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For further information on the project or to apply for this fellowship, please go to the Stoneleigh website and complete the Individual Application. Send the application to the attention of Christie Balka.

### **Helping Build Bridges for Young Children to Early Intervention Services**

Each year, thousands of young children in the region who are demonstrating delays in acquiring some skills are provided early intervention services. Both funding and responsibility for these programs is shared between the federal and state governments, and between different departments within each governmental level. Thus the responsibility for very young children 0-3 years is found in Pennsylvania at the Department of Public Welfare; while responsibility rests with the department of education for children of 3-5 years. For many years, aspects of the program as well as the split between program responsibility and eligibility for these two programs confused parents and worked against ease in transition and maximum utilization from 0-3 and 3-5 year olds.

During the Rendell administration, a structural change occurred which resulted in the creation of a position of a deputy in both departments who could oversee the workings of the early intervention program. While much progress in increasing accessibility and ease of transition occurred during these last years, there is much left to do to create an understandable road map for children and their families who need services and to provide capacity to serve all the children who would benefit. As we look to the end of the current state administration, we believe it is the perfect time to undertake a review of the workings of early intervention programs for children 0-5 in Philadelphia and make recommendations for improvement.

The Stoneleigh Fellow will have the opportunity to look at early intervention, federal, state and local policy, meet with parent groups and families, visit programs, collaborate with PCCY's education, child care and health staff as well as with providers, leaders in the field and in the school district. The Fellow will be someone who wants to think at both system and individual levels, keeping the picture of the child and family needing services while working on policy change. At the end of the year, the Fellow will have met with groups of parents to better understand accessibility needs, become familiar with the programs and the rules under which they operate, identified opportunities for change, issued a report with recommendations and laid the ground work for future advocacy.