

## **Human Development Center Agency Report October 2009**

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services was not able to re-fund the Supported Employment Continuous Improvement Project (SECIP), despite their satisfaction with the project. As a result, HDC had to let four valued employees go: Patty Ghioffi, David Legendre, Sam Slavich, and Alisha Burch. We wish them all continued success as they continue to work to improve the quality of life enjoyed by persons with disabilities.

On a happier note, HDC welcomes four new staff who will be working on the Louisiana Autism Spectrum and Related Disabilities (LASARD) project: Lisa Altman (New Orleans), Julie Riley (New Orleans), Bambi Polotzola (Opelousas), Auna Oncay (Polock). The LASARD project is entering its fourth year and has been somewhat redesigned to include a greater emphasis on achieving its goals by working through school district personnel using web-based technical support in addition to traditional face-to-face strategies. The project's Louisiana Autism Quality Indicators (LAQI) instrument has undergone revisions and the psychometric properties of the revised instrument are being established this school year. Two training events open to the public are scheduled to occur this fall: October 27 8:30 to 3:30 in Bossier City and November 3 in Baton Rouge. For more information contact Lisa Altman at (504) 568-4331 or to register online go to <http://www.hdc.lsuhsu.edu/lasard/Registration.html> . These workshops are open to any professional or family member in Louisiana school districts who is not currently at a LASARD partner school. The workshop will include information on current research and evidence-based practices for educating students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Related Disabilities. Additionally, the workshop will provide an introduction to the LASARD project and the Louisiana Autism Quality Indicators (LAQI).

Three families have been enrolled in the Early Intensive Treatment Project- which is a project designed to systematically document implementation and outcomes associated with coaching parents to use "evidence-based" procedures to support the learning and development of their young child with, or at risk of being diagnosed with, an autism spectrum disorder. Project staff also recently provided training on evidence-based procedures for supporting learning/development of young children with ASD in north, central and south Louisiana to audiences of EarlySteps service providers and family members.

HDC is awaiting receipt of a fully executed contract from EarlySteps to establish and evaluate a Transdisciplinary Service pilot- again, for families with young children with, or at risk of, a diagnosis of ASD. This very ambitious project seeks to establish procedures and evaluate the feasibility of delivering transdisciplinary services within the EarlySteps framework. The project will have two phases. The first phase will focus on establishing model transdisciplinary teams. The second phase will focus on training EarlySteps personnel and providers to implement EarlySteps services within a transdisciplinary framework. Staff recruitment is underway. If you are interested, or know a service provider who may be interested in working on this project please contact Dr. Gina Easterly-Taylor at [geaste@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:geaste@lsuhsc.edu).

HDC will begin working in collaboration with St. Tammany school district to implement and evaluate Response to Intervention procedures. This effort will target specific schools and will include on-site technical assistance, problem solving and evaluation. If this project is successful, it may serve as the foundation for future work and grant applications. On a related note, HDC staff will be providing a webinar series on the topic of Rtl this fall. For more information contact Lizette Flammer-Rivera at [lriver@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:lriver@lsuhsc.edu) or go to <http://www.hdc.lsuhs.edu/Webinars.html> to see dates/topics and registration information.

The Louisiana School Psychology Internship Consortium is entering its 17<sup>th</sup> year. Since its inception, approximately 200 school psychologists from universities around the country have completed the program. Nearly half of the psychologists trained by this program have stayed to work at least 3 years in Louisiana. This year's class hails from 7 different Universities located in six different states.