

MNDEC Newsletter <http://www.mndec.org/>

Minnesota Division of Early Childhood

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April 4, 2017

President's message

Kellie Krick Oborn, Ph.D., MNDEC President, ECSE Coordinator Bloomington Public Schools

Spring has sprung! Hopefully with it will come fresh warmer air, lightening of our winter clothes (and blahs), and a renewed sense of energy!

Those of us working in schools know that spring is an important time for transition not only seasonally, but important educational changes and transitions as well. Supporting children and families through these transitions is an important part of the work we do, and it requires of us renewed energy and commitment as we see summer on the horizon.

At MN DEC we are here to empower you and your work so you can, in-turn, provide the best possible services and supports to MN children and families!

The [DEC Recommended Practices](#) for Transitions is a great resource to review as we approach transition season. The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA) has a [series of resources](#) that align with the DEC Transition Practices. In addition, ECTA has compiled links for resources specific to supporting [transitions from Part C to Preschool](#), as well as resources for supporting [transitions to kindergarten](#). Finally, in the spirit of renewal and change, I encourage you to take a look at the wonderful [resources Chrissy Mignogna, Yoga Calm Trainer](#), shared as keynote speaker at the 2017 DEC Practitioners Conference a few weeks ago. Chrissy's keynote and follow up session inspired all of us in attendance to nourish mind, body, and heart, for ourselves and for the students and families we serve.

For the MN DEC Board, spring is a time for renewal, for reflection on the past year of service, and also a time for planning as we shift our attention to the 2017-2018 school year. Please note important professional development dates you will want to get into your calendar:

June 20-21, 2017 [MN Early Intervention Summer Institute](#)
October 4-6, 2017 [DEC National Conference in Portland Oregon](#)
October 11-13, 2017 MN ECSE Leadership Conference at Rutgers
October 19-20 MEA
October 25-27, 2017 MASE Fall Leadership Conference
March 8, 2018 MN ECSE Spring Leadership Forum
March 8-9, 2018 DEC ECSE Practitioners Conference (evening of March 8 and all day March 9)

I hope you will take time to read the following MN DEC Spring Newsletter, forward it on to colleagues in the field, and encourage membership in CEC/DEC. [Membership](#) in our most important professional organization comes with many privileges and advantages and is, in my opinion a professional responsibility to support and engage in our profession.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the MN DEC Board and our members for the honor of serving as the MN DEC president this past year; it has been my honor to serve our field in this way. Please join me in welcoming Judy Swett, Early Childhood Coordinator, PACER Center, as incoming MN DEC president!

In appreciation,

Kellie Krick Oborn

State Updates

Carol Maliszewski , ECSE Education Specialist MDE/Office of Early Learning

News from MDE/ECSE

Upcoming Conferences

Fall 2017 ECSE Leadership Conference at Rutgers

October 11-13, 2017

Spring 2018 ECSE Leadership Forum at MDE

March 8, 2018

DEC Spring 2018 Practitioners Conference at DoubleTree in St Louis Park

March 8–9, 2018

Please continue to check the Minnesota Centers of Excellence websites for resources. www.mncoe.org.



Regional Inclusion Institutes

Intended Audience:

District level teams of preschool special education and general education leaders (e.g. Head Start, School Readiness, child care, etc.) with at least 1 practitioner representative from each program. Teams should be no larger than 6.

Intended Outcomes:

- Identify the current system of inclusion within the district
- Identify a common vision of high quality inclusion within the district
- Identify possible challenges to preschool inclusion as well as possible solutions
- Develop an action plan for preschool inclusion
- Identify needed supports and strategies to implement the action plan

Locations (all sessions will run from 9 AM-3 PM with lunch provided):

Friday April 7th Sauk Rapids Government Center 250 Summit Avenue North Sauk Rapids 56379	Monday April 10th South Central Service Cooperative 2075 Lookout Drive North Mankato 56003
Monday May 1st Minnesota Department of Education 1500 Highway 36 W Roseville 55113	Monday May 8th Hibbing Community College 1515 E 25th St Hibbing 55746
Friday May 12th Lakes Country Service Cooperative 1001 E. Mt. Faith Fergus Falls 56537	

Registration (registration closes 1 week prior to the event):

Registration should be sent via email to jennifer.moses@state.mn.us. The email must include the district and general education program names, names and titles of each participant and the location desired. Registration is accepted on a first come, first served basis. Space is limited. A confirmation will be sent upon receipt of registration.

Higher Education

Aaron Deris, Ph.D., Minnesota State University, Mankato at Edina

While our current winter has not been too bad, it is always nice to think about warmer weather. As has been the case for several years, the annual MN Early Intervention Summer Institute will be this summer. The dates are June 20 -21. For more information, please check out the website- <http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ceed/events/summerinstitute/default.html>

Aaron



National DEC Updates

Opportunities to engage and lead in DEC – self nominations are welcomed!

Call for RP Commission members

<http://www.dec-sped.org/single-post/2017/03/08/DEC-Recommended-Practices-Commission-Call-for-Commission-Members>

Executive Board nominations <http://www.dec-sped.org/ebnominations>

New information source: Resources within Reason. You can access current/past issues and subscribe to the list serv at the link: <http://www.dec-sped.org/single-post/2017/03/14/Resources-within-Reason---DEC-Launches-New-Resource-for-Providers-Instructors-and-Leaders>

On January 9, 2017, the Office of Special Education Programs and Rehabilitative issued a letter reaffirming their position that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs. <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/preschool-lre-dcl-1-10-17.pdf>

2017 MNDEC Mini Grant Recipients



At the two annual conferences (Leadership and Practitioners) sponsored by MN DEC, each region donates a basket to raffle, the proceeds from the raffle are used to fund ‘Mini-grants’. These action research projects are targeted to enhance learning for children and/or families. This year the number of grants funded was expanded and we are proud to announce three teams have been awarded grants for the 2017-2018 school.

The winning teams are from Stillwater, Rochester, and Mankato. Two teams, from Stillwater and Rochester, are focusing their research on expanding the use of sensory material in preschool inclusion settings. Stillwater’s team will increase the availability of sensory tools and collect data on the effectiveness of different sensory tools. Rochester’s team will emphasize increasing the use of sensory tools to enhance student engagement and self- regulation.

Mankato will use their grant to expand the teaching of Stem Skills. They will develop teaching strategies and lessons aligned with Creative Curriculum, based on Stem Indicators. In the fall of 2017 they plan on training staff to implement the lessons.

As the end of the year approaches, teams often have wonderful ideas about ways to enhance their practice which may be more costly than districts can fund. Mini grants are a great way to turn these ideas into practices and to be able to provide funding. Applications can be found on the MN Dec website, and are easy to complete. Stay tuned for further information regarding the next grant application deadline.

2017 MNDEC Spring Practitioners Conference Awards

Judy Swett, Early Childhood Coordinator, PACER Center, incoming MN DEC president

MN DEC once again awarded Early Childhood professionals at the 2017 MN DEC Practitioners Conference. This year awards were bestowed on four very deserving people. Jane Gibson of Wayzata School District and Heide Muhs of Forest Lake School District were recipients of the 2017 MN Lifetime Professional Excellence Awards. Shari Mensink of Owatonna School District received the 2017 MN DEC Professional of the Year Leadership Award and Rebecca Wald of Richfield School District received the 2017 MN DEC Professional of the Year Award.

Jane Gibson, 2017 MN DEC Lifetime Professional Excellence Award Recipient

Jane Gibson, Birth to Three teacher in the Wayzata School District

For more than 30 years, Jane has been a tireless advocate for children and families. For the last eighteen years, she has been employed by the Wayzata School district in the Birth-to-Three Early Intervention Program. During that time, Jane has accomplished many things. Among them are:

- Implementing the Family Support Team which helps to coordinate services, gather resources, and provide s a network of support for families.

- Beginning monthly Reflective Practice sessions for staff in the early childhood programs in Wayzata

- Providing teaching, support and mentoring to several districts as they implement the Family Guided Routines Based Interventions initiative.

- Mentoring new teachers and practitioners within the Early Intervention field

- Supporting the growth of membership within MN DEC as a long-time member of the MN DEC board

In Jane's words:

“Thank you so much for this wonderful award. I just learned about it yesterday and I am overwhelmed. When people ask me about work I always say that I love my job. I am very fortunate to have had this long career in a job that I love. I have many people to thank for this award, especially the staff that I work with who put together an amazing application for this nomination, even if they kept it a secret from me.

The most important people to thank are the families and children I have had the opportunity to work with. When you work in early intervention families open the doors and let us in. This can be a challenging time in their lives and they keep opening the door to us. It has been an honor to be part of the new journey these families are on. I've learned a lot from these families, from the very first visit I went on to the visit I went on this morning.

I've met really good people during my career from the families to staff, community partners, DEC and MDE folks. I have learned a lot from all of them. Many I consider my mentors. Here are just a few. In the late 80's the public schools took responsibility for the education of ECSE students and the DAC, a private non-profit where I worked closed. I needed to find a job and learn more about public schools. I was given a name and number to call. Wendy Berghorst was a great connection. She told me about someplace called 287. She gave me names, numbers and an introduction which landed me the job at Intermediate District #287. For the next almost 20 years, Wendy taught me the value of interagency work. When you get different professionals, organizations and families at one table to plan good things happen for families and young children. Donna Marget talked me into coming to Wayzata Schools and together we started the early intervention program there. What an opportunity for me. Louise Rath introduced me to the DEC board and continued to encourage me to look at the broader picture of my career, not just what I did every day at my job. I learned the value of professional organizations, higher ed, state and national conferences. The more I got involved the more I learned. Kelli Krick Oborn invited me to co-teach at the University of St. Thomas. Ann Gearity and her wonderful reflective practice was a real learning opportunity, about myself and my job. I hope I always have Ann's words in my head. Special thanks to the courageous Sara Ridley who makes me laugh and think hard every day at my job.

For those of you who are at an earlier part of your careers than I am here are a few words of wisdom. Enjoy your job, keep learning because research and best practice continue to change, share what you know and when you are comfortable mentor others. Our jobs are about relationships. Always keep the needs of the families and children first and the paperwork will follow. Thanks again.” - Jane Gibson, Birth to Three teacher in the Wayzata School District

Heide Muhs, 2017 MN DEC Lifetime Professional Excellence Award Recipient

Heide Muhs, ECSE teacher in the Forest Lake School District

Heide has worked in the Forest Lake School district as an ECSE teacher since the winter of 1992. Heide's passion for early intervention has been the catalyst for the success of many young children, families and educators. Through her experience and compassion she helps families see how the unique traits that their children possess are actually strengths. She helps families celebrate differences and embrace being unique.

Heide is a supportive team player to her work team as she eagerly shares her experience and knowledge with those new to the field. She has also made it her duty to advise student teachers and prepare them for the work in the field. She is passionate about inclusion and lives these beliefs as both a parent and an educator.

In Heide's words:

"I have always believed in inclusion. I volunteered at a residential center for all ages of people with disabilities while in college. I initially thought that I wanted to become a lawyer related to disability law. That experience taught me even more about the importance of inclusion and made me decide that I could have more direct influence as a teacher. I was lucky that my first job in the 70's was in a rural community. We shared the space with a Head Start program. We had lunch together and went on field trips together. As my students grew up, I was able to "mainstream" them (as it was called at the time) into reading, gym, music, recess and other activities. I learned so much from the families, their children, and all the other team members that I have worked with in all the school districts I have served. Thanks especially to the Forest Lake District where I have been since 1990. We have a wonderful, supportive team that have embraced inclusion, the coaching model and other innovations. I hope that I have listened when needed and worked with families to empower them to find the information and support they need. As I said in my thank you at the awards, the things that are important to me are: 'We all belong together.' 'Children are all children first.' The families are with their child for a life time. We need to listen to each individual family to hear what they want and need for themselves and their child and find ways to problem solve together to meet those needs. Thanks again!"

- Heide Muhs, ECSE teacher, Forest Lake Area Schools

Rebecca Wald, MN DEC Professional of the Year Award Recipient

Rebecca Wald, Early Intervention teacher currently working in the Richfield School District

Rebecca has worked in the field of early intervention for almost 10 years. She has served on the leadership team for the Reaching Potentials through Recommended Practices(RP²) innovation and served as an internal coach. She merged this innovation into the district's EI Professional Learning Community, creating a sustainable system for skill building with the EI team. She worked with her EI team to bring the entire ECSE team on board in implementing the DEC Recommended Practices.

Rebecca has demonstrated leadership as she became the spokesperson for her EI team within her district, presenting at district-wide trainings to bring awareness to the work of early intervention. She has also presented at MN DEC conferences to bring information on the RP² project to teams throughout the state.

She is able to guide both the team and families to achieve the goals they have set. This guidance provides lasting positive change for both professionals and families.

Shari Mensink, MN DEC Professional of the Year Leadership Award Recipient

Shari Mensink, Special Services Coordinator and Coordinator for ECSE in the Owatonna School District

Shari has been in her current role of Special Services Coordinator/ECSE coordinator for the past 7 years. She has expanded the ECSE program to include 200 students with 25+ staff members. She has demonstrated the ability to work with a multi-disciplinary team and has dedicated herself to implementing best practices throughout the ECSE department. Under her leadership, Owatonna ECSE implemented the Primary Service Provider model and Family Guided Routines Based Interventions. Shari has implemented Professional Learning Communities throughout the department as well.

She has worked with ECSE preschool staff and Owatonna preschools to develop a report card that can be implemented for all preschool students in the district. She has worked with the community to find more settings in which ECSE students can be placed with the goal of having as many students in inclusive settings as possible. She has recognized the need for improved understanding of people from many different cultural backgrounds and has ensured that her team have increased their skills in working with all families in the district. With her leadership skills, the ECSE program in Owatonna is flourishing.

In Shari's words:

"I have been spending time this week reflecting on my career path, and thinking about all of the people who have helped shape my leadership. I promise that I won't give you my life history, but will take a moment to share with you my very first mentor in special education.

When I was in seventh grade, I was sitting in study hall when a teacher came into the room and said, "Shari, why are you wasting your time in a study hall?" I didn't think I was wasting my time at all. In fact, I really liked having time to do my homework. When I looked at her with a slightly shocked expression, she went on, "There are some young ones I want you to meet. Come with me." I dutifully followed her down the hallway to her elementary resource room, and didn't leave until I graduated from high school.

The teacher's name was Elizabeth Knudson, and the school was New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale Geneva. At that time, it was a PreK-12 building. There was one elementary resource room and one high school resource room. I thought Mrs. Knudson was amazing. She not only taught me a multitude of teaching strategies, but also how to set high expectations and support student growth. So thank you, Beth, for fueling a passion that I wouldn't have known even existed.

I couldn't do what I do every day without the love and support of my family. My mom, Cindy, raised me to believe I could do anything, and has been by my side through college, grad school, and every day since graduation. I would not be in this position without her guidance and support. My husband, Corey, is in a leadership position within the business community. He has taught me that a good leader is someone who hires and then continually invests in people who share the team's vision and passion. I am thankful for my children: Peyton, Brock, Zach, Macy, and Jake. They have had to learn that leaders sometimes have long hours, but also can find balance. There is always time for family.

There are many people who have supported the work that I do: the Region 10 team (Jill, Naomi, Tammy, Christian), my fellow Region 10 Coordinators, Lisa Backer and the MDE team, my first Director Julie Ladwig, and my Directors in Owatonna, Mark Krug and now Wendy Cirksena.

But what it all boils down to is the Owatonna ECSE team. The ECSE Leadership Team—Andrea Franko, Jennifer Henslin, Trina Kasper, & Kenda Schlueter—are here today. Two other members, Heather Gagner and Diane Driessen, couldn't make it. I am so proud of them as well as the rest of the team members. It is crazy to think that just over ten years ago, Owatonna's team was comprised of fewer than five staff, and now we have over thirty members. Every staff member is a leader, and we tap those strengths to build our strong foundation.

So I say thank you. Thank you to all those I have mentioned, and to many, many more of you that I have failed to mention. I am proud to be a part of ECSE in Minnesota. We all make a difference in the lives of children and families every day." -*Shari Mensink, Special Services Coordinator & ECSE Coordinator, Owatonna School District*

Article Summary

Liz Barnett, MA, CCC-SLP, MN DEC newsletter editor, website manager

One benefit of CEC and special interest division DEC membership is access to high quality publications that are readable and pertinent to the issues and concerns faced by practitioners and the families and children we serve. Articles in **TEACHING Exceptional Children** address the teaching and administration of programs for children with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. Research articles in **Exceptional Children** can be applied to classrooms. DEC members receive the **Journal of Early Intervention** and the magazine **Young Exceptional Children**.

The article “A Comprehensive Inclusion Program for Kindergarten Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder” (page 208), by Diane M. Sainato, Rebecca S. Morrison, Sunhwa Jung, Judah Axe, and Patricia A. Nixon, **Journal of Early Intervention** Volume 37, Number 3, September 2015, compares model kindergarten classrooms with “education as usual” classrooms over 4 years. Each model class had an equal or greater number of typically developing children (6-9) than children with ASD (6-7). Model classrooms implemented Full Day Programming, Inclusion, General Education Curriculum, Evidence-Based Strategies, Behavior Management and ongoing Teacher training. Comparison classrooms of 1-2 children with ASD and 12-22 typically developing students, programmed for their students as they would usually do so. In the model classrooms, curriculum and supports were well-planned and designed to meet the needs of a variety of students. In the end, students in the model classrooms had better outcomes with statistically significant differences for all domains except adaptive behavior and spoken language. While there were limitations to the study and possible influences of other factors, such as low teacher-to-children ratios, the high fidelity of implementation of supports and strategies in the model classrooms along with ongoing staff training/coaching likely helped to achieve positive results. You may be interested in the Appendix which has the treatment fidelity checklist used in the study.

Liz

News and Events

June 20-21, 2017 [MN Early Intervention Summer Institute](#)

October 4-6, 2017 [DEC National Conference in Portland Oregon](#)

October 11-13, 2017 MN ECSE Leadership Conference at Rutgers

October 19-20 MEA

October 25-27, 2017 MASE Fall Leadership Conference

March 8, 2018 MN ECSE Spring Leadership Forum

March 8-9, 2018 DEC ECSE Practitioners Conference (evening of March 8 and all day March 9)

Do you have an ECSE question?

The Minnesota Department of Education Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) leadership team has a general email address that can be used to submit any ECSE question, birth to five. The emails will be answered in a timely manner by members of this team. Email questions to: mde.ecse@state.mn.us

Resources

Looking for a job in ECSE? www.mndec.org http://mndec.org/Job_Postings.html

Prospective Employer? Complete the document to post on MN DEC's website:
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1XPHA15yLJWaLeTMKe5TZmLkgerQFLTr1Asx-s3wSipM/viewform>

Minnesota Centers of Excellence has a very well developed website. www.mncoe.org

National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) NIRN's mission is to "contribute to best practices and science of implementation, organization change, and system reinvention to improve outcomes across the spectrum of human services". <http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/> Go to their website and you will find a resource titled Implementation Drivers: Assessing Best Practices .

PACER's Early Childhood website <http://www.pacer.org/ec/>

Help Me Grow <http://www.helpmegrowmn.org/> An interagency initiative of the State of Minnesota (Department of Education, Department of Health and Department of Human Services) partnering with all local service agencies.

Head Start Center for Inclusion <http://depts.washington.edu/hscenter/>

Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children (TACSEI)
<http://www.challengingbehavior.org/>

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/>

Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Effective School-wide Interventions and Supports <http://www.pbis.org/>

Minnesota ECSE Licensure Programs <https://sites.google.com/a/umn.edu/mn-ecse-programs/>

Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Webinars to support the Inclusion of Young Children with Disabilities. <http://www.ectacenter.org/~calls/2014/inclusion/inclusion.asp>

Professional Organizations

The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) <http://www.dec-sped.org>

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) <http://www.cec.sped.org>

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) <http://www.naeyc.org>

Please do not forget to follow us:

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Twitter https://twitter.com/mndec_info

MNDEC is Minnesota's Chapter of The Division For Early Childhood

