

## **5<sup>th</sup> Parent Leadership Institute**

Our 5<sup>th</sup> annual Institute was held in Orlando, Florida from May 12-16. Six state teams attended: Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Rhode Island, and Vermont. During the intensive four-day Institute, individuals participated in interactive activities and discussions centered on leadership skills and styles. As a centerpiece of the meeting, state teams worked hard to create state team plans as part of their commitment to carry out an event or activity on parent leadership within six to nine months of the Institute. Participants wrote extensively about the value of the meeting and were generous in their suggestions for further work on future Institutes. We are sharing a few of the comments expressed by more than one participant:

### ***Highlights***

- “Deep Listening.”
- Dialogue on diversity.
- Getting to know my team members.
- Opportunities to learn possible actions and strategies from other states.
- The ORID and Roberto’s diversity piece.
- Family stories.
- Out-of-class time with other parents.
- The first team meeting which first revealed emerging leadership skills of parents.
- Team planning.
- True Colors allowed us as team members to have a better understanding of each other in the team process.
- Openness
- Seeing it all come together.
- “Early Memories” and exploring differences.
- Being reminded of other states’ accomplishments, problems, solutions, and goals.
- I enjoyed meeting other parents and exchanging information.
- The resource sharing
- Presentations on cultural awareness.

### ***Accomplishments***

- The Institute was a great time for communicating with team members. It helped clarify our team’s priorities.
- Our team is embarking on creating a powerful vehicle which will provide a forum for accomplishing tasks we’ve identified to strengthen services to families.
- Listening.
- The team has a cohesive mission.
- Our team came up with a viable plan.
- I learned more about myself.
- Meeting new friends and speaking to other teams.
- We decided on a specific family event to attempt back home. We also got to know our team members better.
- The feeling of empowerment that our state team is leaving with.
- Returning home with an outline of a realistic and doable plan.
- This event brought our state team together, and we were able to bond very closely. We are much more focused and have taken responsibility for our ICC.
- Our team developed a parent involvement strategy.

## Resources

At the May 2004 ICC Parent Leadership Institute, participants shared resources from their states. Here are a few:

**Florida:** “A PRO Guide to The Alphabet Soup of Acronyms,” a pamphlet with acronyms and their descriptions. Provided by Paula Kendig, President/CEO, Parent Resource Organization Network, Inc. 2921 Inverness Pl, Pensacola, FL 32503. Phone: (850) 434-8131; Fax: (850) 434-8132. Email: [pkendig@aol.com](mailto:pkendig@aol.com).

**Idaho:** Idaho Infant Toddler Program, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. Early Intervention services for children birth to 3. Contact Idaho Careline at (800) 926-2588, or visit them online at [www.idahochild.org](http://www.idahochild.org).

**Rhode Island:** Rhode Island Parent Information Network. 175 Main St, Pawtucket, RI 02860. Phone: (401) 727-4144 or (800) 464-3399 (toll free in RI only). Email: [ripin@ripin.org](mailto:ripin@ripin.org). Web: [www.ripin.org](http://www.ripin.org).

**Indiana:** “Family to Family: Connecting Families in Community,” an online support network providing training & resources to help families serve as points of contact, advisors and co-trainers. For more information, contact Mary Jo Paladino at Family to Family. 16130 Brockton Court, Granger, IN 46530-9714. Phone: (574) 273-6019. Email: [mpaladin@indiana.edu](mailto:mpaladin@indiana.edu).

**Kansas:** Parent to Parent of Kansas (a program of Families Together, Inc), a one-on-one support model for parents of children with special needs. Contact the Wichita Parent and Administrative Center for more information. 3340 W. Douglas Ste. 102, Wichita, KS 67203. Phone: (316) 945-7747; Fax: (316) 945-7795. Email: [wichita@famielstogtherinc.org](mailto:wichita@famielstogtherinc.org).

**Vermont:** The Vermont team presented a leadership workbook--*Parent Portfolio Notebook: Turning Life Experience into Credentials*—which the authors gave us permission to distribute in electronic format. Please contact us if you would like a PDF version of the document emailed to you. Soon, it will also be available for download on our project website.

**We are seeking states interested in participating in next year’s Institute (May 2005).** The four-day Institute aims to meet the learning needs of participants and support the work that groups of parent leaders will do when they leave the Institute to return to their respective states. Contact us for more information.

## Other News

In March and June, Barbara Popper was able to attend the most recent meetings of the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council (FICC) in Washington. At both meetings, outstanding presentations were made on the subject of autism. Some of the speakers were part of the Autism Summit held last fall and sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). There is now also an Interagency Coordinating Council on Autism sponsored by those groups. While it is wonderful to have a focus on this area (since so many new cases are being diagnosed and no cause has been pinpointed), parents still might want to support the current FICC sponsored by the Department of Education under the current IDEA. It addresses the needs of all children birth to three in need of early intervention. The proposed IDEA does not require that there be such a body, so it may not continue. The FICC website is [www.Fed-icc.org](http://www.Fed-icc.org).

If you would like to share your stories, an article, a poem, or any ideas you may have, please call or email Marilyn Gutierrez-Wilson ([marilyng@fcsn.org](mailto:marilyng@fcsn.org)) or call (800) 493-2338 x 151.

**Check out our website for more details: [www.iccparent.org](http://www.iccparent.org)**

