

Third time's a charm:

SPEDWatch draws a crowd at Federation Conference

BOSTON - SPEDWatch exhibited at the Federation for Children with Special Needs Annual Conference in Boston on March 1st. "This was our third consecutive year exhibiting at this conference, which is widely regarded as *the* yearly conference for parents of children with special needs and the professionals who serve them" said SPEDWatch Executive Director Ellen Chambers. "This time it was a very different experience for us, though. In earlier years few people we talked to had heard about SPEDWatch, and not many spent more than a moment at our table. This year I would say about eighty percent of the folks we talked to already knew about us, and we had some fantastic discussions with many, many parents"

"I tried to make it over to the SPEDWatch table several times yesterday – each time the line there was too thick to get anywhere near it!"

**Julie Kelley
Rutland**

SPEDWatch member Beth Pino-Mauch volunteered to help Chambers staff the table and both women were kept very busy answering questions and taking comments from a steady stream of visitors. Five parents became SPEDWatch members on the spot and many more took membership applications saying they intended to join the movement.

"It was enormously gratifying to see that SPEDWatch is really taking hold," said Chambers. "People are really identifying with our message and are becoming much more willing to actually join us in our fight to secure the special education rights of the Commonwealth's schoolchildren. I was so glad to have Beth there, too! She did a fabulous job managing the traffic. Next year I think we'll need to

double our exhibit space and have several volunteers to staff it!"



Beth Pino-Mauch at SPEDWatch's Federation exhibit.

INSIDE

- Pg. 2 Parents advised to be advocates
- Pg. 2 Important SJC CHINS ruling
- Pg. 3 SPEDWatch on 'Kids First' Shrewsbury
- Pg. 3 New Comm. of Education starts May 19
- Pg. 3 Community Resources for People w/Autism
- Pg. 3 MASSDE to become MDESE
- Pg. 3 New Discipline Flowchart
- Pg. 4 You Are Not Alone
- Pg. 5 SPEDWatch membership
- Pg. 5 SPEDWatch Community Meetings
- Pg. 6 Executive Director's Message
- Pg. 7 Compliance Monitoring Reports
Norfolk "Aggie"
- Pg. 11 *The Adventures of Janie Gal ...*