



Welcome!



Inclusion was the theme chosen for 2015-2016 at the Kansas ICC strategic planning session in September. The decision followed the recent release of new federal guidance on expanding meaningful inclusion of young children with disabilities in early care and education settings. The Department of Education (DOE) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) issued a [joint policy statement](#) with recommendations and resources for states and local communities to support increasing opportunities for preschool children with disabilities to be included in high quality early childhood programs—public and private-- with their peers. The *Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs* was released in the year of the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the 40th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the 50th anniversary of Head Start.

Earlier in September early education leaders from Kansas and Missouri were invited to meet with senior officials from DOE and DHHS in Kansas City, Missouri to discuss opportunities and challenges related to implementing recommendations included in the new policy statement. Among those invited were Kansas ICC members Barbara Dayal, Kansas State Department of Education; Sarah Walters, Kansas Department of Health and Environment; and David Lindeman, University of Kansas Life Span Institute in Parsons. Also representing Kansas early childhood programs were Carrie Hastings, Kansas Department for Children and Families; Gayle Stuber, Kansas State Department of Education; and Erick Vaughn, Kansas Head Start Association.

The policy paper makes clear that expanding access to high-quality early childhood programs for all children, including young children with disabilities, “requires strong State and local leadership, a shared responsibility and commitment within communities, and a robust partnership between families, schools, communities, and government at all levels” (p. 20). As a direct result of the joint statement, a statewide taskforce on early childhood inclusion has been formed and members and staff of the Kansas ICC look forward to being active partners. Watch for more information in this newsletter and on the ICC website: www.kansasicc.org

The annual strategic planning retreat for the Kansas ICC will be June 17, 2016 at the Kanza Café in Topeka from 1:00-4:00 p.m. We welcome your participation and/or suggestions about future goals and activities for the council.

Matthew Connell, Chair
 Kansas Interagency Coordinating Council for
 Early Childhood Developmental Services

What’s Inside

| | |
|------------|--|
| Cover Page | Welcome from the Chair |
| Page 2 | A Parent’s Story Inclusion Resources |
| Page 3 | Spotlight on Local ICCs |
| Page 4 | Meet New SICCC Staff Legislative Update |



I Can Do It Myself!

~ From a parent ~



Three year old Little Hulk was sitting in front of the TV. "Show," he asked, as he pointed to the TV. His mother told him just a minute as she was busy with dinner. He waited for just a moment. Then, he began to tinker with it himself.

Meet Little Hulk. A 6 year old in first grade. He loves his 8 year old brother whom is also very protective of him. Little Hulk idolizes his brother

and loves to copy him. He also has a 23 year old sister that has an infant son. Little Hulk adores his little nephew, and he is always ready to give hugs/kisses to the baby except when the baby invades his room.

Life hasn't always been easy for Little Hulk. When his mother was 5 months pregnant, tests results came back that Little Hulk would have Down syndrome. It was a scary time as that can mean not only delays but also many other health conditions. He did have excess fluid around his heart and stomach when he was born at 37 weeks gestation.

Infant/Toddler services through Rainbows in the Wichita area quickly began. There was a teacher, physical therapist, and speech pathologist involved in his services. Little Hulk did have some issues with sucking and swallowing along with general delays. However, he was able to progress with the help of Rainbows staff and his loving family. A huge milestone for Little Hulk was learning to walk just 2 weeks before his 3rd birthday and transition into the Goddard Public School.

Little Hulk had a fairly easy transition into 3-5 year old services. Speech pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, classroom special education teacher, and adaptive PE teacher were all very welcoming. He has recently started putting words together to make phrases.

When Little Hulk isn't in school, he likes to do swimming lessons and to participate in the Down Syndrome Buddy Walk. He is also learning both Spanish and English. His family is a great asset to him. When asked one thing that was most helpful, Little Hulk's mom replied, "Society of that particular disability, other parents of that same situation bringing education and help, support group to relate to" and "communication with the teacher."

Are you wondering what happened to Little Hulk's tinkering? Did he ever get his TV time? Yes, he did. A few minutes later his mother came in to set up the TV/DVD movie. To her amazement, he was contentedly watching Thomas the Tank Engine. That's more skill than some adults I know!

Resources to Support New Policy Statement on Preschool Inclusion

Interested in learning more about the recommendations of the federal policy statement on early childhood inclusion described on page 1? A new [Google Hangout](#) has been created for one-stop access to information and resources supporting the joint policy recommendations from the Department of Education (DOE) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). In addition to the full 2015 *Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs* you will find implementation resources for states, local programs, providers, and families, including archived webinars.

The first webinar in the preschool inclusion series was broadcast February 18th: *What's the evidence, what gets in the way, and what do high-quality programs look like?* The webinar focuses on the 40 years of research supporting inclusion in early childhood.

The second webinar in the series aired on April 14, 2016: *Implementing state recommendations from the federal policy statement on inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs.* This webinar features success stories and lessons learned from three states focused on implementing policy recommendations to ensure that young children with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) receive high quality inclusive services in the early care and education settings where they would typically be found if they didn't have a disability. <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/inclusion/index.html#el-google-hangout-1>

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ICC Project Focuses on Developmental Milestones

By Maggie Lee Reinhardt

While about a dozen local and area non-profit entities are involved in a new project, they each want the same thing—for young children to be screened early for developmental issues. The project will entail handing out packets of information to public health facilities and agencies that care for young children. The packets will then be distributed to parents who will learn about the early signs of potential problems. This effort is being organized in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control campaign called “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” Packets will be distributed this spring between February and April.



“We want to reach out across central Kansas to educate parents,” said Cathy Estes, children’s services coordinator at Sunflower Diversified Services. “Not all parents are aware of some developmental milestones until their children lag further behind their peers.”

This is why Sunflower has teamed up with its local Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) partners. Sunflower owns and operates the Early Education Center and Incredible Years Preschool in Great Bend. ICC partners include Parents as Teachers, special education preschools, health departments, the Center for Counseling & Consultation, Barton County Community College and Connecting the Pieces Autism Support Group.

“The welfare of children is our utmost concern and it takes this level of team work to reach the families who need us,” Estes said. **“We can be so much more effective collectively; one agency cannot do it all.”** Each ICC member has specific talents and requirements but the bottom line is to provide an avenue to early intervention.

“We all work with each other every day,” Estes commented. “For example, a child in Sunflower’s early intervention program may be referred to Parents As Teachers play group. The extra socialization with peers is crucial.” The ICC’s information packet will include a refrigerator magnet with a resource directory. David Edgerton of La Crosse designed it. “David and his wife, Katrina, have been a big help to us,” Estes said, noting they have a child in early intervention services. “David has an eye for the graphic arts and the technical know-how to bring them to life.” Other items in the packets include written materials about developmental milestones and a children’s book.

McKinley Phillips, Sunflower early childhood special education teacher, knows the importance of milestones not just in her professional life; she is now mother to 6-month-old Wylder. “Wylder is doing just great but I still understand that screening children as early and often as possible is very important,” Phillips said. “Once a child develops a delay, there can be a snowball effect that places the child further behind. Intervention services can prevent this. Sunflower’s free developmental screenings by our professional team are extremely helpful to any parent,” she added. “We can suggest activities, strategies and resources for the child’s successful development.”

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Share Your Local ICC Story With Us

The Kansas Interagency Coordinating Council strives to support and strengthen our local ICC counterparts. We are very interested in gathering examples of the diverse ICC structures in our state. We are looking for sample documents to be shared as a resource on the Kansas ICC web site. Please send us your examples of local Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), council by-laws, newsletter, event calendar, or any resources you think would be of interest to other ICCs.

In addition to sharing resource information, we would like to celebrate what is working well with our local ICCs. We invite you to share your success story with us. Tell us how your council pulled together to solve a problem or improve existing services for infants and young children with or at risk of developmental delays or disabilities and their families.

What Do We Know About Kansas ICCs?

In the fall of 2014 the state ICC (SICC) developed a survey that was intended to gather information about the issues facing LICCs. The Kansas ICC web site was used to disseminate the survey and an email was sent to all local coordinators of the *tiny-k* programs and to the chairs of each LICC. Approximately 20 participants responded to the survey. Survey results were summarized and shared with the SICC to guide planning and will be posted in graph formats on the Kansas ICC website:

www.kansasICC.org

Submitted by Communication and Collaboration Committee of the Kansas ICC

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Meet New SICC Staff Person: Phoebe Rinkel



In November 2015 Phoebe Rinkel was hired as the new staff coordinator for the Kansas Interagency Coordinating Council, replacing Doug Bowman who retired last spring after distinguished service to Council for the past 22 years. Phoebe brings a depth of skills and experience related to the Council's mission of ensuring a comprehensive system of integrated services is available to all Kansas infants, toddlers and preschoolers with, or at risk of, developmental delays, and their families. For the past 10 years, as technical assistance coordinator for the Kansas Inservice Training System, Phoebe collaborated with state agency personnel to support targeted improvement goals for the provision of Part C Infant Toddler Services and Part B/619 preschool services within the context of state and federal statutes and policies. She has worked with school districts, *tiny k* programs, Head Start and community preschools across the state to set and attain goals for improving the quality and effectiveness of their services for young children with special needs and their families. She has extensive experience collaborating with stakeholders across early childhood systems in Kansas.

Phoebe holds a Master's Degree in Family and Child Development with licensure in Early Childhood-Handicapped and as Supervisor/Coordinator of Special Education. In addition to her work with KITS, Phoebe's professional experience includes direct early intervention and special education services (classroom, community-based and home-based) for infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities and their families. She has also worked as an early childhood administrator, research assistant, inclusion facilitator, and coach.

"In my different professional roles, I have come to understand implementation of the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) through the perspective of families, practitioners, administrators, and state agency personnel. I have long appreciated the vital role of the state ICC in modeling a collaborative approach to identifying and responding to the needs of infants and very young children with disabilities, their families, and the professionals that serve them in many different capacities. I'm particularly looking forward to supporting the work of local interagency coordinating councils (LICCs), having seen what great things can be accomplished at the local level by committed community partners."

Phoebe has already been invited to participate in several LICC meetings across the state and has provided technical assistance on issues such as roles and responsibilities of the LICC, engaging parent members, and planning for a change in lead agency. Phoebe would love to visit one of your LICC meetings and you can contact her at 785.296.1294 or prinkel@kdheks.gov

Legislative News

As this newsletter goes to press the Kansas legislature is in recess. They will return April 27 to deal with the veto session and a number of unresolved challenges, including state revenue projections that have fallen short of 11/12 of the last estimates and the Kansas Supreme Court ruling that the current block grant formula for funding K-12 education is inequitable and therefore unconstitutional. While the Governor has signed an interim school finance bill designed to address the equity issue and keep schools open after July 1, the Court has yet to rule on whether the bill meets their requirements.

The Governor's FY 2017 budget approved by the legislature was touted as not cutting K-12 or early childhood programs. It does supplant more than \$7 million of the Children's Initiative Fund (CIF) with federal funds for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) giving the Children's Cabinet authority to decide which program(s) might institute means-testing criteria for income eligibility. The Governor's initial proposal to move the Children's Cabinet, Infant Toddler Services, State ICC staff, and the CIF under the authority of the Kansas State Department of Education was removed from the final budget, along with language specifying use of TANF funds for the Parents As Teachers program, following strong legislative advocacy efforts from early intervention and early care and education proponents. A bill (SB 463) has since been introduced that would move the CIF and other revenue streams into State General Funds in 2017, calling into question whether those funds would still be dedicated to children's programs. A new long term school finance bill (HB 2741) was introduced right before the recess and is still being reviewed. The Kansas ICC will continue to monitor these and other bills that would impact services for young children and their families that could still be acted on in this session. Follow legislative updates in council minutes posted on www.KansasICC.org. Remember that this is an election year—all House and Senate seats are up for election in 2016.

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