

# Transition Tidbits

A biannual newsletter

Spring 2011 - Issue 10

published by ATTI



## In this issue –

1. Amber Lathrop's Parent Story
2. Hoonah Training
3. Cordova Training
4. Clarification on RTI

## Amber Lathrop's Parent Story



Amber Lathrop is the parent of four children, ages 5, 6, 7, & 8. All participated in the Infant Learning Program at Frontier Community Services in Soldotna. They have all successfully transitioned to elementary education with the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. Two children continue to receive support through IEP's and two do not require Sped Services.

### **What was most helpful or beneficial to you in your transition process?**

The most beneficial thing to our family was the group effort put forth to find a unique solution for the best educational program for each child. Having Head Start, ILP, and Child Find working together made the process go smoothly. Communication among agencies and a willingness to work together made the transition a positive one. My son, Logan, was non-verbal when he qualified for district services. One of my main concerns was for him to develop speech among age-appropriate peers. In order to accommodate Logan's need for social skills and speech, an arrangement was made for him to attend Sped Preschool in the mornings and then be bussed to participate in Kenaitze Head Start in the afternoons and on the mornings he did not have AM preschool. This proved to be a highly successful team choice as Logan thrived in his combination of placements.

**What was most challenging for you in your transition process?** As a parent, the most challenging thing for me was realizing the different qualifying factors going from ILP to school district. Both of my daughters, Sophie and Taryn, had been receiving private OT, PT, and speech services in addition to ILP intervention. With their given diagnoses, I was unsure if they would qualify for Special Education services. As it turned out, because of all the positive early interventions and therapies, neither required further special education.

**What is one thing that could have gone better or differently in your transition process?** I can honestly say that I would not try to change the process. I was happy with the interventions and the people involved. The most trying part for me was the number of people involved, from therapists

*continued on page 2.....*

.....parent story continued

to educators to representatives for the children before they were formally adopted. At one IEP I believe that there were seventeen people in attendance. That number was overwhelming!

**What piece of advice would you give parents going through the transition process?** For parents the best advice I can give is to write down goals for your children, as well as, your concerns so you are prepared at meetings. Asking questions in advance is a good strategy. The Step Ahead At Three book is also a great reference as it provides a step-by step guide to the transition process. Parents should also be encouraged to call a meeting if the placement chosen is not working. My younger son, Kian, moved to full day kindergarten in October after it was agreed that Sped Preschool was not his Least Restrictive Environment. Parents should feel empowered to question and make changes if necessary.

*Amber Lathrop is a Regional Parent Navigator for Stone Soup Group. She advocates for parents whose children experience exceptionalities and supports foster care and adoption. In addition, she works with families experiencing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders and was recently selected to be a trainer on the ATTI Project.*

---

---

## **ATTI Training in Hoonah** ***September 2010***

The Hoonah transition team participants were actively involved in developing common understanding of all programs and of current transition requirements and process. They worked hard at identifying challenges to effective transitions and developing a realistic action plan. Hoonah is fortunate to have the PAT program which serves as a foundation for families with young children in their community. In addition, many other resources are available.



### **Hoonah's Vision**

*The Hoonah Transition Team will collaborate to provide an inclusive, smooth, timely, and culturally sensitive transition process for families and their children birth to age 8.*



## **ATTI Cordova Training** ***November 2010***

The Cordova transition team participants worked hard in developing greater understanding of all program services and the transition/referral process into special education services. The training helped clarify confusion about the transition process and agency roles & responsibilities. They developed a written guidance document, ( flow chart ), to outline the referral process. This will be beneficial for all program staff and will also help to orient new staff members.

**Congratulations Cordova on a productive training!**

## **Clarification on RTI and Referrals to Early Childhood Special Education**

*By Bev Ingram, ATTI Project Coordinator*

Response to Intervention (RTI) discussion and various stages of implementation is sweeping the country and Alaska's school districts. In most districts, the focus is on school aged children and there is some confusion about how RTI approaches can be applied to younger children. RTI is a multi-tiered approach to instruction and intervention that addresses the needs of ALL children and requires high quality instruction, ongoing student assessment and progress monitoring, and family involvement.

According to a memorandum dated January 21, 2011 from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to State Directors of Special Education, a RTI process cannot be used to delay or deny an evaluation for eligibility under IDEA. The regulations implementing the 2004 Amendments to IDEA include a provision mandating that States allow, as part of their criteria for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability (SLD), the use of a process based on the child's responses to scientific, research-based intervention. Most RTI programs focus on Reading, Math and Behavior. Pre-school children are generally not placed into the category of SLD, because of their age and where they are developmentally. Many children under the age of 5 are found eligible in the category: early childhood developmental delay, ECDD or DD. Whenever a parent gives consent to an evaluation, whether it be the initial or re-evaluation, schools have 45 days in which to complete the evaluation and determine whether or not the student is eligible for services. However, if after having gone through the referral process, the school does not suspect that the child has a disability, and does not believe additional evaluations are necessary, the district must provide a written notice to the parents, telling why and what was used as the basis of this decision.

Many Head Start providers have expressed concern on how local education agencies (LEA's) are implementing RTI and therefore causing unnecessary delays when a Head Start program refers a child suspected of having a disability and being in need of special education and related services. IDEA does not require, or encourage, an LEA to use an RTI approach prior to a referral for evaluation or as part of determining whether a 3-5 year old is eligible for special education and related services. It is important for all referral sources to include specific information with the referral including screening or assessment results and any pre-referral intervention strategies and approaches that have been tried. The documentation must include the specific concerns and prior interventions including curriculum adaptations; behavioral interventions in the home and/or classroom; changes in classroom organization; teaching techniques or schedule.

Hopefully, this clarifies any questions about RTI and referrals for evaluation for special education services for young children. The application of RTI within Pre-K settings is a new phenomenon and several states are putting ideas into practice that are described in the PreK Roadmap listed in the below resources.

### For more information:

- For complete letters from OSEP-contact, [bevingram@reachak.org](mailto:bevingram@reachak.org)
- Roadmap to Pre-RTI, National Center for Learning Disabilities, [www.RTINetwork.org/PreKRoadmap](http://www.RTINetwork.org/PreKRoadmap)
- The Center for Response to Intervention in Early Childhood, [www.crtiec.org](http://www.crtiec.org) is currently conducting research and development to document the effect of multi-tiered instruction designed specifically for preschool children.
- State of Alaska Special Education Handbook, [www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/sped/Handbook](http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/sped/Handbook)

## **Plan NOW for training in 2011-2012**

If your team needs help with.....

Developing or updating your MOA, meeting transition timelines, conducting transition conferences, collaborating or team building, meeting management, orienting new team members, or supporting families through the transition process, ATTI can help.

Call or complete the request form on [www.attialaska.org](http://www.attialaska.org) to schedule a new training, technical assistance support, or team meeting facilitation.

***Transition e-learning module now available on line.***

[www.eed.state.ak.us/ELearning/](http://www.eed.state.ak.us/ELearning/)

***CHECK IT OUT!***

## **UPCOMING EVENT**

*Stone Soup Group presents,*  
***TRANSITION: CRADLE to COMMUNITY***

*April 26-28, 2011 in Anchorage*

[www.stonesoupgroup.org](http://www.stonesoupgroup.org)

## **Alaska Transition Training Initiative**

[atti@aptalaska.net](mailto:atti@aptalaska.net)

[www.attialaska.org](http://www.attialaska.org)

907-586-8228



Grant funding for ATTI is provided through The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development and DHSS, Office of Children's Services.



postage

c/o REACH, Inc.  
213 Third Street  
Juneau, AK 99801

***ATTI Vision: All children will have successful life transitions supported by their family and community.***