



# IDEA INFANT & TODDLER

COORDINATORS ASSOCIATION

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

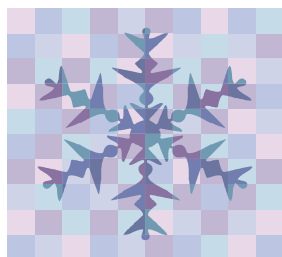
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Dear ITCA members:

I am very pleased and honored to be the President of the IDEA Infant Toddler Coordinators Association (ITCA) at such an exciting time in the Association's history. The ITCA has come a long way in its short 6 year history. The Association has grown developmentally from a modest core group of states – to an Association with 43 member States and territories that is truly listened to in Washington. We are no longer a toddler organization but are starting to walk with the other national organizations who are advocating for early childhood, disability and health issues.

approaching, our Infant Toddler Coordinators Association has much to be grateful for in the strength of its membership.

Let me tell you a little about myself. Those of you I have met during my six years with the New Mexico Family Infant Toddler Program probably know that I'm originally from London, England. I moved to the United States in 1989 after completing my Masters degree in Social Work. While in the United Kingdom, I worked with individuals with developmental disabilities, including integrating folks from a huge institution into the community. While in the United States I have worked with people with Autism Spectrum Disorders and their families in New York State and coordinated disability services (including early intervention) on the Navajo Nation and with the Hopi tribe for the State of Arizona. In my role as Part C

Coordinator for New Mexico I remain committed to the values of relationship based and family centered practice and to promoting learning that occurs within everyday routines, activities and places.

Over the past year, ITCA's voice has really been heard in Washington. National organizations often turn to the ITCA for our endorsement of positions and Congressional staff seek our input on early childhood issues. The ITCA board and staff have worked hard over the past year on the reauthorization of IDEA to promote language that would be positive for State Part C systems. As in any legislative process, we were able to get some of what we advocated for and not others.

We have a busy year ahead. Now that IDEA has been reauthorized it's time to make sure the regula-

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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.



## Legislative Committee Update

The Infant Toddler Coordinators Association's Legislative Committee continues its monthly conference calls with a focus on legislative matters, then provides advice and guidance to the Board of Directors. The most recent calls have focused on reauthorization of the IDEA (now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 or IDEIA). **Recapping for newsletter readers, the IDEIA was reauthorized by Congress in November of 2004 and signed into law by President Bush on December 3, 2004. The law is identified as P.L. 108-446.**

Following reauthorization the Legislative Committee has specifically discussed the need to prepare for the regulatory process that will accompany the IDEIA. The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services within the federal Department of Education is presently seeking comments and recommendations on regulatory issues under the re-authorized IDEIA prior to developing and publishing proposed regulations.

The Legislative Committee has also recommended to the Board of Directors that a review be undertaken of prior work done by member states in this area believing significant and useful work has already occurred and could provide a positive framework for further input. Member states should be receiving pre-

regulatory materials shortly from ITCA and will be asked to provide timely feedback. Additional comments will be sought at the Annual Part C Conference in February. Comments are due to the Department of Education by February 28, 2005.

Additional attention by the Legislative Committee has been devoted to discussion of the federal allocation of Part C funds and how this has impacted, in many cases negatively, member states. This issue has also been brought to the attention of the Board of Directors and clarification of allo-

## President's Letter (continued)

-tions reflect the interest of the Part C community and are as clear as possible. We are also hoping that the regulations may be a vehicle for addressing the State Allocation process. The ITCA will also be working hard to encourage Congress to increase the Part C appropriation, especially in light of increasing federal mandates. We will need the help of individual states in informing Congress of the funding needs that States face in implementing quality state systems for early intervention services and the need for an increased federal appropriation. advocating that no Medicaid caps be established and no cuts at the Federal level be made to this important funding source for early intervention.

Building on our strong

cation formulas has been sought and received by the ITCA from the Office of Special Education Programs.

The Legislative Committee is continuously looking for members of this committee.

Committee members have the opportunity through monthly call to dialogue with Sharon Walsh, ITCA's Legislative Liaison. Please contact Ron Benham, Part C Coordinator in Massachusetts, if you are interested in participating. Ron can be reached at 617-624-5962 or e-mail at [ron.benham@state.ma.us](mailto:ron.benham@state.ma.us).

working relationship with OSEP, the ITCA will also advocate that State reporting requirements, including Annual Performance Reports (APRs), Performance Plans and increased data – including child and family outcome measurement – are not overly burdensome for States.

Finally, the ITCA will be issuing a Position Paper that looks at the relationship between Infant Mental Health and IDEA Part C and how states can both promote IMH approaches within their early intervention systems and link to mental health systems in promoting healthy social and emotional growth of eligible children.

I look forward to talking to many of you at the ITCA

## Mentorship Program

*Do you remember what it was like to be a new Part C Coordinator? The confusion! All the information to learn!! And no one to help make sense of it all! Don't forget that ITCA Mentorship Program exists to support new Part C Coordinators by linking them with a "veteran" Part C Coordinator. ITCA believes that mentoring will lead to greater retention of Coordinators and promote of a sense of community across states and Part C personnel. If you would like to volunteer to be a mentor or would like to request a mentor, contact Stephanie Moss at [skmoss@dhrr.state.ga.us](mailto:skmoss@dhrr.state.ga.us) or 404-657-2721.*

Annual Meeting on Feb 06<sup>th</sup> and encourage you to contact me, other board members or staff if there are issues that you would like the Association to address or if there are ways the Association can support you as a Part C Coordinator

Thanks!

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ITCA President

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## ITCA Leadership Awards

The Parent Leadership award is designed to acknowledge a parent of a child with or at risk for a disability or developmental delay who has displayed outstanding leadership in Part C issues that has made a significant difference to the Part C program in his or her state. This year the award will be presented to two outstanding individuals at the annual ITCA meeting.

### **Denise Arland—Indiana**

Denise is the mother of five boys, four of whom are quadruplets and received early intervention services. She served as the chair of Indiana's ICC for five years. Additional roles with the ICC included vice chair and chair person of several other committees and initiatives.

She is the founder of Families United for Support and Encouragement, a private nonprofit group that has served as a model for other support groups across the state. She is also one of the founding team members of Indiana's Family to Family initiative - a statewide project that promotes family involvement and support for parents of children with special needs. She has participated as a trainer in a wide variety of staff development activities for parents and professionals across the state. Other examples of active involvement include partici-

pation in Indiana's transition initiative where she works with a variety of community agencies to ensure that transition is a positive experience.

Perhaps her greatest accomplishment is the extent to which her children are involved in their community. They attend public schools and participate fully in general education programs, extracurricular activities, and community events. Colleagues consistently describe her in the most positive terms. In the words of Lanier DeGrella, Indiana's Part C Coordinator, "Looking back on my first year as Part C Coordinator, I can't imagine what it would have been like without Denise's support and knowledge. She provided leadership for many aspects of our state system with quiet determination during times of major changes. She is one of the most amazing people I have had the pleasure to work with"

### **Cassie Johnston—Washington**

Cassie's activities have had a positive impact on early intervention at the local, state, and national levels. In her capacity as Parent Participation Coordinator for the Washington State Early intervention system, Cassie has recruited, trained and mentored parents from communities all across the

Personnel and Training Committee, Family Leadership Team, and their Public Policy Committee. She has taken the lead in planning state and local ICC "Conversations with Families" in order to assure that family voices are heard in relation to the early intervention service systems. She also was instrumental in working with the state early intervention program and the ARC of Washington to plan and implement Family to Family gatherings. These were designed to reach out to underserved minority, rural, and diverse families.

Cassie manages the parent scholarship program at their annual Infant and Early Childhood conference, the largest of the Early childhood training events in the state. She was a member of the first Washington team to participate in the national Parent Leadership Initiative. In this capacity she envisioned and implemented their state ICC Family Leadership Team model of parent participation in early intervention planning. She's presenting this approach at the national parent ICC conference this year.

Significantly, Cassie's nomination came from both the Part C and 619 Coordinators. They state "she is a warm, witty and fun person who makes working together exciting for all. She inspires many

### Renewing Members

Thanks to the following states and territories who have renewed their membership for 2005 as of January 21:

- Arizona
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- District of Columbia
- Georgia
- Idaho
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Mississippi
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Mexico
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Puerto Rico
- Utah
- Vermont
- Virgin Islands
- Washington
- Wyoming

Two states have joined the Association for the first time:

- :
- Maine
- Virginia

people with her commitment to families and parent leadership. She is a true collaborator and advocate for families."

## Medicaid Technical Assistance Paper

The Association is pleased to announce that after a successful procurement process, an agreement has been reached with Solutions Consulting Group to provide a technical assistance paper on Medicaid options for financing early intervention services.

As states struggle with current fiscal crises, there is increasing interest in strategies to maximize all available funding sources. Many state early intervention systems already benefit from Medicaid as a significant financial resource. States have accessed Medicaid reimbursement with a variety of approaches: as a fee for service payment source, to support administrative costs for access to early intervention services, and to support comprehensive waivers that cover early intervention services for all eligible children. Ongoing limited financial resources are compelling more states to investigate the use of or the expansion of Medicaid as a method to maximize limited state resources.

The paper will address the following issues:

- Researching Medicaid as a funding source for state early intervention systems;
- Evaluating the allowances and features of each Medicaid reimbursement mechanism available to states;
- Evaluating the potential costs and benefits (pros and cons) for each method of reimbursement; and
- Highlighting or featuring successful state experiences in maximizing the use of Medicaid to reimburse costs for early intervention.

The paper is expected to be ready for distribution in the spring.

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