

Virginia DEClares

Fall 2007

DEC– Who We Are

The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is a national, non-profit organization of individuals who work with or on behalf of children with special needs, birth through age eight, and their families. Founded in 1973, DEC is dedicated to promoting policies and practices that support families and enhance the optimal development of children. Children with special needs are those who have disabilities, developmental delays, are gifted/talented or are at risk of future developmental problems. Additional information about DEC is available at www.dec-sped.org, dec@ceo.cudenver.edu, or 303/556-3328.

VA DEC 2007-2008 Officers

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President's Message

Dear VA DEC Members and Friends:

During this time of transition we want to thank Linda Bradford, our past president, for her tireless devotion and significant contributions to the education of infants and young children and their families in Virginia. In July, Linda received our prestigious Nancy Fallen award at the Shining Stars Early Childhood Conference in recognition of her work and leadership in the field of early childhood special education (ECSE). Thank you, Linda for a job well done!

We also had the opportunity to present the Nancy Fallen award to another well-deserved recipient, Diane Postman, an ECSE teacher in Gloucester County. Congratulations Diane for your outstanding contributions to the field! (Read more about Diane and Linda on pages 4 & 5).

As you read through the newsletter you will see that this is an exciting time for early childhood education in Virginia! Everyone from the Governor to the practitioner is focused on promoting policies and practices that support young children and their families. Consider how you might contribute to the cause-make sure you know what's going on in our state, encourage others to join DEC, fill a vacancy on our board. Whatever you do, don't sit idly by and let this opportunity to make a difference pass you by!

I urge everyone to follow in the footsteps of

our role models, Linda and Diane. Stay informed, become involved, and take action!

Wishing you all the best for a productive and positive new school year!

Belinda Hooper, VA DEC President

Mark Your Calendars

The 23rd Annual International Conference on Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families

The theme for DEC's 2007 conference is *Crossing New Borders*. The conference will be held October 25-28 at the Sheraton on the Falls and Brock Plaza in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada. Go to http://www.dec-sped.org/conference/about_the_conference.html to access conference information. A new feature on this site is a searchable online database that allows you to find sessions by day and time or to search by title, keyword and presenter's name.

The Virginia Federation of the Council for Exceptional Children Conference

The Virginia CEC conference will be held on October 14-16, 2007 at the Doubletree Hotel in Charlottesville, VA. The theme for the conference is *Evidence for Excellence*. The keynote speaker is Dr. Paige Pullen from the University of Virginia. You can view the preliminary conference schedule at find registration details at: www.virginiacec.org/49conference.htm.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children Conference

The NAEYC annual conference will be held November 7-10 in Chicago, Illinois. Information about registration and conference events is available at: <http://www.annualconference.naeyc.org/>

VAECE Conference

The 52nd annual Virginia Association of Early Childhood Education conference will be held on February 14-16, 2008 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Reston, Virginia. The conference theme is *Relationships: The*

Heart of the Matter. Conference details are available at <http://www.vaece.org>.

Federal Updates

The latest updates on IDEA can be found on the DEC policy page at www.dec-sped.org/publicpolicy.html. This page includes links to the final IDEA 2004 Part B regulations, DEC's final comments on the proposed IDEA Part C regulations and a side by side comparison and analysis of current IDEA Part C regulations and the proposed regulations. You can also preorder a new booklet titled, *Understanding IDEA: What it means for preschoolers with disabilities and their families*.

State Updates

State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR)

IDEA 2004 now requires states to report annually to the US Dept of Education, Office of Special Education Special Programs on selected information in several areas. Preschool programs have to collect information in three areas: 1) preschool children's placements during the school week, 2) child progress in three functional areas, and 3) referrals from Infant and Toddler Programs (Part C) to school divisions for ECSE services. Work sessions for these areas have been provided at the Shining Stars Conference; at regional trainings for special education directors and preschool staff, and other state meetings. If you are unaware if this information is being collected, ask your special education director for assistance. Your local T/TAC can be contacted for additional information.

IPOP Products

The Inclusive Placement Opportunities for Preschoolers Administration Manual and training modules for early childhood classroom teachers will be available this fall. Roll-out sessions to learn how to develop a wider variety of settings for preschoolers with special needs and how to use the materials will be offered in late October or early November. Watch for an informational

flyer from your local Training and Technical Assistance Center (T/TAC) or special education director/preschool coordinator. For more information contact your T/TAC or Phyllis.Mondak@doe.virginia.gov.

Draft Special Education Regulations

Draft special education regulations are expected on the Board of Education's agenda at their meeting on September 26th. The draft should be available on-line before the board meeting at:

http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/VA_Board/bd-sched.html. Public hearings will be scheduled to obtain input on this draft.

The Tuition Assistance Program for Early Childhood Special Educators

Tuition assistance is available for teachers seeking licensure in ECSE. Updated information about this program was posted on September 21, 2007 at: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/suptsmemos/2007/inf203.html>. Please read the memo and application carefully for details.

Virginia's Alignment Project

Virginia's Alignment Project is a team initiative that involves many components focused on early childhood education. Products of this project to date are the *Milestones of Child Development and Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals*. They describe what children should be able to **do and learn** from birth to kindergarten as well as ways adults can support children's learning. These documents can be accessed on line from the Va. Department of Social Services website at <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/publications.cgi>. For questions contact Pat Burgess at pat.burgess@doe.virginia.gov

Submitted by Phyllis Mondak, Educational Specialist, Virginia Department of Education

Integrated Training Collaborative Update

The Integrated Training Collaborative (ITC), in collaboration with DMHMRSAS and the Virginia Department of Education's Special

Education Instructional Services, sponsored the Communities of Practice in Autism conference on September 24th in Charlottesville. The conference was an advanced level training focusing on strategies to support families with young children from birth to age four with Autism Spectrum Disorders in natural environments. Dr. Maureen Conroy from VCU and Dr. Brian Boyd from the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute were the featured speakers. Following the conference, twelve Community of Practice in Autism (CoPA) Leaders from around the state were trained to develop local Communities of Practices in their localities. Watch for announcements in your regions about upcoming CoPA activities!

The ITC is facilitating a Part C Local System Manager's training on October 16th and 17th at the Verona Government Center. Local System Managers and Part C staff have collaborated with the ITC to develop a training to meet the needs of new and veteran Local System Managers. This training will be the first of three trainings for Local System Managers.

The ITC is pleased to announce that the *Amazing Babies: An Overview of Development from Birth to Thirty-six Months* module is completed and ready for purchase. This module, written by Dr. Dianne Koontz Lowman, is the perfect tool for early childhood education students, special education students, childcare providers or parents. Providing an overview of development from birth to thirty-six months, the module is divided into sections by ages. Each section provides information about physiological, sensorimotor, cognitive, language, psychological, and self-care development. Also featured in each age level are ideas for play and age-appropriate toys. *Action Alerts* and *Something to Think About* provide readers with evidence-based research and current trends and issues related to infant and toddler development. A competency test is included. If you are interested in purchasing, this module please visit <http://www.vcu.edu/partnership> and then go to Resources and Products.

If you would like additional information about the ITC or would like to become a member, please contact Cori Hill at (540) 943-6776 or corihill@ntelos.net or visit our website at <http://www.infantva.org/wkg-ITC.htm>

Submitted by Cori Hill, Virginia Early Intervention Training Specialist, Partnership for People with Disabilities at VCU

T-TAC Information

The Virginia Department of Education supports eight regional Training and Technical Assistance Centers (T/TACs) designed to improve educational opportunities and contribute to the success of children and youth with disabilities (birth - 22 years). The T/TACs are a valuable resource for professionals who work with children and youth with disabilities in Virginia. The T/TACs conduct a variety of activities to meet local, regional and state needs such as consultation, information services (including periodic newsletters), linkage and networking of resources, lending library of multimedia resources and technology, long-range planning, presentations about T/TAC services, referral to other services, and workshops.

If you are not familiar with the services provided by the T/TACs or do not know how to access these services go to <http://www.ttaonline.org>. This link will allow you to locate the T/TAC that serves your region and to connect to the website for that T/TAC.

Resources of Interest

RecognitionandResponse.org is a comprehensive online resource developed and managed by the National Center for Learning Disabilities. The site offers information and resources to help early educators address the needs of young children (3 to 5 years old) who show signs that they may not be learning in an expected manner. Learn more about this approach by going to: <http://www.recognitionandresponse.org>.

Washington Learning Systems offers free reproducible parent-child early literacy activity materials developed by Angela Notari-Syverson, Ph.D., Kristin Rytter, Ph.D. and colleagues. To download these materials go to www.wlearning.com and click on the purple button that says "Free Parent Education Handouts" on the home page.

These materials include forty-six home and community activities for adults and preschool children that encourage early language and literacy development in young children. They are available in English or Spanish and are appropriate for children with disabilities as well as children who are developing typically. For questions contact Mary Maddox-mmaddox@wlearning.com.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDCs) have initiated a campaign, *Learn the Signs, Act Early*, to educate parents about child development and warning signs for potential developmental problems. A free early intervention resource kit is available to early childhood professionals to help with this campaign. The kit includes fact sheets in English and Spanish on developmental milestones, developmental disabilities, and developmental screening. You can order this kit online at <http://www.cdc.gov/actearly> under the child care provider section.

The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning has updated PowerPoint slides and information focused on ways to promote young children's social and emotional development. The web address is: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/>.

Nancy Fallen Award Recipients

Congratulations to this year's recipients of the Nancy Fallen Award for the *Early Childhood Professional* of the year. The award is presented annually to a current VA DEC member who excels in the field of early childhood special education or early intervention. This was the first year with a tie. The two winners were Diane Postman, teacher at Abington Elementary

School in Gloucester County Schools, and Linda Bradford, education director for the Virginia Treatment Center for Children in Richmond.

Diane has been an educator for 27 years. In the spring of 2006 she was selected *Teacher of the Year* for Abington Elementary School, as well as *Elementary Teacher of the Year* for Gloucester County Schools. She was also selected as the *Outstanding Graduate Student of the Year* for Old Dominion University (ODU). She contributed samples of data collection for an ODU Poster Presentation at the 2006 national DEC conference, as well as an assistive technology (AT) tip for the ODU T/TAC's *AT Network E-News*. Diane has mentored new ECSE teachers and trained Child Study committee chairs. She has presented at Virginia conferences, T/TAC workshops, and for local school system and community audiences on topics such as challenging behavior and using rhymes to teach objectives and SOLs.

Linda Bradford has been an educator for 36 years. In addition to working as a teacher for Lancaster County Schools and a child development specialist, special education coordinator, and director of special education for the Northern Neck Regional Special Education Program, she served as the 619 ECSE Coordinator for the Virginia Department of Education (DOE) for 12 years. She implemented and supported many initiatives in Virginia that assured high quality early childhood special education programs for preschool children and their parents. Since retiring from the Virginia DOE, Linda has worked as a consultant with the Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind and Multi-Disabled in Hampton, as well as with several Virginia school divisions. She is the immediate past president (2005-07) of the Virginia Division of Early Childhood. She is a member of the Council for Administrators of Special Education and the Virginia Council for Administrators of Special Education (VCASE). She is the VCASE 2002 recipient of the James T. Micklem Award. She is on the Board of Trustees of Coker College (Hartsville, South Carolina) from which she is a graduate and is

president of the Coker College Alumni Association.

Congratulations Diane and Linda for the dedication you have modeled to children, families, and early childhood special education colleagues!

Submitted by Elaine Barker, VA DEC officer

Nancy Fallen Award Nominations

We are currently accepting nominations for the Nancy Fallen award for 2007/2008. Requirements for being considered for the award include:

- The nominee must be a current member of the Virginia DEC
- The nominee must be a professional currently involved with programs for young children with special needs, ages birth to five. She or he must have current or past direct service experience
- The nominee's name, address, telephone number, and a brief description (less than 50 words) of his or her early childhood background must be submitted to the selection committee.

Submit nominations by May 15, 2008 to Elaine Barker, Gatehouse Center, 8115 Gatehouse Rd., # 3419, Falls Church, VA 22042 or to Elaine.Barker@fcps.edu.

Virginia DEC Officers Needed

We have several vacancies for officers on the VA DEC Board for the 2007-08 term including: Vice President, Exceptional Children's Week, Student Representative and Family Representative. Please consider volunteering for one of these positions! Email Belinda Hooper at bbhooper@vcu.edu for more information.