human growth and child development, family and community engagement, and constructing learning environments that are not covered in detail in IPTS or NAEYC standards.
4. Group discussed the benefits and feasibility of adopting Gateways to Opportunity entitlement level 5 as part of ECAG standards to enhance focus on child development, community and family collaboration, learning environment, and health and safety for early childhood candidates/teachers.

5. Concern and questions were raised by members in attendance as to the commitment of time and resources that will be necessary to receive Level 5 entitlement from Gateways, as well as anticipated push back from university programs.
6. Vicki Phillips (ISBE) clarified if Gateways entitlement is integrated into ECAG standards, it will not be subject to ISBE assessment and reporting standards. Programs would work directly with INCCRRA for their entitlement process. Programs would be given a three-year grace period to attain Level 5 entitlement. Gateways may possibly be incorporated as a “yes”/ “no” box to check to indicate if program has reached Level 5 entitlement.
7. Concern about articulation raised in that community colleges can receive Gateways entitlement up to Level 3.
8. Vicki Phillips explains her support for Gateways as being important training for early childhood teachers to understand child development and effectively meet the needs of children who may start school at age 3, but developmentally are much younger. Gateways benchmarks would prepare teachers to teach a child at his/her developmental level. Teachers must be able to teach a broad range of developmental abilities, and Gateways benchmarks offer specificity as to what teachers need to know and do.
9. Prior to making any decisions as to whether or not ECAG should integrate Gateways into its standards, the group requested to see the language, as it would be written in the ECAG standards. There were lingering questions about reporting, assessment, and implementation.

#### IV Early Childhood field and clinical experiences

- A. Reviewed crosswalk of field and clinical experiences standards for early childhood.
  1. Explanation of changes: NCATE (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education) and TEAC (another accreditation body) are merging to become CAEP (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation). ECE programs will meet both CAEP and NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) standards, which remains the specialized professional association standards.
  2. CAEP and NAEYC have different standards for field locations. It can be difficult to place students in multiple locations, particularly for community colleges. However, the group present at today's meetings recommends four-year institutions should provide placement in at least 2 out of the 3 early childhood age levels, but not necessarily at different sites.

3. Group requested more time to finalize the requirements/essential experiences for 2 and 4 year programs.

#### IV      Next Steps

- A. ECAG group will be presented with updated ELA, Math, and Science/Social Studies standards.
- B. Additional information and clarification will be provided related to Gateways to Opportunity.
- C. Revisit and finalize clinical and field experiences.
- D. Upcoming work will review and compare dispositions for ECE.

Respectfully submitted,

(not signed, as submitted electronically)  
Robin Miller Young, Ed.D.,  
IDEC Past President  
ECAG member

Director of Early Childhood Education  
Rockford University



**Illinois Council for Exceptional Children**

**2013 Fall Convention**

*Celebrating Special Educators*

November 7-9, 2013

Hyatt Lisle - Lisle, Illinois

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



# Updated DEC Recommended Practices

Updated DEC Recommended Practices are coming in 2014. Your input is needed now.

The **DEC Recommended Practices** were developed to provide guidance on practices related to better outcomes for young children with disabilities, their families, and the personnel who serve them. However, as the field continues to evolve and new research emerges about how best to serve children with disabilities, it is important that the Recommended Practices are revisited and revised to remain current and relevant. Starting in 2012, DEC created a **Recommended Practices Commission** which was tasked with updating and revising the Recommended Practices. In addition, the Commission was asked to develop a process by which the Recommended Practices will continue to be updated.

While the Commission serves as the entity that leads this process, the Recommended Practices are driven by the needs of the children and those who serve them. Therefore, it is critical that there is ongoing input, guidance, and feedback from the field. You can help with the *DEC Recommended Practices*!

There will be two types of discussion opportunities to provide input into the newly revised *DEC Recommended Practices*:

- **Topic Area discussions** conducted face-to-face during the annual [DEC Conference](#), in San Francisco, CA, between October 16 - 18, 2013

Wed. October 16, 2013 from 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm:

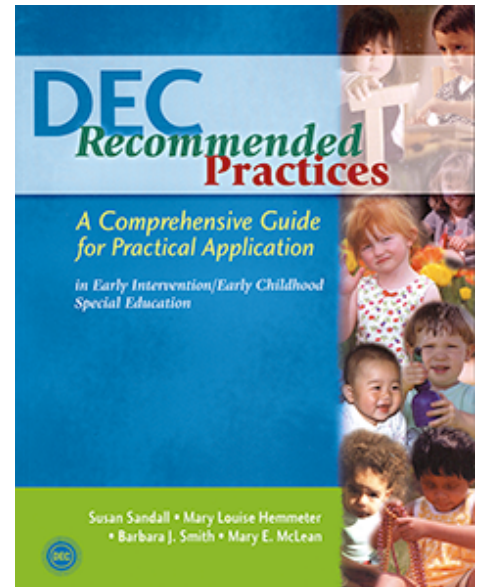
1. Assessment Practices
2. Instructional Practices

Thur. October 17, 2013 from 7:30 am - 9:30 am:

1. Interactional Practices
2. Support Practices
3. Family Practices

Friday-October 18, 2013 - 8:00 am - 9:30 am:

1. Teaming and Collaboration
2. Transition Practices
3. Environmental Features



If you are interested in learning more about these opportunities or to provide input on the Recommended Practices, join us at these discussions or visit [www.decrecpractices.org](http://www.decrecpractices.org).





# Illinois Early Intervention Training Program

## Early Intervention Training Program moves to the University of Illinois

Submitted by: Susan Connor

After 11 successful years at UCP of Great Chicago (UCP), the Early Intervention Training Program was awarded to the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana.

On July 1, 2013, [the Early Intervention Training Program at the University of Illinois](#) began its mission to build upon the achievements of the highly successful, former Illinois Early Intervention Training Program and develop a system that is **regionalized, responsive and reflective of best practice** in the field of early intervention. Through a comprehensive system of personnel development, the Early Intervention Training Program (EITP) at the University of Illinois will provide pre-service and in-service training for service coordinators and providers supporting children in the Illinois Early Intervention System. This comprehensive system of personnel development will support and ensure the Illinois Department of Human Services goal to improve the quality of services and supports offered to infants, toddlers and their families in early intervention through an effective network of early intervention personnel.

Dr. Amy Santos, Dr. Michaelene Ostrosky and Dr. Tweety Yates are the Principal Investigators from the University of Illinois who will be responsible for ensuring the activities of the EITP are carried out. Ted Burke will continue as Director of EITP at the University of Illinois, Susan Connor has accepted the position of Assistant Director, Chelsea Guillen will continue as Ombudsman, and Keena Sims will continue as Project Manager over the Interpreter/Translator project, the child and family outcomes projects, and the credit request project. In addition, there will be many familiar faces on the training team moving forward as well as some new faces.

### Early Intervention Training Program Continued...

We strongly believe that the University of Illinois is uniquely qualified to continue the high level of support that our field has come to expect. With its strong commitment to excellence in research, teaching and public engagement, the University of Illinois has the expertise, resources, and supports for the Training Program to reach heights many of us have only imagined.

The Early Intervention Training Program will be offering a multitude of professional development opportunities for early interventionists including **webinars, face-to-face events, conferences, as well as linked series institutes**. We are adding events every day, including several opportunities for linked series institutes on the topics of **foundations of early intervention, child development, infant/toddler assessment, the modern family, and intervention strategies**. Check out our calendar for upcoming events! We look forward to this new chapter in the Early Intervention Training Program and all the opportunities it will bring.

You can contact us via phone at (866)509-3867 or visit the website at [www.illinoiseittraining.org](http://www.illinoiseittraining.org).

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## JOINING DEC IS FUN!

If you are interested in joining the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the Division of Early Childhood (DEC), go to [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org) and click on Membership. Follow the directions to join or print out the Membership Form and mail it. If you are already a member, you can renew your membership online also.

Cost for membership varies according to your position.

For example, if you wish to join as a Professional: First join CEC, the CEC dues for Illinois as a Professional are \$122; then choose to add the Division of Early Childhood (DEC) which is \$35 for Professional. Total cost is \$157.

If you wish to join as a Student, first join CEC. The CEC dues for Illinois as a Student are \$71. Then choose to add the Division of Early Childhood (DEC) which is \$15 for Students. Total cost is \$86.

The chart below lists other types of membership choices. Please review the descriptions for each at [www.CEC.sped.org](http://www.CEC.sped.org)

Organization Dues	Premier	Professional	Retired	Student/Family
IL CEC Dues	200	122	71	71
IL DEC Dues	35	35	35	15
TOTAL Annual Dues	\$235	\$157	\$106	\$86



## **DEC Welcomes Its New Executive Director, Dr. Leah Weiner**

The DEC Executive Board is pleased to announce DEC's new Executive Director, Leah Weiner, Ed.D. Leah brings a unique combination of experience, knowledge, and interests that position her well to lead DEC's ongoing evolution into a vibrant, thriving membership organization. She blends knowledge of and expertise in organizational leadership with a passion for children with disabilities and their families.

As Executive Director of a nonprofit recreational program for children with disabilities, she successfully recruited over 2000 volunteers. Leah also brings fundraising experience as a Development Director for a nonprofit, developmental disability organization and for a major hospital. She spearheaded an advocacy training program related to education and disability. Leah has a strong commitment to equal access, particularly for children with disabilities living in poverty.

Leah holds a doctorate in Organizational Leadership and Development and a Masters in Public Administration from Pepperdine University. She also has academic teaching experience in the area of Nonprofit Management. Leah has administered small and large organizational budgets, organized educational conferences, launched a national membership program, and created public relations and marketing campaigns. She is well-versed in capitalizing on social media to meet organizational objectives and in generating revenue through a variety of fund raising mechanisms.

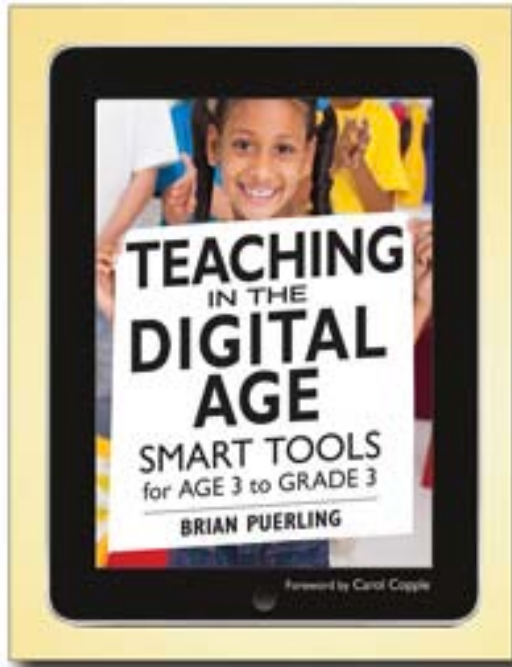
Leah's education and experiences are well aligned with the unique needs of membership organizations such as DEC. Leah brings great energy and a vision for moving DEC towards its mission of promoting policies and advancing evidence-based practices to support the optimal development of young children with special needs and their families.

# Teaching in the Digital Age: Smart Tools for Age 3 to Grade 3 By Brian Puerling

## A Review by Linda Robinson

As an early childhood teacher in Chicago, Brian Puerling integrated a variety of technologies into activities and routines of young children in his classroom. He shares these innovative experiences in his book *Teaching in the Digital Age: Smart Tools for Age 3 to Grade 3*. The book serves as a timely guide to using technology in the preschool and early elementary

curriculum in light of the recent release of the position statement on technology and interactive media by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media at Saint Vincent College. The book provides many implementation strategies that support the position statement key points.



The book begins with a discussion of the challenges currently facing teachers as they use the newest technologies in their classroom. Puerling encourages teachers to intentionally plan their use of technology by developing a curriculum map listing content area, skills, and activities. He provides planning forms as samples which can be copied and used in the classroom.

Each of the next seven chapters in the book focus on an individual type of technology. The content covers cameras, projectors, audio recorders, videoconferencing and webcams, publication and presentation tools, videos, and multi-touch mobile devices. Each chapter includes strategies and documentation on how the particular technology can be used to support learning, assess children's knowledge, and exhibit learning. Puerling includes accompanying forms in each chapter so teachers have a written guide to follow and eventually adopt or adapt as their own. Throughout the book there are QR codes related to videos illustrating a specific activity and links to the videos on the Redleaf Press website. Links are also provided so that forms can be downloaded and printed.

The final chapter focuses on infusing technology into the classroom with ideas for working with administrators and involving families in technology experiences. Puerling also includes forms for evaluating apps and how they can be used to support children's learning.

With his new book, Brian Puerling has made a significant contribution to the field of technology and early childhood. Not only is his book innovative in its use of new technologies with young children, but it also connects this technology to developmentally appropriate practices. With child development foundation constantly in mind, technology truly can be a tool to support a young child's learning.

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### **ECO Resource Database**

The Early Childhood Outcomes Center at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill now has a searchable database of ECO resources. Users can conduct a search with keywords or through three guided categories including Age, Topic, and ECO Resource Type. There are 24 topic areas listed with numbers of items in each ranging from one to 214. Resource types include conference sessions, ECO Conference, ECO Tools, papers or reports, training resources, webinars, and webpages. Resulting resources from a search may include an extensive list of conference presentations with links to PowerPoint slides, articles, reports, and websites. The database can be found at <http://ecoutcomes.fpg.unc.edu/>







# Little kids, big impact

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**With our master's degree in early childhood special education, you'll make a difference in families' lives when it matters most—when their children are small.** You'll specialize in both early intervention (birth to age three) and early childhood special education (ages three to five). The challenges of graduate school will be made easier as you learn and grow with a cohort of fellow grad students who start and stay together across the entire program. This two-year, part-time program is the only one in the Chicago area that blends the important fields of early intervention, early childhood education, and special education.

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**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**Graduate Information Session**  
**Saturday, November 16, 9:00 a.m.**  
**Frick Center, Founders Lounge**  
**Elmhurst College**

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**Email:** [sps@elmhurst.edu](mailto:sps@elmhurst.edu)

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ExceleRate Illinois is the Quality Rating and Improvement System that will provide programs a clear process for making quality improvements. The system will include licensed child care centers, Preschool for All programs, Head Start program, and licensed family child care homes. ExceleRate Illinois includes standards, guidelines, resources and supports and will provide a consistent set of standard to measure programs. The standards include four key domains:

- Teaching and Learning
- Family and Community Engagement
- Leadership and Management
- Qualifications and Continuing Education
- 

Theresa Hawley of the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development shared a big picture overview of the state's goals for early learning, as well as details about ExceleRate Illinois, and the new Quality Rating and Improvement System in a webinar this past summer entitled Forward Together. A link to the recorded presentation can be found on the ExceleRate Illinois website.

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## Be Inspired By B2K

The mission of B2K: To equip, educate, inspire, and ultimately transform communities to implement advanced solutions to address the complexities associated with promoting the growth and development of young children with diverse abilities. The intent of the B2K blog, is three fold:

1. We aim to provide expert content posts that lead to solutions to complex issues.
2. We aim to inspire and share our journey (all the while, encouraging others to share their voice).
3. We highlight what we call advanced solutions-whether they be products within our collections, or events sponsored by B2K.



In general, we want to take the complexities we face in working with young children with diverse abilities and their families and find real solutions - hence the quote on our home page at [www.b2kcentral.com](http://www.b2kcentral.com)

*"Everything should be made as simple as possible, but no simpler". - Albert Einstein*



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR TODAY!**  
**2014 DEC International Conference**

**Saint Louis Marriott**

**St. Louis, MO**

**October 7 - 9, 2014**



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Serve on the  
2014 DEC International  
Conference Committee

- *Are you interested in getting more involved in DEC?*
- *Want to develop your conference planning skills?*
- *Want to build relationships with your colleagues?*

If you said, YES to any of the above,  
send an email to [DEC](#) at [dec@dec-sped.org](mailto:dec@dec-sped.org)

Share a few sentences about why you would like to serve on the conference committee and include your resume or vita as an attachment.

Be sure to write on the subject line for email: DEC 2014.