



# Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities

RESEARCH CENTERS

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August 14, 2009

Letter from: Marsha Mailick Seltzer, PhD  
Chair, Directors Association of the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* Intellectual and  
Developmental Disabilities Research Centers; and  
Director, Waisman Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison

On behalf of the directors of the nation's 15 Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers, I wish to express our gratitude for the lifelong contributions of Eunice Kennedy Shriver—a tireless champion for people of all abilities. It was just last year that our centers (as well as the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development), were renamed in her honor. How fitting that her name is now forever linked to our extensive efforts to better understand intellectual and developmental disabilities and ultimately to improve the lives of children and adults who are affected by these conditions.

As a result of the efforts of Eunice Kennedy Shriver, our network of research centers and an affiliated network of interdisciplinary, university-based clinical and educational training centers were established in 1963. During the past 46 years, a vast amount of knowledge about intellectual and developmental disabilities has been discovered and we have made great progress in understanding the causes, consequences, treatments and interventions for individuals living with a wide range of conditions and their families. Mrs. Shriver has been a beacon of light, and she will be a continuing inspiration to all of us as we carry on our scientific research in her memory and in her honor.

As we train the next generation of scientists committed to devoting their lives to advancing knowledge about intellectual and developmental disabilities, we will think of her. As we develop new interventions and supports for conditions such as autism, Down syndrome, and fragile X syndrome, we will think of her. And as we improve the lives of infants, children and adults and their families—as I'm confident we will—our success will be infused with her spirit.

Our sympathies go out to the entire Shriver and Kennedy family, and we will continue to look to them for leadership, advocacy, and guidance.

#### About Marsha Mailick Seltzer:

Dr. Seltzer is a Vaughan Bascom Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Director of the Waisman Center, also at UW-Madison. Her research focuses on intellectual and developmental disabilities across the lifespan and their impacts on the family.