

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

Minnesota Division of Early Childhood

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President's message

Aaron Deris, MN DEC President

Happy First Newsletter of 2015-

We are off to a great start in 2015 as a board and as a state for MNDEC. As a board, we have had the following accomplishments in this first month-

1. Our Spring Practitioner conference planning team has secured presenters (note the keynote will be Suzanne Milbourne, co-author of *Cara's Kit*), ensured that voices of our members were heard and have credit card payment as an option, and will be providing an incentive to members who attend the conference in the form of a copy of the latest DEC Monograph (*Blending Practices for All Children*)- mark your calendars this event will be March 5 & 6: <http://mndec.org/Conferences.html>
2. We have begun talks for securing new board members. If you are thinking about becoming a board member, please know more information will be coming out in the next few months.
3. We will be announcing the grant recipients for our mini-grants, the deadline for applying is January 31, at the spring practitioner conference
4. We will be announcing the recipients of our leader and practitioner of the year at the spring practitioner conference. The deadline to nominate someone is February 6, 2015- <http://goo.gl/FePEvm>

At the state level, we are ecstatic to announce that Dr. Donna Miller, MN Centers of Excellence, has secured the position of secretary for National DEC. It will be great to have a local voice on the board again, many of you probably remember when we fortunate to Lisa Backer, MDE, serving.

We do have one request from our members for our upcoming Spring Practitioner conference. We use the proceeds from the drawings at both of our conferences to fund the mini-grants. If your team or region is able to make a donation to be used for the drawings, please contact us at info@mndec.org and we will provide you with more details.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at either the state leaders' meeting on March 5 at MDE or at the Spring Practitioner Conference the evening of March 5 and all day on March 6. Please know we want to hear from you and value your opinions.

Here is to a productive and wonderful 2015!

10 things you should know about the Centers of Excellence for young children with disabilities

www.mncoe.org

The [Centers of Excellence \(CoE\)](#) initiative continues to be the state vehicle for provision of local professional development efforts for early childhood special education practitioners and some of their regular education partners. The CoE is experiencing growing pains as we expand and shift to better support practitioners to do the hard work necessary to high quality services to our youngest learners and their families. Here are some updates:

- 10) The centers have regional identities. Each region within the state of Minnesota has Professional Development Facilitator (PDF) and time allocated to the programs and staff within that region.
- 9) The number of PDFs has been increased to better support ECSE programs across the state. Additional positions were put in place to ensure that local programs have a personal connection to this work.
- 8) Each PDF has a direct relationship with program leaders and connects with them on a regular basis. We are working with local leaders to understand the dynamics of each program.
- 7) The CoE is working to provide evidence based/informed practices and has not altered the 'menu' of innovation support that is available.
- 6) The CoE is working to support local programs with targeted learning to enhance or create capacity for local programs to increase quality practices for children with disabilities.
- 5) The frameworks of Active Implementation guide all the work we support through the CoE. Learn more about [Active Implementation](http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/). <http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/>
- 4) The focus of the CoE support will now begin with local program leaders. We will partner with local leaders to ensure the appropriate program wide efforts are begun and sustained.
- 3) CoE supports will align with the identified needs of a local program created through your self-assessment, INSPIRE ACTION or other data-based source.
- 2) The CoE is working to building a pool of skilled/qualified trainers who will ensure that each program is receiving the necessary information.
- 1) We, like you and your program, are changing and evolving! This growth does create opportunities to build on practices that have proven worth and create new pathways for expanded growth. We hope you will find this partnership valuable in your program.

Higher Education

Kellie Krick Oborn- St Thomas University, MN DEC board member

Aaron Deris, MN DEC President-Minnesota State University, Mankato at Edina

The Minnesota ECSE Higher Education Consortium has been hard at work identifying and finalizing session topics and presenters for the 2015 Minnesota Early Intervention Summer Institute. Please mark your calendars for this annual professional development event to be held June 11-12, 2015. This year the consortium is asking that team members attending together attend the same session vs taking the 'divide and conquer' approach. Collaborative work during sessions will lead to deeper understanding of the content and allow for the problem-solving necessary to tackle implementation back at home. Registration opens March 2nd with Early Bird pricing.

Here is a just a glimpse of sessions to look forward to:

A therapeutic teaching approach for dealing with children exposed to trauma and toxic stress

Typical development in order to identify atypical development

LEAP, take the autism perspective out for general inclusion

More information on the consortium-

<http://www.cehd.umn.edu/CEED/events/summerinstitute/mhecmembers.html>

More information the summer institute (registration is not yet open)-

<http://www.cehd.umn.edu/CEED/events/summerinstitute/default.html>

DEC Mini-Grant Eden Prairie Schools

Judy Beaton- President Elect (Eden Prairie Public Schools)

Over the years, we have observed that many children benefit from a fidget or a simple sensory item to assist in self-regulation and calming during classroom activities such as circle time and transitions. As special education staff, we often receive requests to try out squishy fidgets or cushion sits. Eden Prairie Schools created kits for staff to use with all children in inclusion rooms. The kits included directions and simple activities that all staff could use. We also used the grant money to print and laminate colored versions of (TACSEI) Social-Emotional Pyramid tools to use in the classroom. Eden Prairie Schools has been a TACSEI site for the past two years.

Five kits were created and staff took documentation regarding how the materials were utilized in the classroom settings. Prior report showed that fidgets or simple sensory supports were used only occasionally by general education preschool staff. Staff collected evidence for two months. The data showed that the "move and sit" cushions were used with students at circle time. "Feelings cards" were used on a weekly basis with the entire class when needed. The "weighted dog" was used during group time activities. "Fidgets" were also used during circle time and transitions. Staff comments included students needed to be shown how to use fidgets or to hold the weighted dog so that they weren't thrown or flipped around. This action research demonstrated that intentional teacher to student training needs to take place to show students how to use items. The data also showed that having the kits available gave classroom staff an opportunity to try different approaches to support students.



Technology

Bridget Gilormini, Director, Simon Technology Center, PACER (Minnesota Parent Training and Information Center)

PACER's TIKES Project Helps Parents, Educators Maximize the Use of Assistive Technology

Parents react in many different ways — from big smiles to tears of joy to exclamations of delight — when they first discover what a difference the right assistive technology (AT) can make for their young child with a disability. The challenge is helping parents and educators learn what technology is available and how to use it, which is a goal that is being addressed by PACER's TIKES project — Technology to Improve Kids Educational Success. “We met with a dad recently who was practically in tears as he watched his daughter focus and interact and respond to some very simple switch toys,” said Bridget Gilormini, Director of PACER's Simon Technology Center. “He could see the possibilities for his child. It was wonderful!”

There are two facts that inspired PACER to develop the TIKES project: The use of assistive technology can be a valuable tool for children ages birth to 5 with disabilities, and AT is vastly underutilized among young children. “The numbers are very low — less than 9 percent — for children ages 3 to 5,” Gilormini said, “and virtually nonexistent for ages birth to 2. People just don't think of assistive technology for children that young, yet the solution may be as simple as an adapted toy or modified scissors.”

Great resources for families

Launched in January 2013 and funded by the U.S. Department of Education (Office of Special Education Programs) as a five-year model demonstration project, TIKES is a partnership between PACER and three Minnesota school districts: Bloomington, Anoka- Hennepin, and Rosemount-Eagan-Apple Valley. The goal is to help parents and teachers maximize the use of AT by children with disabilities ages birth to 5.

The project team is made up of early childhood and assistive technology specialists who are partnering with parents and professionals to develop a model that can be replicated elsewhere. “I think the most important thing for families is to know that PACER's Simon Technology Center is here, and it is a place they can go to help their child,” said PACER Assistive Technology Specialist Kasey Miklik. “We have incredible resources — everything from simple pencil grips to the latest eye gaze communications devices and our VGo robots. We are here to support families.”

As part of the TIKES project, PACER is providing hands-on training and coaching for parents and professionals, helping partner school districts improve their lending libraries to complement PACER'S resources, and utilize AT reuse programs so families can buy, sell, or swap used AT devices.

Teachers and parents are learning about the latest technology available, and how AT requirements can be written into a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). The TIKES team has developed a practical, Child-Centered AT plan to help teachers and families make the most of the IEP or IFSP process. This is one of several tools the TIKES team has built that will be available through partner school districts and on PACER's website. At the same time, parents are learning about resources their school districts already offer, new tools their children can use now, and how to use PACER's services.

Although the outcomes of the TIKES project will have broad impact on the use of assistive technology, the immediate benefits are clear for the families and educators involved. At a recent consultation, the TIKES's team was showing the parents of a child with a disability how some very basic tools could make a significant difference for their daughter. “The dad's response was ‘Wow!’ He was so excited to learn about these simple, inexpensive tools, things he had just never thought about before,” Miklik said. “The child might eventually benefit from a sophisticated iPad application or speech-to-text device but for now the dad has discovered a do-it-yourself solution to meet an immediate need. That's very cool!”

To learn more about the TIKES program and PACER's AT resources for young children, e-mail Bridget Gilormini (bridget.gilormini@pacer.org) or call (952) 838-9000.

Article Summary

Liz Barnett, MA, CCC-SLP, MNDEC newsletter editor, website manager

Members may want to browse the webpage found at the following link <http://www.dec-sped.org/papers>. It contains position statements and papers of the Division for Early Childhood. FYI: "Position Statements are formal expressions of the Division for Early Childhood that have been developed with input and reviewed by members and approved by the Executive Board. These statements address a specific topic or issue and represent the official position of the organization." The following is a summary of two of those papers.

The Joint Position Statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), April 2009, Early Childhood Inclusion position statement found does not require permission to copy. In fact, distribution is encouraged. This is a summary but the full statement is available if you click on the following link: <http://www.dec-sped.org/papers>.

Blended programs combine two or more types of early child hood programs. This occurs in a variety of settings including home-based to community-based settings. Blended practices utilize the best of general education and special education in an inclusive environment, thus benefiting all children in the environment. The Early Childhood Inclusion position statement acknowledged that while there was not one definition for "inclusion" nationally, high quality in early childhood programs and services was found when the features of "access, participation, and supports" were present. "Access" includes universal design. (Note: Think beyond physical access to universal access when engineering environments for children with challenging behaviors, for example.) "Participation" and engagement opportunities are key for children with and without disabilities. System "supports" strive for a continuum of services that both meet the needs of children with disabilities and those who are at risk for disabilities while not losing connection to inclusion as a guiding principle in the development of this continuum.

The second paper, "Frameworks for Response to Intervention in Early Childhood: Description and Implications", is currently available to members via the following link <http://www.dec-sped.org/papers> as well as in the publication [Young Exceptional Children Monograph No. 16: Blending Practices for All Children or Young Exceptional Children Monograph No. 02: Natural Environments and Inclusion](#). This paper is the work of the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and the National Head Start Association. It describes a framework for Response to Intervention (RTI) in Early Childhood (EC). It covers five misconceptions regarding RTI in EC. While we may be challenged by changes, research is focusing on ways to support practitioners in implementing effective practices that will help children succeed.

News and Events

March 5-6, 2015 MN DEC Spring Practitioners Conference
June 11-12, 2015 Summer Institute 2015

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

Please do not forget to follow us:

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Minnesota-DEC/132315643458975?v=wall>



Twitter https://twitter.com/mndec_info



Resources

Looking for a job in ECSE? www.mndec.org .

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

Minnesota Parents Know <http://parentsknow.state.mn.us/parentsknow/index.html> Provides trusted parenting information, resources, and activities to help your children grow, develop, and learn from birth through high school. Links, podcasts, videos, newsletters, and how-to-connect to programs for parents of children of all ages and abilities are available. Many materials are translated or presented in additional languages.

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/>

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>

Introducing the new logo for Division For Early Childhood:



