

# MNDEC Newsletter <http://www.mndec.org/>

Minnesota Division of Early Childhood

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October 28, 2014  
VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3

## President's message

*Aaron Deris, MN DEC President*

Here we go again, by now we are all accepting that the 2014-2015 school year has begun. I am hopeful that you all have taken the recent October break and used this time to refresh and revitalize.

Your local board for MN DEC has a lot of exciting opportunities for you in the near future. We have also had our own excitement with our recent elections and having some new individuals in leadership positions.

Our first opportunity will be the annual Fall Leadership Conference held October 29-31 at Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge. MN DEC, in partnership with Minnesota Department of Education, S will host this annual event. The conference focus will be a continuation of Implementation of Quality, and Inspire Action for our state. Melissa Van Dyke and Oscar Fleming, both from the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN), Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, will be presenting again. During the conference MN DEC will host a membership meeting as well as a wine and cheese reception for DEC membership only (check agenda for details).

If you haven't yet registered, here is the link- <https://classic.regonline.com/builder/site/?eventid=1592745>

Many individuals from the board and others from around the state recently attended the 30th annual Division for Early Childhood International Conference in St Louis. In this newsletter there is a summary of information from the conference. It is never too early to start planning to attend this conference. The conference location for the next two years has been announced- 2015 will be in Atlanta, GA and 2016 will be in Louisville, KY- <http://www.dec-sped.org/content.asp?contentid=211>

Our annual MN DEC Spring Practitioners Conference will be held the evening of March 5 and all day March 6. Our website will soon contain information about this wonderful event. Please notify me if you have ideas or have interest in participating in a work group for the spring conference ([aaron.deris@mnsu.edu](mailto:aaron.deris@mnsu.edu)).

MN DEC Communications subcommittee has been busy updating the website- [www.mndec.org](http://www.mndec.org). You will be able to find archived meeting minutes, ability to post a job announcement for your district, and our current executive board, amongst other resources.

*President's message continued on next page*

*Message from Aaron Deris MN DEC president (continued from page 1)*

MN DEC board has posted the Mini-Grant Application for 2015 on the MN DEC website. The funds for these Action-Research grants are raised through the silent auction and raffle held annually at the Fall Leadership and Spring Practitioner's Conferences. Two grants of \$500 each are available to practitioners who wish to engage in action research efforts within their district programs, serving young children with disabilities and their families. Each application must include at least one applicant who is a current member of DEC. Grant applications are due on December 1, 2014 and will be awarded December 15, 2014. All information is available on the MN DEC website.

Finally, we have some new individuals on our MN DEC Board. I am quite excited to announce the following individuals whose terms started this year.

Judy Beaton- President Elect (Eden Prairie Public Schools)

Pam Morrison- Treasurer (Stillwater Public Schools)

Heide Muhs- Secretary (Forest Lake Public Schools)

Members at Large-

Jodi Altringer (Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Public Schools)

Lisa Brinkley (Prior Lake-Savage, Public Schools)

Donna Miller (MN Centers of Excellence)

Ann Schmitz (Mankato Public Schools)

Thank you for all that you do for our youngest of learners.

## State Update

*Kelly Monson MA Ed, MPA, CFLE*

*Help Me Grow Coordinator*

MN Department of Education

1500 Highway 36W

Roseville, MN 55113

651-582-8421



### **What is happening now and what are the next steps?**

The Minnesota Office of Early Learning held a summit in December 2013 with the purpose of learning more about the NHMG system. Over 100 early childhood stakeholders and community partners from across the state attended the summit and provided thoughtful feedback about implementing the NHMG system in Minnesota and how it might meet the needs of young children, families, and service providers in our state.

The Office of Early Learning has decided to formally explore the National Help Me Grow system here in Minnesota through a year of technical assistance and planning with the Help Me Grow National Center. During the year-long planning process, the Office of Early Learning will ask for continued engagement from early childhood providers and partners, to help decide how to best structure the system to fit our state's needs.

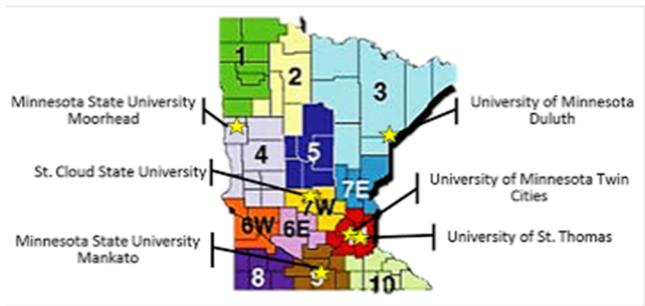
The Office of Early Learning will continue to serve as the organizing entity through the upcoming planning year. Kelly Monson will serve as the Program Coordinator and primary contact for this initiative, working in close partnership with an interagency coordinating team. You can contact Kelly at [Kelly.monson@state.mn.us](mailto:Kelly.monson@state.mn.us).

## Higher Education

*Kellie Krick Oborn- St Thomas University, MN DEC board member*

The Minnesota ECSE Higher Education Consortium has established a collaborative website to help individuals interested in pursuing an ECSE license explore the various options that are available in Minnesota. There are currently six universities in Minnesota that are approved by the MN Board of Teaching to offer ECSE licensure programs. Finding the right program is an important decision. The website provides an overview of all licensure programs to help individuals compare options. Please share this information and website with individuals you know who may be interested in pursuing their license!

<https://sites.google.com/a/umn.edu/mn-ecse-programs/>



Save the Date! Summer Institute 2015 will be held on Thurs - Fri, June 11-12. The cost will be \$125.00. Program leaders/coordinators are encouraged to consider sending teams and to budget / plan accordingly. There will be sessions offered that support foundational knowledge and skills, as well as advanced sessions; some of the sessions will be designed to support findings from the Inspire Action self-assessment. Hope to see you there!

## National DEC Conference 2014

*Jane Gibson, MN DEC membership chair*

This year the conference was held in St. Louis, MO on October 7-9th. It was great to see a lot of Minnesotans there, doing workshops and poster sessions, attending meetings and tweeting. There were also friends of MN to be found there. Juliann Woods, current president of national DEC, couldn't say enough good things about MN and was often seen promoting our own Donna Miller who is running for the national board next year.

There was a broad variety of good workshops. Suzanne Milbourne, one of the creators of CARA's Kit, presented on Creating Adaptations for Infant/Toddler Routines and Activities in home and daycare. There was an excellent equity round table discussion on the shooting and protests that occurred in Ferguson MO and how such events impact young children and the responses adults can provide. Some people took a field trip to the Central Institute for the Deaf.

Other workshops included Blogging as a Professional Development Tool, Supporting Parent Engagement, Ethical Dilemmas in Early Intervention and DEC Recommended Practices.

Of course there was time for some sight-seeing and good dinners out. Anybody heard of Sweetie Pies? Attending the national DEC is a great opportunity to learn more about many things, network with a broad variety of people and have a lot of fun!

## Connected Educator Month

*Jodi Altringer, DEC Board Member*

In the world of education, October has gained a new title that is indicative of the times. October is Connected Educator Month (CEM). CEM was developed by the US Department of Education with the goal of getting more educators using social media to improve their practice. Educators have always been encouraged to network and collaborate; Twitter and other social media tools have removed the geographical limitations of networking and allows educators to learn with and from others across the globe. There are many benefits of being a connected educator and there are many tools available to make it easy to connect with others. Twitter is a powerful networking tool. The conversations taking place on Twitter have caused me to reflect on my practice and adjust my practice. Twitter is my go to source for finding relevant research and information related to evidence based practices. It is also a source of support and collaboration.

Not only are there advantages of being connected for the educator, but there are also advantages for our field. Twitter provides a unique opportunity for our field to display our professionalism and knowledge. We can increase the understanding and value of our profession by contributing to conversations about recommended practices, policies and practice. Twitter is also a powerful advocacy tool. Currently, early childhood education is getting more attention than ever. Twitter is a platform for discussions about policies that will impact the outcomes of young children. Researchers and advocacy groups are using Twitter to take advantage of this attention to be a voice for early childhood. It is critical that our profession is part of this discussion.

Twitter is a conversation that is taking place with or without our input. There are some practices that make it easier to be part of this conversation. Twitter is powerful, but the amount of information on Twitter can be overwhelming. The following practices can help users manage the information available on Twitter.

**Hashtags:** Twitter serves the purpose of a search engine through the use of hashtags. A hashtag is the # followed by a word, phrase or acronym. Hashtags are added to tweets so the tweets can be searched by topic. People who share common interests agree upon a hashtag and monitor their Twitter feeds for that hashtag. Hashtags are virtual versions of communities of practice. For example, #atchat, is the agreed upon hashtag of the assistive technology community. Professionals mark their tweets with this tag so that others in the community can find the information. When marking a tweet with more than one hashtag, a space between the tags is needed. Sometimes a chat is developed around a hashtag. A chat is a scheduled conversation led by a moderator using the agreed upon hashtag. The moderator poses questions and the community discusses the topic. Hashtags are used at conferences as a way to network, share resources, and spark conversations about the conference topic. Conference hashtags are promoted as a way for non-attendees to access the information and benefit from the conference sessions.

Information relevant to our field can be found by searching the following hashtags; #ecse, #earlyintervention, #earlyedsped, #b25, #earlyed, #prek, #ece, #spedchat, #atchat, #assitivetech, #slpeeps, #otpeeps, #preemies, #autism, #inclusion, and #earlyliteracy.

**Twitter lists:** Twitter lists can be created by Twitter users. The lists are a way to organize the people the user follows into categories. These lists can then be used to filter searches. I have created the following lists; [research/policy](#), [assistive technology](#), [related services](#), and [ECSE on Twitter](#). When I apply these lists as a filter, I see tweets posted by members of the list, making it much easier for me to find relevant information based on my needs at that time. Twitter lists are also sources of people to follow. As I look at lists created by other members of my personal learning network, I find people I want to follow.

*Jodi Altringer's technology tips are continued on the next page*

*Jodi Altringer's technology tips (continued from page 4)*

Third party tools: The third party tools [Tweetdeck](#) and [Hootsuite](#) are used to organize tweets into columns by filters determined by the user. Using Tweetdeck, I have created columns based on hashtags and my Twitter lists. All tweets marked by the hashtag will appear in the column assigned to that hashtag or list. These columns are real time search engines and make reading tweets much more efficient. When reading tweets, I prefer using one of these tools over using the Twitter website.

I hope that the use of these tips will enhance the time you spend on Twitter. I look forward to connecting with you on Twitter. You can follow [@mndec](#) and [@decsped](#) to keep current with what is happening in our professional organization. If you have any questions, send a message or tweet to [@jodialtringer](#). Happy Connected Educator Month, see you on Twitter!

## Article Summary

*Liz Barnett, MA, CCC-SLP, MNDEC newsletter editor, website manager*

Journal review: Teaching Exceptional Children September/October 2014 Vol. 47 No. 1

In this MNDEC newsletter, we are delighted to have a technology article from Jodi Altringer, MNDEC board member at large. We look forward to hearing more from Jodi. Check out the September/October 2014 edition of Teaching Exceptional Children's technology articles. You'll find insight into applications and uses of universal design in order to assist students with special needs in their daily lives. The article Smooth Transitions: Helping Students with Autism Navigate the School day by Kara Hume, Melissa Sreckovic, Kate Snyder, and Christina R Carnahan, which begins on page 35, outlines how to identify the need for and then use supports to help students with transitions through the day. The strategies could be applied to students of many ages.

Do you have a student using a form of augmentative or alternative communication? On page 56 in this same journal, the article by Yun-Ching Chung and Karen H. Douglas, Communicative Competence Inventory for Students who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication – A Team Approach provides a questionnaire for evaluating communication competence, an example of implementation and a method of progress monitoring of the use of augmentative or alternative communication. Again, you may find useful information to apply to the challenges of young students who experience fewer communication opportunities.

## Do you have an ECSE question?

The Minnesota Department of Education Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) leadership team has a general email address that can be used to submit any ECSE question, birth to five. The emails will be answered in a timely manner by members of this team. Email questions to: [mde.ecse@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.ecse@state.mn.us)

## Resources

**Looking for a job in ECSE?** [www.mndec.org](http://www.mndec.org) .

**Minnesota Centers of Excellence** has a very well developed website. [www.mncoe.org](http://www.mncoe.org)

**Minnesota Parents Know** <http://parentsknow.state.mn.us/parentsknow/index.html> Provides trusted parenting information, resources, and activities to help your children grow, develop, and learn from birth through high school. Links, podcasts, videos, newsletters, and how-to-connect to programs for parents of children of all ages and abilities are available. Many materials are translated or presented in additional languages.

**National Implementation Research Network (NIRN)** NIRN's mission is to "contribute to best practices and science of implementation, organization change, and system reinvention to improve outcomes across the spectrum of human services". <http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/> Go to their website and you will find a resource titled [Implementation Drivers: Assessing Best Practices](#) .

**PACER's Early Childhood** website <http://www.pacer.org/ec/>

## Resources continued

### **Help Me Grow** <http://www.helpmegrowmn.org/>

An interagency initiative of the State of Minnesota (Department of Education, Department of Health and Department of Human Services) partnering with all local service agencies.

### **Head Start Center for Inclusion** <http://depts.washington.edu/hscenter/>

### **Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children (TACSEI)** <http://www.challengingbehavior.org/>

### **Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)** <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/>

### **Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Effective School-wide Interventions and Supports** <http://www.pbis.org/>

## Professional Organizations

### **The Division for Early Childhood (DEC)** <http://www.dec-sped.org>

### **Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)** <http://www.cec.sped.org>

### **The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** <http://www.naeyc.org>

## News and Events

October 29 – 31, 2014 ECSE Fall Leadership Workshop at Rutgers

December 1, 2014 Mini-Grant applications due

March 5-6, 2015 MN DEC Spring Practitioners Conference

June 11-12, 2015 Summer Institute 2015

## Please do not forget to follow us:

**Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Minnesota-DEC/132315643458975?v=wall>

**Twitter** [https://twitter.com/mndec\\_info](https://twitter.com/mndec_info)

