Message from Part C’s State Family Resource Coordinator, Information & Referral... Happy New Year!

Dear Parents/Families,

Get ready to forge new friendships, discover new solutions to burning challenges and fill your mind, body and spirit. The Nevada Disabilities Conference is coming this Summer and I hope many of you will consider attending. Make it a vacation!!!

A few of the wonderful things about attending a conference is that you go to a place where there is excitement, learning, fun, making connections, and always having a new experience. This Conference is sure to be a dynamic conference experience, bringing people together in an exciting forum for change, new abilities, and future opportunities.

The two most important learning activities in attending a conference: 1) to listen to presentations, and 2) to converse with other attendees.

Listening to presentations will help you learn and inform you of what others know or are doing. It will also expose you to different ideas, and may inspire ideas of your own. Feel free at sessions to introduce yourself and ask questions about some issue that you would like to know more about or find interesting.

Though listening to presentations is valuable, hallway or mealtime conversations can also be very interesting. You’ll see lots of people standing in hallways or during meals talking to others who also share the same goals and interests. Do everything you can to cultivate these small, yet often critical conversations—this can be a highlight to a wonderful conference experience.

Nevada Disabilities Conference 2015 information is on page 5

Sincerely,
Dan Dinnell

Planning ahead — check with your local support organizations... Sometimes there are resources available to help cover some or all of the costs of transportation, hotels, meals, and registration for families to be able to attend conferences...

A limited number of scholarships for parents and family members of children with disabilities are available on a first-come, first-served basis from the Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities (NGCDD). Click on Projects & Activities where you can access the paperwork for the Consumer Leadership Development Fund Applications— http://www.nevadaddcouncil.org/

Interested individuals may apply for these scholarships through the Consumer Leadership Development Funds Application at: http://www.nevadaddcouncil.org/consumer-leadership-3/.

Scholarship recipients will have their registration fees paid directly by the Council and be reimbursed after the conference for travel, hotel, and per diem costs [meals] not covered by the conference. Recipients must use the least expensive mode of transportation and will be reimbursed for hotel and per diem at the GSA.gov rate. The maximum reimbursement is $500 per individual or $750 per family.

Questions may be directed to the NGCDD Executive Director: Sherry Manning at (775) 684-8619 or smanning@dhhs.nv.gov, or visit their website at: http://www.nevadaddcouncil.org/
"Hi, my name is Janina Easley. On Easter Sunday 2011 my husband Cody and our daughter Alexis welcomed Averi Rachelle into our family. During what was a very normal, healthy pregnancy, Averi at 37 weeks, stopped moving in utero and was born via emergency C-section due to no fetal movement and fetal distress. Averi has cerebral palsy, cortical visual impairment, epilepsy, plus a few other challenges. Averi is the strongest, bravest, most stubborn, and happiest person one could ever meet. Averi has opened our family's eyes to a world we knew little to nothing about. Here begins our journey through Early Intervention, specialists, therapists, and the unknown.

When Early Intervention arrived in our home about 4 week after Averi was born and just released from the NICU, they found a healthy baby girl and parents who were in a bit of denial. She was functioning as a normal baby should so we opted for the least amount of service. As the months and years went on the delays became more and more pronounced. We were blessed with all the services early intervention could offer. We as a family grew stronger and became more knowledgeable about our new world.

As we began to learn from Averi and her many disabilities, we also felt more comfortable going out in public, meeting new people and explaining to friends and family who Averi was. Advocating for Averi became a big part of who we were and we strived to make sure she got what was best for her. Advocating grew into a mom's group with other Early Intervention moms who wanted to meet and learn from other mothers who also have traveled down a similar long and winding road.

I was introduced to the Interagency Coordinating Council by my development specialist who saw my passion to advocate and educate. I went to my first ICC meeting in 2013 and was deeply interested in learning more and how I could give a voice to children and families with disabilities. I became an official ICC member in 2014 and felt that I could now make Averi and other children's and parent's voices heard. I have learned much and have much to learn. I look forward to my three years or more of continuous education through the ICC."

~ Janina Easley, ICC Parent Representative

A PARENT IS A CHILD'S BEST ADVOCATE, AND EVERYONE HAS THE ABILITY TO BECOME A STRONG ADVOCATE. HOWEVER, TO BECOME AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE, YOU MUST SPEND TIME PREPARING AND LEARNING IMPORTANT ADVOCACY SKILLS.
An opportunity to participate…

MEETING NOTICE

NEVADA EARLY INTERVENTION
INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL (ICC)

Date and Time of Meeting: Thursday, January 22, at 9:00 a.m.

Meeting will be held via Video Conference at the following Conference room locations:

- **Las Vegas**: Nevada Early Intervention Services, 1161 South Valley View Blvd.
- **Reno**: Nevada Early Intervention Services, 2667 Enterprise
- **Elko**: Nevada Early Intervention Services, 1020 Ruby Vista Drive

Nevada’s Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) has a federal mandate to advise and assist Nevada in the development and implementation of a statewide system of early intervention services for young children with developmental delays or disabilities and their families. Families and community partners are invited to all ICC meetings. It is especially important to hear from families and I encourage you to participate. If you would like more information about attending meetings or how to submit public comments to the Council please contact me at: ddinnell@dhhs.nv.gov or Project ASSIST at 1-800-522-0066

Have you thought of getting more involved in your early intervention program? Would you like to “give back” to the program? Would you like to help another parent or child? Would you like to have input in local and state planning and policy decisions that affect young children with disabilities? There are lots of opportunities for you to participate in!

Your early intervention program may have a family support group or work with an organization that does. This is a wonderful way to “give back” to the program.

Nevada’s Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) was set up to advise and assist Nevada in the development and implementation of a statewide system of early intervention services.

Nevada’s ICC has a Family Support Resource Subcommittee. This committee supports ICC activities and helps ensure the ICC responds to issues important to families, strengthens and broadens family involvement at all policy and service levels, increases ICC communication with families, provides public awareness support, and identifies and supports efforts to improve early intervention services and programs within communities.

The IDEA Part C Family Newsletter provides opportunities for families to share by submitting articles, sharing their story, or including their child in a Family Spotlight, with a photo.

If you would like to share or get more information, please feel free to contact me anytime at: ddinnell@dhhs.nv.gov

Sincerely,
Dan Dinnell

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The University’s Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities is seeking motivated, interested parents of children with developmental disabilities in Southern Nevada, to become candidates for **NEVADA PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING, Class of 2015. *Limited Space!* Don’t Delay!!!**

**PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING** is a very intensive and innovative national model of leadership training, designed to teach parents and self-advocates the power of advocacy and to change the way people with disabilities are supported, viewed, taught, live and work. *This FREE class starts January 2015.

**PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING** is about…

- Leadership skills and developing positive partnerships with elected officials and other individuals who make policy decisions about services that you and/or your family use.
- Systems change—creating, working towards, and achieving a vision of shared values about people with disabilities.
- Becoming confident in oneself, competent in the knowledge and information received, and comfortable in sharing the life experiences and expertise one brings to the program.

If you are interested, visit their website: [http://nced.info/pip/](http://nced.info/pip/) or contact Diana Rovetti: rovetti@unr.edu
According to the most recent report from the US Health Resources and Services Administration, 14 to 19 percent of U.S. children have a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral or emotional condition (Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), 2011). An estimated 16.8 million unpaid caregivers provide care to a child with special needs under the age of 18 in the U.S. and among family caregivers of children under 18, 81% do not use respite (National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) and AARP, 2009).

Without this home-care, many of these cared for loved ones would require permanent placement in institutions or health care facilities. The value of the services family caregivers [for all ages] provide for "free" is estimated to be over $450 billion a year. That is more than twice as much as is spent on homecare and nursing home services combined, estimated at $158 billion. (AARP Public Policy Institute Report, 2011)

The mission of the Nevada Lifespan Respite Program is to expand quality respite services throughout the age spectrum, statewide. Our goal is to promote and assist in the development of respite services so caregivers can continue to provide long-term care of their loved one.

For more information on Respite Care in Nevada: Nevada Lifespan Respite Program
Aging & Disability Services Division
3416 Goni Road, Suite D-132, Carson City, NV 89706
Phone: 775-687-4210
http://www.nevadaadrc.com/services-and-programs/lifespan-respite

“FREE… Participation in the national EARLY INTERVENTION FAMILY ALLIANCE (EIFA) is open to all interested in supporting early intervention. . . Keep informed! Obtain Answers! Impact Policies! The Early Intervention Family Alliance is a national leadership organization dedicated to improving outcomes for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, open to all.

Members receive email alerts and updates on key early intervention topics and can join the EIFA list serve to participate in active discussions and share experiences. Web: www.eifamilyalliance.org

"You are Your Child’s First-Lifelong Advocate!" — Highly involved parents and other family members are fundamental to a child’s successful journey. This 2-page fact sheet speaks directly to parents about what it means to advocate for their child, describes the "successful lifelong advocate," and suggests strategies that parents can use and considerations to keep in mind. From New Mexico's PTI, Parents Reaching Out:
http://parentsreachingout.org/cd/pdfs_en/fs001.pdf

New State Part C Coordinator — Please join us in congratulating Brenda Bledsoe on her new appointment as Nevada’s IDEA Part C Coordinator. Brenda’s program knowledge, years of experience in early interventions services, and leadership skills will serve well in her new position. Her dedication to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families is evident in her many efforts to make Nevada's early intervention services a system of family centered and best practices within IDEA law and regulation.

Brenda has an M.S. in Psychology and Guidance for Elementary Schools, and a B.S. in Early Childhood Education. She began her career in the administration of state early intervention service systems with Tennessee’s Early Intervention Services (TEIS) as an education consultant in 1993. She was appointed Director of Early Childhood Programs for the TN Department of Education, Division of Special Education from 1998-2006. During that time, she also represented states where Department of Education was lead agency for early intervention services on the IDEA Federal Interagency Coordinating Council (FICC) 2002-2004, and as a Board Member for the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring (NCSEAM) through Louisiana State University 2003-2006. Brenda has worked with the IDEA Part C Office to support a coordinated system of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities in Nevada since May 2006.
Mark your calendars! The Nevada Disabilities Conference will provide a one-stop platform for connecting to the resources, trainings, best practices and support for creating healthier lives for individuals with developmental disabilities, advocates, caregivers and families of children with special health care needs and the professionals who serve them including administrators, educators, and healthcare/service providers.

The last conference garnered 394 attendees who enjoyed two days of an outstanding program with 48 sessions, several national Keynote presenters, and 38 vendors/resource tables.

Also the Nevada Disabilities Conference 2015 will be held concurrently with the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities’ annual conference, which will bring national experts in the field of disability to Nevada, offering more resources while bringing national attention to the state and the NDC 2015!

This is a great learning opportunity for families and individuals affected by disabilities or special health care needs, administrators, healthcare professionals, educators, students, caregivers, advocates, policymakers, service providers to learn about various topics of interest, such as:

- advocacy
- Assistive Technology
- early intervention
- education
- futures planning
- recreation
- health & dental care
- mental health
- building community
- family support
- service supports
- independent living
- inclusion
- transition
- self-determination
- respite
- and more.

For more information contact Family TIES
Statewide (866) 326-8437
www.familytiesnv.org

Nevada Disabilities Conference Scholarships may be available. Please check the website for more information on Scholarships for the 2015 Nevada Disabilities Conference.

This event provides a truly unique opportunity where people can attend educational breakout sessions relevant to their specific needs, interact with policymakers, network with others and learn about the wide range of services available in Nevada. Plan on it!!!

Nevada Disabilities Conference Scholarships may be available. Please check the website for more information on Scholarships for the 2015 Nevada Disabilities Conference.
**Early Intervention Program Activities or Events for Families and Friends**

**Northeastern Nevada Early Intervention Services**
* contact your Developmental Specialist/Service Coordinator for more information

**Northwestern Nevada Early Intervention Services**
* contact your Developmental Specialist/Service Coordinator for more information

⇒ **Advanced Pediatric Therapies—Reno:**
- Community Play Group 2nd and 4th Friday each month, 10:30 am.

⇒ **Nevada Early Intervention Services—Reno:**
- Family Support Group, open to all parents, sponsored by Down Syndrome Network of Northern Nevada & NEIS - The 1st Thursday each month [except for Summer months activities or other events] 5:45 pm, at NEIS-Enterprise. Call 775-828-5159 or e-mail dsnnninfo@gmail.com to R.S.V.P.
- Family TIES provides family support in filling out Medicaid/SSI and other Social Services applications every 2nd Monday from 10am-12noon at NEIS-Enterprise, by RSVP only! Please call 775-823-9500 to RSVP.
- RAVE will have Respite Applications available every 2nd Monday from 10am-12noon at NEIS-Enterprise.
- Friends of Special Children is looking for new board members to join their non-profit organization that supports families in Early Intervention. This non-profit has supported families at NEIS in so many ways both financially and physically. If you are interested in being a part of this great cause, contact Lori Schoen at 688-0379 or email: lschoen@health.nv.gov
- Hands and Voices meets at NEIS, Enterprise Rd., usually the 4th Thursday of every other month on the “odd” months, at 6:00 pm. Contact 351-1959, or email: info@nvhandsandvoices.org

⇒ **The Continuum—Reno:**
- Grandparents raising grandchildren with special needs — Support Group, 3700 Grant Dr., Reno. First Thursday monthly, with free childcare on site. For more information call Amanda Aitchison at (775) 737-8756.

**Southern Nevada Early Intervention Services**
* contact your Developmental Specialist/Service Coordinator for more information

⇒ **Easter Seals Nevada—Las Vegas:**
- Easter Seals is hosting playgroups on Fridays. Come Join the Fun! For more information call or email Ella Philander, at 428-4335 or ella.philander@eastersealsnevada.org

⇒ **Nevada Early Intervention Services—Las Vegas:**
Coming soon! A parent meeting for families of children (any age) with Prader Willi Syndrome, at the NEIS Valley View location, February 2015. Day and Time TBD. Contact Erica Magana at 486-9265 emagana@adsd.nv.gov – Bilingual, or Shirley Farkas 486-9263 sfarkas@adsd.nv.gov

⇒ **Positively Kids—Las Vegas:**
- Playgroup at Windmill Library (Windmill & Rainbow). Call Sally for more info at 702-577-3104
- Follow us on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/positivelykids

⇒ **Therapy Management Group—Las Vegas:**
- Milagros Escondidos family support group, last Thursday of the month, 6-8pm, at 6600 W. Charleston Blvd., Ste. 111
- TMG is partnering with Family to Family and conducting twice a week inclusive developmental playgroups. Contact: Sarah Petrocelli @ 340-5521 or spetrocelli@tmgnv.com

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**For Families, Professionals**

**Early Childhood Special Education Library**—
There are a great many things to learn... check them out!!!

The Elephant in the Playroom, by Denise Brodery. Moms and dads from across the country write intimately and honestly about the joyful highs and disordered lows of raising children who are "not quite normal.” Laying bare the emotional, medical, and social challenges they face, their stories address issues ranging from if and when to medicate a child, to how to get a child who is overly sensitive to the texture of food to eat lunch.

Library materials are available for use statewide. For more information, contact your service provider or coordinator. If you have questions or recommendations for the Library, please contact me at Project ASSIST toll free 1-800-522-0066 or ddinnell@dhhs.nv.gov

http://dhhs.nv.gov/Programs/IDEA/ProjectASSIST

Nevada’s Early Intervention website is filled with information and resources, including a “Links” page of all kinds of useful websites with information, and a Frequently Asked Questions page.

To receive the newsletter electronically and to make sure you don’t miss out on useful information, please send your e-mail address to Dan Dinnell at ddinnell@dhhs.nv.gov