

# PACESETTER

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

## TIKES project helps young children use technology

Assistive technology (AT) can make a significant difference in the lives of young children with disabilities, but many families do not even think to use AT with children under the age of 5. “The numbers are very low for young children using AT, less than 9 percent for children ages 3 to 5, and virtually nonexistent for ages birth to 2,” said Bridget Gilormini, Director of PACER’s Simon Technology Center. “People just don’t think of assistive technology for children that young, yet the solution may be as simple as an adapted toy or modified scissors.”

PACER’s TIKES project — Technology to Improve Kids Educational Success — was developed to help parents and educators learn what technology is available, its benefits, and how to use it. “We met with a dad recently who was practically in tears as he watched his daughter focus and interact and respond to some very simple switch toys,” Gilormini said. “He could see the possibilities for his child. It was wonderful!”

Launched in January 2013 and funded by the U.S. Department of Education (Office of Special Education Programs) as a five-year model demonstration project, TIKES is a partnership between

*Continued on page 2*

## October is PACER’S National Bullying Prevention Month



October is National Bullying Prevention Month, which was developed in 2006 by PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center (NBPC) to raise awareness of the issue. “Bullying prevention is something in which everyone can play an important role,” said NBPC Director Julie Hertzog. “Every year, the momentum to address this issue grows, and more communities unite to take action so that students who are bullied know there is support available.”

Community members can take action in several ways: Use free online resources at [PACER.org/bullying](http://PACER.org/bullying), show their true colors by wearing orange on Oct. 22 for Unity Day, stage a Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying event, or become a “Champion” for the cause. National organizations also lend support, including the National Education Association, American Federation for Teachers, and National PTA. Communities across the country hold events and activities and, in collaboration with Facebook, PACER offers a free step-by-step event planning guide.

“Taking part in Unity Day is a simple way to make a powerful statement,” said Paula F. Goldberg, PACER Center’s executive director. “Anyone can join with us to ‘Make It Orange and Make It End.’”

*See page 8 for more information on how you can participate in Unity Day and National Bullying Prevention Month.*

# TIKES helps parents, educators make the most of technology

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PACER and three Minnesota school districts: Bloomington, Anoka-Hennepin, and Rosemount-Eagan-Apple Valley. The goal is to help parents and teachers maximize the use of AT by children with disabilities ages birth to 5.

The project team is made up of education and assistive technology specialists who are partnering with parents and professionals to develop a model that can be replicated elsewhere. "I think the most important thing for families is to know that PACER's Simon Technology Center is here, and it is a place they can go to help their child," said Gilormini. "We have incredible resources, everything from simple pencil grips to the latest eye gaze communications devices and our VGo robots. We are here to support families and educators."

As part of the TIKES project, PACER is providing hands-on training and coaching for parents and professionals. Additionally, the organization is helping the three partner school districts to improve their lending libraries to complement PACER'S resources and utilize AT reuse programs so families can buy, sell, or swap used AT devices.

Teachers and parents are learning

about the latest technology available and how AT requirements can be written into a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). The TIKES team has developed a practical, Child-Centered AT plan to help teachers and families make the most of the IEP or IFSP process. This is one of several tools the TIKES team has built that will be available through partner school districts and on PACER's website (PACER.org). At the same time, parents are learning about resources their school districts already offer, new tools their children can use now, and how to use PACER's services.

Although the outcomes of the TIKES project will have broad impact on the use of assistive technology, the immediate benefits are clear for the families and educators involved. At a recent consultation, the TIKES team was showing the parents of a young child with a disability how some very basic tools could make a significant difference for their daughter. "The dad's response was 'Wow!' He was so excited to learn about these simple,



inexpensive tools, things he had just never thought about before," Gilormini said. "The child might eventually benefit from a sophisticated iPad application or speech-to-text device, but for now the dad has discovered a do-it-yourself solution to meet an immediate need. That's very cool!"

*To learn more about the TIKES program and PACER's AT resources for young children, e-mail Bridget Gilormini ([bridget.gilormini@pacer.org](mailto:bridget.gilormini@pacer.org)) or call (952) 838-9000.*



## Save the date! PACER's Annual Benefit is May 2, 2015

Mark your calendars now for Saturday, May 2, 2015, and make plans to attend PACER's 33rd Annual Benefit at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

For more information on the Annual Benefit, including opportunities for corporate sponsorship, contact Jackie Saffert ([jackie.saffert@PACER.org](mailto:jackie.saffert@PACER.org)) or Debbie Andrews ([debbie.andrews@PACER.org](mailto:debbie.andrews@PACER.org)) or call (952) 838-9000.

# PACER honored for national assistance

## We are better...

You first spoke with us and we trusted you to speak for us. You did so proudly with conviction and passion seeking only to represent our interests. And because you wanted us to be better, you helped us find our voices.

You remained ever vigilant, helping to make real the promise of a free appropriate public education for generations of American students with disabilities. You helped us stand tall against any action that might erode or deny the civil rights of citizens with disabilities. You helped us be better.

You taught us to be good stewards of public resources. You were there when Centers first opened their doors helping new leaders learn to manage an organization. For established Centers, you helped keep us current and strategic and looking forward. You kept all of us aware of best practices in management and leadership. You helped us build strong resilient organizations that would allow us to serve our passion, our mission of service to children with disabilities and their families. You helped us be better.



*PACER Executive Director Paula Goldberg (second from left) was recently presented with a plaque from IN\*SOURCE, the parent center for families of children with disabilities in South Bend, Ind., commemorating PACER's many years of providing support and assistance to parent centers across the country. Paula accepted the honor from IN\*SOURCE Executive Director Richard Burden (left), co-founder Sally Hamburg (second from right), and program specialist Wilner Cusic. Read the heartfelt inscription [here](#).*

You asked us what we needed to be better. And, with us, you developed high quality programs, services and resources. You used your skills and reputations to build relationships with the private sector and because you wanted us to be better, you made certain that all of us could have access to the priceless services and technologies that you negotiated.

You are our mentors, respected colleagues, our dear friends. With quiet dignity and courage, working tirelessly on our behalf, with selfless commitment to our success, you helped us to be better. Together, our National Network of Parent Centers has touched countless lives and they are better.

Thank you to all of the PACER family.



*Darlene Zangara (center), new director of Minnesota's Olmstead Plan Implementation Office, recently visited PACER Center to learn more about PACER's work on behalf of children with disabilities. She met with PACER staff, including Sam Graves (left) and Bonnie Jean Smith (right), to discuss Minnesota's implementation of the Olmstead Plan to improve the way the state provides services and support to people with disabilities.*

# Creative approach to mediation helps one family resolve a special education dispute

When disputes arise between a parent and a school district, mediation is not unusual. It is rare, however, for a young child to be directly involved in the process, as was the case with Susan, a mom from Minnesota whose 13-year-old son Bradley was at the table when an agreement was reached about his Individualized Education Program (IEP). “I really wanted Bradley to see how many people cared about him and how hard we were all working to resolve things,” said Susan.

After usual efforts to reach an agreement among members of the IEP team have been exhausted, mediation is one of the voluntary dispute resolution options available to families. In mediation, a neutral third party provided by the state helps parents and their child’s school district resolve disputes over identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE). At least one parent and a district staff person with authority to resolve the dispute (usually the special education director) must attend the conference.

## Working together for success

Bradley is one of seven siblings. He is creative and outgoing but has a processing disorder which causes him emotional stress and difficulty fitting in with his peers. Prior to mediation, Susan had worked with the school to develop Bradley’s IEP, but one key issue was unresolved — Susan wanted Bradley to attend a regular education language arts class so that he could be with his peers in a less restrictive environment. “We were really concerned about the social aspect of



Bradley’s education because he was struggling with that,” Susan said. “You need to try and understand where the teachers are coming from, but you can’t let go of what is important for your child.”

Susan worked closely with a PACER parent advocate to help resolve the issues and build trust with the school. She wanted the school to better understand Bradley’s learning challenges, and felt it would be best if her son was involved in the process. Having Bradley at the table helped the adults in the room grasp the scope of his needs and helped Bradley better understand what he needed to do to be successful. As a result, the IEP was changed to add more structure and additional supports for Bradley so that he could do well in the regular education language arts program. “I was happy that they listened to me,” Bradley said when the mediation was over. “I was really surprised to see everybody getting along, but I liked it.”

To help parents with the mediation process, PACER offers the resource, “Checklist: Preparing for and Attending Mediation” which is available for free download in English, Spanish, Somali, and Hmong at [PACER.org/disputeresolution](http://PACER.org/disputeresolution). Once the parties reach a resolution, the mediator puts the agreement in writing. The final document is confidential and legally binding.

“I really appreciated that the charter school was creative enough to allow some flexibility and move toward positive reinforcement,” Susan said. “In our case it was very helpful having Bradley participate in the mediation, and it helped him to better understand what he needed to do. Other families may want to consider this option, too.”

*The family’s names have been changed in this story to protect their privacy. For more information on dispute resolution, visit [PACER.org/disputeresolution](http://PACER.org/disputeresolution) or call (952) 838-9000 and ask to speak with a parent advocate.*

# Minnesota one of 15 states to meet objectives for special education services under new criteria

Minnesota's public schools are doing a better job of providing special education services according to the annual special education progress report issued by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Minnesota is one of 15 states that are making the grade under OSEP's new methods of accountability, which are designed to directly support states in improving results for children with disabilities and their families. The previous measurement system placed a heavy emphasis on compliance; the new Results Driven Accountability (RDA) method is also focused on educational results and functional outcomes for children with disabilities.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) governs how special education services are provided, and states must show that they are meeting the educational needs of children with disabilities. To do that, each state gathers data from local school districts and submits an Annual Performance Report (APR) to the federal government.

The IDEA Part B determination for students ages 3 to 21 is based on evaluation of such criteria as graduation

rate, dropout rate, participation and performance on assessments, and meeting evaluation timelines. Minnesota achieved a rating of "Meets Requirements," the highest possible rating. Minnesota received the same rating for IDEA Part C (ages birth to 3).

## Parent involvement is important

One way parents and postsecondary students can help is by participating in the state's annual outcomes surveys, which measure how well students do after high school. Parents can also utilize two family friendly guides developed by PACER in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to help parents through transition planning: "Minnesota Secondary Transition Toolkit for Families: A Guide to Preparing Your Child with a Disability for Life Beyond High School," and "Mapping Dreams: The Transition to Adulthood." Both are available free to Minnesota parents at [PACER.org/publications/transition.asp](http://PACER.org/publications/transition.asp) or by calling (952) 838-9000.

# Surrogate Parent Project provides valuable information

When a child with a disability does not have a parent to serve as his or her educational advocate, who fills that role? Often, it's a surrogate. Surrogates are trained community volunteers or foster parents who represent students who are under state guardianship, or whose parents are unknown or unavailable. PACER's Surrogate Parent Project provides surrogates, or those considering taking on a surrogate role, with all of the information and resources they need.

"Surrogate parents are important for children with disabilities who don't have anyone else who can help," said PACER advocate Pat Anderson, the project coordinator. "Giving surrogate parents the information they need helps them to be more successful in their role as the child's advocate."

Through the program, surrogate parents have access to resources such as workshops, online training, helpful publications, and a short video called "The Parent Role in Special Education: Who Takes this Role for Foster Children?"

*For more information, visit [PACER.org/surrogate](http://PACER.org/surrogate), e-mail Pat Anderson ([panderson@pacer.org](mailto:panderson@pacer.org)), or call (952) 838-9000.*



# PACER project helps parents from diverse communities be more engaged at school

Research demonstrates that parental involvement is one of the most important success factors for students, including those in special education. For parents from underserved populations, however, there can be significant obstacles to involvement, a reality that is being addressed by PACER Center in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education, and the Minneapolis and St. Paul public schools. Now in its fifth year, the goal of the State Personnel Development Grant: Parent Involvement with Cohorts District Project is to increase parent involvement in special education among racially and culturally diverse communities, English language learners, and families living in poverty.

“We are acting as a bridge between families and schools to help them understand each other’s perspective,” said PACER project coordinator Barb Ziemke. “PACER is in a unique position because we have extensive experience with educators and families, we know how to talk with parents in plain language, and our multicultural advocates have earned the trust of people from diverse cultures in Minnesota.”

## Resources for families, educators

To determine what the barriers and cultural differences are that discourage parent involvement and engagement, PACER conducted focus group activities. The information gathered was then utilized in the development of free resources to help increase engagement, including student record keeping folders, activity cards, tip cards, handouts, and more. All resources are available in



Hmong, Spanish, Somali, and English. PACER also developed workshops and webinars for educators on a variety of related subjects.

The primary goal is to increase parent involvement in special education, but if they are not meaningfully connected to their child’s school in other ways, families aren’t likely to play an active role as a member of their child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, for example. When schools hold family events and parents don’t participate, assumptions are sometimes made that the parents are not interested in their child’s education. In fact, the issue might simply be a lack of communication or understanding of what it means to be *involved*. “Many families are new to the American educational system, and they aren’t aware of the role they can play,” Ziemke said. “We are helping families discover those opportunities.”

PACER is currently developing dedicated webpages for both parents

and educators that will provide access to all of the materials developed as part of the project, along with videos of parent success stories, and links to other helpful resources. In addition, a new *parent connector* initiative is underway in one Minneapolis elementary school this fall. Its goal is to identify parents who are involved in their child’s education, and have them encourage other members of their community to do the same.

“Schools are certainly the experts when it comes to education,” Ziemke said, “but parents are the experts when it comes to their own children. We recognize that every family, regardless of their background, language, or economic circumstances has something of value to bring to the table if they are given the opportunity to participate.”

*For more information, contact Barb Ziemke (e-mail [bziemke@pacer.org](mailto:bziemke@pacer.org)) or call (952) 838-9000.*

# It was another outstanding PACER symposium!



More than 1,100 teachers, parents, and administrators were on hand Aug. 7 at the Minneapolis Convention Center for the Ninth Annual National PACER Symposium About Children & Young Adults with Mental Health & Learning Disabilities. The event featured outstanding keynote presentations by Larry Wexler of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP); child and adolescent psychiatrist Dr. Susan Jenkins; and Jo Mascorro, a national leader on behavior intervention, communication strategies, and programming for students with disabilities. Presentation materials are available for download at [PACER.org/symposium](http://PACER.org/symposium).

*Above left: (From left to right) PACER Executive Director Paula Goldberg posed with keynote speaker Larry Wexler, Minnesota's Director of Special Education Barbara Troolin, and PACER staff member Sharman Davis-Barrett.*

*Far left: Dr. Read Sulik led two popular workshops.*

*Left: Dr. Barry Garfinkel gave opening remarks.*

## Choose PACER for United Way and CFC donations

Choose PACER this fall when making donations through United Way campaigns and the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), the workplace charity campaign for federal civilian, military, and postal employees. You make a difference for children!

### United Way Donor Choice Program

As a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, PACER can receive donations through United Way campaigns. United Way pledge cards have a Donor Choice designation where donors can write in PACER Center, Inc., 8161 Normandale Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55437.

### Combined Federal Campaign for Federal Employees

Look for PACER in your local campaign booklet under the Children's Charities of America heading or alphabetically. To designate your gift to PACER, use code 12272. This code is unique to PACER and should be used under any heading where PACER's name is listed.

For information on how to support PACER through the United Way, Combined Federal Campaign, or other workplace charity campaigns, call PACER's development office at (952) 838-9000 or visit [PACER.org](http://PACER.org) and click on "Get Involved, Make a Donation."

# The end of bullying begins with you!

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## Wear orange on Unity Day with T-shirts from CustomInk

Make plans to wear orange on Unity Day (Wednesday, Oct. 22) in a show of support for those who have been bullied. PACER partner CustomInk has launched its fourth annual Be Good to Each Other campaign in support of Unity Day and PACER's National Bullying Prevention Month in October. The campaign encourages students, groups, and others to take a stand for kindness and tolerance by designing and wearing custom bullying prevention T-shirts. Official Unity Day T-shirts are available now for \$12, and CustomInk donates all profits (at least \$9 per shirt!) to PACER. Order by Oct. 6 at [customink.com/stopbullying](http://customink.com/stopbullying) for guaranteed arrival in time for Unity Day.



## New mobile-friendly websites

Millions of students use smartphones and tablet computers to access the Internet. Now they can visit mobile-friendly versions of PACER's two popular websites for kids: [PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org](http://PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org) and [PACERTeensAgainstBullying.org](http://PACERTeensAgainstBullying.org).

The two sites were recently redesigned and upgraded in time for PACER's National Bullying Prevention Month to be more intuitive, easier to use, and more streamlined. The websites feature updated information and improved resources. There is more emphasis on sharing students' stories with multiple ways to interact. There are also new resources for educators to use in school.

To access any resources mentioned here, visit [PACER.org/bullying](http://PACER.org/bullying)

## Run Walk Roll AGAINST BULLYING

Saturday, Sept. 22 in Bloomington, MN

Register online now

[PACER.org/bullying/nbpm/runwalkroll](http://PACER.org/bullying/nbpm/runwalkroll) or call 952-838-9000

# #BTProject artists to release bullying prevention anthem in support of PACER

Music is a powerful force, and young people will soon have a new musical rallying cry against bullying to add to their playlists. The original song will be released in October for PACER's National Bullying Prevention Month. It was written by Clinton Sparks, Kylie Morgan and The Mowgli's, and inspired by the positive voices of teens across the country.

PACER partnered with Galderma Laboratories, L.P., the makers of Epiduo® Gel, for the "Band Together to Banish Bullying" campaign (#BTProject), which encourages individuals who have been affected by bullying, or who want to speak out against it, to share artwork, photos, videos, or brief stories about their bullying experiences.

"We are so excited to hear the song," said Julie Hertzog, Director of PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center.

"So many teens and young adults provided wonderful inspiration, and we know the message will make an impact."

Multi-platinum, Grammy nominated producer/songwriter Clinton Sparks uses music as a way to express himself and his individuality. "We care deeply about doing our part to help prevent bullying in this country, and recognize the power of song in providing hope to those who feel down," said Sparks.

You can view the collection of teen submissions and the artists' own bullying stories on the campaign's YouTube channel, which is accessible through the [PACER.org/bullying](http://PACER.org/bullying) website. Check back in October to hear the song and share it with others to help prevent bullying.

# EX.I.T.E. Camp inspires young designer to dream big



High school student Anna Kimmel attended PACER's EX.I.T.E. Camp during middle school and was inspired to be a designer through her hands-on experiences with science, technology, engineering, and math.

There's no telling who or what might influence a young person's career choice — a teacher, a great book, perhaps an inspirational public figure — but what are the odds that it would be a cardboard shoe? That's what inspired Anna Kimmel to dream big about her future while attending EX.I.T.E. Camp, a PACER Center program for middle school girls with disabilities that focuses on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). "Camp was so much fun and I made a lot of new friends, but I really loved the day the volunteers from Target came and we got to design our own shoe for Cinderella," said Anna, who attended EX.I.T.E. Camp in 7th and 8th grades. "We learned what it takes to design your own products. Now I know I want to be an interior designer."

Anna has Arthrogryposis, a rare condition that results in multiple joint contractures, which limits her range of motion in most joints. She uses a power wheelchair, has restricted

movement of her hands and arms, and deals with related medical complications. Hers is a big dream for a 17-year-old with significant disabilities, but she is driven to succeed.

"The medical professionals kept telling us that she had significant cognitive impairment and would not be able to learn," said Angie Kimmel, Anna's mother. "We just kept pushing. Eventually the school gave her proper accommodations and she was able to test in the 97th percentile in the 5th grade!"

By middle school, Anna was making straight A's and was attending technology camps where she learned computer programming, animation, and web development. In the 8th grade, Anna earned the President's Award for Educational Excellence for scoring in the top 2 percent of all students in the nation. "Anna is a visual learner and she just needed the right tools to be successful," Angie said.

Acquiring those tools was not easy, but Angie was an informed, persistent advocate for her daughter. For example, she overcame multiple objections and obstacles to convince the school that Anna needed an iPad in 7th grade because it was much easier to manipulate than the laptop she was using. "People used to tell me that I couldn't do anything, but I have come a long way and I can be quite independent," Anna said. "It feels good."

She takes advantage of every opportunity to learn, including attending the Technology for Girls workshops at PACER which many EX.I.T.E. Camp graduates enjoy. "I don't know why but I just love science and technology. I want to know how things work," Anna said. "I love my iPad, and the iPhone has been incredibly helpful."

Anna is on track to graduate from high school in 2016 and she has already begun taking design classes. Ask her about the future and she doesn't hesitate: "I want to be an interior designer on HGTV," Anna said. "My dad keeps telling me I should be a lawyer like my mom but I tell him, 'No, this is what I want to do!'"

## EX.I.T.E. Camp 2014



Volunteers from Eagan's Green Girls robotics team (above), and corporations such as IBM (below), Target, and 3M, mentored 30 middle school girls with disabilities at EX.I.T.E. Camp in August at PACER Center.



# Where in the world are the PACER puppets?

Since 1979, PACER's COUNT ME IN® puppets have been making a positive impact across Minnesota, but their influence is now much broader. The endearing, life-size, multicultural puppets are teaching children across the United States and as far away as England about disabilities and bullying prevention.

“We have been using the PACER puppets for more than eight years in schools across England, and it has been very successful,” said Gillian Archbold of Kidz Aware in West Yorkshire. “We have educated over 35,000 young people and the income generated from the educational programs has enabled us to support over 600 families of children with disabilities.”

More than 350,000 children have seen PACER's COUNT ME IN® (disability awareness), KIDS AGAINST BULLYING (bullying prevention), and LET'S PREVENT ABUSE puppets. Led by volunteer puppeteers, the innovative, interactive presentations share age-appropriate messages, enabling children to learn through dialogue and question and answer. PACER makes the puppets and scripts available for purchase by other organizations to use in their communities.

“It's incredible to see the faces of the children during performances. Their eyes just light up,” said Gregg Doan of Special Kids, Special Families (SKSF) in Colorado Springs, Colo., which began its puppet program in 2013. “There have been so many memorable moments.”

SKSF does shows across Southern Colorado and plans to expand into Denver. They have localized the



*Puppeteers Michelle Laveau (left) and Natasha Babwah (right) of the Caribbean Kids & Families Therapy Organization did 75 presentations last year with PACER's COUNT ME IN® puppets on the islands of Trinidad and Tobago. Numerous organizations around the world use the PACER puppets to educate children about disabilities and bullying prevention.*

scripts provided by PACER to fit their audiences. “The program has brought attention to our agency because we are the only one with the puppets in Colorado,” said Doan, whose organization also does puppet programs for adults with developmental disabilities.

Jean Harris of the Capital Center for Independent Living in Lansing, Mich., has been doing shows with PACER's puppets since 2005 and uses the puppets to reach children in Head Start (ages 2 to 5) from low-income, diverse families. “It's a great program with awesome puppets and really good scripts,” she said. “We researched other puppets, but the PACER puppets looked more like kids, and of course the price was better.”

The puppets are hand-made in Minnesota, and their appearance

can be changed to portray diverse communities. They can be shipped anywhere in the world. PACER also offers training to puppeteers.

Natasha Babwah, puppet program coordinator with the Caribbean Kids & Families Therapy Organization (CKFTO) in Trinidad and Tobago, recently visited Minneapolis for two days of training. CKFTO has been using the PACER puppets since 2013 and did 75 shows last year. “It has been such a wonderful experience to come to Minnesota and meet the people at PACER Center,” Babwah said. “This is a great program and an excellent teaching tool for young children.”

*To learn more about purchasing puppets and scripts, visit [PACER.org/puppets](http://PACER.org/puppets), e-mail [puppets@PACER.org](mailto:puppets@PACER.org), or call (952) 838-9000.*

# PACER partners with Babble.com to provide information on Children's Mental Health and Emotional or Behavioral Disorders

PACER's Children's Mental Health and Emotional or Behavioral Disorders Project is designed to bring together parents, youth, professionals, and the community to provide individual families with the resources and support they need. As part of that effort, PACER is now offering helpful information through two important publications.

## Monthly posts to Babble.com parenting blog

PACER is now a regular contributor to Babble.com, the highly acclaimed online magazine and blog network published by the Walt Disney Company for parents. Babble is partnering with PACER to help parents better understand and navigate the needs of children with mental health and behavior issues. PACER's first blog post — "Understanding Challenging Behaviors: What Your Child Is Really Trying to Tell You" — offers practical information and advice on dealing with emotional outbursts by young children. Upcoming topics will include information on how to be an effective advocate for your child, dealing with stigma associated with

mental health conditions, and more. To read the posts, visit [babble.com/author/pacercenter](http://babble.com/author/pacercenter).

## Children's Mental Health & EBD E-news

For families of children with mental health and emotional or behavioral needs, it can be complicated trying to navigate multiple systems of care to receive supports and services for their child. One of PACER's goals is to provide parents with practical resources to help overcome these challenges, including the new "Children's Mental Health & EBD E-news." This electronic newsletter contains helpful information on resources for families, changes in systems of care, special events of interest to families, and related PACER initiatives. The quarterly publication is available at no charge. To subscribe, e-mail [pacer@pacer.org](mailto:pacer@pacer.org).

*For more information on PACER's resources for children with mental health and emotional or behavioral disorders, visit [PACER.org/childrensmentalhealth](http://PACER.org/childrensmentalhealth), e-mail [pacer@pacer.org](mailto:pacer@pacer.org), or call (952) 838-9000.*

## PACESETTER

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PACER Center enhances the quality of life and expands opportunities for children, youth, and young adults with all disabilities and their families so each person can reach his or her highest potential. PACER operates on the principles of parents helping parents, supporting families, promoting a safe environment for all children, and working in collaboration with others. An Equal Opportunity Employer, PACER is funded by grants from the U.S. Departments of Education, Labor, Health and Human Services and other sources, and from foundations, corporations and individuals. Views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Departments or other donors. Contributions to PACER are tax-deductible. For information, call Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

PACER website: [PACER.org](http://PACER.org)

FAPE site: [fape.org](http://fape.org)

MN SEAC site: [mnseacinfo.org](http://mnseacinfo.org)

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[PACERTeensAgainstBullying.org](http://PACERTeensAgainstBullying.org)

*(Alternate format is available upon request.)*

## And the survey says... Support PACER with SurveyMonkey

Helping PACER is now as easy as taking simple online surveys. PACER supporters can sign up on SurveyMonkey Contribute to receive short surveys from SurveyMonkey customers who need opinions on a variety of topics. For every survey completed, SurveyMonkey makes a donation to PACER, and all participants have the opportunity to win \$100 in an instant win game. Participants' identities and information remain confidential. Sign up at: [contribute.surveymonkey.com/charity/PACER](http://contribute.surveymonkey.com/charity/PACER)



# Workshops

PACER Center workshops are free to Minnesota parents. For information and to register, call (952) 838-9000 (metro area) or toll free at (800) 537-2237 (Greater Minnesota) or visit [PACER.org/workshops](http://PACER.org/workshops).

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

### Everything You Need to Learn Before Your Child Turns 3

This workshop will help families understand the transition process from Part C Early Intervention services to Part B preschool services or other community options. Topics include transition requirements, Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Inclusion, and Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals and objectives.

- **Sept. 22, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

### Parent Talk

This workshop will provide parents of children ages birth to 5 with tips on how to talk with early childhood professionals, as well as the opportunity to talk and connect with other parents to share experiences and tips learned along the way.

- **Sept. 29, 6:30 to 8 p.m. (PACER)**

### Understanding and Addressing Challenging Behaviors in Your Young Child

Parents of young children with developmental delays or disabilities will learn about brain development and behavior, different temperament types, and strategies to provide children with acceptable ways to have their needs met.

- **Oct. 18, 9 to 11 a.m. (PACER)**

### My Child's IEP: Laying the Foundation for Effective Early Childhood Special Education Services

This workshop for parents of children ages 3 to 5 will provide an overview of the early childhood special education process, including evaluation procedures, writing appropriate goals, and family rights.

- **Oct. 20, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

### Making the Move from Early Childhood Special Education to Kindergarten

Kindergarten is a big step in any child's life. For a child with disabilities, being ready for kindergarten often requires some intentional preparation. This workshop will help parents plan for this transition and learn strategies to help their child be successful and make the first school experience a good one.

- **Nov. 1, 9 to 11 a.m. (PACER)**

## Families Are Important

This workshop features an overview of families' rights, roles, and responsibilities within the early intervention system. It also addresses services in the natural environment, the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), and child and family outcomes.

- **Nov. 15, 9 to 11 a.m. (PACER)**

## CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH, EMOTIONAL / BEHAVIORAL

### Planning for Independence: A Roadmap for Parents and Youth with Mental Health, Emotional, or Behavioral Needs During the Transition Years

This interactive workshop is for parents and their transition-age youth (ages 14 to 24) with mental health, emotional, or behavioral needs. Participants will learn strategies and acquire resources to create a youth-driven plan that addresses education, employment, community involvement, and wellness.

- **Sept. 17, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (Rochester)**
- **Oct. 7, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (Detroit Lakes)**
- **Oct. 13, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (Mankato)**
- **Nov. 13, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (PACER)**

### From Naughty to Nice: The Road to Positive Behavior Interventions

This workshop will explore the purpose of behavior, offer strategies and tips for changing often misunderstood challenging behaviors, and discuss supports and interventions that can help sustain appropriate behavior at school, at home, and in the community.

- **Oct. 2, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Willmar)**

## PARENT TRAINING

### Hot Tips on the IEP: Is Your child's IEP Individualized and Appropriate?

Parents will learn how to use the valuable information on their child's special education evaluation report to determine how well the Individualized Education Program (IEP) addresses the child's unique needs. Parents attending need to bring a copy of their child's most recent school special education evaluation report and their child's current IEP.

- **Oct. 6, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Bemidji)**

- **Oct. 7, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (International Falls)**
- **Oct. 21, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Cambridge)**
- **Nov. 11, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

### Transition: Pathway to the Future

This workshop will help parents of children with disabilities understand how to use the special education transition process to help plan for their son or daughter's life after high school. Parents of students in the 9th grade and beyond are encouraged to attend.

- **Oct. 7, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

### Special Education: What Do I Need to Know?

This workshop will help parents understand special education, learn how to resolve disagreements, and discover the role of parents in the process.

- **Oct. 9, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Mora)**

### Planning for the Future: Helping Ensure Quality of Life for Your Son or Daughter with Disabilities

Guest speaker Emmy Mastel from Prudential Special Needs Solutions, who is the parent of a youth with disabilities, will provide helpful information on what families should consider when planning for the future financial and care needs of their son or daughter.

- **Oct. 28, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

### The ABC's of the IEP: Making the Individualized Education Program Work for Your Child

This workshop will help parents understand how to use the Individualized Education Program (IEP) to benefit their child. Presenters will use PACER's "Guide for Minnesota Parents to the IEP" to help participants understand how each required part of the IEP can be developed to meet the child's needs.

- **Nov. 3, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (PACER)**

### Tips for Talking with School Staff

Participants will learn skills to communicate with school staff and effectively resolve differences. This workshop will provide parents of special education students with practical tips and interactive problem-solving experience.

- **Nov. 6, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

## TRANSITION

### Career Planning: An In-depth Workshop for Families

This workshop is designed for parents who want in-depth information on career planning strategies for their youth with disabilities. Attendees will learn about current thinking around career planning, and how to relate information directly to individual situations. Presented in collaboration with Minnesota's Vocational Rehabilitation Services program.

- **Sept. 18, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Anoka)**
- **Sept. 25, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

### Preparing for Success in Post-Secondary Education

Education and training after high school is an increasingly important part of becoming economically independent. Participants will learn about postsecondary education opportunities for students with disabilities, including academic expectations, available supports, and the role of executive functioning.

- **Oct. 15, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Roseville)**

### Preparing for Employment: What Every Employer Wants You to Know

Most youth with disabilities envision employment as being part of their adult lives, but are they prepared for the world of work? Learn how families can help their youth chart a path to employment by understanding what employers are looking for.

- **Oct. 30, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**  
**Also available by live streaming**
- **Nov. 13, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Apple Valley)**

### Smartphones, Smart Students, and Smart Ideas: How Your Smartphone Can Be a Boost to Your Education, Career Readiness, and Daily Life

Smartphones can be used for more than just games and texting; they can also help organize your life, keep track of school work, and more. Participants will learn how iPhones and Android smartphones can be part of a larger strategy to increase independence, organization, and time management skills. (Strategies/tools discussed are for students in middle school through college.)

- **Nov. 5, 6:30 to 8 p.m. (PACER)**  
**Also available by live streaming**

### An Overview of Technology for Self-Sufficiency

From unique alarm clocks to checklists for the home or workplace to lights that automatically shut off at bedtime, technology can be helpful when working toward goals for self-sufficiency. Join us to discover how technology can help individuals become more self-sufficient at home, school, and work.

- **Nov. 12, 6:30 to 8 p.m. (PACER)**  
**Also available by live streaming**

### Ingenious Research Tools and Strategies for Students

Whether it is used at the library, in the community, or online, technology can make finding, understanding, and using information more effective and fun for students with disabilities. Participants will explore tablet, smartphone, and other technology options for research. This workshop is ideal for students from middle school through college who are working on their reading, note taking, organizational, and critical thinking skills.

- **Dec. 15, 6:30 to 8 p.m. (PACER)**  
**Also available by live streaming**

## SIMON TECHNOLOGY CENTER

### Simon Technology Center Low Vision Open House

Regardless of the cause, low vision can be challenging, but there is now assistive technology (AT) available that can help. Join PACER's Simon Technology Center (STC) for a special Happy Hour event to learn about technology to enhance your vision. For more information, e-mail [stc@pacer.org](mailto:stc@pacer.org) or call (952) 838-9000.

- **Sept. 27, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. (PACER)**

### A Process to Help Incorporate Assistive Technology into the IFSP/IEP

Federal law requires that assistive technology (AT) be considered for all children receiving special education services. This workshop will introduce participants to an easy step-by-step way to be intentional when talking about AT with your child's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) team.

- **Oct. 21, 6:30 to 8 p.m. (PACER)**  
**Also available by live streaming**

### Creating and Using Visual Supports with Young Children

Visual supports can help your child successfully participate in daily routines and learn new skills. In this workshop, parents will learn the basics of creating and using effective visual supports at home and in the community.

- **Nov. 4, 6:30 to 8 p.m. (PACER)**  
**Also available by live streaming**

### iBaby: Navigating Mobile Technology & Apps for Infants, Toddlers, and Pre-K

Can mobile technology be an appropriate solution to help young children with disabilities learn and grow? This workshop will address this hot topic and share information about specific mobile technologies that can help.

- **Dec. 9, 6:30 to 8 p.m. (PACER)**  
**Also available by live streaming**

## HOUSING

### Save the dates: PACER's Three-Part Housing Workshop Series and Housing Fair

Mark your calendar for PACER's Three-Part Housing Workshop Series Feb. 9 and 23 and March 2, from 7 to 9 p.m. at PACER. Visit [PACER.org/workshops](http://PACER.org/workshops) for details and registration.

Also save the date for PACER's Annual Housing Resource and Information Fair on Saturday, April 11, from 9 a.m. to noon at PACER. Families can meet with service providers, state and county representatives, and resource and referral organizations to discuss housing options, services, supports, and related issues for children and young adults with disabilities. For more information, contact Susan Shimota ([susan.shimota@pacer.org](mailto:susan.shimota@pacer.org)) or call (952) 838-9000.

# Resources

## Now available translated

### Special Education Record Keeping Folders

Set of seven folders for parents to keep important papers related to their child's education. Each folder describes which records should be kept. Also includes helpful tips on working with your child's school. 2009. (Also translated in Somali, Hmong, and Spanish.)

▪ \$10 | 10+ copies, \$8 each | PHP-a5



### Family Fun Reading Activity Cards

These activity cards help your child develop literacy skills that are important for reading and learning success. You can do these fun skill-builders at home, in your neighborhood, and on the go! For children in grades K-3. *Now available in Spanish, Somali, and Hmong!* 2012.

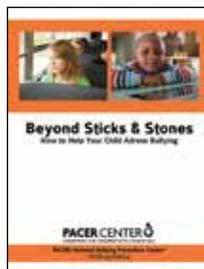
▪ \$4 | 10+ copies, \$2.50 each. 100+ copies, \$2 each | PHP-a43



### Beyond Sticks & Stones: How to Help Your Child Address Bullying

This book offers bullying prevention strategies for children at home, in school, and online. It is filled with information and practical tools that can help parents and others take action against bullying. A special section of the book provides specific tips for parents of children with disabilities. 2013.

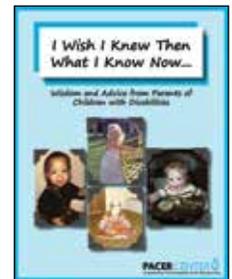
▪ \$10 | 10+ copies, \$8 each | BP-7



### I Wish I Knew Then What I Know Now

Advice from more than 20 parents of children with disabilities, sharing what they have learned while navigating health care, education, and social support systems, and what they would do differently if they did it all again. 2012.

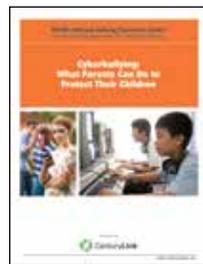
▪ \$8 | 10+ copies, \$6 each | PHP-a42



### Cyberbullying: What Parents Can Do to Protect Their Children

The Internet has become a place for some children to post mean and inappropriate comments about their peers. This 8-page booklet has information for parents on how to address cyberbullying and what steps to take if your child is being bullied online. 2013.

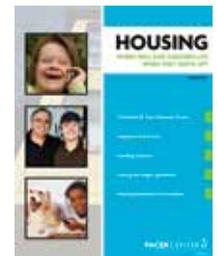
▪ \$2 | 10+ copies, \$1.50 each | BP-23



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

Parents of youth with disabilities will find that this easy-to-use book answers many questions about future housing choices to make with their child. From housing options to funding to supports and services, there is a wealth of information. 2012.

▪ \$8 | 10+ copies, \$6 each | PHP-a26



## Join us for Simon Technology Center's Family Fun Day and Tech Expo Oct. 11

Children with disabilities, their families, and the professionals who serve them can discover the latest in assistive technology (AT) and take part in a variety of hands-on fun Saturday, Oct. 11, 2014, during the Simon Technology Center's Family Fun Day and Tech Expo! This free event, with activities appropriate for all ages, is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at PACER Center. For more information or to register online, visit [PACER.org/workshops](http://PACER.org/workshops) or call (952) 838-9000.



## 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

You may also place orders on PACER's website at [PACER.org/publications](http://PACER.org/publications). 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 13). Payment must be in U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank.

Order number	Name of publication ordered	Quantity	Per item cost	Total item cost

Total cost of all items ordered \_\_\_\_\_

(Minneapolis residents, 7.75%; Hennepin County residents, 7.275%; Anoka, Ramsey, Dakota, Washington counties, 7.125%; most other Minnesota residents, 6.875%)  
Sales tax varies with specific location.

Please complete the following with your order:

I am a:  Parent  Professional  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_ (c)

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*If a parent:*

Birth date of child with disability: \_\_\_\_\_ Disability: \_\_\_\_\_

## Send best wishes with PACER's 2014 greeting cards



Dominic with his winning design at PACER's 2014 Benefit

The holidays are coming and what better way to send best wishes to family and friends than with the 2014 PACER greeting card, which features the winning design from PACER's Ninth Annual Creative Kids Contest. "Big Pink Polar Bear!" is the name of the special creation by Dominic, a fun-loving 11-year-old who enjoys art, sports, and nature.

Diagnosed with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder), some of Dominic's favorite things are playing Minecraft on the computer and fishing, and he is an excellent swimmer. Dominic also loves his iPad, and through PACER's Simon Technology Center has discovered ways to use it for learning. When Dominic grows up, he would like to be a police officer or a football player.

Proceeds from the sale of the cards support PACER programs. A set of eight greeting cards featuring Dominic's design can be purchased for \$10 by ordering online at [PACER.org/help/creative2014.asp](http://PACER.org/help/creative2014.asp) or calling (952) 838-9000. Cards are also available in larger quantities for businesses and individuals.

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**Change Service Requested**

**For more information on special education or bullying prevention, e-mail [PACER@PACER.org](mailto:PACER@PACER.org) or call 952-838-9000.**

## Pacesetter Circle recognizes gifts to PACER Endowment

Many individuals who support PACER Center’s Endowment Campaign do so because of the assistance PACER has provided to a family member or close friend. Others, like Al Apple, leave a legacy gift because they simply believe in the work PACER does to help children and families. “I have not had anyone close to me who has needed PACER’s services, but I have supported PACER for many years,” said the retired CPA (Certified Public Accountant). “I feel they are providing a service that is very important in the community.”

Regardless of the reasons for giving, PACER recognizes friends making commitments as members of the Pacesetter Circle. This special designation recognizes those who include a gift to PACER in a will or revocable trust or name PACER as a beneficiary in a retirement plan, will, insurance policy, or charitable remainder trust.

An endowment provides long-term financial stability, reducing the potential impact of economic downturns and funding cuts. The PACER Endowment Campaign is more than halfway to its goal of \$10 million. All gifts are permanently invested and only the annual investment income is spent.

**“The money that is given to PACER is spent very wisely.”**  
*-Al Apple, contributor*

Apple became familiar with PACER about 30 years ago when he provided professional services to the organization and has generously given his time and resources ever since. He has chosen to leave a gift in his will, and cited PACER’s sound fiscal management as an important factor in his decision. “The money that is given

to PACER is spent very wisely,” he said.

*To learn more about PACER’s Endowment Campaign and how you can help, please call Executive Director Paula Goldberg at (952) 838-9000.*