



# 2015 ITCA Annual Report

## 2015 Board of Directors

**President:**

Ardith Ferguson (CO) 1/15-9/15  
James Coyle (PA) 10/15-12/15

**Vice President/President Elect:**

Sherry Franklin (NC)

**Secretary/Treasurer:**

Ron Benham (MA)

**Directors at Large:**

Amanda Carlson (ND)  
Brenda Sharp (LA)  
James Coyle (PA)

**Past President**

Donna Noyes (NY)

**Staff:**

Maureen Greer, Executive Director  
Sharon Walsh, Governmental Liaison

## Message from the President

Dear Members:

It is my pleasure to submit the 2015 Annual Report of the IDEA-Infant-Toddler Coordinators Association to our members. ITCA is a not-for-profit corporation organized to “promote mutual assistance, cooperation and exchange of information and ideas in the administration of Part C.” In 2015, our organization continued its focus on three key areas:

- Representation of the state and territory infant and toddler early intervention programs;
- Development of policies and practice that promote quality services; and
- Support for new and continuing early intervention leaders.

As Part C coordinators, all members benefit from the ongoing exchange of questions and ideas through our emailed conversations about eligibility, intervention practices, fiscal issues, medical assistance and many other topics. Many of us participated in the excellent professional development webinars and pored over the annual Tipping Points Survey to reflect on national and local trends in early intervention. *(See page eight)*



## Inside this issue:

Meetings and Presentations	3
Initiatives and Collaborations	4
Surveys and Reports	6
Annual Meeting	7
Federal Agency Connections	7

## Response to Federal Notices/Public Comment

The US Departments of Education-HHS issued a **joint policy statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs**. ITCA was pleased to be asked by OSEP to attend an input meeting and respond to some general questions specific to the development of the posi-

tion statement in January 2015. In addition, the committee drafted and submitted comments to the position statement when it was released for public comment. The final version was published in October.

In May, 2015, the committee responded to a **Head**

**Start White Paper**” from the US House Committee on Education and the Workforce. The purpose of the White Paper was to provide feedback on ways to strengthen the Head Start program.

In June, 2015, the Administration for Children and

## Response to Federal Notices/Public Comment (continued)

Families issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to update the **Head Start Program Performance Standards**—Due to the complexity of the NPRM, the committee hosted a discussion with membership at the July ITCA membership meeting and prepared/submitted comments on the Head Start NPRM in August, 2015.

comments on the Head Start NPRM in September, 2015.

The Committee monitored the activities related to the re-authorization of ESEA which passed in December and is titled **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**. The committee will continue to watch for the development of the proposed rules and any potential impact on Part C.



## 2015 ITCA Awards

At the ITCA annual meeting, the Trohanis Leadership Award was presented to Dr. Bonnie Strickland and the Family Leadership Award was presented to Barb Schinderle.

**The Trohanis Public Service Leadership Award**, named after Pascal Trohanis, has only been awarded on two previous occasions. It is reserved for out-

standing, long-term achievement on behalf of children.

Dr. Strickland’s career with special needs populations began as a special education teacher and led to a Ph.D. in special education. In the mid-1980s, she was recruited to the Department of Defense Dependent Schools to direct implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in special education programs for children of military personnel serving overseas. Upon returning to the United States, Strickland spent four years in academia before making her way to the Maternal Child Health Bureau (MCHB), where she led multiple Division programs before becoming the director of the Division of Services for Children with Special Health Care Needs in 2006.

As director of the Division of Services for Children with Special Health Care Needs, Bonnie



Barb Schinderle and husband

and her staff worked diligently to improve the system of services for children and youth with special health care needs through leadership, partnership, and grant-making.

**The National Parent Leadership Award** is given to acknowledge outstanding state and national parent leadership on behalf of the Part C program for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities and their families. Barb has been involved with advocacy at the local, state, and national level to include changes to public policy that



Dr. Bonnie Strickland with Ron Benham

## Meetings and Presentations

### **Division for Early Childhood Presentation**

*“Use of Diagnosed Conditions for Part C Early Intervention (EI) Service Eligibility” – Presentation at the Division for Early Childhood’s (DEC) 31<sup>st</sup> Annual International Conference on Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families, October 9, 2015, Atlanta, GA*

ITCA was pleased to have the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from the Centers for Disease Control National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (CDC-NCBDDD), Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, Center on Human Development, the University of Oregon-Eugene, and Office of Special Education Programs to submit a proposal to DEC for a panel presentation to discuss the use of diagnosed conditions with a high probability of resulting in developmental delay in eligibility determinations for state Part C early intervention programs. The proposal was accepted, and on October 9, 2015, Donna Noyes, Past President of ITCA, joined Brian Barger (representing CDC), Jane Squires (University of Oregon) and Priscilla Irvine (Office of Special Education Programs) in the panel presentation to DEC participants. Ms. Irvine provided the federal context for the discussion, presenting an overview of IDEA Part C regulations on child find and eligibility. Dr. Squires followed with an overview of key issues in current child find and eligibility policies pertaining to infants and toddlers with diag-

nosed conditions, including variability in state definitions of diagnosed conditions and community practices in identifying and referring infants and toddlers to Part C systems. Dr. Barger presented work completed by the CDC, in collaboration with ITCA, to review information provided by ITCA members on diagnosed conditions with a high probability of resulting in developmental delay used in their states to determine eligibility for infants and toddlers referred to Part C. Dr. Noyes concluded the panel discussion, on behalf of ITCA, with a presentation on future directions in the use of diagnosed conditions for IDEA Part C Program Eligibility. Donna’s presentation for the association emphasized that Part C is an important resource for young children and families, representing a complex and vital system of state-operated programs – while ITCA supports action steps and aspirational goals to improve early identification and referral of children with diagnosed conditions, it is also important to recognize that state systems are reaching significant numbers of infants and toddlers. Part C can and should be a vibrant contributor to the broader early childhood community – all children, including those with disabilities and their families should be supported in a variety of settings and a rich array of services are available for young children who may not qualify for Part C services.

### *2015 Committee Chairs*

#### **Data:**

*Lynne MacLeod (UT)*

*Christy Scott (CO)*

*29 member states participate*

#### **Finance:**

*Ron Benham (MA)*

*Amanda Carlson (ND)*

*18 member states participate*

#### **Legislative:**

*Susan Ord (UT)*

*Brenda Sharp (LA)*

*13 member states participate*

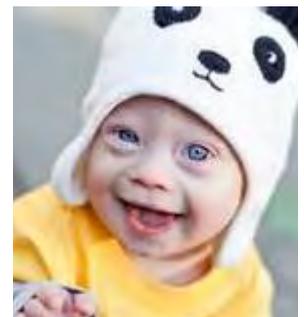
#### **Personnel Development:**

*Sherry Franklin (NC)*

*Brenda Knudson-Chouffi (NY)*

*15 member states participate*

The session was well-attended and audience participation was excellent, including thoughtful questions for the panelists and voicing of a variety of perspectives on the issues discussed. The presentation is available through the ITCA office.



## Merle B. Karnes Award Winner



Sharon Walsh, ITCA Governmental Liaison, was honored as a distinguished individual working in early intervention and early childhood special education at the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Awards breakfast on Friday, October 9, 2015. Sharon is the recipient of DEC's Merle B. Karnes Award for Service for 2015. This award is given to a DEC member who has made a significant contribution to DEC in the areas of leadership, service, research, advocacy, or publications. The award is given in honor of Merle Karnes, who served on the DEC Executive Board and was the found and first editor of the *Journal of Early Intervention*. The ITCA Board was represented at the DEC Awards Breakfast to recognize Sharon and fellow recipients of other DEC annual awards. ITCA is proud and happy to congratulate Sharon on this highly deserved award.

## OSEP Meetings



US Department of  
Education

The ITCA Board continued its meetings with OSERS/OSEP Leadership to share both successes and challenges faced by state Part C systems.

The Board met with Department leaders during the annual retreat in February and again during the summer Leadership Conference.

In addition, Ardith, Sharon and Maureen had bi-monthly phone calls with Melody Musgrove and Ruth Ryder. This year, Gregg Corr and Larry Wexler participated on these calls. The calls provide an opportunity to ensure ongoing communication that benefits ITCA members.

## Awards (continued)

strengthened the Part C program; increased or preserved levels of funding; enhanced service delivery, including creating opportunities for services in natural environments; better public awareness; implementa-

tion of family-centered supports and services.

As a valued parent and advocate, she has served as a member of MICC committees including the Family Rights Guidebook, Best Practice Service Coordination Guidelines for

Children with Hearing Loss, Feeding Services Ad Hoc, Prevalence Study, Funding Formula, Family Cost, and other Part C fiscal committees, *Early On* Redesign, and SPP/APR Indicator target setting.



## Initiatives and Collaborations

### *Fiscal Initiative Collaboration*

As noted in the ITCA Fiscal Initiative funding proposal problem statement for calendar years 2015-2016:

*“In large part due to the multi-year recession many states have narrowed their programmatic eligibility, implemented or expanded fee systems, or have seriously contemplated leaving the Part C program due to reduced fiscal resources. These actions have contributed to a reduction in the number of infants and toddlers served by the Part C program over the past two years. These actions obviously have negative impact on infants and toddlers who could otherwise benefit from early intervention services and allow them great options for school and life-long success.”*

In response, the ITCA has, for a number of years, a stated goal of increasing the knowledge and expertise of Part C Coordinators, their staff and other members of state agencies on fiscal matters. This goal, brought forward through both the fiscal workshops held during national meetings and



more recently the ITCA Fiscal Initiative, has sought to broaden knowledge regarding fiscal diversification, building political will to access new systemic funding streams and planning for sustainability of state Part C systems.

Currently in its second cohort of states (Kansas, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Virginia, District of Columbia), this effort builds upon an initial 10 state cohort from 2013-2014. States have participated in both webinar-based and face-to-face meetings on a variety of fiscal topics key to the successful operation of a state Part C system.

Most recently, the second cohort of states came together in Arlington, Virginia over a three-day period (October 14-16, 2015) to actively participate in a fiscal learning community to discuss and engage in discussion of such topics as Medicaid support for Part C, Private Insurance opportunities, identification of funding champions thru circles of influence, family fees among other areas. Feedback from this meeting as well as those from the prior cohort have been uniformly strong reinforcing the belief of ITCA staff that these meeting provide unique and important opportunities to grow financial support for Part C allowing many additional infants and toddlers and their families to be served.

None of the success of the Fiscal Initiative could have occurred without the generous support of OSEP, ECTA and NCSI. As supporters, funders and technical assistance providers, they have recognized the clear linkage between fiscal growth and growth in the number of Part C children served. ITCA greatly appreciates the support provided by these partners.

### *Use of Diagnosed Conditions for Part C Eligibility*

ITCA continued its collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (CDC – NCBDDD), the CDC Learn the Signs Act Early team, the federal Maternal Child Health Bureau and Office of Special Education Programs, the University of Oregon, the Orleans-Hawkes Pucket Institute, and the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center to develop and publish a series of articles on eligibility for Part C Programs, the “state of the states” in use of diagnosed conditions, and improve efficiency of access to early intervention services for infants and toddlers with diagnosed conditions. Three papers have been drafted and are currently under review with federal partners prior to submission to a targeted journal for review. The

Continued on page 6

## Initiatives and Collaborations (continued)

first paper addresses IDEA Part C eligibility and the use of diagnosed conditions; the second paper describes state policies and practices related to use of diagnosed conditions in determining eligibility for state Part C systems; and the third addresses policy considerations and future directions. Maureen Greer and Donna Noyes are on the writing team.

### *Birth Cohort Data Study*

ITCA continues its work on examining child count issues through the birth cohort approach to supplement the point in time and cumulative counts supported by OSEP. The ITCA Data Committee has collected five years of data and is currently collecting state data for children born in 2011. This year the committee is working with the IDC Center to interview participating states to identify whether all data elements are commonly defined and to determine if variances impact the actual results. There has been interest in this work from OSEP, CDC and HRSA. The data continue to support the conclusion that state Part C systems impact significantly more children than the percentage reflected in the point in time count and more than reflected in the current published literature.

The data also identify that there are significant differences between the number of children referred, the number evaluated, the number eligible and finally the number of children enrolled with an IFSP. The data raise interesting programmatic and resources issues for states to

examine.

### *2015 Data Survey*

It has been three years since ITCA has conducted the first survey regarding Part C Data. This year the Data Committee collaborated with the DaSy Center to revise and re-distribute the survey to all states and jurisdictions.

The goal of updating the survey was to assess any changes in the capacity of state data systems. With the focus on high quality data, the committee is hopeful that these survey results will assist states as they continue to improve and enhance their state data systems.

To date 47 states and jurisdictions have completed the survey. The data has been sent to DaSy who will complete the analysis of the responses. ITCA will work with DaSy to develop a report that will be published in 2016



## 2015 ITCA MEMBERS

Alaska: 13 years  
 American Samoa: 14 years  
 Arizona: 15 years  
 Arkansas: 10 years  
 California: 11 years  
 Colorado: 12 years  
 Connecticut: 15 years  
 Delaware: 15 years  
 District of Columbia: 11 years  
 Florida: 12 years  
 Georgia: 14 years  
 Hawaii: 15 years  
 Idaho: 15 years  
 Illinois: 14 years  
 Iowa: 13 years  
 Kansas: 15 years  
 Kentucky: 13 years  
 Louisiana: 13 years  
 Maine: 8 years  
 Maryland: 15 years  
 Massachusetts: 15 years  
 Michigan: 10 years  
 Minnesota: 8 years  
 Mississippi: 14 years  
 Missouri: 13 years  
 Montana: 6 years  
 Nebraska: 10 years  
 Nevada: 14 years  
 New Hampshire: 14 years  
 New Jersey: 15 years  
 New Mexico: 15 years  
 New York: 12 years  
 North Carolina: 15 years  
 North Dakota: 14 years  
 Northern Marianas: 14 years  
 Ohio: 14 years  
 Oklahoma: 15 years  
 Pennsylvania: 13 years  
 Puerto Rico: 10 years  
 Rhode Island: 14 years  
 South Carolina: 8 years  
 South Dakota: 11 years  
 Tennessee: 13 years  
 Texas: 15 years  
 Utah: 15 years  
 Vermont: 15 years  
 Virgin Islands: 11 years  
 Virginia: 10 years  
 Washington: 15 years  
 West Virginia: 14 years  
 Wisconsin: 14 years  
 Wyoming: 11 years

## Member Services and Supports

The Professional Development Committee is committed to supporting the needs of ITCA members and their staff. On an annual basis the committee conducts a survey of members to determine the priorities of the members for training topics and companion materials.

Two topics were identified by members as priorities in 2015:

- Family Assessment; and
- DEC Recommended Practices.

ITCA partnered with ECTA to develop and present the webinar on Family Assessment. Forty-six registrations were received and evaluation comments were very positive. Participants appreciated the presentations from states that have implemented changes in how they approach family assessment activities.

*"The practical examples from other States were very helpful. Especially hearing that it's not an overnight process & they were able to work through the struggles of getting a whole thought process/practice to*

*switch over."*

ITCA worked with DEC to develop a two part webinar series focused on the revised DEC Recommended Practices and how states were implementing the new standards. Forty registrations were received with a number of them representing multiple people participating. Evaluation comments included:

*"I gained knowledge of how other states are implementing Recommended Practices (RP) at both a state and local level, advice on resources needed for implementation, lessons learned from other states in implementing RP, knowledge of how RP are embedded within different state's SSIP, importance of state leadership in implementing RP"*

In addition to the webinars, ITCA partners with the OSEP Monitoring and State Improvement Planning Division (MSIP) on an annual basis to conduct an orientation workshop for new Part C Coordinators as well as any new staff. The twenty-five participants at the 2015 gathering reflected both new and experienced Part C staff that were



able to share challenges and opportunities along with resources that can be helpful.

MSIP staff discussed the structure of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and supports that each state's contact can provide. They also reviewed OSEP funded Technical Assistance Centers that are designed to meet the needs of state Part C lead agencies.

The discussions were rich and both new and experienced coordinators identify the orientation session as incredibly valuable.

## 2015 Tipping Point Survey



For the tenth consecutive year, the ITCA surveyed its members regarding state responses to Part C implementation issues and challenges. The Association utilizes this information to track emerging issues and state responses related to eligibility, finance and decisions regarding continued participation in Part C. ITCA and its members also make this information availa-

ble to the Administration, to the Congress, to our early learning partners and to state and local elected officials. The survey tracks key issues facing states such as budget status, fiscal issues, program eligibility, continued participation in Part C, services for children etc.

<http://ideainfanttoddler.org/pdf/2015-ITCA-State-Challenges-Report.pdf>

IDEA Infant & Toddler Coordinators Association  
 6545 North Olney Street  
 Indianapolis, IN 46220-3723  
 Phone: 317-251-0125  
 Fax: 317-251-1510  
 Email: [ideaitca@aol.com](mailto:ideaitca@aol.com)



The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Infant and Toddler Coordinators Association is established 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.

To this end, the Association is committed to:

- ✦ Identify and represent the interests of state and territory early intervention programs at the national level;
- ✦ Develop and recommend models, standards, policies and programs that promote quality services; and
- ✦ Strengthen current leadership and foster new leadership at the local, state/territory and national level.

## President's Message (Continued)

Our newer members and their staff found help in the form of our fiscal boot camp and new coordinators' trainings, held before the biannual OSEP conference. A second wave of state representatives are now participating in ITCA's fiscal initiative, made possible through a partnership with ECTA and NCSI.

State and territory leaders continued to have a hand in shaping national policies on a variety of topics. Our organization made contributions to the development of the innovative joint policy statements from the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. The organization reviewed and commented on proposed federal Head Start regulations. We also continued to provide feedback to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) about the unfolding SSIP and determination processes.

The infant-toddler early intervention community has a unique relationship with OSEP, thanks to ITCA's commitment to dialogue. Through face-to-face discussions, thoughtful comment on issues and ideas being considered by OSEP, and other engagements, ITCA gives its members a voice in important work shaping our field.

ITCA's members are leaders, and their contributions are evident in every aspect of the organization. None of the work described in the report would be possible without our vibrant and active standing committees focused on fiscal, data, professional development and policy issues. I am very grateful to our committee chairs and their dedicated members. Thanks also to the ITCA board, with representatives from a diverse collection of states. I am grateful for the unique personal experience and creativity each of our members brings to the board. Special thanks must be given to our excellent staff—Executive Director Maureen Greer and Governmental Liaison Sharon Walsh. Their expertise, dedication and support are key components of our organization's success.

For most of 2015, ITCA was under the leadership of Former President Ardith Ferguson, now working with the National Center for System Improvement (NCSI). Incoming President Sherry Franklin also left ITCA this year and now provides technical assistance as a member of the Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center. I am grateful to Ardith and Sherry for their lead-

ership within ITCA and look forward to opportunities to work with them in their new roles.

Whether you are a brand new or experienced Part C Coordinator, thank you for your participation in ITCA. I am confident that together we will support each other and continue our effort to support infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

Sincerely,

*James E. Coyle, Ph.D.*

