



**Executive Summary (Continuing Funding)
Parent Training and Information Center of Iowa
April 22, 2007 – March 11, 2008**

The Parent Training and Information Center of Iowa (PTI Iowa), a project of ASK Resource Center, is in the fourth year of its grant reporting period. Progress continues to be made and often exceeds the Goals and Objectives submitted in its application.

The ASK Resource Center Mission:

All Iowans with special needs will have access to the support and services they require.

The Vision of ASK Resource Center:

Access for all.

The Purpose of ASK Resource Center:

ASK provides opportunities for collaboration and coordination among visionary organizations and projects dedicated to excellence.

Goal 1: *To promote greater awareness, knowledge and understanding of disability issues among parents of infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities, the professionals who serve them and members of the public.*

PTIC Iowa has made contacts with 6,204 families, professionals and the community through workshops, presentations, resource fairs, our website, and one-on-one parent coaching and IEP team problem solving in the current report year (April 22, 2007 – March 11, 2008). (web activity is not included in the quantitative data provided – including 138,651 web site hits and 14,713 web site visits for this reporting period), newsletters (also not included in our quantitative data for the period – 13,504 newsletters were distributed). PTI Iowa is also instrumental in providing a state-wide parent conference which provides parents and professionals with relevant, essential information about special education issues. This year the conference topic concerned post-secondary transition.

Goal 2: *To increase the knowledge of parents of children with disabilities about rights and responsibilities under IDEA, how to participate in education decision-making and alternative methods of dispute resolution, with special emphasis on parents of young children and newly identified students.*

The PTIC Iowa Family Support staff has provided one-on-one problem solving and coaching for 560 parents of children with disabilities who called because of a disagreement or conflict with the school. This number is an increase from 483 intakes in the last fiscal year. All Family Support staff are trained as “Conflict Resolution Facilitators” by the Conflict Resolution Center of Iowa (CRCI). One of the most

frequently requested trainings provided by PTIC Iowa continues to be on Improving Parent – School Relationships. PTIC Iowa staff attended 45 IEP meetings with parents this fiscal year, a decrease from 85 in the previous fiscal year. We believe this reflects the fact that we are helping families to resolve disputes before they are so intense as to require third-party family support during IEP meetings. We also believe this represents a more efficient use of our grant funding.

Goal 3: *To provide intensive 2-day IDEA trainings four times a year to 60 parent leaders, parent advocates, and community leaders who serve those families who have been typically underserved in Iowa.*

The PTIC Iowa and the Parent-Educator Connection have a formal agreement to meet and train parent leaders together, paid for by the Iowa Department of Education, promoting “parent involvement activities.” We have trained parent surrogates for children and youth in group homes, foster care and juvenile detention facilities – traditionally underserved populations. In addition, we have sponsored parent leaders from the Latino community who are involved in our Latino parent support group, to attend the “parents as presenters” workshop.

Goal 4: *To promote effective collaboration between parents and educators and inform policy and program developers of the parent perspective, focusing in particular on the issues most important to families who have been underserved.*

PTI Iowa has sponsored several Spanish-language trainings and presentations for parents and professionals who want a better understanding of the Latino communities in Iowa. PTI Iowa has a Spanish-speaking Family Support Coordinator on staff, as well as also an “Engaging Communities” Project Coordinator for our “Engaging Communities – Improving Outcomes” program addressing issues of disproportionate representation of African-American students in special education, both of whom are funded by Iowa’s Part B grant funding. PTI Iowa also sponsors a community summer literacy event called Literacy for Leaders, which provides literacy strategies for primarily African-American students grades 1-5. This year we are initiating a collaborative effort with Children and Family Urban Ministries, an urban outreach project that serves underserved (primarily minority) families. This will allow PTI staff to have more direct and meaningful interaction with parents in this demographic group.

Goal 5: *To increase the number of knowledgeable parents and students with access to training resources and information who are prepared to serve as leaders to effectively improve systems and services in Iowa.*

PTI Iowa has a formal agreement to work with the Iowa Department of Education on a variety of projects. Members of the PTI Iowa and ASK Resource Center staff serve on the following Boards, Councils and workgroups. We represent parents on the Special Education Advisory Panel, the Disproportionality workgroup, the Least Restrictive Environment task force, the Division for Vocational Rehabilitation Council, the Positive Behavior Supports Council, MH, DD, MR, BI Children’s Advisory Council, the Interagency Coordination Council for Part C, the Department of Education’s Resource Management Team (concerned with improving mental health supports to children and

youth), and the State Professional Development Grant Management Team. PTI Iowa actively recruits parents to participate on these state-level boards and commissions.

To conclude, PTI Iowa meets and often exceeds its stated goals. PTI Iowa utilizes OSEP-funded projects through the materials, trainings, conferences and technical assistance it offers. We also take advantage of the resources provided by the Alliance for Parent Centers, which produces OSEP vetted curricula. This fiscal year, we have improved our data collection and measurement of performance on key indicators by adopting the PACER AIMS database system. We are also increasing our outreach and technical assistance to underserved populations, especially Latino and African-American families. We partner actively with the State Department of Education as well as with many school districts across the state to improve outcomes for children and youth with special education needs. We train parents to advocate effectively for their children's needs. We are proud of building a "culture of collaboration" in special education in Iowa. Our highly qualified staff work with families and professionals in ways that positively impact student success, as demonstrated through the data verified by the annual impact survey we administer and submit to OSEP. We continue to fulfill the Mission, Vision and Purpose of ASK Resource Center through the Parent Training and Information Center of Iowa.