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The Family Surveys Are In

Once again, Nebraska ranks among the highest return rates on the Family Survey nationwide. This year, 930 of the 1,417 surveys distributed were returned (66%). Thank you to all who helped make this important effort a continued success.

Use of PRT Grant Funds

Across the nation, funding is tight for many organizations, causing them to implement policies aimed at limiting spending. One policy is the limitation of employee travel to events and trainings. PRT Lead Agencies should remember

that these policies pertain to the agency employees only. PRTs are to use the grant funds they receive for training, which may also include some travel expenses. Although employees of the agency must follow the agency policies, they do not flow over to other members of the PRT. For example, if the Lead Agency is a school district, and the district has a "no travel" policy, then employees of the school district must adhere to the policy. If, however, a parent/foster parent, or community partner who is member of the PRT or a services coordinator would like to attend a training, the PRT should consider and provide the request for support.



EDN Systems Support/Change Grant Application

The Grant application is open on the NDE Portal/GMS. All Services Coordination Training dollars should be allocated as such on the budget page. The due date for the application is August 1, 2013. Resources to assist teams in writing their grant are available at, <http://edn.ne.gov/grants.html>. Final reimbursement claims for the current year grant are due on or before November 15, submitted through GMS. Also, please remember to submit your Annual Preschool Meeting materials to Pam Kasl by August 1, pam.kasl@nebraska.gov.

Role of the Family Partner in the Early Development Network



The role of the Family Partner is an important component in Nebraska's Part C program. From direct mentoring to conducting family leadership trainings to participating in early childhood work groups, the Family Partner has had an impact on Nebraska families with children with special needs. Currently, there are two Family Partners: **Connie Shockley** of PTI-Nebraska and **Mark Smith** at the Munroe-Meyer Institute, Nebraska's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities.

Connie and her husband have three children, of whom both the oldest and youngest have autism. She has been with PTI Nebraska since 2007 as the Parent Support Coordinator (infants, toddlers, and preschoolers) where she provides training, information, and support to families who have infants and young children who qualify for services through the EDN and those moving into a preschool setting. She provides technical assistance and information to the Family Representatives on the state Early Childhood ICC and their

counterparts who serve on local PRT teams. Connie also provides technical assistance to parents who want to develop family-to-family support organizations in their communities. In addition, she serves as Family Partner with the Co-Lead Team to provide the family perspective in Early Intervention.

Mark is the parent of a 23-year old son with disabilities, Sean. Sean was one of the first children served in Nebraska by the EDN. At that time, Mark was a Disability Behavior Interventionist. He found himself presented with opportunities to participate in Early Intervention policy activities, including serving as an advisor to the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, on his District PRT, the Nebraska State ICC, and the Federal ICC. He also received opportunities to write and present on Early Intervention policy and practice nationwide. Mark joined the Co-Lead Team as a Family Partner in 2003. He continues to work at all levels—from working directly with EDN families to serving on the Board of the Division of Early Childhood of the CEC—to represent the family perspective in Early Intervention. At Munroe-Meyer, Mark works at the local, state, and national levels to represent the individual and family perspective across the lifespan in developmental disability systems and programs and works with professionals training to work in the disabilities field.

PRTs that would like assistance gaining family involvement on their team or that have family-related questions, can contact Mark at [\(402\) 559-5744](tel:4025595744) (msmitha@unmc.edu) or Connie at [402-991-6713](tel:4029916713) (cshockley@pti-nebraska.org).

OSEP's Annual Leadership Conference

The 2013 IDEA Leadership Conference (previously named the OSEP Leadership Conference) will take place **July 29-31, 2013** at the **Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC**. The conference supports better outcomes for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and their families by providing opportunities for key leaders and partners to interact with Department staff and OSEP-funded technical assistance providers.

Mark Smith will join Deb Jackson from Washington State to address challenges that states face when recruiting and retaining parent representation and strategies to develop an action plan for ongoing family leadership involvement at the conference. Their presentation is no. EC203, **Parent Leadership Promotes Parent-Professional Partnership, Ensuring Positive Outcomes for Infants Families in IDEA Part C – What 2 States Have Done**, to be held Tuesday, July 30, from 10:00-11:30.



From the Nebraska Department of Education, **Joan Luebbbers**, State Coordinator, **Sue Bainter**, Consultant/ Trainer, and **Cindy Hankey**, Consultant/Trainer will present with Robin McWilliam, Director of the Center for Child and Family Research, Siskin Childrens Institute, TN, on **Implementing Systems Change in Nebraska's Part C and Part B 619 Service Delivery**, session no. 306 on Wednesday, July 31, from 8:30-9:45. It will address Nebraska's shift from the provision of training to a shared emphasis on training and systems change and changes in training, tools, and strategies for practices to be family-friendly and interventions with the child to be in the context of everyday routines.

The IDEA Infant and Toddler Association hosts the **National and Regional Parent Leadership Awards** during the Leadership conference. These awards are to parents who have shown outstanding state/regional, and/or national leadership on behalf of the Part C program. Nebraska nominated four parents: Mike Adams, Christy Pelton, Deanna Schulz, and Salene Ulrich.