



# NEW DIRECTIONS

EARLY CHILDHOOD DIRECTION CENTER C/O Women and Children's Hospital 219 Bryant Street Buffalo, NY 14222 PHONE 716-880-3875 1-800-462-7653 FAX (716) 836-1252 [www.wchob.org/ecdc](http://www.wchob.org/ecdc) Any questions? [rmalinowski@Kaleidahealth.org](mailto:rmalinowski@Kaleidahealth.org)

March 2008

## Early Childhood Direction Center

ECDC is a regional clearinghouse that provides free information, referral, technical assistance and support to families, professionals, and community agencies concerned with children birth to five with suspected or diagnosed delays or disabilities. We provide ongoing community training programs for both parents and professionals.

ECDC is funded by New York State Education Department and hosted by Women and Children's Hospital. If you would like to be included on our list serve to receive the latest federal, state and local updates, please send an email to [vrubin@kaleidahealth.org](mailto:vrubin@kaleidahealth.org) and indicate whether you are a parent or a professional.

## DO YOU NEED HEALTH INSURANCE?



Many people in our community are uninsured despite the availability of health insurance coverage. Kaleida Health has a team of facilitated enrollers who can assist with insurance applications. The facilitated enrollers will screen uninsured individuals and make a determination of whether they will qualify for Family Health Plus, Medicaid, Child Health Plus A or B or the Prenatal Care Assistance Program. They will then assist in gathering the documentation required to process the application, help complete the application, and will act as a representative for the case.

You do not have to be a current Kaleida patient to receive this assistance. It is Kaleida's mission to enroll anyone in the community who needs insurance. So if you or anyone you know needs health insurance please call (716) 859-2161.

## GET HELP -IT'S EASY AS 211



If you need help, but don't know where to start, pick up the phone and dial 2-1-1. A knowledgeable, friendly specialist will refer you to the right people so you can get the help you need. 2-1-1 can help if you have questions about:

- Rent assistance
- Financial or legal counseling
- Healthcare
- Job-training opportunities
- Food assistance
- What to do during a natural disaster or weather emergency
- Information about free income tax preparation sites
- Holiday food and toy distribution programs
- Children's services
- Any other service or agency to help you or your family

2-1-1 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, is free and confidential, and is multi-lingual. You can also search for help online at [www.211wny.org](http://www.211wny.org). Dialing 2-1-1 or 1-888-6-WNY-211 (1-888-696-9211) is the easiest way to get information about local services.

You can be confident that your call will be answered by a trained professional because 2-1-1 is operated by our region's premier information and referral providers – Central Referral Service in Erie, Niagara and Wyoming Counties, and First Call For Help in Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Counties. Wherever you are, whatever you need - Western New York 2-1-1 is here to help.

## Ask ECDC

Dear ECDC,

Our child is turning five and we have our first Committee on Special Education (CSE) meeting. We are overwhelmed. Help!

Andrea and Steve, Cheektowaga

Vickie Rubin replies:

When my daughter, Jess, was five, twenty years ago, transition was quite different than it is now. There were few options, few supports, and not as many laws governing our procedures. It was both easier and harder than it is now. How can that be, you may ask? Let me explain, easier because we didn't have a menu of services and locations to select. Harder because we didn't have a menu of services and locations to select! The good news is that there are options out there and ECDC will help you understand this important transition as your child moves towards Kindergarten.

**If your child is turning five, please attend one of these free Transition workshops:**

**Moving to Kindergarten  
Understanding Transition from  
Committee on Preschool Special  
Education (CPSE) to the Committee  
on Special Education (CSE)**

In this training you will learn the changes that take place when your child moves from CPSE to CSE, the steps you need to take for a smooth transition, an overview of the special education system, updates on the laws, information to help you make the appropriate decisions for your child's education, as well as have a time for questions and answers.

**March 26<sup>th</sup> 5:30-7:00  
Connections North  
10825 Bennett Rd, Dunkirk**

**April 7<sup>th</sup> 9:00 - 10:30 am  
Sacred Heart Headstart Program  
1112 South Ave. Niagara Falls**

**April 9<sup>th</sup> 5:30-7:30 pm  
ECDC location - People Inc.  
3131 Sheridan Dr. Amherst 14226**

**RSVP 800-462-7653**



2008

Western New York Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day  
Thursday, May 22, 2008  
Buffalo Convention Center  
8:00- 4:00

This event, which is open to the public, will bring together approximately 1500 people including individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, human service agency representatives, and local officials to explore current issues in the field. The day will include speakers, workshops, vendor exhibits, live entertainment and an awards presentation.

**For information on attending the conference, please contact (716) 805-1555.**

## **'J-Mac' To Attend Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day The largest conference of its type in the USA!**

**Jason McElwain** nicknamed **J-Mac**, is a young man with autism who became suddenly famous in 2006 for scoring twenty points in four minutes during the last basketball game of the season at Greece Athena High School near Rochester, NY. On [February 5, 2008](#), [New American Library](#) released a book written by McElwain and Daniel Paisner about McElwain's life. It's called "The Game of My Life: A True Story of Challenge, Triumph and Growing Up Autistic". J-Mac will be presenting a workshop and promoting his book at the conference.

**Henry Holden**, keynote speaker, is a 'general' in the battle against the exclusion and negative typecasting of persons with disabilities in the media and entertainment industries. As the founder of Performers with Disabilities for the Screen Actors Guild, he was bestowed with the honor of receiving the [Joseph P. Riley Award](#) for his unwavering commitment to work toward the inclusion of persons with disabilities in media. He is also the very first recipient of the American Scene Award for his work in a music video. Henry produced an award-winning documentary called "Look Whose Laughing", a comedy showcase that featured comedians with disabilities.

Sponsored by DDAWNY (Developmental Disabilities Alliance of WNY), a joint effort of more than 20 human service organizations throughout Western New York. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Wendy McCarthy at (716) 877-7007