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## New York Zero-to-Three Network

Fostering collaboration among those who work with infants, toddlers and their families

September 2012

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### Save the Date for NYZTT Network Annual Conference: May 3rd, 2013



**REPORTS & MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS:**

EDUCARE coming to NYC and Pre-K day extension: [New York Times](#)

EDUCARE Implementation study findings released [August 2012](#)

Early Head Start National Resource Center: [Approaches to Learning News You Can Use](#)

Clasp: [What is Sequestration? At Risk: Early Care and Education Funding and Sequestration](#)

[Guide for Funding Putting it Together](#)

## News

### BACK TO SCHOOL FOR SOME.....

Young children are learning all the time and their learning matters!

The "PK-12 crew" have returned to school buildings, yet for those of us in the zero-to-three field we know that little children learn all the time! Spreading the message that what happens in the first years of life has profound proven benefits on success in the classroom and in life is important for all of us.

Differences in how young children "learn" are key points in educating others outside the early childhood field:

- Young children learn in the context of a relationship - and early relationships matter for how they develop relationships in school and life.
- Young children don't only learn in specific buildings - learning experiences happen in multiple settings for young children: doctors' offices, homes, grandparents' homes, early care and education settings, everywhere!
- Young children learn in a multi-domain context and the domains are interdependent - a delay in one domain can result in challenges in another; alternatively a strength in a domain can be leveraged to address a challenge in another.

Here are some great New York resources to help continue to make the case for the importance of quality early childhood experiences:

- [Quality: What it is and Why it Matters in Early Care and Education](#) - SCAA NY
- [ECAC Newsletter](#) - Early Childhood Advisory Council
- [Winning Beginning NY](#) - Statewide Advocacy coalition for Early Care and Education
- [Early Years Institute Blog](#) - Early Years Institute

## Interview with Margaret Sampson - Leader in Early Intervention

NYZTT caught up with Margaret Sampson, Family Initiative Coordinator at Just Kids Foundation and member of the New York State Early Intervention Coordinating Council, over the

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summer. Margaret had just returned from the OSEP Leadership Conference in Washington, DC and was able to share with us some national and state perspectives on early intervention policy.

NYZTT: What would you say was the most pressing issue discussed among the attendees at the OSEP Leadership Conference?

Margaret: The upcoming November election was foremost on the minds of those attending. There was a great degree of uncertainty among the participants with regard to the outcome of the November election and how it will impact support for IDEA Part B and Part C. Sequestration was also an issue of great concern for its potential impact on all federal programs. The projected 7.8% cut to federal programs will greatly impact the funding stream for our programs. Senator Harkin's report outlined the potential cuts and the impact on individual states. (For more information on sequestration see the CLASP article in the Reports and Media Highlights Column of this newsletter.)

A redefinition of "early intervention" has been suggested. The new language would read "early intervention is to build the capacity of each family to enhance the development of their child." The current definition is "to enhance each family's capacity to care for infants and toddlers." I am concerned about how redefining early intervention would impact funding streams, service delivery, programming and practice.

NYZTT: In regards to the use and documentation of evidence-based practices (EBP) being written into the IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan), what can you report?

Margaret: Strengthening language in the reauthorization of Part C regarding the use and documentation of evidence-based practices in the IFSP was an issue that generated a lot of discussion at the conference. The definition of EPB, as well as the policy of incorporating EBP into programming, should be clearly defined as we move forward with this agenda. It is important to consider the reasons for incorporating EBP as well as the individual needs of children. Some states are pushing for much more rigorous policy language, similar to the natural environments provisions and beyond.

NYZTT: Do you foresee any changes with regard to billing a family's insurance (private or public) here in New York?

Margaret: The discussion related to billing centered on the regulation in Part C that requires states to obtain consent from families in order to bill insurance companies for early intervention services. There seem to be varying opinions as to the strength of the language required and the need to obtain permission. An example of language change would concern the need to obtain parental consent anytime there is a change in frequency of services. Protection of annual/lifetime and service caps, and a parent's right to refuse access to their insurance if it will result in a cost to the family (e.g., increases in premiums) continue to dominate discussions at the national level. In New York, what remains to be seen is who will be responsible for obtaining parental consent, how often, and how the incorporation of the fiscal agent for billing will influence the timeliness of payment.

NYZTT: Congratulations on your appointment to the Early

Intervention Coordinating Council. At this point in time can you identify a "hot topic" for yourself or the council as a whole?

Margaret: The council is anticipating that several changes to regulations will be issued by the New York State Department of Health in response to three independent factors. First the governor's budget will make it necessary to enact certain modifications to the EIP (Early Intervention Program). Secondly, changes will need to be made in order to align the program with changes to IDEA Part C regulations that were issued last fall by the federal government. Third, as a result of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSEP) Part C Annual Determination Letter to Commissioner Shah, changes must be made to NYS EIP regulations to bring us into compliance with federal requirements.

In addition, I personally am preparing a crosswalk between IDEA Part C Regulations and New York State Regulations. One area that I have identified as requiring a change in practice is the family assessment. IDEA Part C regulatory language has changed, and family assessment, still optional to the family, is not conducted unless the child has been determined eligible for the EIP. Also, family assessment will now require the use of an assessment tool in addition to the personal interview.

NYZTT: Any final thought that you would like to leave with our readers?

Margaret: New York has had a long-standing commitment to young children with disabilities and their families. I am very proud of New York's Early Intervention Program despite our challenges. I would encourage readers to become more involved with policy changes. Voices are critical and need to be heard.

[Edited for clarity.]

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