



Northeast Regional Developmental Screening, Referral and Response Conference

Act Early Ambassador- Biographies



Stacey Aguiar (RI) has a Bachelor's degree in Health Education and is a Certified Health Education Specialist. She is currently completing a Master's degree in Public Health and plans to continue her education with a Doctorate in Public Health. As an Early Childhood Screening Specialist at the Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH), she supports primary care providers, with on-site technical assistance, to implement developmental screening electronically. She has evaluated the advantages and challenges of implementing screening electronically, and has worked with the state Medicaid and the RI Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (RI AAP) to recommend specific screening systems and tools. She ensures that support to providers incorporates current best practices. She also supports providers to link families with

evidence-based programs that would meet their needs. These combined efforts help ensure that Rhode Island (RI) has a comprehensive screening and response system for families with young children. Her work has allowed her to acquire valuable knowledge and understanding about supporting primary care providers to conduct developmental screening and address families' needs as early as possible. Her combination of education and experience makes her an ideal candidate for the Act Early Ambassador role.



Nancy Cronin (ME) is the Coordinator for the Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Systems Change Initiative and the State Autism Implementation Grant Manager in Maine, and in that role is facilitating this interagency effort to achieve a cost-effective and efficient comprehensive system of care for persons with ASD. Cronin joined the staff of the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council in this role in January, 2008, having previously served for over four years as the Executive Director of the Autism Society of Maine. While at the Autism Society, Cronin's work at the local, state and national level focused on the development of effective services and supports for persons with ASD of all ages and their families. Maine is striving towards universal screening for autism but that is only a piece of the challenge towards prompt identification. As the manager of the

Autism Implementation Grant, Cronin has overseen the creation of a training DVD and accompanying curriculum to train early childhood professionals and medical professionals on the administration and scoring of autism screening tools. She has also built strong working relationships with Maine medical professionals and early childhood professionals.



Jennifer Doris (NH) has been the LTSAE Ambassador for since 2013. She has currently focused on training child care staff in how to utilize the LTSAE information. She has participated in the statewide TA Advisory committee and remains on multiple other statewide committees. In 2009-2010, she was a NH LEND trainee and completed training in the area of autism through the Leadership in Autism Spectrum Disorder program. In 2010, she opened an Autism Center as part of the Area Agency programs. Through her role as program director for early supports and services, she coordinated the screening of all children using the Ages and Stages Questionnaires and the MCHAT. She also oversees the dissemination of LTSAE information with families that are participants in the Early Supports and Services Program and child care centers throughout the state. Since 2008, Ms. Doris has been a partner in Watch Me Grow, NH's universal developmental screening system using the ASQ,

ASQ- SE. She serves as a member of the WMG Steering Committee which oversees the implementation of WMG statewide. Additionally, she oversees the implementation of WMG in her region, including use of the ASQ, ASQ- SE, MCHAT and LTSAE materials. Ms. Doris is an active participant of the Autism Workgroup for Screening and Diagnosis. She is the president of the Early Education and Intervention Network (EEIN) and one of four Routine Based Interview certified trainers in NH. She regularly engages in professional development activities related to early development, including participation in the AUCD conference in 2009-2010. Additionally, she is an adjunct professor at the University of New Hampshire and Plymouth State University and is able to integrate the ACT curriculum into some of the coursework.



Elaine Gabovitch (MA) is the Director of Family & Community Partnerships for the UMass Medical School-E.K. Shriver Center, Family Faculty in the Shriver Center LEND Program, and an instructor in the UMMS Department of Family Medicine and Community Health. As the mother of a young adult son with ASD, she has met many parents over the years who, like her, struggled to receive a timely and accurate diagnosis for their children due to a lack of awareness and training among parents and professionals of the early warning signs of ASD and other



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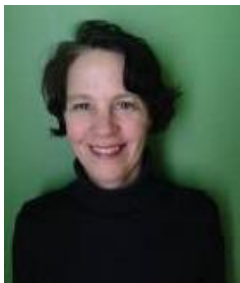
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developmental disorders. Thus, she co-founded the nonprofit First Signs in 1999 and served as its vice president from 2000 to 2004. In 2010, she launched the Massachusetts Act Early campaign as its State Team Leader and in 2011 she joined the first cohort of CDC Act Early Ambassadors. She has served in both roles since that time coordinating an interdisciplinary steering committee and three task forces (outreach, training, early identification). As director of the “Considering Culture in Autism Screening” project, she has overseen production of a culturally-competent autism screening guide and kit for pediatricians in 2012, and the development of a companion training module in 2014. She currently serves as project director on the HRSA-MCHB state autism planning project for Massachusetts working with agencies across the state to assess needs and monitor progress. She hopes her state team’s efforts will create a new standard of identification and care for children and youth with ASD in Massachusetts and beyond.



Ann Gionet (CT) is staff member of the CT DPH Adolescent and Child Health Unit with a focus on children and youth with special health care needs for 19 years, participate in program design and execution through four major enhancements. Co-ordinate the Health Resources Services Administration, State implementation Grant for Improving Services for Children and Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Other Developmental Disabilities. Designed and authored the Connecticut ASD grant proposal whose primary outcome is to improve access to comprehensive coordinated health care and related services for CT children and youth with ASD and other DD. The project is co-administer by the DPH, and the University of Connecticut A. J. Pappanikou Center for

Excellence in Developmental Disabilities and received direction and input from the CT DPH Medical Home Advisory Council, Act Early Summit participants, the Advisory Council to the Division of Autism Spectrum Services and the CT Autism Action Coalition. Represent the DPH Commissioner on several statewide Councils including the CT Family Support Council and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Advisory Council and co-chair of the subcommittee to improve and Expand Access to a Comprehensive Services Resource Guide.



Janet Kilburn (VT) has worked for many years as a Title V Children with Special Health Needs Program medical social worker; she has a clinical role in our Child Development Clinic, on Part C Early Intervention teams, and participates in care planning and conferences in the medical home. Her direct experiences with families have shown her the importance of *acting early* and the difference this can make in the lives of young children. Her systems experience began as a social work graduate assistant on the MCHB grant, Partnerships for Change, with Dr. Kathleen Kirk Bishop at the University of Vermont. Janet participated in the activities of the MCHB State Implementation Grants for Children and Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders and began working to improve our state’s cultural competence in early ASD/DD screening and assessment. Her recent Act Early Ambassador

role has led to cross-sector partnership building across health, mental health, family support, and early care and education systems for early identification and timely diagnosis of developmental concerns in young children. She has recently become the new Vermont MCH Child Development Coordinator and is working to improve developmental screening, systems integration, and service linkages via implementing the Help Me Grow program. Janet remains active on the Interagency Autism Plan Advisory Council.



Deepa Srinivasavaradan (NJ) is a Family Resource Specialist for the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, supporting parents and professionals at a county Special Child Health Services Case Management Unit and The Center for Neurological & Neurodevelopmental Health, a Clinical Enhancement Center for children with ASD. She is the multilingual Parent to Parent coordinator for Southern NJ, and a Medical Home Parent Partner, helping pediatricians implement best practices. She provided family-led screening training to FQHCs for NJ’s Act Early State System Grant (2013) using LTSAE materials. As an Outreach & Enrollment Specialist, she helped enroll eligible children into NJ Medicaid and SCHIP. She coordinates SPAN’s project to spread awareness about ACA. She was an AMCHP Family Scholar (2011-2012), is an AMCHP Family Delegate, and is on NJ’s Help Me Grow team. As an immigrant parent of a son with ASD, she

understands the cultural barriers that interfere with timely screening, diagnosis, and delivery of services to South Asian and other immigrant families. She is the co-leader of the “Early Screening & Diagnosis” work group of NJ’s Community of Care Consortium. She presented on diverse family leadership to Dr. Lu (MCHB) (2014). Her passion is early ID and early intervention for underserved children.