

Collaborative Connections



SECOND ANNUAL FAMILY FUN NIGHT & HOLIDAY AUCTION HUGE SUCCESS!!

Over 400 people kicked off the holiday season at the Garden State Discovery Museum on Friday, November 16th. Visitors were treated to refreshments, face painting, arts and crafts and even Santa and his elf paid a visit to take pictures! Some of the remarks about the evening include: **“What a wonderful thing to do for families!”**,

“My kids are having the time of their lives!!” and **“We never knew this place existed, we’ve got to come back!”** The purpose of the event was to raise funds to support early intervention families in educational opportunities, purchase of equipment not covered by insurance or other resources that may be financially prohibitive for a family. The Board of Trustees and the entire staff of the Southern New Jersey Regional Early Intervention

Collaborative would like to thank the Garden State Discovery Museum for hosting the event for a second year. The Southern region Early Intervention administrators, practitioners, service coordinators and the numerous volunteers deserve a round of applause as well! We can’t wait to see what the Board of Trustees has in store for ‘08!

Photos courtesy of Jenny Boyce, Virtua EIP





The Collaborative Crew

Those lovely voices that you hear when you call the SNJREIC belong to two of the newest members of the Collaborative team. **Melissa Cannistraci**, Administrative Assistant, is the voice most callers reach first. She is a mother of two wonderful girls and loves spending time with them in the kitchen or camping out.

Melissa is also a college student majoring in Sociology.



Callers reaching the Camden County referral line are welcomed by **Susan**

Rodgers. Susan also assists the Data Manager and Clerks with the tremendous amounts of paperwork that flow through the office. When Susan isn't nursing paper cuts, she enjoys reading, road trips and dining out.

Meet other members of the Collaborative in our next issue!

“A two year old is kind of like having a blender, except you don't have a top for it”- Jerry Seinfeld

Retail Renee-Shopping Tips

We at the Collaborative are amazed at this staff members unique talent. **Renee Budniack**, Data Support Specialist, or as we know her, “**Retail Renee**” shares her talent with the region. Her tip for January:

“Take an inventory of your wrapping paper, tissue paper, cards, tags and bows. Stock up now while many stores are offering up to 80% off their leftover holiday stock! If you are lucky enough to find holiday cards, keep them



in a handy place so that in September you can start writing them out. You'll be one step ahead of the game come this holiday season!

Remember to keep safe by being aware of your surroundings in the parking lots no matter what time of day!

Special Needs Dance Program!

The Dance Web Inc. School provides dance

lessons for children with special needs at their Cedar Brook, NJ location. Instructor, Miss Kristin is a special educator and runs the “Reach For the Stars” program. For more information contact the school at 609-561-7661. Open House Wednesday, January 16th!

Identity Theft and Children?

According to the Federal Trade Commission over 500,000 children have fallen victim to a crime commonly associated with adults-identity theft. One of the most alarming statistics is that the theft is usually done by a family member. However, others that may have access to personal information could also be the culprit. The attractiveness for criminals is the length of time between the actual theft of the personal information and discovery of the crime.

Most parents never think to check their children's credit status. However, when teenagers begin to apply for

employment, student loans or attempting to open a savings or checking account, parent's may discover a crime has been committed.

There are several things parent's can do to protect their child's credit history.

- Shred all papers that you throw out that contain Social Security Numbers.
- Do not carry your or your child's Social Security Number in your wallet
- Social Security numbers should never be given out on non-essential forms, like a sports team or day care center

application. Always ask why the information is needed.

- If pre-approved credit card offers come in the mail in the name of your child, check your child's credit report, someone may have opened a line of credit in their name.



Thank you to Susan Rodgers for the idea for this article!

Save the Dates!



Join the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN) in celebrating their 20th Anniversary of working with families to improve outcomes for infants, toddlers, children and youth! The conference will be held at the Sheraton in Eatontown on **Wednesday, March 1**. Visit www.spannj.org for more information.

2008 Lunchtime

Teleconferences Health Advocacy Series- SPAN is sponsoring a six part lunchtime series beginning in April. Each teleconference will feature a presentation from 12-1 and a question and answer period from 1-1:30. All workshops in the series are free; but participants must

register at www.spannj.org. Some of the topics include Child Behavioral Health, Managed Care, Health Insurance Models and more.

Wrightslaw **Special Education Law & Advocacy Conference, April 17, 2008** Maggioano's Little Italy, Bridgewater, NJ 9 - 4:30. To register contact the Family Support Center of NJ www.fscnj.org.

The second observation of **Early Intervention Week.**

The third week in May has been designated to celebrate the families and system staff that sustain the New Jersey Early Intervention System. Family Support Coordinators are meeting with SICC member,

William Agress, to plan activities for our state. Anyone with any suggestions should contact a family support coordinator in their region!

The SNJREIC is hold several **Transition to Preschool Workshops** this Winter an Spring. Visit us at www.snjreic.org for a complete schedule or check with your service coordinator for more information!



"Babies don't need a vacation but I still see them at the beach. I'll go over to them and say, "What are you doing here? You've never worked a day in your life!"

-Steven Wright



WEB LINKS

According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, close to 93 million Americans access the internet for health-related concerns. Many of us also access the web for updated information on disability law, early childhood best practices and for supportive purposes.

The following websites represent a small portion of information relevant to the early intervention population.

The Children's Disability List of Support Groups and Listservs © is a annotated directory of internet support groups for

families of children with disabilities and special needs. Each disability mailing list has been validated for usefulness and family orientation. Children's disability discussion forums, support groups, and listservs for parents of special needs children are grouped by general content in this directory. This list is created by the Children's Disability and Special Needs Website.

www.childrensdisabilities.info/speclists.html

First Signs is dedicated to the early identification and intervention of children with developmental delays and disorders. The First

Signs Web site provides a wealth of vital resources, covering a range of issues: from healthy development, to concerns about a child.

www.firstsigns.org

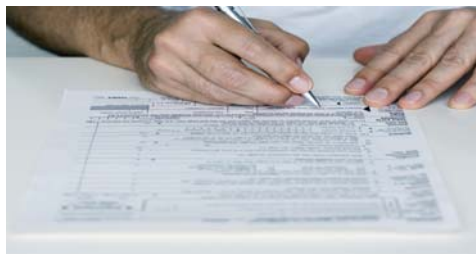
ZERO TO THREE's mission is to support the healthy development and well-being of infants, toddlers and their families. We are a national nonprofit multidisciplinary organization that advances our mission by informing, educating and supporting adults who influence the lives of infants and toddlers.

www.zerotothree.org

Next Issue March 2008...

- *The Collaborative Crew*
- *Spring into Fun*
- *Answers to child development questions*

In an effort to continue our mission to support the families within our state, the New Jersey Early Intervention System is conducting a survey of families whose children recently received early intervention services. Approximately 500 families within our region may receive a survey in the mail in the near future. Each of the four Collaboratives are encouraging families to complete and return it in the self-addressed envelope. The information provided is confidential and participants need not provide a signature. Most of the improvements that we have experienced within our system have come directly from parental input, so please return your survey!



The Southern New Jersey Regional Early Intervention Collaborative is funded by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services Early Intervention Program, with funds from Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).