

# PACERSETTER

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

## Americans with Disabilities Act became law 25 years ago

The landmark Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law July 26, 1990 by President George H.W. Bush. Celebrations were held across the country this summer to mark the 25th anniversary of the ADA, which provides equal opportunities for people with disabilities in employment, transportation, state and local government, public accommodations, and telecommunications. It protects anyone with mobility, visual, or hearing impairments, as well as people with cognitive disabilities.

“I was on the White House lawn the day the legislation was signed and I shook the President’s hand,” recalled PACER Executive Director Paula Goldberg. “The ADA is a significant law, and it was very exciting to be there.”

There were many challenging years of activism, protest, and political issues leading to passage of the ADA. It was the world’s first comprehensive legal declaration of equality for people with disabilities. There are reminders of its impact everywhere you look, from designated parking spaces to curb cuts on city streets, equal access for individuals with service animals, and braille signage in public buildings. “The ADA has definitely had a positive impact,” Goldberg said, “but there is so much more to be done.”

## PACER’s bullying prevention efforts launched an international movement



*Students around the world participate in PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center activities including this group of middle school students in Panama.*

It began with a letter from a distraught parent whose child with disabilities was being severely bullied at school. That was more than 10 years ago. Today, PACER’s bullying prevention efforts have grown into an international movement. “The letter was heartbreaking and we knew we had to do something,” said PACER Executive Director Paula Goldberg. “A few of us sat down in a conference room and started discussing how PACER could help change the culture about bullying for all children, not just those with disabilities.”

PACER set out to actively lead social change so that bullying would no longer be considered a rite of passage, and that kindness, inclusion, and acceptance are the encouraged behaviors. PACER staff decided that technology was the best way to engage children and help people understand the impact of bullying. PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center provides practical resources on three websites for parents, schools, and students. October is National Bullying Prevention Month (see page 8 for details), which was started by PACER in 2006 to raise awareness.

*Continued on page 8*

# PACER gives teens with mental health challenges a voice in the community

As a volatile young child, Talia would yell and scream and make her feelings known through frightening rage. Today, the 15-year-old with bipolar disorder is an articulate, insightful communicator who can stand up in front of hundreds of adults and share her story. She has that opportunity as a member of PACER's Youth Advisory Board for Children's Mental Health, which works to educate the community and help reduce stigma. The board is an initiative of PACER's Children's Mental Health and Emotional or Behavioral Disorders Project, coordinated by Renelle Nelson.

"As a kid, you feel like the adults in your life are in control of you and you have to do whatever they say, but at the end of the day we need a voice, too," said Talia. "I'm proud of my story and people need to hear it."

Talia has spoken at PACER's national symposium, at community outreach events, and on discussion panels with other teens. Parents ask a lot of questions and seek teen input as they try to help their own children. "People don't really understand mental health issues, and it doesn't help the way the media portrays it," Talia said. "Everyone assumes the worst, and it's frustrating. People who have cancer are seen as fighters and survivors. People understand when someone has a visible disability, but when teens have mental health issues, it's different."

## "We can make a difference"

When Talia was in elementary school, every day was a battle as the family tried to get an accurate diagnosis, find effective medication, and keep her in school. She was in and out of multiple treatment programs and numerous schools as her parents did their best to help her. Talia's mother Karen turned to PACER for help. "Being the parent of a child like Talia can be a very lonely place," Karen said. "It's tough on a marriage, it's tough on the family, it's tough on siblings, but PACER had the resources we needed."

In the 6th grade, Talia enrolled at the Cyber Village Academy in St. Paul, Minn. The school was flexible and accommodating and Talia made the honor roll. She even went on a school trip to Washington, D.C. "Being at that school made me feel free," Talia said. "I didn't have to fit in their box; they made a box that was right for me."

Working in a positive, encouraging environment as part of the Youth Advisory Board has been an uplifting



**"I'm proud of my story and people need to hear it."**

- Talia, pictured (left) with her mother Karen

experience, as well. "At PACER, we are treated with respect," Talia said. "We believe that we can make a difference and do something good."

Talia has become an excellent self-advocate and is now active in leadership roles at her new high school. She is interested in law, and successfully completed an internship with a county judge. Her future looks bright. "What we're doing now is our silver lining," Karen said. "I am very proud of Talia, but we could not have reached this point without PACER."

For more information on PACER's Youth Advisory Board and how to participate, visit [PACER.org/cmh](http://PACER.org/cmh) or call (952) 838-9000.

## 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).



# PACER Symposium inspires educators, parents

More than 1,000 teachers, parents, and administrators were on hand Aug. 4 at the Minneapolis Convention Center for the 10th Annual National PACER Symposium About Children & Young Adults with Mental Health & Learning Disabilities. The event featured outstanding keynote presentations by renowned educator and speaker Brad Cohen, ADHD expert Jodi Sleeper-Triplett, and technology pioneer Steven Koppel. Presentation materials are available for download at [PACER.org/symposium](http://PACER.org/symposium).



Keynote speaker Steven Koppel (left) and PACER Youth Board member Nyk Shea were among the Symposium presenters.

## 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.

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

BULLYING: [PACER.org/Bullying](http://PACER.org/Bullying)  
[PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org](http://PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org)  
[PACERTeensAgainstBullying.org](http://PACERTeensAgainstBullying.org)

(Alternate format is available upon request.)

## Don't miss the Nordstrom Gala to benefit PACER!

Mark your calendar for an evening of food, fashion, and fun! In celebration of its newest Minneapolis-area store in Ridgedale Mall, Nordstrom is hosting an opening gala on Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2015 at 7 p.m. Proceeds from this event support PACER's Inspiring Opportunities project for children with mental health and emotional or behavioral disorders.

Attendees can enjoy cocktails, gourmet delights, desserts, live entertainment, and a presentation of men's and women's fashion throughout the evening. Guests will also have the opportunity for a sneak preview of the 140,000 square-foot store and an exclusive chance to shop the season's best looks before the official store opening. Tickets are \$100 each and include complementary valet parking. Visit [nordstromrsvp.com/ridgedalegala](http://nordstromrsvp.com/ridgedalegala) to RSVP.



# What is third-party billing for IEP health-related services?

In Minnesota, schools are required by law to seek reimbursement from private and public health insurance for health-related services included in a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP). Public health insurance is called Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) and includes Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare.

Parents often have questions about this process and how it will impact their child's IEP services and their health insurance. Here are seven things you need to know about third-party billing:

1. Health-related IEP services may include nursing, personal care assistance services, and physical, occupational, and speech therapy.
2. The school must ask for your written consent in order to bill your child's insurance company for IEP health-related services. You do not have to give your consent and you can withdraw your consent at any time. The information is part of the Notice of Procedural Safeguard that you receive prior to IEP meetings.
3. The amount and type of IEP services your child receives cannot be affected by whether the school can bill your insurance company. Your child's IEP team — which always includes you, the parent — should develop the IEP before billing is even considered.
4. You cannot be required to make any payments to your insurer, including co-pays and deductibles, for health-related services provided as part of the IEP. The school must cover the cost.
5. Billing MHCP, by law, has no effect on your health coverage or other public benefits. This means you will have no caps or limitations on future coverage.
6. If you have private insurance, third-party billing may affect your child's overall benefits. For example, some service limits and prior authorization limits may be affected. You should check
7. The school cannot ask you to sign up for public health insurance just so it can bill for the health services included in your child's IEP.



with your private insurer before giving consent to the school. If you have both private and public insurance, the school must bill your private insurance first. Most private insurers deny coverage for school-provided services, so the schools then bill the public health insurance.

7. The school cannot ask you to sign up for public health insurance just so it can bill for the health services included in your child's IEP.

*For more information on third-party billing, visit [PACER.org/health/billingForIEP.asp](http://PACER.org/health/billingForIEP.asp) or contact PACER's Family-to-Family Health Information Center at (952) 838-9000.*

## PACER'S Judy Swett honored with national award

Early childhood project coordinator Judy Swett of PACER has been named the recipient of the National 2015 Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Parent/Family Award for her contributions through service to the early childhood special education field and community. This award, presented by the Council for Exceptional Children, is given to demonstrate the importance of recognizing parents and families who are making a difference in the field of early childhood special education. Judy joined PACER in 1996 and is the parent of two daughters, one of whom has disabilities. "We are very proud of Judy and her important work, both in Minnesota and nationally," said Paula Goldberg, PACER's Executive Director. "Her commitment and dedication to families of young children with disabilities is outstanding."





## Parents have options to resolve special education disputes

Helping their child with disabilities receive an appropriate education is one of the most important jobs a parent has, but special education disagreements between families and school districts do happen. Parents may or may not agree with their child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team on everything.

PACER provides extensive dispute resolution resources, both online and in print. This information can help families learn how to manage disputes in a positive, productive way. Parents can use the information to increase:

- Knowledge of special education

rights and responsibilities

- Understanding of educational planning and their child's IEP
- Communication, self-advocacy, and conflict resolution skills
- Awareness of conflict resolution options and how to use them
- Ability to advocate for their child

Most disputes can be resolved locally between the family and the district's special education director. Parents who are unable to resolve issues, or believe there may be a violation of special education law involved, can file a state-level complaint with the

Minnesota Department of Education. "PACER encourages families to try to resolve their differences by first sharing their concerns with their IEP case manager or the school district's director of special education," says PACER parent advocate Pat Anderson. "But if differences are not resolved at that level, the parent has options."

These options include: Conciliation, Mediation, Facilitated IEP, State Complaint, or Due Process Hearing.

*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.*

## PACER offers resources for surrogate parents

When children with disabilities don't have a parent who can be their educational advocate, surrogate parents often fill that role. 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 who are considering taking on the role, with vital information and resources.

PACER offers a comprehensive guide for parents and administrators titled "Children in Need of Surrogate Parents." This 30-page manual explains the procedures Minnesota school districts have to follow in establishing their surrogate parent programs. It outlines three major requirements: Identifying children in need of surrogate parents, recruiting individuals to serve in that capacity, and providing training for surrogates.

Printed copies are available from PACER for \$9 each, but one copy is available at no charge to Minnesota parents of children and young adults with disabilities. To order, call PACER at (952) 838-9000 and request publication number SP-3.

PACER also offers a helpful new online guide called, "Training for Surrogate Parents," a 22-page resource that includes information on the laws and procedures for representing a child in the special education process. It is available for free download at [PACER.org/publications/pdfs/SP-1.pdf](http://PACER.org/publications/pdfs/SP-1.pdf).



"Surrogate parents are important for children who don't have anyone else who can help," said Pat Anderson, project coordinator and PACER parent advocate. "The more surrogate parents know about the role and its responsibilities, the more effective they will be."

*For more information, visit [PACER.org/surrogate](http://PACER.org/surrogate) or call (952) 838-9000.*

# Family, friends celebrate a special high school graduate

Beverly Ofstie will never forget the day her son Jesse walked across the stage at his high school graduation in Southern Minnesota. “I’m not a crier, but I shed plenty of tears that day,” said Beverly.

They were tears of joy — and for good reason. Jesse, who has Rubinstein-Taybi syndrome and is nonverbal, overcame many challenges on the way to graduation. When Jesse’s name was called, the auditorium erupted into applause and a standing ovation. “I could see the joy on Jesse’s face,” said Beverly. “He was so proud of himself and so excited to be up there with his friends.”

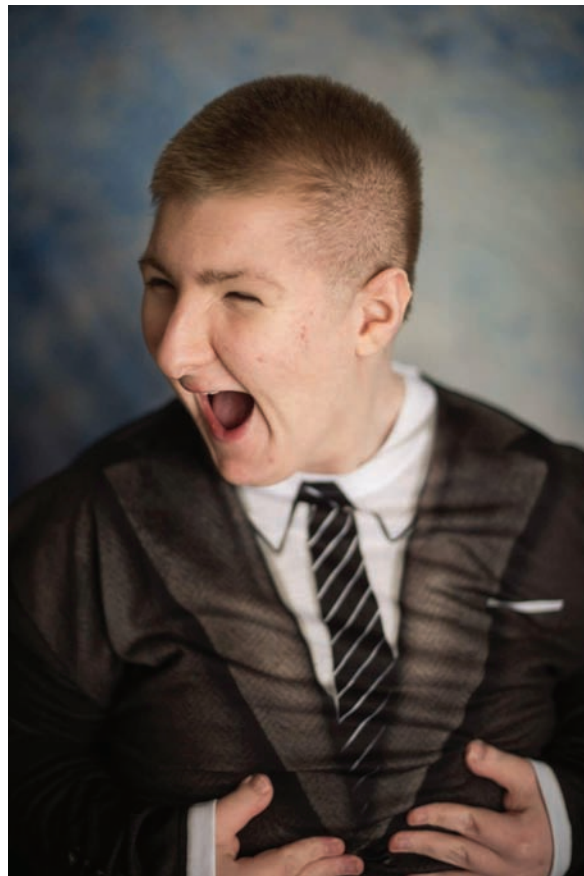
Though Jesse’s story has a happy ending, his experience with inclusion wasn’t always positive. Beverly faced countless hurdles in making sure Jesse was included with his typical peers in the classroom and recreational opportunities. “The school didn’t always understand the importance of inclusion,” said Beverly. “I had to educate them and show them how it could work.”

Beverly realized early on that her family needed extra support, so she reached out to PACER Center when Jesse was 3. She worked with PACER parent advocate Bonnie Jean Smith to create a plan to meet Jesse’s needs. Beverly attended PACER workshops and conferences and researched special

education laws and services in the community. When mediation was needed to resolve issues with the school, Bonnie Jean was able to help. “PACER has been there for us for 15 years,” said Beverly. “They’ve given me the information and support I needed.”

The Ofsties’ tireless efforts paid off. Jesse blossomed in the inclusive school environment and made many friends. He was the first student with cognitive disabilities at his school to participate in the typical high school classroom and walk in the graduation ceremony. “The other kids motivated him to learn and provided him with important social development skills,” said Beverly.

This fall, Jesse will attend a transition program in Rochester, Minn., where he will continue to practice life and job skills. Beverly is confident that her son will be an asset to an employer or volunteer organization because of the skills he gained through inclusion. “Life is not a special education classroom,” said Beverly. “I knew that he would not be secluded in the real world, so it was



*Jesse Ofsties’ graduation photo*

important for him not to be secluded in the classroom, either.”

Beverly encourages other families who are facing barriers to inclusion to learn their rights, advocate for their child, and contact PACER for help. “Inclusion can work for any child,” she said. “Children with all types of disabilities will learn and grow when they spend time with their typical peers.”

## Helpful Transition Resources

PACER’s National Parent Center on Transition and Employment offers information and resources to help young adults with disabilities and their families navigate the transition process. Here are some of the tools available at [PACER.org/transition](http://PACER.org/transition):

- Videos: Watch videos on topics such as assistive technology (AT), interpersonal skills, success stories, employment, and disability.
- Learning Center: Read articles and explore online resources to help young adults meet their goals for life after high school.
- Stories: Read inspirational stories from young adults who have successfully navigated transition, and share your stories.
- Resource Library: Find PACER publications on a wide range of relevant topics.

# PACER project offers resources for educators and families from diverse communities to promote parental involvement

Most educators agree — and many years of research supports it — that parental involvement is vital to educational success. PACER, working in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education, and the Minneapolis and St. Paul public schools, has developed extensive resources to help families from underserved populations become more involved in their child's education. Many parents are new to the American education system in general and special education in particular.

“Before, I took the approach that the school is responsible for the education piece and I am at home and take care of the basic needs,” said James Vue, a Hmong parent in the Twin Cities, “but I understand now that it doesn't work that way. It takes a whole group of people to ensure that the child is successful.”

Funded by the State Personnel Development Grant, the primary goal of the project is to increase parent involvement in special education, but it also helps foster more basic connections. When schools hold family events and parents don't come, educators often assume that the parents are not interested in their child's education. In fact, the issue might be a lack of communication or understanding of “involvement.” For example, the way flyers promoting the event are written is important and may be misinterpreted by some families.

The project is helping parents who may not know how they can participate more in their child's education. “I know now it's OK to go into the school, and ask to be involved,” said Hodan, a Minnesota parent who is a native of Somalia. “I have seen what being a part of the school system has done for my children and my family, so I'm encouraging others to do the same.”

PACER has developed many popular resources for parents including helpful Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting Parent Tip Cards, School Recordkeeping Folders, and Reading Activity Cards — all published in English, Hmong, Somali, and Spanish.

Educator resources include training videos, research literature, practice guides, and helpful tools. For example, there is a webinar called, “Engaging Diverse Families: What Parents Want Teachers to Know and Do.” Another is titled, “Practical Tips for Working Effectively with Culturally Diverse Families of Young Children.” These



help educators inform parents about how to support their child's education, become more informed decision makers, and improve home-school communication.

“This project is helping families and schools understand each other's perspective, and it is providing them with the tools they need to work well together,” said PACER project coordinator Barb Ziemke. “The ultimate goal is to help children be more successful in school.”

*To learn more, visit [PACER.org/cultural-diversity](http://PACER.org/cultural-diversity), e-mail [PACER@PACER.org](mailto:PACER@PACER.org) or call (952) 838-9000.*

## **Book a PACER puppet show and leave a lasting impression**

Capturing the attention of young children isn't easy, but PACER's endearing, life-size puppets have a way with preschool and elementary school students that leaves a lasting impression. PACER is scheduling shows in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area for the COUNT ME IN® (disability awareness) and KIDS AGAINST BULLYING (bullying prevention) puppet programs. The innovative, interactive presentations use charming, multicultural puppets to share age-appropriate messages, enabling children to learn through dialogue and question and answer. To learn more, visit [PACER.org/puppets](http://PACER.org/puppets), e-mail [puppets@PACER.org](mailto:puppets@PACER.org), or call (952) 838-9000.



# October is PACER's National Bullying Prevention Month

Continued from page 1

“Ten years ago many people still looked at bullying as an accepted rite of childhood passage, just a part of growing up. We now know that bullying has serious implications such as school avoidance, and physical and emotional health issues,” said Julie Hertzog, Director of PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center. “At that time, our goal was to use technology to reach people and we developed the innovative PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org website.”

PACER has always taken a positive, proactive approach to the issue. Even the term “bullying prevention” speaks to this philosophy as opposed to the more common negative language. “We look at bullying as behavior and recognize that behavior can be changed,” Hertzog said. “PACER also has a goal of offering opportunities for individuals to take action at the local level. Kindness, support, and hope matter and it's something everyone can give.”

In the past decade, PACER has developed a vast array of innovative resources, from simple toolkits for students to the peer-to-peer “We Will Generation” campaign, and the upcoming “You're Not Alone” initiative. PACER's websites for teens and elementary students have become go-to resources and media around the world turn to PACER for expertise. States have passed stronger bullying prevention laws, schools are implementing more effective policies, and students have become better educated, equipped, and empowered to help. Yet there is still so much to be done.

National Bullying Prevention Month and Unity Day (Wednesday, Oct. 21) provide opportunities for everyone to be involved. Celebrity supporters

raise awareness and inspire action, and corporate partners help raise much-needed funding. It's easy to participate. “One of the most common questions we hear is, ‘What can I do?’” Goldberg said. “October provides many different opportunities to show that you care.”

Wearing orange on Unity Day is a simple way to speak up and encourage others to do the same. Taking part in PACER's Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying, holding a student-led event, and sharing the message on social media are other ways to participate.

“It is difficult to quantify behavioral change, but over the last 10 years people have really changed their thinking on this issue and that has been positive for schools, for communities, and most importantly for students,” Hertzog said. “We don't want a single child to experience bullying, but if they do we want them to know that they are not alone and PACER is here for them.”

## Disney celebrates Unity Day

Disney Consumer Products and Interactive Media is donating funds to PACER for bullying prevention.

Disney will be celebrating Unity Day at their campus in Glendale, Calif., on Oct. 21 with employees wearing orange T-shirts and hosting a bullying prevention speaker. Throughout the month of October, Disney's Babble.com will be publishing content to support bullying prevention, including an article written by PACER Center.

## PACER to open bullying prevention office in Los Angeles

PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center will open a branch office in Los Angeles this fall to better serve the needs of schools and communities in Southern California. “People have been encouraging us to do more on the West Coast,” said PACER Executive Director Paula Goldberg. “We are very excited about the possibilities.”

PACER supporters Michael and Hayley Miller will host a large event Sept. 26 at their home in Bel Air, Calif., to officially launch PACER's Los Angeles center and the start of PACER's National Bullying Prevention Month in October. For more information, please contact [PACER@PACER.org](mailto:PACER@PACER.org).



## Coming Soon!

Watch for PACER's exciting new Together Against Bullying (TAG!) campaign coming Oct. 1. Inspired by the performer Carrot Top, TAG is presented in partnership with national sponsors including Chegg, Facebook, Instagram, and Adobe.

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





## Hollywood event supports PACER

David and Leila Centner (left) of the all-positive social media ap güdly were on hand in Los Angeles this summer, along with Michael Sullivan of the Trevor Project and Bailey Lindgren of PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center, at the #dancingman event as they made a donation to PACER and other organizations. Hundreds of bullying prevention supporters were at Hollywood's Avalon nightclub to support Sean O'Brien, an Englishman who became an overnight media sensation and unlikely hero after he was cyberbullied for dancing in public. The event drew the support of many Hollywood celebrities, including musicians Moby and Pharrell.



## PACER'S 2015 Unity Awards

Leah Fuda (left) from York, S.C. and Jacob Law (center) of Middletown, Del. were among those honored in June at PACER's 2015 Unity Awards ceremony in Bloomington, Minn. Television personality Mike Augustyniak (right) of WCCO-TV in Minneapolis was the emcee for the event which honored people who have gone above and beyond to prevent bullying in their communities. Leah and her friends Halle West and Alexis Zara were honored along with student Abby Belcher from Rowlett, Texas, community member Mindy Murtley of Barnum, Minn., and Girl Scout Troop 4073 of Duluth, Minn. Singer-songwriter Anna Richey of Utah performed at the event.

## Make plans to wear orange October 21 on Unity Day and show support for those who have been bullied

PACER has partnered with CustomInk to launch its fifth annual Be Good to Each Other campaign in support of Unity Day (Wednesday, Oct. 21) and PACER's National Bullying Prevention Month. The campaign encourages students, groups, and others to take a stand for kindness, respect, and inclusion by designing and wearing custom bullying prevention T-shirts. Official Unity Day T-shirts are available for \$12, and CustomInk will donate 100 percent of profits back to PACER. Be sure to order by Oct. 8 for guaranteed arrival in time for Unity Day. For more details visit [customink.com/stopbullying](http://customink.com/stopbullying).



# PACER's VGo robots and other leading-edge technology help students with education, communication, literacy, and more

For children who cannot attend school due to a disability or serious health condition, PACER's VGo robots offer a unique opportunity to continue their education and interact with peers without leaving their home or hospital room. Using the VGo software and a webcam on their home computer or iPad, a student can 'drive' the robot around school to participate in class, go to lunch, and communicate with teachers and friends. The robots, which are available for long-term loan to schools and families, are part of the Simon Technology Center (STC) Paul Adelman Collection which offers families of children and young adults with disabilities the opportunity to use the latest assistive technology (AT) available.

The range of AT options available through the STC is growing as the Adelman collection expands this fall with the acquisition of additional cutting-edge, high-demand technology that the community has been asking for. It will include tools for communication, literacy, and other needs. "The new collection represents the most current trends in technology," said Bridget Gilormini, STC director. "These are the latest high-tech devices with sleek designs, contemporary interfaces, and dual functionality."

Made possible by the Paul Adelman Children With Disabilities Endowment Fund, STC's collection currently includes two VGo telepresence robots, an UbiDuo communication device, and a Tobii PCEye Go eye tracker.

## Communication Devices

These tools meet the needs of individuals with speech and language disorders, often giving them a voice they might not otherwise have. Such cutting-edge augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices are tablet-based (iPads for example) and provide users access to complex language software that is flexible and can expand as the user's vocabulary grows.

## Literacy Tools

These devices support individuals who are accessing specialized formats for print materials. Technology tools such as the E-bot PRO Portable Video Magnifier and the Blaze EZ will provide new options for accessing alternative formats such as large print, audio, and braille. This will give readers greater access, flexibility, and independence.

## Special Technology

STC also plans to acquire tools to help individuals with disabilities control the environment around them by providing alternative methods of accessing everyday items such as the telephone, lights, or television. The STC plans to acquire technologies such as Pilot One and VoiceMe that



PACER's high-tech VGo robots (above) enable children to attend school virtually from their home or hospital room.

use voice controls to access the user's environment and provide greater independence and control.

All new items in the Adelman Collection will be made available for demonstration at PACER later this year with the specific technology yet to be determined. Families, individuals, and professionals can borrow assistive technology for up to four weeks through the STC Lending Library. The VGo robots are available for months-long loan for families who need one.

*Learn more about the STC Lending Library and the Adelman Collection, and how to acquire a VGo robot for long-term loan, visit [PACER.org/stc/library](http://PACER.org/stc/library) or call (952) 838-9000.*



## EX.I.T.E. campers have fun with science, technology, engineering, math

The 13th Annual Exploring Interests in Technology and Engineering (EX.I.T.E.) Camp was definitely lucky for nearly 30 middle school girls with disabilities this summer at PACER Center. The campers discovered just how much fun science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) can really be thanks to the amazing volunteers from Accenture, IBM, Medtronic, Target, and 3M, along with special guests including KARE-TV meteorologist Belinda Jensen. Learn more about EX.I.T.E. Camp at [PACER.org/stc](http://PACER.org/stc).



*(Far left and above) EX.I.T.E. campers make new friendships throughout the five days of camp. (Left) 3M volunteer Paul Davies shows campers the magic of science.*

## 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."



# 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).

## CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH, EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIORAL

### Challenging Behaviors and the Individualized Education Program (IEP): Making a plan that works

Children and youth with challenging behaviors often struggle to be successful in school. This workshop will discuss what challenging behavior in school may look like, why those behaviors are so hard to change, and offer suggestions on how to use the IEP to make a plan that works to support school success.

- **Sept. 17, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (St. Paul)**
- **Oct. 20, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Maple Grove area)**
- **Nov. 5, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

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

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

- **Sept. 26, 9 a.m. to 11 a.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 regarding their child's strengths and needs. This is also an opportunity for participants to talk with other parents to share experiences and tips.

- **Oct. 13, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

### 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.

- **Oct. 17, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. (PACER)**

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

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

- **Oct. 26, 6:30 p.m. 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 that step often requires some intentional preparation. This workshop will help parents plan for the transition and learn strategies to help their child be successful and make that first school experience a good one.

- **Nov. 14, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. (PACER)**

### Families Are Important

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

- **Nov. 16, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

## HEALTH

### Care Coordination: Empowering Families

Participants will learn advocacy skills, coping strategies, and ways to organize information from multiple health care providers. Topics will include how to define and expand your child's health care team, navigate health care and insurance systems, improve communication skills, and find resources. Parents of children with genetic conditions and complex health care needs should e-mail [Linda.Cherwitz@pacer.org](mailto:Linda.Cherwitz@pacer.org) for an application to participate.

- **Oct. 24, All day event (Twin Cities area)**

## PARENT TRAINING

### Help Your Child with a Disability Succeed at School (SPANISH)

This workshop, presented in Spanish, will help parents of children with disabilities be more successful in school. Topics include the importance of parent involvement, understanding the U.S. education system, the special education process, tips for communication, and parent rights and responsibilities in the special education process.

- **Oct. 5, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Gaylord)**  
Presented in Spanish only

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

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

- **Oct. 1, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. (Minneapolis)**
- **Oct. 5, 6:30 to 8:30 pm (Gaylord)**

### Six Skills for Effective Parent Advocacy

Parents will explore six skills they can use to become more effective advocates for their child with a disability. These include: understanding the child's disability, using effective communication, becoming well-organized, and knowing how to resolve disagreements.

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

### 10 Topics to Help Your Child Succeed in Special Education

Parents who participate in this interactive workshop will learn about 10 important areas in special education, and acquire skills and knowledge they can use to help their child with disabilities be more successful. Parents will also be provided with several useful tools.

- **Oct. 1, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Farmington)**
- **Oct. 26, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (New Ulm)**
- **Oct. 27, 6:30p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Morris)**

### The ABC's of the IEP – A Guide for Minnesota Parents to the IEP

This workshop will help parents understand how to use the IEP to benefit their child. Presenters will use the PACER booklet, "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.

- **Oct. 19, 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. (Moorhead)**
- **Oct. 21, 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. (Waconia)**

## Planning for Educational Inclusion

Parents of children with disabilities will learn more about educational inclusion. Topics include least restrictive environments, access to the general curriculum, and tips for social inclusion at school.

- **Oct. 27, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Owatonna)**

## Special Education and the Important Role You Play for Your Child

Parents play an important role in the special education process. Participants in this workshop will learn how parents can use their rights and abilities to advocate for their child and work effectively with the school. This workshop will also provide valuable information for surrogate parents, foster parents, and the professionals who work with them on behalf of children in special education.

- **Nov. 9, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Little Falls)**
- **Nov. 10, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Duluth)**

## Hot Tips on the Individualized Education Program: Is your child's IEP individualized and appropriate?

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

- **Nov. 9, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Red Wing)**
- **Nov. 10, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Waseca)**

## SIMON TECHNOLOGY CENTER

### Off to College with Google Chrome

This workshop is for students preparing to make the transition to higher education. Students, their parents, and professionals will learn about apps, extensions, and resources available on Google Chrome to help with writing, organization, research, and more, including Google services and online resources for college students. The workshop will include both presentation and demonstration.

- **Sept. 24, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

### Let's Write a Story: Tools for Creating Social Stories

Social stories help learners understand the world around them and prepare for the

unexpected. Workshop participants will learn about a variety of tools that can be used to create a social story.

- **Oct. 1, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

### Leveraging Technology to Improve Executive Function

This workshop will explore tools and strategies to help with attention, memory, planning, organization, time management, and self-monitoring. Learn how to choose the right tools to help individuals with disabilities move toward independence in a variety of settings including education and employment for transition ages.

- **Oct. 8, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

### Do the Math: Mastering the Basics Adds up to Success

Participants will learn about the math skills employers are now expecting employees to have. Math is part of making decisions and reasoning, and basic math skills are used in the workplace when purchasing and ordering supplies, following a budget, even managing your vacation time. Discover which technologies can help you brush up on your skills and make sense of this important skill.

- **Nov. 17, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

### Learn About Assistive Technology Online: Helpful resources for parents and educators

Whether you are new to assistive technology (AT) or a seasoned parent or professional, this workshop will provide valuable AT information and resources. Topics include resources for webinars, articles, and social media to make learning about AT fun and impactful. Content provided by the Center on Technology and Disability (CTD), a leader in educating the community about AT and IT through informative online content.

- **Nov. 19, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. (PACER)**  
Streaming option also available

## TRANSITION

### Ready for Life After High School? Employment and Support Strategies for Youth with Disabilities

Planning for employment is an important step in preparing your youth with a disability for life after high school. This new workshop will provide information on career exploration and planning, along with strategies for finding

and keeping a job. Parents will gain knowledge about how to help prepare their youth for employment, and will hear from agencies that provide employment services and supports. Parents of students in the 9th grade and beyond are encouraged to attend.

- **Sept. 24, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., (Anoka)**
- **Oct. 28, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., (Alexandria)**

### Self-advocacy: Tools You Can Use

An advocate can be broadly defined as "someone who speaks up to make things better." The goal of this workshop for **transition-age students and their families** is to help them learn about the importance of self-advocacy and to develop and learn to use some helpful tools.

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

### Work is Possible: Understanding the Emerging Landscape of Employment

This innovative workshop helps families learn about emerging employment philosophy and policy changes, such as Employment First and Minnesota's Olmstead Plan. It will also address myths around disability employment, highlight parent experiences, and offer valuable information on the role of benefits planning.

- **Nov. 10, (East Metro)**

### 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 life after high school. Parents of students in the 9th grade and beyond are encouraged to attend.

- **Nov. 17, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (New Prague)**

### Taking the Next Step: Planning for Success in Postsecondary Education

An increasing number of youth with disabilities are choosing to continue their education after high school. This free workshop for parents of youth will provide information on how to help youth prepare for success in college, understand the value of postsecondary education, and access needed supports.

- **Nov. 19, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Bemidji)**

### Getting and Keeping the First Job

Competitive employment is the cornerstone of a successful transition to adult living for youth with disabilities. This workshop will provide youth and parents with answers to important questions about preparing for and keeping a job.

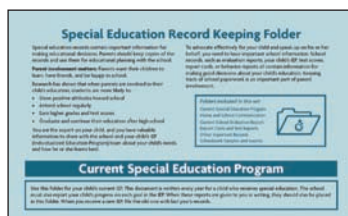
- **Dec. 10, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

# Resources

## Updated! Special Education Record Keeping Folders

Special education records contain important information for making educational decisions. This set of 6 folders helps parents organize school paperwork to help them make good decisions about their children's education. 2014.

**\$10 | 11+ copies, \$8 each | PHP-a5**



## Updated! EZ AT

A guide for parents and professionals working with children ages 3-8 with disabilities. It provides assistive technology activities to encourage inclusion among all students. EZ AT offers information on a wide range of devices and products that promote best practices for home and classroom learning. 2015.

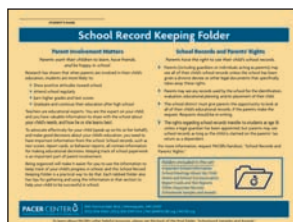
**◆ \$5 | 10+ copies, \$4 each | STC-16**



## New! School Record Keeping Folders

This School Record Keeping Folder is a practical way for parents to stay organized to keep track of their student's progress in school. Each of the six tabbed folders also have tips for gathering and using the information to help your child to be successful in school. 2014.

**\$10 | 11+ copies, \$8 each | MPC-6**



## A Guide for Minnesota Parents to the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Updated for 2014. Helps parents work with schools to address each child's special needs through understanding the required components of the IEP. Includes examples from the Minnesota state-recommended form.

**◆ \$3 | 10+ copies, \$2 each | PHP-a12**



## Families Are Important! An Early Childhood Guidebook for Families of Young Children

Helps families of children with disabilities or delayed development understand Minnesota's early intervention system and how to access services for their child. 2014.

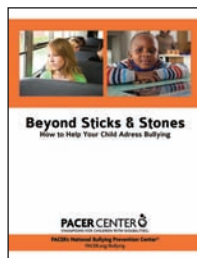
**◆ \$7 | 10+ copies, \$6 each | AP-44**



## 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**



## 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. One copy free to young adults, high school or older, with disabilities and their families. 2012.

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



**FAMILY FUN DAY & TECH EXPO!**

Stop by PACER's Simon Technology Center for free fun that celebrates how assistive technology can give people super powers! Children with disabilities, their families, individuals, and professionals can participate in hands-on activities with technology, enjoy the live band, and more.

**Saturday, Sept. 19  
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
at PACER Center**

*Pre-registration required at [PACER.org/workshops](http://PACER.org/workshops)*

◆ This symbol indicates one item is free to Minnesota parents or guardians of children with disabilities



## 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 3). 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%; St. Paul residents, 7.625%; 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 2015 greeting cards

The holidays are coming and what better way to send best wishes to family and friends than with the 2015 PACER greeting card, which features the winning design from PACER's 10th Annual Creative Kids Contest. "How to Train Your Dragon" is the name of the special creation by Amanda, a nature-loving 12-year-old who enjoys books about dinosaurs, and animals of all types. She particularly likes reptiles.

Amanda, who has Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), often goes to the pond near her house to look for turtles or walks along the river at Minnehaha Falls with her mom.



Amanda (right) and her winning artwork (above)



Proceeds from the sale of the cards support PACER programs. A set of eight greeting cards featuring Amanda's design can be purchased for \$10 by ordering online at [PACER.org/help/creativeKids2015.asp](http://PACER.org/help/creativeKids2015.asp) or calling (952) 838-9000. Cards are also available in larger quantities for businesses and individuals.

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**Change Service Requested**

# Saturday, Oct. 3: Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying

Register now and gather pledges for PACER's Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying on Saturday, Oct. 3 presented by the Friends of PACER and American Dairy Queen. This fun, family event, which raises awareness and funds for PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center, will take place at Mt. Normandale Lake Park in Bloomington, Minn. It includes a four-mile run and a two-mile fun walk/roll followed by presentations, speakers, and live music. Download pledge forms and promotional materials, and register online at [PACER.org/bullying/nbpm](http://PACER.org/bullying/nbpm).

