

PACERSETTER

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A news magazine of PACER Center, Inc. by and for parents of children and young adults with disabilities

Bullying Prevention Awareness Week is Oct. 21 – 27

PACER's second annual National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week, Oct. 21-27, promises to be even more dynamic and far reaching than last year's banner event, according to Julie Hertzog, project coordinator at PACER Center. Nationwide poster contests, video contests, online training, and more are among the events. Families and schools can learn how to participate in the activities by visiting PACER Web sites at www.PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org or www.PACER.org.

"Childhood bullying is a significant problem across the country," said Paula F. Goldberg, PACER Center executive director. "It can cause school absenteeism, mental and physical stress, poor school performance, poor self-esteem, and, in some cases, school violence. Statistics show that 160,000 children in the United States miss school each day as a result of being bullied. Any child can be the target of bullying, and children with disabilities can be especially vulnerable.

National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week is intended to draw attention to and change the situation."

National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week is sponsored by PACER Center's National Center for Bullying Prevention. It is co-sponsored by the American Federation for Teachers, National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, National Education Association, National PTA, and School Social Work Association of America.

In individual states and communities, there are partners such as the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association, and other organizations. To be a state or local partner, go to the bullying prevention Web site and complete the online form.



PACER.org has a makeover

PACER Center's newly designed main Web site at www.PACER.org is drawing praise nationwide for its easy-to-use organization, accessibility, depth of information, and visual appeal. The site launched in mid-August.

"Ease of use was a primary goal for the new site," said Stephanie Rosso, PACER staff programmer and developer of the site. "We want parents to obtain the accurate information they need as quickly and simply as possible."

PACER's Web sites contain thousands of files for parents of children with disabilities and professionals. New feature are audio and interactive formats.

"The site's content reflects that PACER has collaborated with national experts on special education and disabilities," said Paula F. Goldberg, PACER executive director. "We want parents and professionals to have current research-based information that will serve children well."

OLSON, a Minneapolis-based design firm, and Straight Line Theory, information architects, provided pro bono expertise for the project. In addition to Rosso, PACER staff members Julie Hertzog, project coordinator; Gretchen Godfrey, and Traci Meyer worked on the Web site.

"I want to thank OLSON President Kevin DiLorenzo for his leadership in the project," said Goldberg. "Because of his efforts, the families and teachers of millions of children with disabilities will have easy access to important information."

PACER's sites had more than 2.4 million visitors in the 2006-07 fiscal year. Google™ helps PACER in its national role.

Other PACER Web sites are ww.taalliance.org; www.fapep.org; www.PACERKidsagainstbullying.org; and www.c3online.org.

PACER Center: Champions for Children with ALL Disabilities

Being a parent is challenging, and having a child with a disability may bring extra challenges. That's why there's PACER Center.

A Minnesota and national parent center, PACER has served families of children with disabilities and special health needs for nearly 30 years. PACER provides expertise and resources to help families make decisions about education, vocational training, employment, and other services for children and youth with *all* disabilities.

How can PACER help me?

If you have a question or need help for your child with a disability, contact PACER. Most PACER staff are parents or family members of children with disabilities. They share your experience. They understand.

PACER has 30 projects. Many are specific to Minnesota. Some are national or international in scope. All focus on ways to help children with disabilities succeed at home, at school, and in the community.

If you live in Minnesota, you can call PACER's parent advocates who will help you understand the laws that affect children with disabilities.

How do I contact PACER?

By telephone, Web sites, e-mail, or fax.

If you call during PACER office hours, a staff member will answer the telephone and take information about your situation and link you to the appropriate PACER project. If you are not directly connected, a staff member from that project will call you back, usually within 48 hours.

PACER telephone numbers are
(952) 838-9000 (main number)
(800) 537-2237 (Minnesota toll free)
(888) 248-0822 (national toll free)
(952) 838-0199 (fax)

Send e-mail to PACER@PACER.org.

PACER Center's postal address is
PACER Center
8161 Normandale Blvd.,
Minneapolis, MN 55437

What are PACER hours?

PACER's switchboard is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday–Friday. There is voice mail at other times. PACER observes federal holidays.

Where can I learn more about PACER?

PACER's Web sites are:

- www.PACER.org (principal site)
- www.taalliance.org (technical assistance for the nation's 100 parent centers)
- www.fape.org (information on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - IDEA)
- www.c3online.org (Connecting Youth to Communities and Careers)
- www.PACERKidsagainstbullying.org (bullying prevention)

PACER device helps bridge victim

PACER Center is a respected member of the disability and education communities—but also of the community at large. Its presence was evident following the Aug. 1 Minneapolis bridge disaster.

The parent of a man hurt in the collapse teaches in Greater Minnesota. She called PACER when her son had difficulty speaking because of his injuries, and she wondered if an assistive technology device such as her school uses might help him communicate. PACER's Simon Technology Center (STC) did have the device and a couple others, which it quickly loaned to the family.

"It was great to say, 'Yes, we can help you,'" said Bridget Ames, STC coordinator. "That's what we're all about."

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PACER Web site: www.PACER.org

Alliance site: www.taalliance.org

FAPE site: www.fape.org

C3 site: www.c3online.org

Bullying: www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org
(Alternate format is available upon request.)

MGM film to show locally

Free tickets available for *Music Within* premiere

Up to 200 PACER Center friends and supporters will have an opportunity to receive free tickets to the Twin Cities premiere of *Music Within*, an award-winning MGM film about Richard Pimentel, one of the primary activists behind the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Donated by Artculus Entertainment, Inc., 100 tickets are available for Friday, Oct. 26, and another 100 are available for Saturday, Oct. 27.

The film is being released that weekend in nine major U.S. cities. PACER was selected as a local nonprofit to receive the complimen-

tary tickets. Those attending must be over 18 years old.

Music Within (Rated R) was directed and produced by Steven Sawalich, who has ties to the Twin Cities. It stars Ron Livingston, Melissa George, Michael Sheen, Yul Vasquez, Rebecca DeMornay, and Hector Elizondo.

The film is described as humorous, poignant, and attitude-changing. Reflecting an Oliver Wendell Holmes quote, "Most people go to their graves with their music still inside them," *Music Within* relates how Pimentel helped improve the lives of people with disabilities across the world while discovering his own music. See www.musicwithinmovie.com.

For information about the free tickets, call PACER at (952) 838-9000.

PACER's Fun Day is Nov. 18

PACER Center's Third Annual Family Fun Day for all children and youth from age 4—with and without disabilities—is **Sunday, Nov. 18**. It is from noon to 2:30 p.m. at the Lindbergh Center, Minnetonka.

Designed for families, the popular event includes simple team games and activities, treats, prizes, and fun for all participants.

A parent made the following comments about previous Family Fun Day events:

"This is the first time I've taken my

two sons with autism out in public and felt comfortable about how they'd behave. Thank you PACER for having Family [Fun] Day!"

Panera Bread sponsors the 2007 Family Fun Day and provides free lunches. Treats include Dairy Queen Dilly Bars. Michael Keller of American Dairy Queen Corporation is master of ceremonies.

Tickets are \$5 per person. Scholarships are available.

For information call (952) 838-9000 or visit www.PACER.org.

United Way and CFC can support PACER

PACER Center is eligible for donations made through United Way campaigns and the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), the workplace charity campaign for federal civilian, military, and postal employees. PACER is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

United Way

The United Way accommodates employees wanting to support PACER, although PACER is not a United Way agency. United Way pledge cards have a location in which to write PACER's name and address (PACER Center, Inc., 8161 Normandale Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55437).

CFC

PACER will be listed under "National/International Independent Organizations," in local campaign charity lists. PACER's code number for CFC contributions is **12272**, and donors should use the code in designating their gift to PACER.

For information on how to support PACER through the United Way, CFC, or other workplace charity campaigns, call PACER's development office at (952) 838-9000 or visit www.PACER.org and click on Get Involved>Make a Donation.

Breaking PACER news?
Don't miss it!



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- Upcoming PACER Events
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- Workshops
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Go to

www.PACER.org/forms/index.asp

and complete the form to be on PACER's e-mail list.

Your e-mail address and other contact information is considered confidential and will not be shared.

IDEA Report Card shows state's efforts

By Patricia Bill

By most standards, Minnesota is trying to serve its students with disabilities well, according to the nation's first IDEA Report Cards issued by the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The Report Cards are officially known as "U.S. Department of Education Determination Letters on State Implementation of the IDEA."

IDEA is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which provides public education to the nation's nearly 7 million children with disabilities. Minnesota has approximately 122,000 children and youth receiving special education services. For funding accountability, the most recent version of IDEA (2004) requires states to show that they are meeting the education needs of children with disabilities. Each state develops its own state performance plan (SPP), based on federal guidelines. The state then submits an annual report telling how it met the objectives of its plan. The IDEA Report Cards are based on the states' reports.

Part B

The report cards affecting Part B of IDEA (students age 3 to 21) included 20 "indicators" or areas for reporting. Minnesota did positively on 18 of them, including two in which the state did exceptionally well. Conversely, two

areas need work in Minnesota.

According to notification received by the Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota met a goal for moving young children with disabilities from Part C services (infants and preschoolers) to Part B services with an Individual Education Program (IEP) developed and implemented before their third birthday.

It also showed that Minnesota was successful in resolving written complaints to the state Department of Education within a 60-day limit.

OSEP commended Minnesota on its efforts to identify and correct glitches in the supervision of monitoring, complaints, and hearings.

The report card said that Minnesota needs improvement in a couple areas: 1) the supervision of monitoring, complaints and hearings, and 2) the timeline of evaluating children for special education services with parental consent.

In both instances, the problem could be the way in which the state is reporting the data, said Carolyn Anderson, a parent advocate at PACER who follows accountability efforts.

Part C

The Part C report card, which provides for infants and toddlers (0-3 years), had 14 indicators for areas of reporting. The state met or achieved progress on 12 of the indicators with exceptional performance

for three indicators, said PACER Early Childhood Director Kim Kang. Two areas needed improvement.

Minnesota received exceptional performance marks in notifying school districts if a child was potentially eligible for Part B services as they exited Part C in the transition process. In the area of monitoring, Minnesota also received exceptional recognition for identifying and correcting noncompliance in 96 percent of cases as soon as possible and no later than one year from identification. Furthermore, the state met its 100 percent goal of resolving written complaints within 60 days.

Areas noted for improvement included transition conferences for children exiting Part C and potentially eligible for Part B. However, OSEP was unable to determine if this was truly an area needing improvement due to how the state reported the data.

There was also a loss in percent of Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) with transition services and steps for all children exiting Part C.

"Minnesota is trying to be accountable, and the report card reflects that," summarized Anderson.

(Visit www.PACER.org and search for U.S. Department of Education Determination Letters on State Implementation of the IDEA.)



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No Child Left Behind Act is up for reauthorization

By Marcia Kelly

Signed into law five years ago, the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is being reauthorized (updated). The timeline is undetermined, but many expect the reauthorization to be completed this year.

NCLB set as its goal the guarantee that all children in America—including those with disabilities—would receive a quality public education. Toward that end, NCLB requires all states to implement education standards, assessments, and accountability procedures.

This standards-based education reform has allowed schools and districts to

- track the achievement of every group of students,
- note progress in closing achievement gaps, and
- help all students to meet high standards.

The NCLB scores help schools identify where they—and their students—are doing well and where they need to improve.

While the goals of NCLB are generally supported by educators, parents, and others, many people also see the need for improvement in several areas. Some of the topics that Congress is likely to address include:

- development of better assessments to track student progress

- standardized testing
- federal investment in an expanded, highly qualified teacher workforce
- federal resources to help struggling schools improve

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has several recommendations for improving NCLB. Its specific suggestions to increase student achievement and close the achievement gap can be viewed at the MDE Web site, www.education.state.mn.us/mde/index.html.

Look for updates on NCLB legislation at www.PACER.org.

PACER partners in national early literacy project

Parents and professionals have a new resource on how to encourage early literacy in children who have disabilities, developmental delays, or related challenges. It is the Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL), in which PACER Center is a partner.

CELL promotes ideas and products proven to help young children from birth to age 5 who may be at risk in learning to read, write, and spell. CELL intends to help parents, early intervention practitioners, and other professionals working with preschoolers prepare the children for successful kindergarten and first-grade experiences.

One of CELL's purposes is to help parents understand the importance of providing opportunities that promote literacy early in a child's life. It also intends to build awareness of research-based practices for parents and professionals. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in October 2006, CELL is a research-to-practice technical assistance center

and a major initiative of the Center for Evidence-Based Practices at the Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute in North Carolina. It is led by codirectors Carl J. Dunst, Ph.D. and Carol M. Trivette, Ph.D.

In addition to PACER, collaborative partners include the American Institutes for Research and the Pappanikou Center for Developmental Disabilities.

To reach CELL's Web site, go to www.PACER.org>Programs and Resources>Programs>Early Childhood Intervention. The site has parent-friendly "CELLnotes" that translate research into practical tips that parents can use at home with their child.

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(Jan. 30)
is privately funded.*

PACER finds parents need dropout information

By Patricia Bill

Parent education seems to be key in helping students stay in school, according to PACER Center findings in Minnesota Department of Education-sponsored projects.

The dropout prevention projects, in which PACER works with middle school students and their parents in the Richfield, Cloquet, and Fond du Lac Ojibwe school districts, present two preliminary observations:

- Many parents do not realize the possibility that their children may drop out of school.
- Parents may not know about school

and community activities that encourage their children to stay in school.

In individual discussions at one school, 100 percent of the parents questioned said their children were in no danger of dropping out. Yet, statistics for the same school district show that more than 5 percent of students with disabilities and almost 12 percent of all students will drop out of school before graduation.

Research also indicates that students who are engaged in school or community activities tend to stay in school. Parents, however, do not seem

to be aware of the opportunities for involvement available to their children, said Jody Manning, PACER parent coordinator working on the project. Because of the finding, PACER and school staff will include information for parents on school and community activities in all PACER workshops presented in the three school districts.

To address both findings, newly written PACER materials focus on building parent awareness of the dangers of dropping out and the importance of school and community engagement in drop out prevention. For more, visit www.PACER.org/dropout.

PACER's health-advocacy project has national ties

As champions for children, PACER Center board, staff, and supporters take action when they see an issue affecting children with disabilities and special health needs. For example, PACER saw that many parents were confused and frustrated in trying to navigate the health care system on their children's behalf. Result: creation of PACER's Health Information and Advocacy Center and its resources.

The project is a central source where families of children and young adults with disabilities and special health needs can obtain support, advocacy, and information about the health care system. In addition to its PACER origin and Minnesota focus, it is a federally funded Family-to-Family Health Information Center and part of Family Voices, a national grassroots network of families and friends of children and youth with special health care needs.

Since the late 1990s, the Health Information and Advocacy Center has reflected PACER concerns about health care issues and children that goes back much further.

Throughout its 30-year history,



Amy Dawson

PACER has addressed health-related issues affecting children. *PACESSETTERS* from the early 1980s carried articles about the children's health, the health care system, and insurance. Staff members with an interest in health-related issues or who had been trained as health care professionals shared their knowledge and experience in one-on-one parent consultations, workshops, materials, and in PACER collaboration with state agencies and national organizations. When Family Voices was

formed in 1992, PACER was an early supporter and continues its involvement and collaboration.

Today the Health Information and Advocacy Center is coordinated by Amy Dawson, the parent of a child with health needs and disabilities. The Center provides information about:

- Understanding health insurance—including private insurance and medical assistance
- Filing an appeal with insurance
- Social Security Disability
- Understanding legal rights in the health care system
- Working effectively with doctors and other health professionals
- Developing health care summaries and plans for emergencies at home and school

For information about PACER's Health Information and Advocacy Center, call PACER at (952) 838-9000 or (800) 537-2237 (toll-free in Minnesota) or visit www.PACER.org. For information on Family Voices, go to www.PACER.org >Programs and Resources>Programs>Health Information and Advocacy Center>Family Voices (under Project Services).

Simon Technology Center plans open house

PACER Center's Simon Technology Center plans a free **Saturday, Oct. 6**, open house to celebrate the technology center's 20th anniversary. It is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at PACER for children and youth of all ages and abilities and their families.

Events include entertainment for children with clowns, face painting, games, and hands-on assistive technology. Parents and professionals can view vendor displays and demonstrations by local organizations and businesses that serve children with disabilities. The Simon Technology Center staff will provide tours and information on assistive technology services and products offered by PACER.

For information and to register, call (962) 838-9000 or visit www.PACER.org.



PACER's international reputation attracts visitors

PACER Center's influence and its reputation for helping families of children with disabilities is known across the globe. As a result, international visitors are regularly welcomed at PACER Center. For example, members of Uganda's Parliament and a delegation of medical and disability organization professionals from Uzbekistan (see photos) were summer visitors to PACER. In addition, government, business,

disability, and education officials from nations such as India, Japan, the Netherlands, Guatemala, and the United Kingdom have recently toured PACER.

More than 400 parents and professionals from other countries receive the *PACESETTER* and other PACER materials.

"No matter where in the world they live, parents of children with disabilities and the professionals

working to make a difference in their lives share a common bond. We applaud their commitment and are happy to exchange information that will help improve life for everyone," said Paula F. Goldberg, PACER Center executive director.

Watch for an international Web site for families of children with disabilities being developed by PACER Center and to be launched soon.

At right, members of Uganda's Parliament met the PACER staff and puppets of the COUNT ME IN™ project. Below, visitors from Uzbekistan examine assistive technology in PACER's Simon Technology Center.



'Report cards' help parents rate schools

By Deborah Ottman, Minnesota Parent Center, Minnesota Parent Information and Resource Center, a PACER Center project.

Whether it is bestseller book lists, restaurant stars, or movie critics giving a thumbs up-thumbs down, many people evaluate things based on rank and ratings. Rankings and ratings can help in making informed decisions. That includes helping parents decide which schools their children should attend.

Yes, the nation's public school system has a rating and ranking system in place. To increase accountability to parents and taxpayers, as well as to help parents make decisions about their child's education, states must prepare an annual report on their public schools' performances. These annual reports are presented as report cards. Like the grade slip a student receives, the schools' report cards tell parents and others how well schools are doing.

States prepare report cards for both school districts and individual schools. Included in the information are students' test scores on standardized state tests. The scores are broken down into subgroups, and details on each subgroup's performance are given as well. Data on proficiency levels, graduation rates, the names and numbers of schools needing to improve within the district, teacher qualifications, and the percentage of students not tested also appear on the report cards.

Report cards communicate student

achievement by looking at standardized test scores. Scores appear for reading and math. A ranking of basic,

For 2007 report cards on Minnesota schools, visit www.PACER.org/mpc/ and click on "Minnesota's AYP lists"

proficient, or advanced on the test tells parents if children are adequately learning the state standards in a particular grade level. Data on a two-year period of achievement is given.

The scores are also looked at from subgroups within a school or district. These groups include gender, race and ethnicity, English language status, migrant status, disability status, and income level. Additionally, the scores reflect the percentage of students not tested. The test results for the school are then compared with other district schools and the state as a whole. This comparison data appears in the report card, too.

The report cards report on dropout and graduation rates. These figures give additional information on a school and district. By examining teachers' qualifications, further information about a school's quality emerges. Report cards are required to provide these figures.

Each state has established a starting point to begin measuring reading and math skills for students. The states also have set the reading and math skill levels students must meet by high

school graduation. All states have a goal of all students reaching 100 percent proficiency by graduation. The standardized state tests measure the progress students make in gaining those skills from year to year. Each state has also decided what the yearly gains should be.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is when the yearly gains are met or exceeded. Report cards offer information on which schools and districts are making AYP and those that have been identified as needing improvement.

A school's identification of "needing improvement" in a report card helps alert parents of Title I schools. The law requires these schools to notify parents directly when a school fails to make AYP. This allows parents to discover what options they may have on school choice and supplemental educational services.

States and school districts are required to notify the public using the report card format. Using public access such as newspapers, radio, television, and the Internet, these reports are made known to the entire state. The information should be available no later than the start of the school year and needs to be offered in a format and language parents can understand.

Making this information public keeps schools accountable as to how effectively they teach the students they serve. Report cards and the ratings they offer give parents yet another tool in making decisions about their children's schooling...and that deserves a thumbs up!

PACER's Minnesota Parent Center is the Minnesota Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC). MPC collaborates with the Minnesota Department of Education and local Minnesota school districts. A major component of Minnesota Parent Center is improving student achievement in Title I schools by increasing parent involvement. The Web site is www.PACER.org/mpc/.

Minnesota Parent Center helps parents of *all* children

Parents: Want to learn more about Minnesota's school report cards? The Minnesota Parent Center (MPC), Minnesota PIRC, a project of PACER Center, can help you with this and many other key No Child Left Behind provisions, including Title I, school choice, and free tutoring services for some eligible children. MPC can provide parent and school trainings on parent involvement and workshops on strengthening parent-school partnerships to increase student achievement. All services are free of charge.

To learn what MPC offers families of all children from early childhood through high school, visit www.PACER.org/mpc or call (952) 838-9000 or (800) 537-2237 (toll free in Minnesota) for information.

Twin Cities student breaks ground in using new accommodation for taking the ACT test

By Patricia Bill

Bridget Thomson is on her way. With an ACT score in the 97th percentile and a high grade-point average, the senior at Benilde-St. Margaret's School in St. Louis Park is narrowing her search to a handful of well-respected colleges from across the nation—and looking forward to the broad array of options a college education will bring her.

Neither the ACT (college entrance test) score nor the grades have come easily for Bridget. In fact, both were accomplished with a good deal of effort. Bridget has severe dyslexia, a learning disability that usually causes difficulty in reading, spelling, and writing.

Bridget's good grades come from her own initiative; years of difficult homework; support from her parents, Susan and Dean; understanding and accommodations at school; special tutoring and assistance; and her family's ongoing relationship with PACER Center and other disability-related organizations.

Bridget's ACT score stemmed from many of the same sources. Teachers, family, PACER, and others backed her efforts to obtain permission from ACT to use accommodations in taking the test. ACT works extensively with many kinds of accommodations (see www.act.org), but Bridget's request to use a certain assistive technology device to dictate the essay section of the test was unique. No one had requested use of the *Dragon Naturally Speaking* speech recognition software before.

Her parents' help, documentation and recommendations of professionals, information from PACER staff members, and assistance from ACT staff members all contributed to Bridget's receiving permission to use the device—and a test score that represented her ability.

From the Thomsons' original request for ACT's permission, the process took



Photo by Martha Mason

Bridget Thomson

several months. It included an application for the accommodation, a denial by ACT, an appeal by the Thomsons, and then ACT's consent. When Bridget took the ACT test in June 2007, the device allowed her to produce an essay that accurately represented her thinking—the purpose of the test section. If Bridget had been made to handwrite the essay, it is likely that all her energy would have been so focused on the mechanics of producing individual words that she could not have expressed her ideas.

The situation involved a couple factors: Bridget's need for the accommodation and ACT's need to preserve the integrity of the highly respected and trusted test. With cooperation and reliable information, both factors were recognized in a win-win situation. In addition, ACT's decision may

help other high school students who need the type of accommodation that Bridget did.

Bridget's mother credits PACER with a major role, not only in the ACT accommodation, but in many of Bridget's successes. Susan Thomson has gathered accurate information from the PACER workshops she has attended over the years, she said. She has called PACER for one-on-one consultation with advocates about education issues. Bridget has used PACER's Simon Technology Center to learn about and try assistive technology, including the device she used for the ACT test. Bridget also participated in the first IBM EX.I.T.E. camp at PACER (see page 12) and was an intern at another. When the ACT question arose, the Thomsons worked with a PACER expert on the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Like many families, they have relied on PACER information to help them make education and other decisions affecting their child's life, with good results.

As Susan Thomson put it, "Wonderful things happen because of PACER."

PACER founders receive award

Paula F. Goldberg, PACER Center executive director and co-founder, and Marge Goldberg, former co-director and co-founder, received the annual Child Advocacy Award from the American Academy of Pediatrics, Minnesota Chapter.

Recognizing Goldberg and Goldberg (no relation) for their commitment to Minnesota children, the award was presented June 1 in Minneapolis.

Second Mann symposium addresses

By Marcia Kelly

Information and inspiration were in abundant supply for the 600-plus people who gathered at the second annual Ted & Roberta Mann Foundation Symposium. Cosponsored by PACER Center, the Aug. 15 event featured national speakers who provided insights and practical advice on ways general education teachers and parents can better understand the needs of children with learning and mental health issues.

The mission of the Mann Foundation is to continue the legacy established by the late Ted Mann, theater owner, movie producer, businessperson, and philanthropist. Administered by Mann's eldest daughter, Roberta Mann Benson, and her two children, John and Blythe Brenden, the foundation makes a difference in the lives of many. The symposium content is a focus of Benson, who has a master's degree in psychotherapy and is earning her doctorate in education.

Participants expressed their appreciation for Benson's



Roberta Mann Benson of the Ted & Roberta Mann Foundation, left, chatted with Mary Schrock, PACER Director of Development, who led in planning the symposium.

this symposium success. Everything was top notch!! I brought my daughter for part of the day. It was a very motivating experience for her. She is 22 and struggles with several issues. The self-advocacy workshop was great for her—especially listening to a peer.”—A parent.

efforts and the symposium's positive impact:

“This symposium was a fantastic way to start the school year! Thank you for organizing this event and bringing such dynamic speakers to challenge our thoughts, habits, and teaching into shifting our paradigms! Excellent! The information is very relevant, and I will be using what I learned with our staff.”—An educator

“This symposium invigorated me with fresh and useful ideas to help the children in my classroom and my life. I need these really appropriate methods to deal with children who only want to fit in.”—An educator

“My sincere thanks to everyone who helped make

Speakers offered insight to child mental health, learning disabilities

LeDerick Horne



Horne

Instead of taking the podium after being introduced, LeDerick Horne remained seated at his table. From that vantage point, his voice, both ethereal and grounded, rose and radiated through the room as he recited his poem “New Beginning.” Soon, he was walking among the

tables, sharing his inspirational story of a severe learning disability, academic struggles, a downward emotional spiral, and eventually tremendous success.

“Our stories tend to be survival stories,” Horne said. “My struggles began in the first grade.” He ended up repeating that year, and by third grade, it was obvious that he had some sort of learning disability. For years he was removed from mainstream classrooms and placed in special education classes, yet all that time, no one explained to him what his disability was or how being in those self-contained classes

would help him succeed.

In junior high, “I began an emotional downward spiral,” he said. Although popular in high school, his academic performance was poor and his anxiety and depression worsened until he became suicidal. “I didn’t see myself as having a future,” he said.

At that point, “you can break down or break through,” Horne said. “I took an inventory of who I was,” and in so doing learned he had a lot of strengths and potential.

“Everyone is born with challenges

(Continued on page 11)

issues of hidden disabilities

(Continued from page 10)

and the gifts to face them,” he said. For him, it was the advice of his Individualized Education Program (IEP) team that set him on a life-changing path. The team advised against going to a four-year college and instead encouraged him to attend a local college with many supports in place for students with learning

disabilities. There, he received the three things he needed to succeed. “I was exposed to an environment of safety. I learned how my mind worked and that I’m an audio-visual learner. And I asked for accommodations.”

With that support, Horne became an outstanding student, graduating with honors and a bachelor’s degree. He

founded a property management company and is board chair of Project Eye-to-Eye, a mentoring program for students with learning disabilities.

A motivational speaker, an advocate for people with disabilities, and a poet, he concluded his presentation as he had begun, with an original poem.

John Maag



Maag has faced oppositional and defiant challenges from students. As

A professor at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln who specializes in the education and treatment of children with emotional and behavioral disorders, John

a keynote speaker at the symposium, he presented sample challenges to attendees to help them develop new ways to view and respond to youth.

Here’s one of the challenges: Make a fist, then ask someone else to open it. Most people will try to pry the hand open, causing resistance to meet force. It won’t work well. So Maag suggested other options: The person could simply ask you to 1) open your hand or 2) offer you money or something else desirable that you

would have to open your hand to grasp.

The same principle applies when working with children who are resistant, Maag explained. Look at things from a different perspective,” he said.

When you are facing a child’s resistant behavior, he advised, challenge yourself to see it in new ways. By taking a nonconfrontational approach, you can help change students’ resistant patterns and change the interaction.

Winnelle Carpenter

She’s bright, she’s articulate, she has a master’s degree—and she has multiple learning disabilities that caused her to “flunk all the time” and be put in the “educably mentally retarded class” when a child in school. Winnelle Carpenter understands the misery and suffering that result from invisible disabilities.

Instead of giving up, she fought back. “Every obstacle was an opportunity to find out who I am,” she said. “Who she is” is an educational consultant in private practice who provides academic therapy, coaching, and mentoring for individuals with learning disabilities and at-risk learners. She also is a researcher and author of the curriculum, “Become Your



Carpenter, center, and student panelists

Own Expert,” a self-advocacy curriculum for youth with learning disabilities.

Flanking her on the podium were eight

of her students, who honestly, articulately, and poignantly answered a series of questions about having learning disabilities. They spoke about how it felt when they were diagnosed, how schools responded when they asked for accommodations, how their families help with their homework, and more.

Perhaps one of the students on the panel best summarized the key message of the group when she said, “A child will succeed if they’re able to. They’re just trying to survive. It shouldn’t be about surviving. It should be about succeeding.”

Carpenter agreed and added, “You never forget the agony under the surface. It’s very challenging living with a hidden disability.”

(Continued on page 12)



At left, a camper learns the fine art of breaking down a computer.

Below, two campers express astonishment at an EX.I.T.E. Camp presentation.



EX.I.T.E. introduces girls to technology

Thirty Minnesota middle-school-aged girls attended the fifth IBM EX.I.T.E. (Exploring Interests in Technology and Engineering) Camp at PACER Center in August.

The day camp encourages girls' interest in math, science, and technology. Activities ran the gamut from making lip gloss to viewing a collection of exotic insects, taking apart computers, and mingling with women who chose careers in science and technology.

Said one parent: "My daughter said she wished these girls were her school classmates. She said it was the first time in her life she felt totally accepted and could just be herself... This opportunity was priceless!"

IBM established the camp at PACER and conducts other EX.I.T.E.

camp activities across the world. Other sponsoring corporations at PACER were 3M, Medtronic, and Accenture. Volunteers from the companies participated in the camp, as did speakers from the Como Zoo, Science Museum of Minnesota, Bakken Museum, and Courage Center.

Meghan Kunz, assistive technology specialist at PACER's Simon Technology Center (STC) coordinated the camp, assisted by STC assistive technology specialist Erika Frake. Bridget Ames is the STC coordinator.

For information about the 2008 EX.I.T.E. camp and to view 2007 camp photos and video, visit www.PACER.org >Programs & Resources> Programs>EX.I.T.E. or call (952) 838-9000.

Mann Symposium

(Continued from page 11)

Jeff Bostic

Jeff Bostic offered both perspective and practical tips on dealing with disabilities. After discussing changes in society's view of psychiatry, disability, special education, and other topics, he also offered some useful techniques for dealing with a child's fears and negative self image.

The techniques included such things as evaluating the evidence behind a statement or feeling, challenging negative thoughts, practicing self-talk, and more. For example, if your daughter says, "I'm no good at sports," you can help her evaluate the evidence by responding, "What happened? Which sports or positions are easier?" If your son says, "I can't go to math. People think I'm dumb," you can challenge the negative thought with a response such as, "What do students do when you arrive? Is anyone friendly?"

Bostic is an assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, director of school psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), and medical director of the

Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Project site at MGH. His research and clinical interests focus on mental health in school settings and working with primary care providers to deliver psychiatric care.

J. Stuart Ablon

Stuart Ablon has a philosophy about all children—and especially those with behavior issues. "Children do well if they can," he says. "If they can't, we adults need to figure why so we can help."

In a world where conventional wisdom says kids misbehave to get attention, manipulate, or because they've received bad parenting, that's radical thinking. Ablon embraces unconventional wisdom that says such behavior is a learning disability. The child, he said, is delayed in the development of crucial cognitive skills—often including flexibility, adaptability, frustration tolerance, and problem solving—or has significant difficulty applying these skills when they are most needed.

"Maladaptive behavior—including but not limited to explosions—occurs when the cognitive demands being placed on the child outstrip the child's capacity to

respond adaptively," Ablon said. The solution, he said, is to identify and teach the lagging skills. The goal, he added, is not to make the child behave, but rather to teach the adaptive skills that will help him or her respond more appropriately.

Ablon is associate director of the CPS Institute in the Department of Psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and co-director of the Center for Collaborative Problem Solving. He specializes in the treatment of explosive and easily frustrated children and adolescents and their families.

Symposium breakout session speakers included the above speakers as well as L. Read Sulik, M.D., medical director of child and adolescent psychiatry of St. Cloud Hospital Behavioral Health Services, and Barry Garfinkel, M.D., president and founder of the Center for Developmental Psychopharmacology.

Dates and speakers for the third annual Ted and Roberta Mann Symposium will be announced in a future issue of PACESETTER and at www.PACER.org.

Project KITE evaluations show high success rate

By Bridget Ames and
Tenley McDonald

Evaluations of PACER Center's Project KITE (Kids Included Through Technology Are Enriched) indicate a major success rate for increasing parents' and professionals' understanding of how assistive technology (AT) can help young children with disabilities.

Project KITE, funded by the Minnesota Department of Education and established by PACER in 1994, is part of PACER's Simon Technology Center (STC). KITE is an assistive technology training curriculum for parents of children ages 3–8 and the professionals who work with them. KITE is the only early childhood assistive technology training program in Minnesota and is recognized nationally for its effectiveness.

Project KITE teams consist of a parent of a child with a disability, the child's teacher, and a service provider. For the duration of the trainings, Project KITE teams receive computers and software to use in the home and classroom. After the five sessions, participating classrooms receive a Young Explorer computer system courtesy of IBM.

In 2006–2007, Project KITE significantly improved interactions with peers and participation in learning activities for children with disabilities in the Marshall and Grand Marais areas. Vast improvements were seen after participants completed a post-training assessment and participants were very pleased with the knowledge they had obtained about early childhood assistive technology.



Classmates are transfixed as a young Project KITE participant displays his computer skills.

After the Marshall trainings, parents indicated they were now using three assistive technology devices in a week instead of one. Professionals also saw an increase in AT use in their classrooms, and all of them felt very comfortable in assisting others with assistive technology questions and products.

Past participants had this to say about Project KITE:

“This was a great experience working with parent and teacher. Assistive technology doesn't have to be expensive and it can be simple. The make-it and take-it projects were great, and we will be doing some projects this summer. I would recommend this opportunity to other programs, and the training was great!”—*Speech-Language Pathologist*

“Project KITE was very useful for me! I was able to implement new strategies immediately that directly impacted my student and class in a positive way. I was also able to further my education and knowledge of resources, ideas and laws for the benefit of my current

and future students. The importance and impact of Project KITE is huge! Thanks for all your hard work and savvy skills and teaching!”—*Early Childhood Special Education Teacher*
“I have learned about adaptations for writing instruments, software reviews, and the loan of a computer so our son could become engaged. Superb concept! Although our son is not yet in kindergarten, we are off to very strong start! He is now fluent on the

computer with Edmark programs and a trackball!”—*A parent*

For the past decade Project KITE has served more than 75 sites throughout Minnesota. Project KITE continues to change the landscape of early childhood assistive technology in Minnesota. If you are interested in having Project KITE in your area, please contact PACER at (952) 838-9000 (Metro area) or toll free (800) 537-2237 (Greater Minnesota) or visit www.PACER.org.

Looking for a parent center in your state?

Visit www.taalliance.org

PACER is the National Technical Assistance Center for the Technical Assistance ALLIANCE for Parent Centers. The ALLIANCE project produces many materials to help the nation's parent centers help parents of children with all disabilities.

To find the parent center nearest you, visit the ALLIANCE Web site and click on your state, or call (888) 248-0822.

Building self-esteem contributes to your child's

Parents want their children to have happy, secure childhoods, whether they have disabilities or not. The not-so-secret ingredient? Many childrearing experts say it's self-esteem.

Self-esteem is more than just feeling good about oneself, explains Michelle Ulfers of PACER's Parent to Parent Support Project, funded by The McKnight Foundation. It includes confidence and self-respect, which influence healthy lifestyle choices. Children need to feel they are capable of handling situations in their

lives and making good decisions.

"As important as it is, building a child's positive self-esteem doesn't need to be time-consuming, but parents need to be intentional," continues Ulfers. "It happens over a period of time. The most effective way to encourage it is through small day-to-day habits."

Ulfers says that it's important for parents to remember that techniques for building their children's self-esteem are not "one size fits all."

Each child is unique, each parent-child relationship is

Here are tips to encourage your child's self-esteem in

1. Spend quality and quantity of time with each child

Sometimes a child needs just a quick hug. At other times, he or she may need your continuing presence. Individual attention to your child says that he or she is important to you. Celebrate his or her successes—big and small. It fosters self-esteem.

2. Build trusting relationships

As relationships build over time, a child has first-hand experience in what trust can feel like. Building trusting relationships in the community with extended family, friends, neighbors, teachers, and others can foster a trusting community for your child.

Teach your child how to be a good friend. Talk about your good friends and the qualities you find in

each. Discuss with your child what he or she may want in a friend. It may be necessary to talk about honesty, and being helpful and dependable. Patience and repetition are key, say parents and professionals.

3. Keep family life consistent

Developing routine in bedtime, meals, bath time, and quiet time, as well as establishing other family rituals and traditions, are examples of how to provide consistency in family life. Predictable consequences for both good and bad behavior help children learn boundaries. Consistency leads to feeling stable and safe, which fosters self-esteem.

4. Be involved in your child's education

Knowledge gives your child a sense of control and builds self-esteem. Something as simple as

routinely checking the papers your child brings from school or chatting about the school day can show that your child's education is important to you. If your child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), share the goals with him or her. If appropriate, involve your child in the IEP meeting. Acknowledge your child's efforts if she or he is working hard, and celebrate successes.

5. Have fun

Enjoyable activities can relax your child and promote a feeling of well-being. Play a board game, walk the family pet, or ask your child to tell you about something that made him or her smile today. Have at least one "smiling moment" with your child each day.

6. Communicate respectfully

Encourage your child to share thoughts and feelings with you. Take time to listen, because it teaches a child that his or her ideas are important. If your child has difficulty speaking, use patience in hearing him or her out. If needed, help your child find assistive technology or other ways to express needs or ideas.

Respectful communication also means listening to all sides of a story and using respectful language at home and in the community.

PACER is part of IBM's World Community Grid

PACER Center has joined the World Community Grid. It is an IBM effort to link computers worldwide and put idle computer time to use in aiding projects that benefit humanity. The grid is built upon an IBM infrastructure and includes IBM support.

To become part of the grid, members install a small, free software program on their computers. When their computers are on but not being used, the program connects to the World Community Grid's server, performs computations, and sends the results back to the server. Members' donated resources help increase the pace of research. To help and join the team, contact Jamie Smith at PACER@PACER.org.

security

unique, and what works in one family's situation may not work in another family's life.

“What is universal is a child's need for praise and encouragement and to feel capable,” adds Julie Hertzog, PACER staff member and parent of three, including an 11-year-old son with Down syndrome. “Children feel valued when their talents are recognized.”

Below are ways parents can build their child's self-esteem day-to-day. Take a look and see what might work for you.



ways that may influence healthy lifestyles

7. Help your child solve problems, resolve conflict

Problems and conflict are inevitable and complex. As they arise, talk with your child about the circumstances and his or her feelings. Explain how others may have a different view of the situation. Praise your child when he or she makes a thoughtful decision, or explore what she or he might do differently in a similar situation.

8. Discipline positively

Everyone makes mistakes. Make sure you have stated the expectations clearly and the child knows the consequences. Identify the issue or behavior as the problem—not the person. Be sure you reward the behavior you want. The ultimate goal of discipline is to teach a child self-discipline and independence, as well as safety. Keep in mind that a child with some disabilities may need more repetition and different learning strategies than a typically developing child.

9. Teach responsibility

Give your child opportunities to feel pride in doing things for others. Feeling pride in making a contribution to the family or community is important. Some children can set a table or care for a pet. Others may

help by mowing a neighbor's grass or carrying an elderly person's groceries from car to house.

10. Address life situations honestly

Teach your child that life does not always happen as planned. Ask each family member to share a positive event, as well as one that went

wrong. Share with your child unexpected happenings in your life, both positive and negative, and how you handled the situations. Such open discussions encourage your children—and you—to consider strengths and coping tools, as well as what brings pride and pleasure to each person in your family.

Saturday, Oct. 13
9 a.m. to noon

At PACER Center

PACER Center
Housing Resource
and Information Fair

Where will your child live when he or she grows up?

PACER's free 4th Housing Fair is an opportunity for families of children and young adults and services providers to meet and discuss housing options, services, supports, and related issues for children and young adults with disabilities. State and county representatives will be available to answer questions.

For information, call (952) 838-9000
or visit www.pacer.org

Resources

NEW INTERACTIVE CD



Top Secret Job Skills: Declassified

This clever and entertaining interactive CD teaches youth basic information and skills for obtaining—and keeping—a job. The exercises advise in a way that invites youth to come to their own

conclusions about what is appropriate behavior in the workplace. While it is designed for youth with disabilities, the CD's common-sense content can apply to anyone entering the job market. \$35 ST-38

NEW



Working Together

This parent's guide to parent-professional partnership and communication is a "must have" for families of children with disabilities as they plan a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Filled with common-sense tips based on research and practice, it offers a blueprint for building positive family-school relationships. There are national and Minnesota versions.

■ \$6 10+ copies, \$5 each PHP-a19



Beyond Sticks and Stones: How to Help Your Child with a Disability Deal with Bullying

More than 160,000 children, many with disabilities, miss school each day to avoid harassment and intimidation by classmates. This long-awaited book helps you to help your child address the problem of bullying.

■ \$6 10+ copies, \$4 each BP-7

NEW

Let's Talk Activity Cards



The activity cards, published by Minnesota Parent Center, Minnesota's Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC), are an easy, entertaining way for parents to help their young child build vocabulary and speaking skills—the first steps in learning to read. Simple instructions and comfortable

handling make the cards enjoyable and easy to use. For all children, ages 2-6.

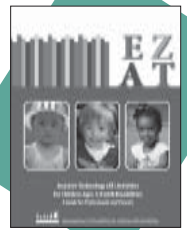
■ \$4 10+ copies, \$2.50 each or 100+, \$2 each MPC-9 SE

NEW

EZ AT Assistive Technology Activities for Children Ages 3–8 with Disabilities

This newly published compilation of activities for children with disabilities is the result of submissions by parents and professionals across the nation. Many of the ideas are simple and inexpensive to incorporate at home and school. All represent best practices for children that most effectively use technology to promote learning and inclusion.

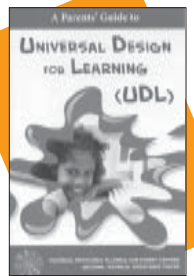
\$10 10+ copies, \$8 each STC-16



NEW

A Parents' Guide to Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

This easy-to-read booklet introduces parents to the background and principles of UDL. It tells how UDL can help students with disabilities succeed in the classroom with an adaptable curriculum to meet their individual learning needs. It is published by the Technical Assistance ALLIANCE for Parent Centers at PACER Center. \$2 10+ copies, \$1.50 ea ALL-38



Parents Can Be the Key

The eighth edition of this popular handbook for parents of children and youth with disabilities describes basic special education laws and procedures and parents rights and responsibilities in their children's educations. Published in 2006.

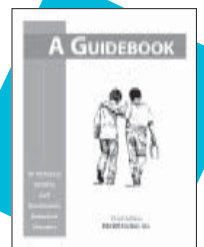
■ \$3 10+ copies, \$2 each PHP-a1



A Guidebook for Parents of Children with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders

The popular book presents basic information about emotional and behavioral disorders, the type of professionals who provide mental health services to children and adolescents and how to select them, school-based services, recommended reading, and more. The 144 pages of this third edition are packed with pertinent suggestions for parents.

■ \$12 10+ copies, \$7.50 each PHP-a8



Resources

The following publications are expected to be available in early October 2007. To order, complete the form below and mail it, call PACER at (952) 838-9000, or visit www.PACER.org.

Coming soon

A Guide for Minnesota Parents to the Individualized Education Program

This new edition of a long-time favorite helps parents work with schools to address each child's special needs through understanding the required components of the IEP. It includes examples from the Minnesota state recommended form.

■ \$3 10+ copies, \$2 each PHP-a12

Coming soon

Housing: Where Will Our Children Live When They Grow Up?

Parents of youth with disabilities will find that the new (2007) edition of this attractive, easy-to-use book answers many questions about future housing choices to make with their child. From housing options to a resource directory, there is a wealth of information.

■ \$8 10+ copies, \$6 each PHP-a26

To order the listed materials...

1. Specify how many you want of each item and the cost
2. Total your order, adding appropriate sales tax
3. Enclose payment with your order
4. Mail to: PACER Center
8161 Normandale Blvd.
Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044

Prices include postage and handling. A discount may be available if 10 or more of the same item number are ordered.

■ indicates one item is free to Minnesota parents or guardians of children with disabilities and to Minnesota young adults (age 14 and older) with disabilities.

For foreign orders, please telephone or e-mail PACER (see page 2). Payment must be in U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank.

The items listed on these pages are also available through PACER's *Catalog of Publications*.

Order number	Name of publication/video ordered	Quantity	Per item cost	Total item cost
Total cost of all items ordered →				

Amount of order: Sales tax: _____ Total amount enclosed: _____
(Minnesota residents, 6.65%)

Please complete the following:

Parent Professional Other _____

Name: _____

Organization (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: (h) _____ (w) _____ E-mail: _____

If a parent:

Birth date of child with disability: _____ Disability: _____

Workshops

PACER Center workshops are free to parents of children and young adults with all disabilities. For information and updates, call (952) 838-9000 (Metro area) or toll free at (800) 537-2237 (Greater Minnesota) or visit www.PACER.org.

Creation Station

Dippy Designs

What do you get when you cross baby oil, food coloring, bubble wrap, and paper? Children of all ages, with and without disabilities, are welcome to come find out! (Hint: Think decorative paper that can be bound into a special journal.) Note: Food coloring is a permanent dye, so please dress accordingly.

Oct. 13, 10 a.m. to noon (PACER Center)

Sculpey Extravaganza

However you squish it, squash it, or squeeze it, Sculpey™ clay gives shape to imagination. Children of all ages, with and without disabilities, can make a colorful keychain, necklace, sculpture, or almost anything else.

Nov. 17, 10 a.m. to noon (PACER Center)

Celebrate Snowman

Children of all ages, with and without disabilities, can celebrate the winter season by making a snowperson out of terra cotta pots. Add a personal touch of style with a no-sew fleece scarf.

Dec. 15, 10 a.m. to noon (PACER Center)

Early Childhood

The ABCs of Early Literacy

Nancy Kaczrowski, Early Reading First GET READY coordinator for the Bloomington public schools, presents the workshop. It focuses on building skills for children from birth through age 5, emphasizing strategies for families.

Oct. 2, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

Understanding and Addressing Challenging Behaviors

This workshop is for parents of children up to age 6 with disabilities. Parents will learn how to understand behavior and its function, use positive behavioral supports to cope with challenging behaviors, use communication skills to reinforce acceptable social behaviors, and understand the connection among developmental stages, learning skills, and behavior.

Oct. 16, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (St. Peter)

Who Pays? Understanding the Funding Maze

Department of Health and Human Services staff will provide information on medical funding sources and other resources available for families who have children with disabilities. Information on Minnesota Children with Special Health Needs, MinnesotaCare, Medical Assistance, TEFRA, Home & Community Based Services, SSI, and third party billing and other funding will be included.

Nov. 15, 6:30 to 9 p.m., (PACER Center)

Emotional Behavioral Disorder

Developing Goals and Related Services to Meet Mental Health Needs

This interactive workshop for parents explains how to write goals and supports into an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to support mental health needs.

Oct. 11, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Crookston)

IDEA 2004 and Positive Behavior Interventions

For parents and professionals, this interactive workshop explains how the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) covers positive behavior intervention for children with behavior needs and emphasizes a new way of responding to those needs.

Nov. 13, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Mankato)

Transition Planning for Youth with Emotional or Behavioral Needs

Planning a transition IEP for a youth with emotional or behavioral needs is challenging. Participants will learn how to address those needs in the transition areas of postsecondary training, jobs and job training, community living, home living, and leisure and recreation. Students 14 and older and parents are invited to attend this workshop.

Oct. 30, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER Center)

Understanding School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports: What Parents and Professionals Need to Know

The Minnesota Department of Education has initiated a statewide positive behavioral interventions and support project (PBIS) to enhance the capacity of schools to successfully educate all students, especially those with

challenging behavior. The St. Cloud schools have been in this initiative since 2005, and they are now participating in efforts to increase parent awareness and involvement. This workshop will explain schoolwide PBIS and how parents can be involved.

Oct. 23, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (St. Cloud)

Health Information, Advocacy

A series on financial resources and public supports. Attend one or all sessions.

Session 1: What Does Normal Mean?

Supports for children and youth with special health care needs come to life through this documentary film.

Oct. 16, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER Center)

Session 2: Social Security for Transition-age Youth

(See Transition)

Oct. 17, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER Center)

Session 3: Getting the Help You Need

Speakers from Hennepin County and the Minnesota Disability Law Center discuss state and county programs and services for children with special health needs and disabilities, including consumer-directed community support and TEFRA.

Oct. 27, 9 a.m. to noon (PACER Center)

Housing

Housing: First Steps Toward Independent Living

This workshop for parents of children 14 and older encourages families to think about the first steps in helping their son or daughter with a disability prepare to move out of the family home. The event features a panel of parents to discuss issues such as person-centered planning and building support networks.

Nov. 7, 7 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER Center)

Housing Resource and Information Fair

Where will your child live in adulthood? PACER's 4th Housing Fair is an opportunity for families of children and young adults and services providers to meet and discuss housing options, services, supports, and related issues for children and young adults with disabilities.

Oct. 13, 9 a.m. to noon (PACER Center)

Workshops

Parent Training

A 5 is Against the Law: Teaching Social Understanding to Teens and Young Adults with Disabilities

The workshop for parents introduces local author Kari Dunn Buron's five-point system for teaching difficult social concepts to youth with Asperger's syndrome or other social-behavior disorders. Cosponsored by the Autism Society of Minnesota.

Oct. 4, 7 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER Center)

IDEA: Understanding the IEP

This completely revised Individualized Education Program (IEP) workshop explores new IEP requirements and components of IEP development, including evaluation, resolving disagreements, and an expanded section on writing measurable goals.

Oct. 3, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Int'l Falls)

Nov. 8, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER Center)

IDEA: Understanding the Special Education Process

This revised workshop outlines the basic principles of special education with materials to help parents organize their child's special education records. Topics include free appropriate public education, evaluation, resolving disagreements, and the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Oct. 1; 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Thief River Falls)

Oct. 2, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Warroad)

Oct. 22, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Rosemount)

Is Your Child a Target of Bullying?

This workshop offers intervention strategies for parents of children with disabilities who may be targeted by bullies at school.

Oct. 25, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

NCLB: No Child Left Behind

The workshop helps parents understand the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law and implica-

tions for students receiving special education.

Oct. 23, 7 to 9 p.m. (Bemidji)

Oct. 24, 7 to 9 p.m. (Detroit Lakes)

Oct. 25, 7 to 9 p.m. (Milaca)

Planning Ahead for Graduation and Life

The workshop is for families of youth with disabilities who are looking past high school. Information and strategies will be offered on completing high school and moving towards postsecondary education, work and adult services.

Oct. 24, 6 to 9 p.m. (Bemidji)

Skills for Effective Partnership

This interactive workshop will present ideas for parents of special education students to use when communicating with school staff. Options for resolving differences also will be addressed.

Oct. 23, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (Worthington)

Using the Special Education Process for Resolving Disagreements with Schools.

This workshop presents options and outcomes of dispute resolution. Communication strategies and problem-solving tips will be included to increase parent's knowledge about dispute resolution.

Nov. 27, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

What's New in Special Education

This new workshop will help parents of children with disabilities understand changes in federal education laws. Participants will also learn about Minnesota rules and statutes. Topics will include high expectations for children with disabilities, meeting attendance and early intervention services.

Oct. 23, 7 to 9 p.m. (Fergus Falls)

Oct. 30, 7 to 9 p.m. (Anoka)

Public Policy

Speak Up for Special Education

Learn what happened during the 2007 legislative session and the power of your

personal story. There will be an opportunity to talk with state legislators about your special education concerns.

Oct. 2, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Roseville)

Oct. 9, 6 to 8 p.m. (Burnsville)

Oct. 22, 6 to 8 p.m. (Wayzata-Plymouth)

Simon Technology Center

Comparison of Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices

This workshop will explore the many communication devices in today's market. Workshop participants will investigate differences among the more popular ones. Participants will leave this workshop feeling more confident about available AAC devices, aware of their similarities and differences, and knowing their capabilities.

Nov. 12, 6 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

Hands-on with Read and Write Gold

The versatile literacy utility program includes voice recognition, word prediction, and text-to-speech with any document or Web page. Participants receive a demo CD. The workshop is free through Texthelp, Inc.

Oct. 16, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (PACER Center)

STC Open House

PACER Center's Simon Technology Center plans an open house to celebrate the technology center's 20th anniversary. It is for children and youth of all ages and abilities and their families.

Oct. 6, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (PACER Center)

Tech for Girls: Dream It and Build It!

If you can dream it, you can build it! Middle school girls join women IBM employees to test their creative thinking skills while designing bridges, boats, and more. Toothpicks, pennies, aluminum foil, and other common materials will be used to make a variety of structures that will then be tested for strength.

Oct. 9, 6 to 8 p.m. (PACER Center)

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Workshop Registration

PACER Center workshops are free to parents of Minnesota children and youth with all disabilities. If you wish to attend a workshop, please register in advance. In addition to the brief information above, the workshops are described in more detail at PACER's Web site.

For information and easy online workshop registration, visit

www.PACER.org/workshops

You may also register by telephone at (952) 838-9000 (Metro area) or (800) 537-2237 (toll free from Greater Minnesota)

Workshops

Tech for Girls: Messy Experiments

Does an egg float or sink in water? Can a raisin really dance? Women IBM employees will help middle school girls with disabilities answer all the questions you've ever had about science. Be ready to get messy!

Jan. 8, 6 to 8 p.m. (PACER Center)

Using Assistive Technology in the Classroom: Student Perspective

Parents, professionals, and young adults are invited to learn first-hand how assistive technology can be applied to the curriculum. Four students will discuss and demonstrate how they use text-to-speech, speech-to-text, MP3 players, and more to facilitate reading and writing needs.

Oct. 29, 6 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

Windows Accessibility Features

Discover how to make your Windows computer easier to see, hear, and use by taking advantage of Microsoft's built-in accessibility features. Participants will learn how to adjust computer settings to improve the visibility of the computer screen, make the mouse and keyboard easier to control, display

captions for speech and sounds, speak text aloud. Each participant will receive a free Microsoft accessibility demonstration CD set. Seating is limited to 30 participants.

Nov. 1, 6 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

Transition

Focus on Transition

The workshop is for families of youth with disabilities that are in the transition process (age 14 and over). Opportunities and strategies will be discussed for youth entering and completing high school and those moving toward postsecondary education, work, and adult services.

Nov. 14, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER Center)

Making Customized and Self-Employment Work

Cary Griffin, co-director of the U.S. Dept. of Labor's National Self Employment Technical Assistance, Resources and Training project with Virginia Commonwealth University, will speak about employment methods, proper job development, systematic

instruction, and natural supports.

Nov. 5, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER Center)

Social Security for Transition Age Youth

A Social Security representative will speak at PACER's Project Pride workshop about programs for transition-age youth. Among the topics: the difference between Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), what the "Ticket" program involves, and what "PASS" means for young adults.

Oct. 17, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER Center)

Oct. 23, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Hutchinson)

Oct. 30, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Owatonna)

Save the date!

PACER Benefit

April 26, 2008

Visit www.PACER.org
or call (952) 838-9000



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