

## *Celebrating 30 Years of Early Intervention*



October 5, 2016

### **The Nebraska Early Development Network (EDN) is pleased to join with others in celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of P.L. 99-457!**

On October 8, 1986 President Ronald Reagan signed into law landmark legislation, the *Amendments to the Education of the Handicapped Act* (now known as IDEA), that created the Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities Program. The legislation also revised the Preschool Special Education Grant program under Section 619 of Part B. Prior to that time, in half the states, families of children with disabilities had to wait until kindergarten before their state mandated services for young children. With the new law, funds were provided to assist states with implementing statewide systems of services for young children with disabilities from birth through age five and their families.

EDN applauds the efforts of families, providers, policy-makers at the federal, state and local levels, researchers, higher education and many others who together made availability of services starting at birth for children with disabilities and their families a reality. Congratulations to all for this tremendous achievement!

#### **Quote from U.S Department of Education Secretary John King**

**October 3, 2016**

“...Indeed all children should receive the individualized services and supports they need to participate fully in a quality well-rounded education, meet high expectations and succeed in school...so, all children regardless of ability, race, background, language they speak at home, or family income receive the services they need to achieve their full potential and engage in their communities.”

On this important anniversary, it is important to make note of the progress we have collectively made since the legislation was passed:

- Strong statewide infrastructures have been built and maintained for the delivery of early intervention and special education and related services for children with disabilities starting at birth.
- Research has demonstrated that intervening at the earliest age can improve outcomes for children with disabilities as they enter into kindergarten.
- Personnel who deliver services to young children with disabilities and their families benefit from IDEA supports through centers that provide resources for professional development, technical assistance, and dissemination of knowledge about effective and evidence-based practices.

## Serving Children and Families

The Infant and Toddler Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education Programs currently serve over a million children annually, almost double the number of children served in 1991.

- According to preliminary data from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), in 2015, just over 690,000 infants and toddlers (ages 0 – 3) received early intervention services.
- According to 2014 child data from OSEP, more than 753,000 preschool children (ages 3-5) received special education and related services, which is almost a 60 percent increase over the last two decades.

**Read about how early intervention benefited Ellie at:**

[Ellie's Story](#)

It is important to note on this anniversary that IDEA early childhood programs are moving forward with national and state efforts to provide universal access and full participation for all children, starting at birth, to high-quality early learning opportunities supported through IDEA services.

**EDN looks forward to continued collaboration with our partners to ensure all young children with disabilities and their families have access to learning opportunities that foster positive outcomes.**

