



**HAND to HOLD**  
*Fragile Babies. Strong Support.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact:**

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Hand to Hold

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**Nonprofit Hand to Hold Brings Attention to Getting the Most Out of Early Intervention at September Talk**  
*Public Invited to Free Discussion Series Organized by Hand to Hold*

**WHAT:** Hand to Hold is hosting its second quarterly discussion series this September with a focus on the effectiveness of Early Childhood Intervention (ECI). This event will feature Keynote Speaker Chris Watkins, a certified, licensed speech language pathologist and ECI 25-year veteran, a panel of local experts with diverse specialties and representatives from local therapy clinics. It is a free event that is open to anyone who has an interest in learning more about ECI. The discussion will be video recorded and uploaded to the Hand to Hold website for those interested but unable attend.

Hand to Hold initiated its quarterly discussion series in June featuring a Mind-Body Connection and Prematurity led by Dr. Jennifer Gunter. A recap and video of the June Discussion Series can be found online for those wanting to gain a better idea of what to expect.

**WHY:** Each year, more than 2200 babies in Austin are born preterm or with a special health care need. Unfortunately, many of these children will go on to experience physical and developmental delays. Early intervention is the key to minimizing these developmental challenges. Hand to Hold seeks to educate parents about the need for Early Intervention and how to maximize access to and understanding of proven therapies. Parents will learn ways to enhance these therapies themselves, as well as how to set expectations for transitioning out of ECI.

**WHEN:** Thursday, September 30, 2010 from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

**WHO:** The discussion's Keynote Speaker will be Chris Watkins, who has served the Texas Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) system for over 25 years. Featured panelists include Dr. Briana Larson, O.D., The Optometry Center for Vision Therapy, Doug Levine, PLLC, Growing Places Therapy Services, Jill Munch, CCC, SLP, Red Wagon Therapy, Carole Garrett, MSPT, Little Tesoros and Katie Navarro, PT, Dell Children's Hospital. Local therapy centers will also have representatives present for introductions and to answer questions.



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**WHERE:** Dell Children's Medical Center  
Signe Auditorium  
4900 Mueller Boulevard  
Austin, Texas 78723

**CONTACT:** Contact Kelli at [kelli@handtohold.org](mailto:kelli@handtohold.org) or (512) 293-0165 to receive more information about this event.

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**About Hand to Hold**

Hand to Hold, a nonprofit organization, provides comprehensive resources and support programs to parents of premies, babies born with special health care needs and those who have experienced a loss due to these or other complications. Based in Austin with plans to expand, Hand to Hold's core service is matching experienced peer mentors with new parents who have had a child in the NICU to offer support. For more information, visit [www.handtohold.org](http://www.handtohold.org).