



IDEA

INFANT & TODDLER

COORDINATORS ASSOCIATION

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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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.

In thinking about how to engage you with my first ITCA President's letter, I've needed to remind myself that I will likely appear before you only once in my new role at our next December 2007 National OSEP meeting. Accordingly, much of my tenure will be focused on seeking to provide leadership through written responses to federal and state issues, including the hoped for new IDEA Part C regulations.

As I look forward through the remainder of 2007, I see many ongoing challenges which impact us as a community. A few of these include growth in the number of children served, funding levels insufficient to meet the demand, shortages of personnel in a number of disciplines and responding to the new regulations, as appropriate.

At the same time I take comfort in the enormous

talent and commitment that each of you and your colleagues bring to these challenges. Equally, I am convinced that with your support and advocacy, this organization will continue its strong leadership role in improving the lives of infants and toddlers with developmental delays and their families.

It is very important that each of you remember and celebrate the growth in the numbers of children served in Part C. From 1999 to 2005, the numbers of infants and toddlers served has increased from 188,926 to 293,816 reflecting a 55% increase.

Unfortunately, increases in funding, particularly federal funding, have not kept pace with this growth. This remains one of our greater challenges.

Great challenges and great opportunity await us. Historically as an

organization, you have had the benefit of thoughtful, intelligent and committed leadership. Those providing administrative and legislative support are of kindred spirit and enormous talent. It is my honor and pleasure to serve as your Board President.

Let us continue our work; infants, toddlers and families deserve no less.

Ron Benham
President

Draft Part C Regulations to be released soon

See Page 3 for Details



CADRE Supports Part C Dispute Resolution

CADRE, The National Center on Dispute Resolution, remains interested in supporting the design and delivery of dispute resolution services in State Part C systems. One of CADRE's most successful Part B initiatives has been a restricted listserv that connects State Dispute Resolution Coordinators (DRCs), providing an opportunity for informal communication and resource sharing among individuals with similar responsibility. Participation on the listserv is limited to the individual designated by their state and CADRE staff that

follow the postings to better understand issues and concerns that are shared. Because the "general public" and federal officials are not subscribed, DRCs feel comfortable asking questions, disclosing concerns, and sharing strengths and successes as they proceed to improve and enhance their dispute resolution system. On the Part B list, it is common for a DRC to hear back from 15 or 20 other states within 72 hours of posting a question or concern. Listserv participation has been prudent and

respectful, recognizing the demanding workloads and busy schedules of all on the list, and the and the listserv is utilized in a way that is constructive and meaningful to the participants.

CADRE has subscribed PART C staff to their own listserv in the past but the listserv has not been well used. In order to ensure accurate representation on the listserv, CADRE would like to get an updated designee name from states. CADRE understands that some DRCs

may want to add the director of an organization that they contract with (to provide mediation services in their state). This information, or questions related to the listserv, should be directed to Philip Moses, CADRE's Assistant Director, at pmoses@directionservice.org or by calling 541-686-5060.

<http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/>

Legislative Committee Update

The Legislative Committee has continued its focus on the creation of a funding document that will ultimately make recommendations to OSEP and Congress regarding the allocation formula and potential for making changes in the formula in the next reauthorization of the IDEA Part C (projected in 2009). For the past several months, the Committee has analyzed a number of potential alternative allocation scenarios and will soon present its recommendation to the Board and ultimately to the ITCA membership for review and comment. It is the hope of the Legislative Committee that this document will 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 Legislative Committee is very active and through monthly calls, member states have the opportunity to dialogue with Sharon Walsh, ITCA's Legislative Liaison. Please contact your new Co-Chairs Debbie Cheatham, Part C Coordinator from Ohio or Linda Goodman, Part C Coordinator from Connecticut, if you are interested in participating. Debbie can be reached at 614-644-9164 and Linda at 860-418-6147. The Legislative Committee is continuously looking for new members and holds 8-10 phone lines open for each monthly call. Please notify the office if you wish to be added to the Committee membership list.

Data Committee

ITCA has established a data committee to examine national policies and reporting requirements that affect the data gathering capacities of states. The committee will focus on the Association's strategic goal to *"Advocate for and facilitate the collection, use and dissemination of consistent credible national data."*

The committee will also review the national survey database that is maintained by the Association for duplication and efficacy.

If you are interested in participating on this committee, please contact the ITCA office or Terry Harrison who is chairing the committee. The committee meets by conference call on a quarterly basis.



Parent Voice Loud and Strong for IDEA Part C

For some time policy-makers and families alike have been worried that there has been an erosion of family involvement in the development of policies related to Part C of IDEA (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). From the beginning, Part C has emphasized the importance of family involvement at all levels of implementation. In April of 2006, a group of parent leaders active in Part C policy-making and implementation, began to formulate a plan to create a family-centered group that would unite early intervention parent lead-

ers throughout the country. In less than one year, that plan has been realized. The founding members of **Early Intervention Family Alliance** (EIFA) have worked diligently and purposefully to ensure a strong foundation. It is EIFA's mission to improve outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, by working to assure meaningful family involvement in the development of Part C policies and their implementation at community, state and federal levels.

Today EIFA has a core mission and guiding principles, bylaws and a Board of Directors. EIFA received early support and guidance from a number of individuals and organizations. At this time, the Infant Toddler Coordinators Association (ITCA) has graciously offered to provide EIFA with the institutional support necessary to move forward.

EIFA's first priority is to ensure quality outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. EIFA believes that this is best accomplished by assuring meaningful participation

by families in policymaking that affects infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. EIFA looks forward to the release of the proposed IDEA 2004 Part C regulations. EIFA's Positions Work Group will develop a coordinated plan to insure that families are represented in all testimony and hearing opportunities.

To keep apprised of EIFA efforts, to receive updates and membership information send an email to info@eifamilyalliance.org. EIFA looks forward to collaborating with other concerned partners in the early intervention community.

Draft Part C Regulations Coming Soon

According to OSEP staff, the draft of the Part C federal regulations has recently been approved for publication by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The draft regulations had been under review at OMB since mid January of this year.

It is expected that the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) will be published in the Federal Register sometime in the next few weeks. Sometimes OSERS makes unofficial copies of the package on the OSERS website before the official publication date. It is not clear if this will occur for the Part C NPRM.

Once the NPRM is published in the Federal Register, there will be a 75 calendar day public comment period and public hearings will be held across the country. It is expected the hearings will occur in early to mid June. Possible cities under consideration by OSERS are Washington DC, Atlanta, Kansas City and San Francisco.

ITCA is already planning conference calls to assist member states in reviewing and developing comments, collaborative work with other associations to respond to the NPRM, and participation in the public hearings and written comments process.

Recommended Practices—There's Something You Should Know

What are Recommended Practices? More than 15 years ago, the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children launched an important initiative to provide guidance on the early intervention and early childhood special education practices that work. Now known as the *DEC Recommended Practices*, this set of 240 practices has evolved into a comprehensive tool to guide service delivery for children with disabilities from infancy through age five. The practices cover seven strands: assessment; child-focused interventions; family-based practices; interdisciplinary models; policies, procedures and systems

change; technology applications; and personnel preparation.

How are they being used? RP identify practices that are effective and they represent both research and professional wisdom. As a result, *DEC's Recommended Practices* support excellence in service delivery by informing practitioners about what works and by providing a higher level of accountability. Practitioners use recommended practices to refine and improve their own work with children and families.

Administrators use them to form a framework for professional development and to improve the quality of services.

In personnel preparation programs around the country, faculty members use these practices to form a framework to prepare those entering the field to work in early intervention programs and early childhood special education settings.

Part C Coordinators are in a unique position to link *DEC's Recommended Practices* to high quality early intervention services. DEC is pleased to offer a number of resources to help you gain a better understanding of the practices and how they can be a useful tool to support quality services in your state.

Want to see a copy of the practices? Order your complimentary **review copy** today.

Check out the recommended practices **resources** available from DEC including the comprehensive guide, workbook, and ever-popular toolkit CD. All are available at www.dec-sped.org.

Interested in **training** on Recommended Practices? DEC has a number of excellent trainers who are available to conduct Practice Institutes, full-day workshops, or conference sessions in your state (nominal fees apply).

Contact Sarah Mulligan, Executive Director of DEC at 406-543-0872 ext 224 or at sarah.mulligan@dec-sped.org for more information.

2007 ITCA Members

The following states and territories have submitted their dues for 2007. The number of

- Alaska (6)
- American Samoa (7)
- Arizona (7)
- Colorado (4)
- Connecticut (7)
- Delaware (7)
- District of Columbia (4)
- Florida (5)
- Georgia (7)
- Guam (6)
- Hawaii (7)
- Idaho (7)
- Illinois (6)
- Indiana (7)
- Iowa (6)
- Kansas (7)
- Louisiana (5)
- Maine (3)
- Massachusetts (7)
- Michigan (2)
- Minnesota (2)
- Mississippi (7)
- Missouri (5)
- Nevada (6)
- New Hampshire (7)
- New Jersey (7)
- New Mexico (7)
- New York (4)
- North Carolina (7)
- North Dakota (7)
- Northern Marianas (6)
- Ohio (6)
- Oklahoma (7)
- Rhode Island (6)
- South Dakota (3)
- Tennessee (5)
- Texas (7)
- Utah (7)
- Virgin Islands (4)
- Virginia (3)
- Washington (7)
- Vermont (7)
- West Virginia (5)
- Wisconsin (6)
- Wyoming (3)

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