

Virginia DEClares

Late Summer 2006

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.

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President's Message

Dear VA DEC Members and Friends:
Where does the time go? Another school opening is upon us and it seems that only yesterday it was the end of the school term. An explanation some years ago helps make the passage of time relevant. When a child is four and waiting for the next birthday the year's wait equals one quarter of her life; at 17 the event is one seventeenth of a lifetime away and so on. That does put it in perspective!

The biggest news of the moment is that we **finally** have Regulations for the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act (IDEA) 2004. They were officially published in the Federal Register on Monday, August 15, 2006. Also published at the same time were the U.S. Department of Education's "model forms" that are "consistent with the requirements of Part B" and "sufficient to meet those requirements" as required by Congress. As you know, this is the first time in the history of disability law the USDOE has disseminated those. At first reading, the safeguards appear to be twice as long as the ones we have used in VA the last few years. Whew!!

Don't forget the Virginia CEC Conference October 15 through 17 in Charlottesville. Additional information is located elsewhere in this newsletter. The International Division of Early Childhood will begin later that same week in Little Rock, AK. We will share our VA DEC display in the Poster Sessions and show off our wonderful

President's Message (cont.)

aprons, tote bags and T-shirts. They will be on sale at VA CEC and are fun to wear and to give a colleague.

Shining Stars was held at Virginia Beach in July. VA DEC helped support the lovely reception held on the first evening. The speakers were excellent and attendance was good. This is the primary opportunity each year for everyone in Virginia serving young children to gather and interact. The connections made can be quite powerful and long lasting. Several of us sold our T-shirts, aprons, and totes and had much fun doing it – it is a nice way to see everyone and have a chance to catch up with old friends.

All the best for a great school year!

Linda Bradford
President

Mark Your Calendars

The Virginia Federation of the Council for Exceptional Children

The annual Virginia CEC conference will be held October 15-17, 2006 at the Doubletree Hotel in Charlottesville, VA. The theme for the conference is "Special Education in the 21st Century: Making a Difference in a Changing World". There will be special sessions with Barbara Foorman, Michael Coyne, and many more! A conference registration form is attached to this newsletter. For more information visit the website at www.virginiacec.org

The Division of Early Childhood's 22nd Annual International Conference On Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families

The annual DEC conference will be held at the Little Rock Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock, Arkansas from October 19-22, 2006. The conference theme is: Advancing Knowledge, Expanding Opportunities. For information go to:

http://www.dec-spced.org/conference_05/about_the_conference.html

2006 NAEYC Conference

The 2006 NAEYC Annual Conference offers more than 900 sessions. It will be held in Atlanta at the Georgia World Congress Center, November 8-11. The preliminary program will be available in early September, but you can register now at the early bird rates and make your hotel reservations. Go to:

Federal Updates

The regulations for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 have been released. You can read the regulations at:
<http://www.ed.gov/policy/spced/guid/idea/idea2004.html>

CEC's analysis of the IDEA regulations are available to members through the CEC Web site at <http://www.cec.spced.org>.

The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) is offering a series of conference calls to update participants on the IDEA 2004 Regulations: Implementation Guidance for Preschool Special Education. Sharon Walsh, DEC Governmental Relations Consultant, will provide an analysis of the new regulations and guidance on how it may influence programs for families of preschoolers with special needs. Participants will have an opportunity to:

- Hear about the changes in regulations under IDEA 2004;
- Have their questions about these new regulations answered; and
- Discuss the implications of these new regulations on preschool special education supports and services.

To participate, you can choose from one of the following sessions that best fits your schedule:

- September 25, 2006, 8:00 PM – 10:00 PM (EST)
- September 26, 2006, 10:00 AM – NOON (EST)
- September 29, 2006, 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM (EST)

For more information refer to the attached flier/registration form or call DEC at (406) 543-0872. Deadline to register is September 20, 2006.

State Updates

Early Childhood Progress Outcome Training for School Teams

The Virginia Department of Education Training and Technical Assistance Centers (T/TACs) is providing training during September to school teams related to the new federal reporting requirement to collect early education outcome measures beginning July 1, 2006. The training will provide information on how to document progress for preschool students who are enrolled in Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE). Information, resources, and tools will be presented for collecting data on individual children at point of entry into and point of exit out of ECSE. Training is designed for **teams** who typically assess children enrolled in ECSE and may include the ECSE teacher, preschool teacher of typically developing children, administrators, and related service providers. Visit your regional T/TAC website for registration information-training ends on Sept. 26th.

Integrated Training Collaborative Update

July 1st marks the beginning of a new fiscal year for the Integrated Training Collaborative (ITC). This year's grant contains several key deliverables:

- 1) Provide three (3) Kaleidoscope, Level I trainings
- 2) Provide two (2) Kaleidoscope, Level II trainings
- 3) Conduct an orientation training for

- potential new KI/KII trainers
- 4) Coordinate and conduct the 5th Annual Creating Connections conference for 250-300 participants
- 5) Collaborate with Part C Technical Assistant Consultants to provide locality-specific technical assistance in 6 localities regarding the supports and services approach in Virginia

An additional goal of the Collaborative is to continue to improve the ITC webpage. This includes posting training information further in advance to allow more planning time for providers. Please be sure to check the webpage for upcoming training events at. <http://www.infantva.org/wkg-ITC.htm>

If you would like additional information regarding the Integrated Training Collaborative (ITC), please contact Cori Hill at (540) 943-6776 or corihill@ntelos.net

Early Intervention Awards

On April 25th and 26th, the Integrated Training Collaborative (ITC) hosted the 4th Annual *Creating Connections: Navigating Toward Success* conference at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center. Approximately three hundred early intervention providers and family members participated. This year, the ITC created and presented three awards. Recipients were nominated by colleagues and selected by a review committee. This year's recipients for each award and some of the descriptions that were included in their nomination submissions are included below:

Leadership Award-Mary Ann Bergeron

"Mary Ann Bergeron has been instrumental in working on behalf of Virginia's youngest citizens to secure State funding for Part C direct services. As Director of the Virginia Association of Community Services Boards since 1989, Mary Ann has been involved with early intervention and the Council Coordinator's Association (CoCoA) for more than eight years. She has consulted and encouraged the CoCoA steering committee to "get organized" and partner

with the Mental Retardation Council on VACSB to work toward getting recognized in the system and mobilized for the benefit of infants and toddlers birth to age 3.

Mary Ann is incredibly articulate in expressing the needs of Virginia's youngest citizens and their families, and has been a fantastic leader in the field of early intervention services for infants and toddlers."

Early Interventionist of the Year Award- Elsa Toth-Polo

"Elsa Toth-Polo is a full-time Early Intervention Assistant and 5-year employee of Prince William County Early Intervention Program. She is among the first credentialed EI Assistants in Virginia (2004). Elsa is a model and dedicated professional, passionate about EI and helping children and families receiving Part C services. She provides direct service among our 200+ Part C families and is a strong advocate of services in the natural environment. She consistently goes above and beyond expectations."

Elsa has integrated Early Intervention into her life. Her "Love of Giving" drives her to excel in providing EI services. With sustained efforts and powerful passion, she has made a broad, cumulative impact on children and families in the state of Virginia."

Early Intervention Family Member Award-Anne Marie Fennelly

"What makes Ann Fennelly especially worthy of this award is the fact that not only has she been a tireless advocate for Sean, but she has been an active member of the National Angelman Syndrome Foundation, participated in State and National Conferences and has become a resource for other parents of recently diagnosed Angelman Syndrome infants. In addition to all of this, Ann has taken every opportunity she can to educate the wider community and specifically pediatric health professionals about Angelman Syndrome and the need for early diagnosis and early intervention.

When Sean reached his first birthday, Ann coordinated a special 'birthday celebration' afternoon at a Church hall in Vienna. With the help of her husband and family, Ann invited over a hundred people to this celebration and brought together health professionals (including a geneticist who specializes in the treatment of Angelman Syndrome) other families with an Angelman Syndrome child, friends, neighbors and any other interested people in the community. The afternoon was educational, inspiring and created increased awareness among all who came about the need for early diagnosis and intervention for children with Angelman Syndrome. Those of us in the medical profession who attended this 'birthday celebration' certainly left with a feeling that we had learned so much more from this mother about caring for a child with disabilities than we could ever learn from clinical training or practice."

Web Sites and Materials of Interest

In a presentation this summer at the Shining Stars conference, Mary Wilds shared information about the following web sites that are useful resources related to the assistive technology

ww.wati.org (Wisconsin Assistive Technology Institute)

Although sections of this web site apply only to educators in Wisconsin, other sections provide useful information for anyone working with a child who could benefit from the use of assistive technology. For example, the curriculum section includes materials such as downloadable books for use in early literacy instruction.

www.childrenwithspecialneeds.com

This website includes a section with 4 information about the Picture Exchange

Communication (PECs) system and free downloads.

<http://prekese.dadeschools.net>

This website developed for the Pre-kindergarten ECSE program in Miami-Dade County Public Schools includes useful resources for all ECSE teachers. If you click on the resources section, you can access color picture communication boards and symbols that can be downloaded and printed if you have Boardmaker for Windows.

www.images.google.com and www.picsearch.com

These sites allow you to search for and access specific pictures that can be used to develop communication systems. All jpg files can be put in Boardmaker.

Additional websites with products for sale related to assistive technology include:

www.buildingblox.net
www.speakingofspeech.com
www.usevisualstrategies.com
www.do2learn.org
www.childcareland.com
www.abcteach.com
www.enchantedlearning.com/Home.html
www.berenstainbears.com
www.pbskids.org/arthur

Volunteer Opportunities

The Virginia DEC is seeking a volunteer to serve as the Children's Advocacy Network coordinator. Please contact Linda Bradford to volunteer.

Nominations

The Virginia DEC is pleased to announce a call for nominations for the Professional of the Year Award. Named after Nancy H. Fallen, Professor Emeritus of Special Education at Virginia Commonwealth University, the award is presented annually to a current VA DEC member who excels in the field of early childhood special education/early intervention.

Requirements for being considered for the award are as follows:

- The nominee must be a current member of the Virginia Division of Early Childhood.
- 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.

There are many of you who are worthy of this award. Please nominate yourself or encourage your colleagues to submit their nomination to Elaine Barker at Elaine.Barker@fcps.edu. Nominations are due by Sept. 30th.