



Message from the President



Brad Hutton, President

How can a program that has received \$500 million as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) be in the midst of a funding crisis? I'm sure that many State Part C coordinators have been faced with this question by many stakeholders. The answer, which many of you already know, is that this one-time infusion of federal funding has allowed many States to erode existing budgets for the Part C system as a means of balancing severe budget deficits. A survey of Part C coordinators in the Fall of 2009 revealed that

31 states are using their Part C stimulus funds for direct services; 8 of these are using their entire allotment of stimulus funds in this manner.

Each of those states (and some others) now face a major dilemma in having to identify sources of financing to replace ARRA money once those dollars go away beginning with FFY 2011. A list of options that these states may consider can only be described as "bleak."

1. Plan on the economy to rebound soon and then count on additional State or local funding to be available
2. Successfully obtain new revenue from third party payors such as private health insurance or Medicaid
3. Create parent fee requirements or increase existing fee amounts

4. Hope that Congress and the President recognize the need for sustained federal funding for Part C in the post-ARRA years
5. Make changes to the way Part C programs are delivered to reduce expenditures such as by restricting eligibility

Could it get any worse? Well, believe it or not, yes! The funding cliff created by ARRA, alas, is not one that can be dismissed as a problem that is two federal fiscal years away, but is rather a "clear and present danger" for two reasons.

First, many states will soon be negotiating budgets for time periods that stretch past September 30, 2011 – the end of ARRA. Second, applications for Part C grant funding for FFY2010 are due to the U.S. De-

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The IDEA Infant and Toddler Coordinators Association is organized as a not-for-profit corporation to promote mutual assistance, cooperation and exchange of information and ideas in the administration of Part C and to provide support to state and territory Part C coordinators.

Reflections on the ITCA Annual Meeting

Peer to peer support in challenging times was the underlying theme and outcome of the 2009 Annual ITCA Business Meeting, Sunday, December 6th. It was also a time to appreciate the 10th Anniversary of our Association! We missed all those unable to attend, many who were affected by travel restrictions due to the budget cuts most states are experiencing. Check out the PowerPoint of the entire meeting, including Sharon Walsh's **Washington Update**, at our website (Association Reports): <http://www.ideainfanttoddler.org>. Here is a recap of our day together, which left us with a sense of hope and support to balance the challenges we are facing.

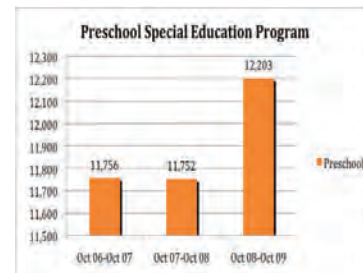
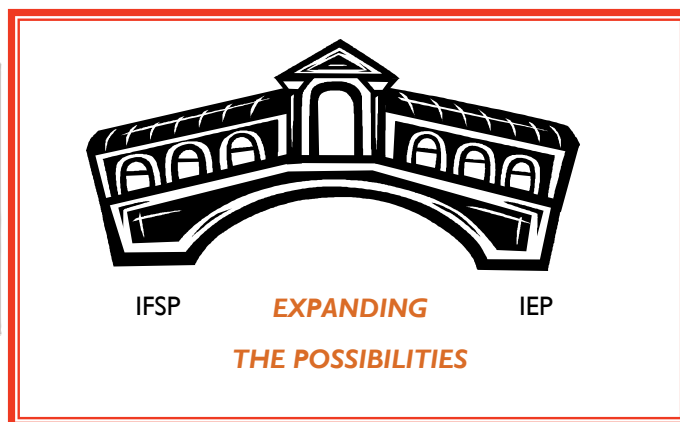
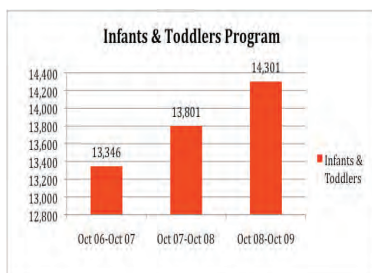
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Making Connections

Maryland's Early Childhood Intervention and Special Education System: Extended IFSP Option from Age Three to Kindergarten Age Services



The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) received \$14,382,810 through an incentive education grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) as part of the education funds provided in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). This new State incentive grant provides Maryland with the opportunity to create a seamless birth through five early childhood intervention and special education system of services for young children with disabilities and their families. The expansion of early intervention services through the Extended Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) Option allows a full continuum of services to become a reality.

Various data points were analyzed to support Maryland's decision-making process to apply for the available incentive grant funds. These included the analysis and comparison of

child and family outcome data (infants and toddlers and preschool special education population), family and parent survey response data, as well as the Maryland Model for School Readiness data, indicating a widened school readiness gap between children with typical development and children receiving preschool special education services.

[Implementation Policy Requirements](#)

Previously, under Maryland's Infants and Toddlers program model, at age three, a child and family were no longer eligible for early intervention services through an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). As of February 1, 2010, families who are currently receiving infants and toddlers services have a **choice** to access IFSP services beyond age three until the child is eligible to enter kindergarten. Under the Extended IFSP Option, Maryland has established

statewide policy implementation requirements, including:

- ◇ Families are eligible for this option if the child has a current IFSP plan **and** is determined eligible for preschool special education and related services as a child with a disability.
- ◇ Once a parent makes the choice to terminate IFSP services at age 3 or makes the choice to terminate services through the Extended IFSP Option after age 3, the child and family are no longer eligible to receive early intervention services through an IFSP.
- ◇ At any time after age three to kindergarten age, a parent may choose to terminate participation in early intervention services through an IFSP and choose to initiate preschool special education services through

an IEP.

- ◇ Parents must provide informed written consent to the State, before the child reaches 3 years of age, stating their request to continue or to terminate early intervention services through an IFSP.
- ◇ Services provided under this Option must include an educational component through special instruction that promotes school readiness and incorporates pre-literacy, language and numeracy skills.
- ◇ If a parent does not agree to the educational component through special instruction, the child and family are not eligible to receive early intervention services.

Under the Extended IFSP Option, Maryland's early childhood intervention and education system of services creates a seamless

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ITCA Meeting *continued*

One of ITCA's priorities is to establish and maintain supportive relationships among us. New coordinators in the last year (10) were welcomed and introduced. We learned more about ourselves with the newly released 2009 Survey Report, **Lead Agency, State ICC, and Family Involvement**. It provided data about state Part C staff employment status (e.g. #, funding and type of positions) and what ICC and parent involvement looks like in states/territories. All surveys are easily found at our website (Board Approved Survey button).

Working collaboratively with our partners is such a value of ITCA that we have made it a tradition to hold part of our annual meeting in conjunction with ICC members and staff. Partnerships with ICCs are critical and needed now more than ever in these fiscally challenging times. For two hours, Sharon Walsh enlightened us with her **Washington Update** and, in table discussions, participants identified fiscal issues and potential solutions that need to be addressed through collaborative efforts. Tipping point and use of ARRA funds data from another ITCA survey also showed us that many states are at critical stages in their ability to maintain a financially-sound EI system (only 4 states are known to be

fiscally operating in the black). Major concerns identified included: state budget cuts; maintenance of effort; and funding of services for increased numbers of children.

As sobering as this news was, we did take time to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of ITCA with our partners. We were treated with an inspiring and reflective video produced by Larry Edelman (University of Colorado Denver). The five minute video served as a toast to the contributions and collaborative efforts that formed the Association and shaped its early intervention advocacy for infants/toddlers and their families. The photos of the children and families that have benefited from EI services and provided state, regional and national leadership were most heartwarming.

In my opening remarks as President, it was an honor to share how we furthered our mission in 2009 and developed as an Association during our first 10 years. To set the context, we compared facts from 1999 and 2009 and had a bit of fun reminiscing with NECTAC Pat Trohanis' famous conference cartoon slides. ITCA accomplishments were framed within nine "tasks" which research identified as attributes and practices of successful leaders of social change. Using *Learning As A Way*

of Leading as a framework, we reflected on how ITCA members learned together, collaborated with partners, and led each other toward the answers and solutions that became our accomplishments. Knowing what was accomplished by a small, but top notch staff and primarily volunteer/member efforts underscored the need to remain committed to this effective Association.

We also attended to regular business: Members voted in Kim Wedel (TX) as Vice Chair and Joan Luebbers (NE) as Director at Large to the Board of Directors. We thanked outgoing Board members Terry Harrison (NJ-Past President) and Molly Dries-Bright (AZ-Director at Large) for their years of service. In other business, members approved the proposed rate increase for 2011 membership dues after Mary Ann Discenza (VA, Treasurer) provided the Board's rationale.

This will be the second due increase since the Association formed. We also heard reports from each of the Committee Chairs (Data, Finance, Legislative, and Membership) – look for their updates in this newsletter.

In closing, it was an honor and privilege to serve and support this Association during 2009. I learned that we are a community of dedicated, smart and principled people willing to do what they can to make life better for infants and toddlers and their families. During these challenging times, let's learn to "sustain hope in the face of struggle" and harness our collective strength.



Julie M. Curry

Save the Date

ITCA Annual Meeting
Sunday, August 1
8:30 — 4:30

Topical Meeting
Saturday, July 31
1:00—4:00

Making Connections

Maryland's Early Childhood System (continued)

seamless Birth-through-five model as illustrated below.

The Extended IFSP Option wraps the arms of family support around early childhood educational practices and incorporates a strong school readiness component. From February 1, 2010 to March 1, 2010, one hundred ninety-five children (who turned 3 by February 1, 2010) were determined eligible for preschool special education services; 77% of Maryland's eligible families chose to continue early intervention services through the Extended IFSP Option.

Service Delivery Model Examples

Based upon the unique features of each of Maryland's twenty-four local jurisdictions (i.e., demographics, organizational structure, resources, staffing, funding, etc.), each jurisdiction customizes the service delivery model implementing the Extended IFSP Option. While the "who," "where" and "how" may vary in each jurisdiction, the "what" remains consistent throughout the implementation process. All service models incorporate family support and training, service coordination, year round services and an educational component that promotes school readiness. Specific early intervention services are based upon the individual strengths and needs of a

child and family, and age appropriate natural environment options.

Each jurisdiction is implementing the Extended IFSP Option through the strengthening of partnerships with preschool special education (Part B), Head Start, Judy Centers, childcare providers, and/or other community private/public preschool programs in Maryland.

Process and Product

Maryland's vision creates a comprehensive, coordinated, high quality early intervention and special education system of services for infants, toddlers and young children with

disabilities and their families with full access, participation, and supports. From the onset, MSDE engaged national, state, and local early childhood experts and stakeholders in each step of the process to develop and implement the Extended IFSP Option. MSDE developed numerous resources to support the state and local implementation process, including:

◇ ***A Family Guide to Next Steps: When Your Child in Early Intervention Turns 3***

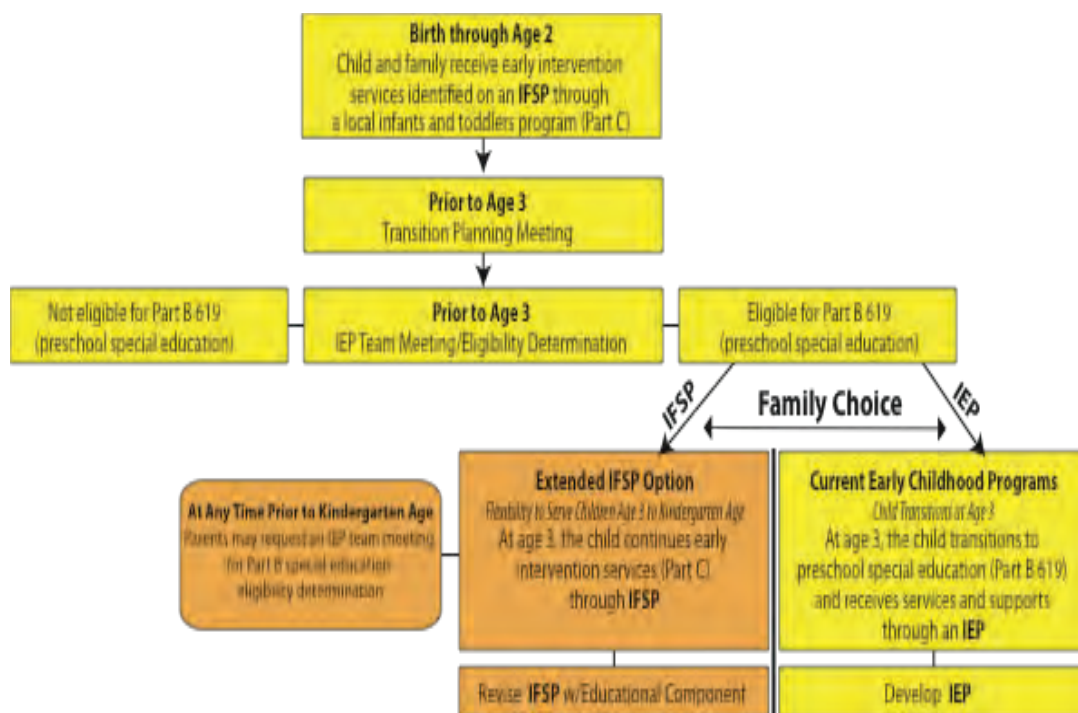
The purpose of the Guide is to support families as they engage in the decision-making process regarding

"While the WHO, WHERE & HOW may vary, the WHAT remains consistent."

the family choice to continue services through an IFSP or to transition to preschool special education services through an IEP. A visual comparison model supports families through this process.

◇ ***Monthly Statewide Implementation/ Process Meetings***

Local infants and toddlers directors, preschool special educa-



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Maryland *continued*

tion coordinators, family support coordinators, school system administrators: individual stakeholder service provider groups, and early childhood educators and providers, participated in trainings to ensure transparency and smooth implementation.

◇ **Question and Answer (Q&A) Series**

The Q&A series were developed and disseminated following monthly statewide implementation/ process meeting to address and clarify outstanding questions.

◇ **Train-the-Trainer Modules**

Train-the-Trainer Modules including Power-Point presentations, hands-on activities, presentation notes, and CDs of resources and materials were developed and disseminated to provide consistent professional development to all service providers.

◇ **Revised Web-Based IFSP**

The family-friendly document provides a periodic diagnostic prescriptive report with built in progress monitoring of individual child/family outcomes; generates pre-defined

and dynamic reports to assist early childhood staff in fiscal, programmatic, and personnel decision-making.

Next Steps

STEP ONE:

Conduct a program evaluation comparing Maryland's IFSP and IEP service models. This analysis will include: family choice (number of children and families served under the Extended IFSP Option), program cost, child outcomes, family outcomes, and natural environment/ least restrictive environment.

STEP TWO:

Create a broad, diverse stakeholder task force. This

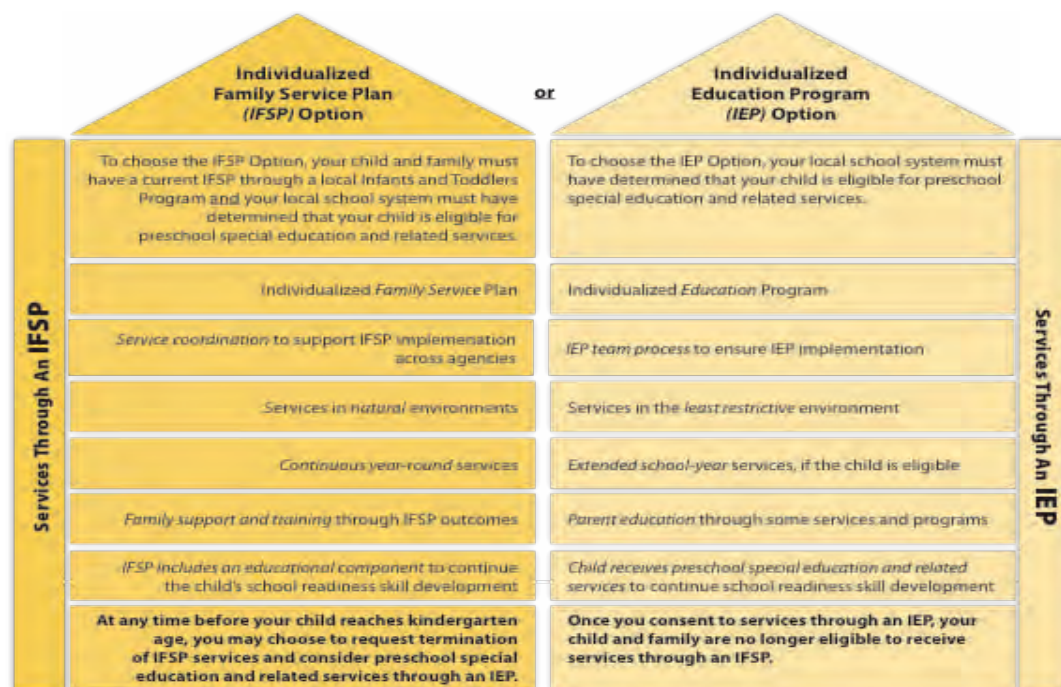
task force will be commissioned to:

- ◇ Address local fiscal, programmatic and personnel challenges;
- ◇ Study the information gathered through the program evaluation;
- ◇ Recommend individual child and family, local, and State strategies to strengthen Maryland's Birth through Five System of Services; and
- ◇ Identify short and long term sustainability measures to support the Birth through Five System of Services beyond the ARRA grant period.

Maryland remains dedicated to building a birth through five system of services for infants, toddlers and preschool children with disabili-

ties and their families. The Extended IFSP Option provides the perfect opportunity to create a comprehensive, coordinated early childhood service model. If there is a need for additional information, please contact Marcella Franczkowski, Branch Chief for the Early Childhood Intervention and Education Branch, the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services, Maryland State Department of Education at (410) 767-0261 or email dmichae@msde.state.md.us.

This article was produced March 2010 by the **Maryland State Department of Education**, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services Early Childhood Intervention and Education Branch



Making Connections

Data Committee

The Data Committee has established the 2010 work plan with the following charges:

- ◇ Review the Transition FAQ and comments from the Legislative Committee, in order to provide comments regarding potential data gathering implications as a result of the FAQ;
- ◇ Provide suggested criteria for comparing states by eligibility type when reporting ITCA survey responses. Some Association members had indicated a desire to continue to provide data comparisons based on eligibility status and since OSEP is no longer providing a state list with eligibility status, the data committee will make recommendations for criteria to continue the Broad, Moderate and Narrow categories.
- ◇ Review ITCA surveys and make recommendations for any needed language changes prior to second distribution. To date the committee has reviewed the Natural Environments survey.
- ◇ Gather input and make recommendations if appropriate regarding consistency of SPP/APR technical assistance available to states. Consider potential input for any future changes to the SPP/APR Indicator language.

The committee wants to thank all states that take the time to respond to our organization's surveys. It

is important to have data from as many states as possible.

The committee's membership currently includes representatives from 17 states. If you are interested in participating on the committee, please contact the ITCA office or Pam Roush, WV the co-chair of the Data Committee with Alice Ridgway, CT.

President's Letter *continued*

partment of Education next month and many states are grappling with whether they are able to provide an assurance that federal Part C funds will be used to supplement and not supplant State and local funds.

This finer point is one that may be lost on some, but Part C coordinators know this issue well as "MOE" - which stands for maintenance of effort. One of the requirements of federal Part C grant funding is that each grantee must assure that the *total amount* of State and local expenditures for the program are maintained from year to year. For states struggling to maintain the level of State and local funding for the program, and this would be especially difficult if all of your Part C ARRA funds were used to balance a severe State budget defi-

cit, the submission of this application is a major source of concern. I would encourage any of you with this concern to communicate closely with ITCA and above all, submit your application for Part C grant funding, even if you have to check "No" for the MOE assurance.

So, what is ITCA doing to support its members during this challenging time? Educating anyone who will listen that while ARRA provided Part C with a wonderful bolus of funding that is being used to support activities that will make longstanding improvements across the nation; it also has demonstrated and in some cases masked how fragile the system of financing is for Part C in many states.

Several ITCA Board members recently had a discussion with Ruth Ryder and staff of MSIP to share frank concerns about the variability in interpretation and understanding of MOE. During this discussion, ITCA impressed upon OSEP that MOE should not be interpreted in such a way that it becomes an impediment to states' efforts to meet the IDEA Part C objective to maximize third party contributions from Medicaid and private insurance.

The committees of ITCA are more active than ever. All have updates in this newsletter and I encourage you to join a committee if you are not already a part of one. Members need not be Part Coordinators, but can also include other state Part C staff.

The reauthorization of IDEA is in the queue behind several other important federal education programs, but discussions may begin as early as the fall of 2010. Now more than ever, your membership and *active* participation in ITCA is vital!

Many of you may be familiar with the Chinese proverb/curse, "May you live in interesting times." According to Wikipedia, this is the first of three Chinese curses of increasing severity, the other two being "May you come to the attention of those in authority" and "May you find what you are looking for." They sound very relevant and appropriate for Part C coordinators in 2010. I'm just not sure whether they will play out as curses or wishes - we'll see!

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Legislative Committee

The Legislative Committee is 13 ITCA members strong and has been having a conference call every month, typically the fourth Monday of the month. Our agenda for the year is to address the following:

- ◇ Transition FAQ issued by OSEP – assess whether the document may be exceeding statutory/regulatory authority and provide feedback to OSEP.
- ◇ Maintenance of Effort – begin to draft proposed

changes to the next IDEA reauthorization and, if necessary, look to adding language to any other piece of legislation prior to reauthorization if some states are faced with extreme hardship that would prevent them from submitting their next grant application.

- ◇ Early Learning Challenge Grants – monitor congressional activity and respond if necessary
- ◇ Part C regulations – monitor process of adopting the Part C

regulations and attempt to review the final proposed regulations prior to the August leadership meeting.

- ◇ IDEA Reauthorization – develop a plan to identify issues that the membership wants to move forward for inclusion in the legislative package.
- ◇ Monitor legislation – continue to monitor all early childhood or special education legislation as it might impact Part C

Linda Goodman, CT
Chair

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee has continued with its work in attempting to identify levels and sources of funding for individual states through a recently completed finance survey. Maureen Greer prepared the survey and has documented its finding for the Committee which is providing final comment prior to submission to the Board. Additional activities have focused on the creation of a funding document that will ultimately make recommendations to the ITCA Board, OSEP and Congress regarding

the Part C allocation formula and potential for changing same in the next reauthorization of the IDEA Part C (projected in 2010-11). The Committee has continued to analyze a number of potential alternative allocation scenarios and will soon present its recommendation to the ITCA Board and ultimately to the broader ITCA membership for review and comment. It is the hope of the Finance Committee that this document can be used in efforts to positively impact federal budgetary and appropriation decisions and to engage state level stakeholders to become more actively

engaged in federal Part C issues.

The Finance Committee is active and through monthly calls member states have the opportunity to dialogue with both Maureen Greer and Sharon Walsh and share common fiscal strategies and challenges. Please contact your Co-Chairs Rick Ingraham, Part C Coordinator from California or Ron Benham, Part C Coordinator from Massachusetts, if you are interested in participating. Rick can be reached at 916-654-2773 and Ron at 617-624-5901.

Leadership Services Committee

The Leadership Services Committee is focusing on two major areas for 2010:

1. Social and Emotional Development webinar series; and
2. New Coordinator Mentorship.

The webinar series (dates TBA) will include:

- ◇ Overview of SE development and its impact on development--Deb Perry;
- ◇ Screening and Assessment

for Social and Emotional – Jane Squires; and

- ◇ Integrating Social and Emotional work (Pyramid model) into Early care and learning settings--A systems approach-- Tiffany Smith-Birk

Jill Giacomini from CSEFEL/TACSEI is providing support for the development of these webinars. We hope to have them ready for dissemination in May with follow up calls by presenters in May and June so folks can ask questions after having seen and re-

viewed the materials.

Ardith Ferguson is coordinating the Mentorship Program for ITCA. Conference calls were held with the new coordinators to identify interest in a mentor. The committee plans to review this program in 2010 for any changes needed to improve the experience for new coordinators.

Erin Kinavey, AK
Chair

2009 ITCA National Award Recipients



Trohanis Leadership Award
Recipient: Ron Benham,
Massachusetts

As so fitting to this award's name sake, the **2009 Trohanis Leadership Award** was presented to an individual whose leadership in Part C from its inception in 1986, is widely recognized by colleagues at the national, state and community level. ITCA was pleased to present this award to our friend and colleague Ron Benham in recognition of his years of leadership on behalf of young children with disabilities and their families.

Ron's skills as a community organizer and his vision of a professional organization that could effectively represent state Part C systems and advocate on behalf of very young children with disabilities and their families resulted in the establishment of ITCA. As a founding member of the ITCA, Ron led the Association as a member of the Board of Directors from 1998 until 2008, serving as president in 2007.



National Parent Leadership
Award Recipient: Nancy
Peeler, Michigan

Nancy Peeler from the State of Michigan is the 2009 recipient of the ITCA National Parent Leadership Award. Nancy began her journey through early intervention with the birth of her daughters who both participated in early intervention, one in Massachusetts and the other in Michigan. Nancy took a leadership role in the Massachusetts early intervention system early in her EI experience as the Parent Advisory Council member for her early intervention program and then continuing to the Dedham, MA early childhood advisory council .

When Nancy moved to Michigan she continued the path to parent leadership as a regional family field consultant and an *Early On* parent partner with the Department of Community Health. As her children moved into different systems her involvement within those systems grew.

Nancy is one of the founding members of the Early Intervention Family Alliance and continues to go above and beyond for families across the country.

2009 ITCA Regional Family Leadership Award Recipients



Sally Sloop, North Carolina

Sally became an advocate for her son from the time she realized that his development was not proceeding as expected; she immediately began educating herself about the Early Intervention System and about her rights and responsibilities as the parent of a child with special needs. From advocating for her son and helping professionals to understand the realities of having a child with special needs, Sally moved into advocacy and systems change through her teaching and training activities.

From 1996 to 1999, and again from 2004 until her retirement in 2009, Sally was the Statewide Parent-to-Parent Project Coordinator at the Family Support Network at UNC Chapel Hill. In that role, she has been instrumental in building a network of support for families with children who have special needs, and coordinated the development of an affiliation process to establish a standard of quality for parent-to-parent programs across the state.



Michelle Lewis, New Hampshire

Michelle was appointed by the Governor to the ICC in 2005 as a parent representative. Michelle has energetically pursued increasing parent representation on the ICC, She always ensures that the parent perspective is represented at all meetings, and in any documents prepared by the ICC, especially when other parents were not able to attend.

Under Michelle's leadership the family outcome workgroup developed a series of outcome statements that formed the basis

of the NH Part C Family Outcome Survey (FOS) and assisted the National Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO) in their work to develop an FOS. This work was then offered as a model that other states could then consider using.

In addition to leading the work group, Michelle led the development of a method of increasing parent involvement through long distance participation.



Kurt Kondrich, Pennsylvania

Kurt is the Chair of Pennsylvania's State Interagency Coordinating Council. Kurt was actively recruited to be the Chair after witnessing his talents as a parent advocate for this council over the last few years. In addition, Kurt has contacted every legislator personally to let them know how much he appreciates the opportunities that have been afforded to his daughter. He shares pictures of her kindergarten graduation and stresses that Early Intervention is part of a larger early childhood system and that the successes of his daughter were totally dependent on the strength of Pennsylvania's early childhood system.

He talks about how quality early childhood educational programs have to be in place for children to be have successful inclusion opportunities.

"People continue to stop and listen to Mr. Kondrich because he has demonstrated the importance of Early Intervention by empowering the legislators with facts that prove not only is it fiscally responsible to support this program but it is their social responsibility." - Maureen Cronin, PA Part C Coordinator

New Mexico Extended Part C Option

The New Mexico Department of Health, Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program (Part C) was one of two states, along with Maryland, that received American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding through a State Incentive Grant (SIG) from the US Office of Special Education Programs.

New Mexico was in a somewhat unique position in that parents already had the choice to continue in the FIT Program until the beginning of the next school year following their child's third birthday, or to transition at the beginning of the school year in which they turn three. This parent choice regarding when transition would occur for their child and family was added to the New Mexico State Statute in 1994.

The SIG-ARRA funding, for the first time, provided fed-

eral funding for early intervention services for children over the age of 3, whose parent(s) choose for them to remain in the FIT Program. This option is now being referred to as the "Extended Part C Option". In order to draw down these SIG-ARRA funds the child must be over the age of 3 and have been determined eligible for IDEA Part B Preschool Special Education.

The application for the SIG included policies and procedures that were jointly developed with the New Mexico Public Education Department (NM-PED). The process of developing these policies and procedures also helped the two state agencies define the process and requirements for the Part C to Part B preschool transition. The collaboration with NM-PED also resulted in the following materials being devel-

oped for the Extended Part C Option and the transition process in general:

- Guidance Document;
- New forms;
- Revised IFSP;
- Flow chart;
- FAQs;

Side-by-comparison of Part C and Part B preschool for parents

The implementation date for the Extended Part C Option was December 01st 2009, which was the date submitted in our SIG application. Prior to implementation training was provided to community transition teams (including FIT providers; LEAs; Head Starts and other early care and education providers) across the state and to all Service Coordinators. In addition to the in-person training an online module

was developed and a webinar provided.

One requirement of the SIG that is outlined in the IDEA 2004 Statute is that the Extended Part C Option must include a Preschool readiness component that addresses preliteracy, language, and numeracy skills. The FIT Program now requires that the IFSP be revised to include outcomes and /or strategies that address preschool readiness for all children served under the Extended Part C Option. Resources regarding preschool readiness have been distributed to FIT Providers and online training is being developed to help developmental specialists and other early intervention personnel think about how to integrate preschool readiness activities into every routines activities and places.

Additionally, the FIT Program had to modify its web based data and billing system to generate claims for children under the Extended Part C Option i.e. who are over age 3 and who were checked as having been determined eligible for Part B.

For more information about the extended Part C Option and to view or download materials please go to either <http://cdd.unm.edu/ecspd/Transition/about.asp> or www.fitprogram.org under "For Providers" and "Transition".

Andy Gomm, NM
Part C Coordinator

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