



Exceptional Times

Spring/Summer 2004



Infant Massage Promotes Happy Babies

It has been proven that Infant Massage promotes bonding, improves circulation and digestion, reduces muscular tension, promotes sleep, and can reduce the symptoms of colic. At EPU we know its also a great way for both parents to connect, interact and spend quality time with their little one. Sponsored by First 5 Fresno County, Infant Massage classes are now offered at EPU for pre-crawling babies.

For more information on Infant Massage classes at EPU, call (559) 229-2000.

IFP Graduates Soar

The Infant Family Program (IFP) at EPU provides individual early intervention services for infants from birth to age 3 with special medical and developmental needs. Since January of 2004, 25 children have successfully graduated from the IFP and are steadfastly moving forward in their education to be ready to take on the world.

**Congratulations
to our
graduates!**



Mark Your Calendars for EPU's 14th annual



Saturday, July 17

Fiesta is our signature fundraising event with the flavor of Mexico. Fiesta is held by the cool waters of the San Joaquin River at Coombs Riverbend Ranch. Mariachi music, a riverside Cantina, live and silent auctions, a complete sit-down tri-tip dinner, dancing entertainment, and homemade tortillas, round out the tradition.

Tickets are just \$45 and corporate table sponsorships are also available.

**Call EPU at (559) 229-2000 for more
information on Fiesta de los Niños**



Heart to Heart



Twenty-seven years ago when EPU was founded, we knew that early experiences had a great impact on the way children develop, but only recently has it been demonstrated that early experiences can have an actual impact on the structure and function of the child's brain.

The interaction between children and their environments, including their relationships with parents and family members, allow the infant to learn what the world is like. How a brain develops hinges on a complex interplay between the genes a child is born with and the experiences of the child. Early experiences contribute to the development of a sense of competence and of security and happiness in the world.

Some of the factors that promote healthy development include the presence of caregivers who are available and sensitive to a baby's needs, positive and responsive interactions between infant and parent, living in a loving and nurturing family, having opportunities for positive play experiences, and experiencing a well organized and predictable home environment.

The impact of early experience is what EPU is built upon. Watching our children come and go each day and witnessing their development as they grow lets me know that we are accomplishing our dreams for all children and families.

We gratefully acknowledge everyone who has contributed to supporting our mission that helps children and families thrive.

Marion M. Karian
Executive Director

www.exceptionalparents.org

EPU And CSN Take The “Lead” On Quality Child Care For All Children



The L.E.A.D.S. (Limitless Early Education And Delivery System) program is up and running through Children’s Services Network (CSN). Funded by a grant from First 5 Fresno County, EPU is a partner with the LEADS team and is working with family child care providers, child care centers, and preschool programs to help make child care more accessible and available for children with special needs and their families. The LEADS team is available to assist parents in their search for quality child care for their child with special needs. **For more information on the LEADS project contact; Mary Scaff at CSN, (559) 456-1100, ext. 123**

WANTED: Volunteers for



The success of Fiesta de los Niños is due largely to the volunteer support from the community. There are many ways you can provide support for our annual Fiesta:

- **Volunteer for the day of the event, Saturday, July 17.**
- **Help secure donations for the live and silent auctions.**
- **Sell raffle tickets**

Proceeds from this event enable EPU to continue to provide quality programs and services to our families at no cost. **For more information on how you can help make this year’s event a success, contact Rhonda Jorn at (559) 229-2000.**

For corporate sponsorship information, visit www.exceptionalparents.org and click on the **Fiesta icon**.

Thank You



EPU is honored to receive support from Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Central Valley and Ronald McDonald House Charities Global Office. Matching grant awards totaling \$3,750 were received to help purchase instruments for the new “Music and Movement for Tots” enrichment program for children with special needs. These activities are being incorporated in many of EPU’s programs for children and families.



EPU SOAR! Program Bridging The Gap From



The EPU SOAR! Program works with high school students and young adults who are leaving the special education system and their parents to ensure a successful transition into adult life through the development of Individualized Transition Plans. For more information on the SOAR! Program at EPU, contact Janet Carpenter at (559) 229-2000.

SOAR! stands for:

Self-awareness, **O**vercoming obstacles, **A**chieving goals, and **R**eaching for the stars!

EPU Family Resource Center Educational Trainings



The Family Resource Center at EPU provides trainings to the community on the following topics:

- ♥ **ADD/ADHD** (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) ♥ **Internet Training**
- ♥ **IEP's** (Individual Education Plan) ♥ **IFSP's** (Individual Family Service Plan)
- ♥ **Transition to Work** ♥ **Infant to Pre-school Transition**

***Trainings are available in English, Spanish, and Hmong**

Contact the EPU Family Resource Center at (559) 229-2000 for the latest training schedule or visit our [calendar of events](http://www.exceptionalparents.org) at www.exceptionalparents.org.



LAP Families Celebrate New Beginnings

EPU is proud to announce the graduation of 15 families who successfully completed one year of support services with the Learning About Parenting (LAP) program. The ceremony was held at Woodward Park where each family member was presented with a certificate of completion. Lunch was provided and gifts were given to parents to help encourage them to keep hope, peace and love in their lives and the lives of their children especially when times get tough. Special thanks were given to the parents by the LAP staff for opening their hearts and homes and for their commitment to providing a more nurturing, loving family life for their children.

Congratulations to all!



Sarah Carona

**HOORAY
FOR SARAH!**

On Monday evening, May 10th, at Fowler High School, Sarah Corona tried out to be a cheerleader. Her family and all of us at EPU were keeping our fingers crossed for her. She was excited—we were nervous. Her mother left a joyous (and tearful) message the next day letting us know that Sara made the Junior Varsity cheer and dance teams. Her coaches and teachers said that there is only one word to describe Sarah and that is COURAGE. Well, maybe we should add DETERMINATION to that as well. Sara is a graduate of EPU's Infant Family Program and her mother Mary Alvarez-French works as an Early Childhood Specialist at EPU. We are so proud of Sarah. This is truly an inclusion success story. Sarah has been fully included throughout her education in Fowler schools.

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Mission Statement

To strengthen and empower children and families facing extraordinary medical, developmental, and parenting challenges.

www.exceptionalparents.org