



FPG Child Development Institute

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Early Intervention Training Center for Infants and Toddlers with Visual Impairments

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Early Intervention Project Web Site and Listserv: Resources for Professionals Working with Young Children November 1, 2001

The Early Intervention Training Center for Infants and Toddlers with Visual Impairments will celebrate its first birthday on January 1, 2002. The project was established to develop resources that will build the capacity of universities to prepare personnel to serve infants and toddlers with visual impairments and their families. The five-year project is located at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is funded under a cooperative agreement to Dr. Deborah Hatton from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. Dr. L. Penny Rosenblum and Dr. Jane Erin at the University of Arizona are major collaborators.

The project listserv is quite active with over 150 members who share information and seek resources. To join the listserv complete the form at <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~edin/listserv/subscription.cfm>, and you'll automatically be subscribed.

The web site for the project at <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~edin/> contains information about the proposed modules, outlines of the module currently being developed, resources for families and professionals, and much more! When you visit our web site, please be sure to take the time to evaluate it by completing our feedback form. This will enable us to adapt our site to meet the needs of professionals in our field.

Project staff members have been very busy working on the first module which will be field tested and disseminated in 2002. This first module focuses on family-centered services and is designed to provide personnel with the expertise required to assess the concerns and priorities of families, function as an effective member of teams, complete routines based interviews and assessments, and develop functional intervention goals. All of these are key factors in developing effective IFSPs that meet the legal requirements of Part C under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). The module will be available in multiple formats and will ultimately be provided to university programs that prepare personnel to serve children with visual impairments.

Over the next four years, other modules will be developed on a variety of topics (e.g., visual conditions with specific information about young children, developmentally appropriate orientation and mobility and motor skills, early intervention practices). To keep abreast of project activities, visit the update section of our web site for drafts of proposed modules and specific information about the module under development. One of the primary purposes of the web site is to provide drafts of resources that are being developed in the update section so that professionals in the field, and university faculty

members in particular, can provide suggestions and feedback as materials are being developed.

The project has a University Advisory Board with 29 faculty members from 24 universities in 19 states. (Please see the advisory board section of our web site for a list of these members.) We met with 18 of these faculty members at a half-day meeting preceding the Josephine L. Taylor Leadership Institute in Washington on March 16 and with 34 university faculty members during a three-hour session at the American Printing House for the Blind in Louisville on May 21. The purpose of those meetings was to secure feedback about the proposed modules and specifically about the family-centered practices module.

In addition, we conferred with leading practitioners from the field of early childhood visual impairment preceding the International Seminar on Preschool Blindness held in Seaside, Oregon on May 6, 2001. Representatives from the following agencies participated in a half-day meeting: Perkins School for the Blind and the Hilton Perkins Foundation in Boston, the Foundation for Blind Children in Phoenix, the Blind Babies Foundation in San Francisco, Visually Impaired Preschool Services and APH in Louisville, Anchor Center and the Colorado Department of Education in Denver, the Center for Development and Learning at UNC-Chapel Hill, Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind in Ogden, along with private consultant Virginia Bishop from Austin, Texas. Again, the primary purpose of this meeting was to secure detailed feedback from participants on the content and format of our proposed modules.

To provide immediate resources to enhance the preparation of personnel to serve infants and toddlers, a mini-grant competition was held specifically for our University Advisory Board. Mini-grants of up to \$1,000 will be used to purchase resources related to early intervention or to provide funds for guest lecturers, field trips, etc.—any reasonable activity that promotes preparing personnel to serve infants and toddlers with visual impairments. Faculty members from the following universities have been awarded mini-grants for 2001: the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Dominican College, Florida State University, University of Louisville, North Carolina Central University, Pennsylvania College of Optometry, and Portland State University.

For more information about the project, contact

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