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C O M M E N T S

## Confessions of an Administrator

Ever know that what you were doing was outdated and didn't meet all of your needs but were afraid to give it up and try something new? Kind of like a new hair style.

That's exactly what happened to us at Early Intervention Services (EIS). EIS (previously Preschool Evaluation Services) is a part of Orange County Schools that screens, evaluates and staffs approximately 2,000 children each year. Our data was stored in an Excel database and we had one person entering all the information, tracking down 'pieces' of missing information, and generating reports. This led to missing information, duplication of work and lack of integration of the information gathered by the EIS staff.

Our Action FDLRS Center conducts child find activities and has a CHRIS database to track their progress. When I learned about CHRIS I knew this could be a solution for EIS. I met with

Annie Garber and Rachael Spanjer several times to discuss the issues and benefits associated with moving our data to the CHRIS system. It became obvious that CHRIS could work for us. I knew it was a long road ahead, but we were all ready for the challenge. Jointly, we came up with a plan to get EIS on board.

Our entire staff of 25 attended a CHRIS New User training session and was then given the responsibility for entering their information, from initial referral through staffing. As you can imagine their initial response was not completely positive. Their main concern was that basic child information needed to be entered twice, once in our IEP Forms Program and again in CHRIS. I discussed the concerns of my staff with Annie Garber. She informed me that it was possible to link information from CHRIS to the IEP Forms Program, eliminating duplicate entry of information. While the implementation of this link was not simple, we have made

great progress and are currently in the final stages of testing. It looks as if this coordination of data will be a huge success. Our data will undoubtedly be more accurate.

The CHRIS team has worked closely with us by listening to our needs, providing on-site training and troubleshooting issues. This summer my goal is to become much more familiar with the reporting capabilities built into CHRIS and to develop some custom reports. Who would have thought!

*Ruthie Rieder*  
*Sr. Administrator*  
*Early Intervention Services*

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# CHRIS NEWS



## Welcome Gladys

I joined the CHRIS Project in March as a Training and Technical Assistance Specialist. Prior to accepting this position

I worked as a technical writer for a software company that developed an information management system for insurance and financial service professionals.

I began my career in technology close to ten years ago working for System One, the airline reservations system developed by Eastern Airlines. I was in charge of performing on-site training for the Central American, South American, and Caribbean markets. While in-house I was a customer support specialist helping System One users throughout the United States.

I am very excited to be in a position where my experiences as a technical writer, trainer and customer support specialist will complement my new responsibilities. As a Training and Technical Assistance Specialist I will be conducting training sessions on-site and on-line, developing training materials, and working with Aimee Astte to provide technical assistance to all CHRIS users.

I am ready to tackle the new challenges that lie ahead and best of all I am looking forward to working with all of you. Please e-mail me a welcome note at [g Sanchez@miami.edu](mailto:g Sanchez@miami.edu) and you will receive one CHRIS point.

—Gladys Sanchez

## Good Luck Marcia!

Marcia Charles started as a work-study student for the CHRIS Project in the Fall of 2001. She took a break to study abroad in Rome, Italy in the Spring of 2002 and returned to us in the Fall of 2002. Marcia was involved with various CHRIS Help Desk tasks including making sure every center got their back up CDs, newsletters, and other mail-outs. She also assisted in the production of the last three CHRIS Comments Newsletters (including this one). Marcia will be graduating this May with a Bachelor of Architecture Degree and a minor in Architectural Engineering. Her future plans include attending the University of California at Berkeley in August to obtain a Master's degree in Construction Management. Please join us in thanking Marcia for all her contributions to the CHRIS Project and wishing her good luck in all her future endeavors.



Marcia Charles and Gladys Sanchez.



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### CHRIS Comments

Newsletter Schedule for 2002-2003  
August, November, February, May

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# Early Risk Factors for Preschool Children with Developmental Delays

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the 1991 amendments (P.L. 102-119) introduced Developmental Delay (DD) as a category of preschool eligibility. DD is a general term that characterizes children who demonstrate significant delays in one or more domains of mental, emotional, or physical development. Identification of the risk factors for DD will assist in the early identification of these children and allow for earlier intervention, helping children to reach their maximum potential.

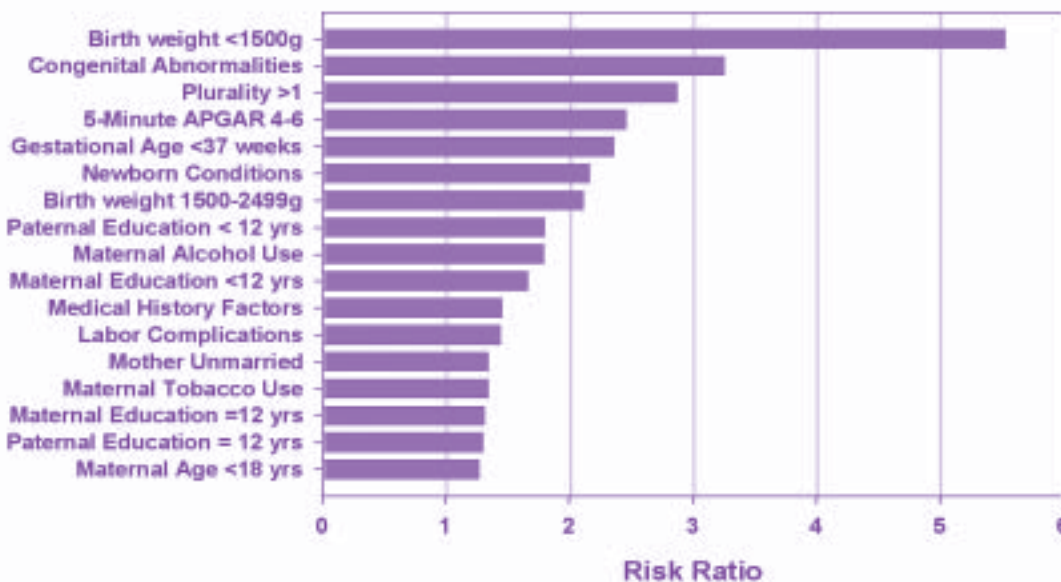
In order to examine the importance of a variety of risk factors, data from the CHRIS master database (November 2001) were linked with the Florida Department of Health birth records. Risk ratios were determined by comparing children diagnosed with DD in preschool (n = 2,120) with

all children born in Florida between 1/1/1993 and 12/31/1994, not including children diagnosed with DD (n = 382,186). Risk ratios demonstrate the increased risk to an individual when a risk factor is present compared to when it is absent. A risk ratio of 1.0 indicates equal levels of risk for DD between the groups being compared (e.g., low birth weight vs. normal birth weight). Risk ratios greater than 2.0 (i.e., double or greater risk) are considered of significant importance and risk ratios of 5.0 or greater are considered very large.

Perinatal child factors demonstrated a significantly increased risk to the child with risk ratios consistently greater than 2.0. Parental factors, while demonstrating an increased risk to the child, were lower in magnitude (consistently less than 2.0). The risk factor associated with the highest risk

ratio (5.53) was very low birth weight, indicating that children born weighing less than 1500 grams were at over 5 times the risk of being diagnosed as DD in preschool than children born at normal birth weight (2500 grams or more). Previous research has indicated that very low birth weight children are at increased risk for cognitive delays, possibly due to neurological impairment. Such delays may be nonspecific in nature leading to a classification of DD in young children. Consideration of environmental influences in addition to perinatal risk factors is important for optimal identification of children at risk for DD; however, the use of existing information collected by public agencies may serve as an effective initial filter for identifying children at risk for DD at a greatly reduced expense.

**Risk Ratios for Selected Risk Factors for Preschool Developmental Delay Classification**



# It Could Happen to You

Yes I am guilty. I am one of those child find people who always thought it would not happen to me. Well, it did. Lightning struck my computer! After many weeks of wondering if anything or everything was lost, our technician gave me the answer I did not want to hear, everything was lost. All data, all emails, all correspondence, everything. The good news was that when I backed up my CHRIS data I also backed up all my other data. Although I was not as diligent as I should have been, I lost less than one week's data. What a relief! So when you hear over and over to back up, take it to heart. It CAN save you! I may not have backed up every day before, but you can believe I do now!

*Backing up always,  
Betsy Stephens - "Queen of Back Up"  
Taylor County School District  
Exceptional Student Education*

# Save the Date



Intro to CHRIS<sup>plus</sup>  
For FDLRS Managers  
and CHRIS Users

August 14-15, 2003  
Orlando, Florida

660313



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