

Early Intervention Training News

Administered by the United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Chicago and
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Training Program Website goes under construction

Easier to use, more information

By Lucy Gimble, Program Assistant

When the EI Training Program's website, www.illinoiseittraining.org, was developed back 2002, it's primary goals were easier access to a calendar of Illinois Early Intervention training events and a simpler registration process for the greater EI Provider population with online registration. The secondary purpose of the website was as an Early Intervention Resource. Without a doubt, it is easier and certainly more cost effective to share information through the "Information Highway" of today than through means of not-so-long-ago — the US Postal Service and word-of-mouth.

To meet the growing needs of the EI community we have performed an occasional 'Nip and Tuck' on the site over the years. However, it has become apparent that if we are going to have the capacity to provide bigger and better resources and more training opportunities to those already working in the field of early intervention, those considering joining it, and the families served through EI a little 'Nip and Tuck' is not enough.

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Credit Request, Credit Request...

What's the status of my Credit Request

By Lucy Gimble, Program Assistant

As the 2007 deadline for credentialed providers to show hours in the four content areas draws nearer, our fax machine is smoking and the mailboxes are full. Our review team works continuously to review your requests objectively, by consulting with experienced providers in your discipline for clarification of any workshop content; and efficiently by dating and logging your requests as we receive them which begins the 30 business day processing timeline. We admit that we do not have the 'perfect' system in place, but we're working on it...

We currently process close to 400 requests per month. Some of your more common questions during this process include the following:

Aren't all STAR NET workshops approved for EI? No. Although many are, most are not. The STAR NET Regions' target audiences are Early Childhood Educators/Providers. **STAR NET** workshops typically include a significant focus on classroom environment/management and teaching strategies. Because of the nature of the subject matter, some STAR NET Workshops do apply to Early Intervention and the birth – three child population.

Aren't you STAR NET? No. STAR NET and the Illinois Early Intervention Training Program are two different entities with two different missions.

Why did I receive a said amount of EI credit for a workshop and a colleague who

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A different perspective on the family interview

When you watch interviews on television, doesn't it seem easy? Often it seems like the person being interviewed (excluding politicians) is very willing to talk, and often gives the information before the questions are even asked.

Those of us whose work requires us to talk to, interview people we have never met before, know it is not that easy. Interviewing is a skill. In Early Intervention we need a lot of information; some is very personal.

Without that information our jobs are more difficult and the families may not receive all the services EI could provide to them. We want our families to feel comfortable and we want to hear their thoughts, concerns and opinions.

In fact when you look at this process closely, we are not really talking about an interview. It is more of a conversation where we share information and ideas back and forth. This can be an empowering experience for the family member or caregiver because much of what we do draws from their concerns and priorities. When your conversation with a family goes well, don't you have a feeling of accomplishment?

Early Intervention is asking therapists, service coordinators, parent liaisons, anyone who works with families to sharpen their interview skills because of the information needed for child outcomes, ASQ-Social Emotional rating scales, outcomes, assessments, progress reports, and other pieces of documentation. Here are some thoughts and suggestions on interviewing that you may find helpful. Please remember, think of this whole process as a conversation.

The SOLER Method for interviewing

- S. Face the client squarely
- O. Adopt an open posture
- L. You can learn toward each other
- E. Eye contact
- R. Relaxed and natural

The following information is adapted from material developed by Benton K. Johnson II, Joan Debelak, regional training consultants, and from family systems researchers Hutchins & Vaught, 1997, Turnbull & Turnbull, 1998).

In relationship-based intervention the professionals



Parents will distance themselves from professionals who they feel don't understand or push too hard.

who work with families may assume different helping roles such as sounding board, empathetic, ear, educator, consultant, coach. Research shows that a helping relationship will be more successful when the parent or caregiver sees themselves as an agent of change in achieving desired family-identified outcomes.

Keys to Helping

The first step is "to understand your own behavior and how you interact with others"

(Hutchins & Vaught, 1997). Think about what type of person makes you feel uncomfortable and why it might be difficult to interview this type of person?



What kinds of questions are difficult for you to ask? What happens when you begin to feel uneasy about asking certain questions? Once you have a better understanding of yourself think about some strategies that might help you when you are asked to stretch beyond your comfort level.

Put a list together of the information you already have about the family. Develop strategies on how you might structure the interview so you are not asking question after question. Plan how you will introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the meeting. Even though you may have explained what the meeting was about to the family over the phone, they may be overwhelmed or confused.

The greeting is important. Be personal but businesslike and help the families feel at ease. Attend to the family member. Respond if he or she seems anxious or skeptical by saying "You seem to be How can I help you?" Try using more open ended questions that invite the family member to talk freely and share more information.

Be an active listener

- ◆ Listen carefully to who is said and how it is said
- ◆ Allow people to complete their thoughts and sentences
- ◆ Reflect and clarify themes that the client presents
- ◆ Explore relevant content
- ◆ Note discrepancies and similarities
- ◆ Rephrase and summarize
- ◆ Encourage feedback from the client to maintain and check for accuracy

THEY'RE COMING BACK...

WITH A TWIST...

The Training Program is often asked, "When is the next Regional Conference?" and the response lately has been, "We are not coordinating a conference schedule at this time, perhaps sometime in the future." Well, sometime is sooner than you think.

Although great learning experiences and very well received by those who attended, the 2-day Regional Conferences sponsored in the past were not a cost-effective use of our program dollars. Not wanting to give up on the EI conference concept, Regional Conferences were put on hold while other options were explored. However, your phone calls and e-mails inquiring about and requesting regional conference keep coming.

The Illinois EI Training Program is pleased to announce the coming of four statewide EI Conferences this 2006-07 program year. one-day conference format, each will focus on one of the four core content areas of Illinois early intervention with breakout sessions offered at the intermediate and/or advanced levels. An EXPO featuring more local agencies/vendors is expected to be on each conference agenda. The plans are in the works and the details are unfolding. Watch for 'Save-The-Date' flyers to be coming at you soon!



Credit Requests cont.

attended the same workshop with me and was given different EI credit? It is very important to include the information requested with your request. Each request is processed according to the information received with that request. You or your colleague may have sent more detailed information (handouts, notes, PowerPoint Presentation, etc) for review. If the exact information was received with each request, then we will re-review.

Do I get credit for the development and presentation of an EI approved workshop? Effective July 1, 2006, presenters of EI approved workshops qualify for credit equal to the number of contact hours involved in a one-time presentation. Even though a trainer may present the same training curriculum several times, credit will be issued only once. Just as a provider may attend a particular workshop more than once but can claim continuing education credit once. The EI Training Program is aware of the time and effort that goes into curriculum development and presentation; however, there is no policy in place at this time to determine how to equate those efforts to EI credentialing credit.

Will I get the same credit posted on your website for a workshop of the same name, but held at a different time and place? Not necessarily. Many workshops of the same title do not offer the same curriculum content OR the curriculum has been modified to fit the needs of a specific audience. In these instances a completed EI Credit Request form with information attached must be submitted for review. In cases when the same presenter is presenting the same content and agenda at a different time and place, the EI credit will be the same; however an EI Credit Request Form with the specific date/time, location, sponsoring entity data must be filed with us. Indicate somewhere on

the form that this is a repeat of an already approved workshop.

Will I get professional CEU's for attending a workshop that is/was approved for EI credit? The process of awarding professional CEU's towards your state licensure is the responsibility of the workshop's sponsoring entity. The EI Training Program approves credit that is only applicable towards your Illinois Early Intervention credential. The EI Training Program's administrative agent, United Cerebral Palsy of Chicago, is an approved Illinois state licensure for PT's, OT's, SLP's, Social Work and Teachers (CPDU's). Curriculum developed and presented by the Illinois EI Training Program offers credit towards your Illinois State professional licensure. This information is clearly posted on all certificates of attendance that the Illinois EI Training Program presents with State licensure approval.

We receive many and varied questions regarding the EI credit approval process and though this article addresses some of the most frequently asked questions and comments, no question is too small to ask. Please feel free to call our office toll free, 866/509-3867, ext. 250 with your questions and comments.

To ensure that your credit request is processed expediently please follow these tips:

- Use the Request for EI Credit Forms currently posted on our website. These are available by opening the attached link on the Home Page.
- **Do not use pencil.** Please print using black ink.
- Include the information requested. A brief description of the workshop and timed agenda are important pieces of information for review.

www.illinoiseittraining.org changes Cont.

Therefore, www.illinoiseittraining.org will go 'under-the-knife' for a major overhaul. Although an exact timeline is not available as this goes to press, the project will begin this summer.

The website will have a new look, one designed to be as user-friendly as possible without being overly simplistic.

The site will continue to feature a training events calendar with search options better suited to your needs and easily recognizable. Because your response to our online training module has been very good, we are developing other online training modules and negotiating links to others. Online training will become a menu option all its own.

One can never have too many resources! Our Resource Links will become categorized and more streamlined for easier accessibility. The online video library will be updated and enhanced. To help you better find the events

and information you need, we will be building in more default options that cross-reference subject matter automatically. And, of course, current early intervention statewide and federal policies, news and events, and informational updates will continue to be featured.

New to the site will be 'Regional' pages. Kind-of-like websites within a website, up to five different early intervention regions, grouped by CFC's and assigned geographically, will be developed. Each Regional Page will feature events and issues relative to that specific area/region.

As you can see we have some very exciting plans for our website. The "Information Highway" that we all talk about so much will be a lot smoother when you go to

www.illinoiseittraining.org

*No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars
or sailed an uncharted land,
or opened a new doorway for the human spirit."*

*Helen Keller
US Blind and Deaf Educator (1880-1968)*

Illinois Early Intervention Training Program

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