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Resource Article



To start the new KIT series on early intervention a parent perspective, we begin by taking an historical look at the evolution of family involvement in early intervention services. In Wehman's article, *Family-Centered Early Intervention Services: Factors Contributing to Increased Parent Involvement and Participation*, she discusses two main factors that have buoyed family involvement in services: legislation and developmental theory.

Wehman provides a legislative timeline that demonstrates the increasing role of family participation in the field of early intervention:

- 1966: Economic Opportunity Act Amendments (P.L. 88-452), authorized the formation of Head Start, which provides early childhood education and health services to low income families and emphasizes the relationship between the families and Head Start staff. Families were seen as instrumental in their child's success.
- 1968: Handicapped Children's Early Education Assistance Act (P.L. 90-538), resulted in federal funding for demonstration projects whose aim was to improve the educational outlook for young children with disabilities. Many of these projects focused on teaching parents specific intervention techniques, often including home visiting;

these experiences expanded the parents' role in their children's services.

- 1976: Education for all Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142), required public schools to provide free and appropriate educational services to school-aged children with disabilities, mandated special education services be formalized into an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), and elevated the status of parents to that of decision makers in the educational planning process of their school-aged children. In 1990, P.L. 94-142 was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) (P.L. 101-476).
- 1986: Part H of the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments (P.L. 99-457), established Early Intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and stipulated that services are to be family-centered (i.e., the family is the focus of intervention services); the services are formalized through an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- 1991: Part H reauthorized (IDEA, P.L. 102-119), required the identification of family concerns, priorities, and resources as part of the IFSP. In 1997 IDEA was reauthorized and Part H became Part C.

While laws were being passed, amended and reauthorized, the field of early childhood was growing and trending in the same direction reinforcing the belief that the family is at the crux

of a young child's development. Wehman also highlights a few theoretical frameworks that further reinforced the importance of family.

- Family Systems Theory: the family is viewed as a system, and that actions affecting one member of that family necessarily affect other members.
- Human Ecology Theory: proposes four sources of influence on a child's development: (1) interactions within immediate settings; (2) interactions among major settings; (3) formal and informal social structures that affect the child; and (4) ideological patterns of the culture and subculture in which the child functions.
- Transactional Model of Child Development: child is both affected by his environment and affects his environment.
- Social Support Theory: child is understood in the context of a social unit (i.e., family) and associated supports (e.g., emotional, psychological, physical, informational, etc.).

The contributions of public laws, sound developmental theory, and parent advocacy have been instrumental in influencing change in early intervention policies and practice. Families enrolled in early intervention are no longer seen as just "receivers" of services. Rather, they are respected partners that play an active participatory role in all aspects of service delivery.

Wehman, T. (1998). Family-Centered Early Intervention Services: Factors contributing to increased parent involvement and participation. Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities, 13 (2), 80-86.

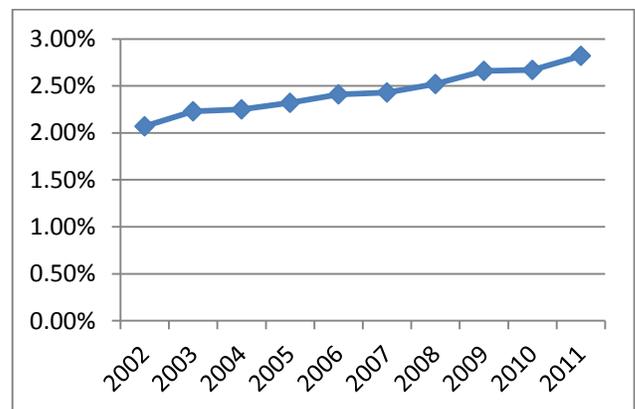
newsletters are written by parenting experts as part of the eXtension land-grant university learning environment. The newsletters are organized by child's age by month and include safety information, developmental milestones, feeding tips, common behavior characteristics and lots more. Parents can sign up for free delivery of the newsletters and they are available in English and Spanish. Check them out at: <http://www.extension.org/pages/22110/just-in-time-parenting-e-newsletters>

What do the Data Say?

How has the percentage of children served under IDEA Part C Early Intervention changed over the past ten years?



The following table illustrates the gradual increase in the percentage of children served under Part C of IDEA from 2.07% in 2002 to 2.82% in 2011. The percentages are based upon the number of infants and toddlers receiving early intervention services in the United States as of December 1 of the each Federal fiscal year.



The percentage serves as a national average indicator of the level of access to Part C early intervention services. By noting the national average, it is possible to consider where a state is relative to the national average and in light of its unique eligibility criteria.

On the WWW



The web resource this month is Just In Time Parenting eNewsletters. The free parenting

See the following link for the complete table including data from the early 1990's. <http://www.nectac.org/partc/partcdata.asp>

Consultation Corner



From February through July 2012, we are excited and honored to have the Early Intervention Family Alliance's Kim Travers serve as the consultation expert addressing the topic of *Early Intervention A Family Perspective*.

Getting to know Early Intervention Family Alliance (EIFA)

EIFA is a national organization that is operated under the guidance of family leaders, who have experienced the Part C Early Intervention system, that are dedicated to improving outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. The EIFA works to ensure meaningful family involvement in the development of Part C policies and their participation at the community, state and federal levels.

EIFA was created to ensure that a unique group of parent leaders from across the nation would have the opportunity to share families' perspective and to impact policies. An example of a family EIFA represents can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/com-health/care-share-bond/videos/douglas.aspx>. EIFA partners with organizations like Infants Toddlers Coordinators Association (ITCA), TA&D Network in collaboration with NECTAC, EHDI National Workgroup, OSEP Conference Planning Committee, Project Connect, and Zero to Three.

The EIFA's guiding principles embrace that Families: are essential partners in implementing family-centered practices in all levels of early intervention; are the experts on their child; should have equal access to training and technical assistance; diversity and voice of the underrepresented are essential to quality

services; and family-centered services that are family and community based as well as culturally competent yield the highest quality programs.

The EIFA membership includes families, professionals and organizations from all over the United States. EIFA wants to ensure that all of the unique family perspectives from every corner is represented as we work together to inform policy-makers of the needs of infants and toddlers with special needs and their families. We want to build leaders who are unified and act as a catalyst for effective advocacy. Any family who is currently participating in their state's Part C system (has an active IFSP) can become a member at no charge. Additional information about how to become a member of EIFA can be found at: www.eifamilyalliance.org/membership.htm

Continuing Education for KIT Readers



The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) is offering a continuing education opportunity for KIT readers.

In line with the focus on *Early Intervention A Family Perspective*, readers are invited to receive continuing education contact hours for reading the monthly KIT publications (February through June 2012) and completing a multiple-choice exam about the content covered in these KITs.

If you are interested, take the exam online at www.edis.army.mil Upon successful completion of the exam, you will receive a certificate of non-discipline specific continuing education contact hours.

Please share your KIT questions/ideas via email to
ediscspd@amedd.army.mil