CPD Director Bryce Fifield visits with the staff of South East Early Intervention Program during a recent visit to Price, Utah.

A small group of professionals drives thousands of miles each year to provide early intervention services to families in southeast Utah from Price to Moab. These nurses and therapists are employees of Utah State University’s Center for Persons with Disabilities, but are based out of South East Early Intervention Program’s three offices in Price, Castle Dale and Moab. South East Early Intervention used to be part of the health department in Price, said Lois Boomer, co-director of the program. The arrangement caused some conflicts, however. If there was a flu epidemic, for example, early intervention services would take a back seat to giving flu shots. Now, South East pays the CPD’s Exemplary Services Division to be its fiscal agent, then contracts with the CPD to provide services. “We want you to know you’re part of the CPD,” said Bryce, Fifield, CPD director, during a recent visit to Price. “You’re an important part of our portfolio. I’m proud to report to the dean of the College of Education and Human Services that we have a vibrant, operation in the center part of the state.” “We’re so glad you guys have supported us so far,” said South East co-director Kathleen Kearney-Reaves. “We have close to 90 kids, the program has really grown.” “We’re respected enough to be autonomous,” Boomer added.

A mother in Moab shared her family’s experience in a letter to her senator. After her son received a diagnosis of autism at 18 months, and worried that they would have to trek to Salt Lake City for treatment, “… we were pleasantly surprised to hear we could receive help in Moab. “Feeling very overwhelmed and alone, we found support, information, special need services, comfort and friendship in the amazing people at South East Early Intervention Program … This wonderful group of professionals came every week to assist us, teach us and provide us with constructive feedback on ways to improve my son’s developmental growth, progress and language communication.” The little boy now goes to public school and is at the top of his class academically. He communicates verbally and is able to properly express himself, his mother said. Despite covering a large rural area, South East is able to offer services in a variety of ways. Tammy Allred of the Castle Dale office said the Castle Valley Center, a program for persons with disabilities from preschool to age 22, has allowed South East staff to use their facilities for home visits. “It’s a great resource,” she said. The Prehistoric Museum in Price has a tactile center and ramps for ease of entry, and has allowed South East to take families there as well, Allred said. In addition, the Castleville stake of the LDS Church has chosen South East Early Intervention as their humanitarian effort, and will be making a variety of things, like weighted blankets and canister drop boxes, to be distributed to families. “We feel like we’ve been supported by the community,” Boomer said.