

PACESETTER

A news magazine of PACER Center, Inc. | Champions for Children | (952) 838-9000 | PACER.org

Global dyslexia experts draw capacity crowd at PACER presentation

PACER sponsored a presentation on June 7 by global dyslexia experts and advocates Sally E. Shaywitz, M.D., and Bennett A. Shaywitz, M.D., co-directors of the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity. There were 600 people in attendance. “It was standing room only, and we had to turn people away,” said PACER Executive Director Paula Goldberg. “It was a wonderful evening! People were just thrilled to hear this presentation.”

Amanda Dirnberger, an adult with dyslexia, was so moved by the presentation that she was brought to tears. “So often, people focus on weaknesses rather than strengths,” she said. “The Shaywitzes discussed the strengths of people with dyslexia. I had forgotten how powerful these strengths are. I felt really empowered by this presentation.”

Along with an overview of dyslexia and a discussion of the methodologies that work best in dyslexia treatment, they spoke about the importance of curriculum flexibility for children with dyslexia, using the example of a child being shamed by having to read aloud in the classroom. Following the presentation, Dr.

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Sheryl Sandberg visits PACER



From left, Jackie Olson, Pat Lang, Dao Xiong, Beth Simermeyer, Sheryl Sandberg, Don McNeil, Paula Goldberg, and Deanne Curran

Sheryl Sandberg, Chief Operating Officer of Facebook and bestselling author of *Lean In*, took time out of her book tour promoting *Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy*, her new #1 New York Times bestseller, to visit PACER on June 9.

Resilience is the theme of *Option B*, and Sandberg came to PACER to hear from a panel of parents about their experiences with resilience as parents of children with disabilities. The panel included PACER Board members Don McNeil, Jackie Olson, and Beth Simermeyer, and PACER staff Dao Xiong, Pat Lang, and Deanne Curran.

Curran, whose two children are deaf, blind, and on the autism spectrum, first connected with PACER as a parent seeking help. She was met with an empathy that was just as important as the helpful information she received.

“PACER took my call and listened,” she said. “The warmth and compassion I experienced helped me get up the next day... This parent community is a powerful thing to have.” Today, as a PACER parent advocate, she helps others build their own resilience and advocate for their children.

Sandberg talked about the importance of resilience in growing stronger after a tragedy. She commented, “Resilience isn’t something we’re born with. It’s a muscle, and we build it.”

Sandberg is the daughter-in-law of PACER Executive Director Paula Goldberg. Sandberg’s late husband, David Goldberg, was Paula Goldberg’s older son. David’s unexpected and sudden death was the catalyst behind the writing of *Option B*, which Sandberg co-authored with Wharton School professor Adam Grant.

Early dyslexia screening, intervention now possible

According to Sally Shaywitz, M.D., a global leader in dyslexia research and advocacy, a child may show signs of dyslexia even before reading age. Shaywitz, co-director of the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity, believes that early diagnosis and intervention are vitally important.

“If children with dyslexia are not identified, they will never receive the evidence-based interventions and accommodations that will change their lives for the better,” Shaywitz said. “Right now in public schools, screening for and diagnosing dyslexia is practically nonexistent.”

That’s something Shaywitz hopes to help change. She has developed a cutting-edge screening tool that will allow schools to easily evaluate all kindergarten and first-grade

students for dyslexia. The Shaywitz DyslexiaScreen™ is an evidence-based assessment that helps teachers identify students in kindergarten and first grade who may have dyslexia. It takes less than five minutes per student to administer.

Shaywitz said that according to recent scientific data, the achievement gap between typical readers and those with dyslexia is evident as early as first grade. She said that in order to close the gap, it’s important to identify children at risk for dyslexia as early as possible. “Accommodations, such as extra time for school work, will help students demonstrate their true abilities and recognize that their reading struggles do not mean they are less capable or intelligent than their peers,” she said.

Parent advocacy leads to new school dyslexia program

When Debra Voss saw her daughter Lilly struggling to read in kindergarten and first grade, she consulted Lilly’s teachers. Voss was told, as many parents are, that “every child develops at their own pace.”

By the end of second grade, it was clear that Lilly was not reading at a typical level. The Voss family had Lilly tested privately, and started outside tutoring. “If I could give parents one piece of advice, it’s to have your child tested when you notice a problem, even if that’s in kindergarten,” Voss said.

Voss began researching the most successful instructional methods used with learners who are dyslexic, and came across the Orton-Gillingham method, a very structured, sequential, multi-sensory approach to reading. She learned that none of the district’s teachers were trained in the Wilson method, a subset of Orton-Gillingham. “We loved the school, but knew Lilly couldn’t stay there unless she received the instruction she needed,” Voss said.

In addition to researching instructional methods, Voss connected with other Minnetonka school district parents at a lecture on dyslexia. She and more than 100 parents “met” online via a Facebook page started by Minnetonka parents who wanted to advocate for their children with dyslexia.

Voss called the superintendent’s office to voice her concerns about dyslexia instruction, and encouraged members of the Facebook group to do the same. “When he came in the next day, he had messages from

50 parents,” Voss said. “He was very receptive, and the district responded quickly to our concerns.”

The district’s new head of special education services was very familiar with the Wilson method, and she quickly implemented training for teachers.

“It’s a year-long training process,” Voss said. “Twenty-seven teachers have been trained, and they are training 30 more this year.”

The parents succeeded in changing the way the district works with children who have dyslexia, starting with early identification and access to services. While parents led the way, the real success came when parents, teachers, principals, administrators, and the superintendent collaborated to ensure that students received the help they needed.

As for Lilly, “She is making progress. Lilly is reading chapter books, and she loves school,” Voss said. “It’s really encouraging when you can do something to help your child.”



Lilly Voss

The gift that keeps on giving: What is an endowment, and why is it important to PACER?

“When I think about the kind of legacy I want to leave, I think of PACER,” a donor recently said to Paula Goldberg, PACER’s Executive Director. “Is giving to PACER’s endowment the right way for me to do this?”

In order to answer that question, it’s important to understand how endowments work. Some people compare endowments to a savings account. An endowment is a legally restricted fund; in order for the fund to grow, the interest can be spent, but the principal amount, the foundation of the endowment, remains intact.

An endowment benefits PACER Center because it helps PACER plan for the future. It helps ensure that PACER’s

programs will always be there to meet the emerging needs of families with disabilities and children who are bullied.

There are many ways to give to PACER’s endowment. A donor may give today, plan regular gifts, or make PACER part of their estate plan. A donor may begin an endowment in honor or memory of a loved one, or choose to contribute to one of PACER’s named endowment funds.

To discuss your role in PACER’s endowment, call Paula Goldberg at (952) 838-9000. Consult your tax professional or financial advisor to learn about how a gift to PACER’s endowment may benefit your tax situation.

PACER’s Health Information Center serves families of children with complex medical needs

Families who are struggling to navigate the health care system on behalf of their child with special or complex health care needs or disabilities are only a phone call away from help.

“PACER’s Health Information Center provides information, resources, and training so that families can make their way through a complicated system,” said coordinator Pat Lang. Health Information Center advocates have comprehensive knowledge about health care, services and medical equipment options, provider information, insurance and waiver programs, and coordinating care.

PACER staff coach families through working with doctors and school health services. At the heart of what they do is promoting family-centered thinking, shared decision-making, and the importance of doctor-patient relationships in health care. How they do this is equally important.

“We can relate to families and empathize with their day-to-day experiences because we have walked in their shoes,” said Lang. Like many PACER staff, Health Information Center advocates are themselves parents of children with special or complex health care needs. They understand that families must balance their children’s needs with financial stresses, work, other family responsibilities, and emotional ups and downs.

Along with being the caring and knowledgeable voice on the other end of the phone, Health Information Center staff serve many other functions, such as visiting hospitals and



PACER’s Health Information Center staff Pat Lang (L) and Linda Goldman Cherwitz

clinics to disseminate literature and speak one-on-one with families. They present at local and national conferences and health care meetings, and partner with medical professionals and families, sharing and learning about how to best address the needs of children and youth. In the end, though, they are focused on the parent who reaches out for help.

“Our contacts with families almost always start when they call to speak to an advocate that first time,” said Linda Goldman Cherwitz, parent health advocate. “There is no question too simple or too complex. Reach out to us, because we understand, and we want to hear from you. We’re here to help.” Call PACER’s Health Information Center at (952) 838-9000.

October is PACER's National Bullying Prevention Month

Take action, be part of the solution

Since its inception 11 years ago by PACER, the National Bullying Prevention Month campaign has gone global, growing from a weeklong event to a month-long campaign that calls attention to bullying prevention efforts and educates the public about bullying.

PACER's leadership has led to awareness and social change. "Thousands of people around the world participate in a many bullying prevention activities," said Julie Hertzog, Director of PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center. "Hundreds of schools, major corporations, and many celebrities have joined the movement."

Hertzog said that though progress has been made, "One in five students still report being bullied. We are educating the public to understand that bullying can no longer be accepted as a childhood rite of passage."

Wear and share orange on Unity Day, Oct. 25

On Unity Day, it's easy to show your true colors online through social media. Here are some suggestions from PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center:

- Share your stories and tag images using #UnityDay2017.
- Update your status to "#UnityDay2017 is October 25! Join the movement to make it orange and make it end!"



If you are being bullied, you are not alone. Celebrate Unity Day to show we are together against bullying and united for kindness, acceptance, and inclusion."

- Change your Facebook profile image in support of Unity Day. Consider a photo of yourself in orange!
- Add a Facebook Unity Day frame.
- Add an orange tint to your Instagram profile and photos.
- Download free images from PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center website to share online and promote participation. Go to PACER.org/bullying/NBPM.

For more information about PACER's National Bullying Prevention Month and Unity Day go to PACER.org/bullying/NBPM

PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center launches new interactive pledge: "Together Against Bullying"

More than one of every five students report being bullied. This might be happening to someone you know and care about. Want to take action to help them and thousands of other students? Teens and adults can take the pledge at PACER.org/bullying/pledge.



Students lead the way: North Branch Area Middle School is united against bullying

Pamela Newbauer, a teacher and the student council advisor at North Branch Area Middle School in North Branch, Minn., felt so strongly about bullying that she worked hard to implement a bullying prevention plan. Nevertheless, she said, something was lacking. “It helped raise awareness, but didn’t engage the kids,” she said. “We needed to give the kids a stake in it so they felt like they had some power to address it.

“We had to turn the baton over to the kids,” she added. “We asked the kids what they needed from us.” The student council took the lead on planning, including raising the funds for bullying prevention activities.

Newbauer said that PACER’s bullying prevention websites provided information and inspiration for students. “It was very helpful to get ideas about what others are doing. The different stories gave us a fresh perspective. I’m really grateful it exists. It’s a great resource that helps kids learn how they can make a difference.”

Last October, every student and staff member signed Unity Day posters that have since been put on permanent display in the hallways as a reminder of the pledge to stay united. On Unity Day, the entire school (650 students, plus staff) took a victory lap against bullying around the track, which culminated in a huge orange color cloud — a symbol and reminder to “make it orange, make it end.”



Students at North Branch Area Middle School create a huge orange color cloud to celebrate Unity Day 2016.

Other activities included the student shout-out board, where students highlighted each other’s positive actions. In April, the student council held a unity rally; the entire school participated, complete with photos taken by a drone.

On May 25, Newbauer loaded up a van with 12 members of the student council, and they drove to Bloomington, Minn., to accept the Faces of Change Award at PACER’s Unity Awards. “We stood onstage, watching the video, and then we accepted the award. As we walked offstage, one of the students said to me, ‘I can’t believe everything we did! I’m really proud of us.’”

Want to learn more about North Branch’s bullying prevention achievements? Go to PACER.org/bullying/getinvolved/unity-awards.asp

Write in PACER for your United Way pledge

Choose PACER this fall when making donations through your workplace giving (payroll deduction) campaigns. You can be a Champion for Children! Here’s how to contribute.

United Way Donor Choice Program

On the United Way pledge card, you can write in PACER Center, 8161 Normandale Blvd., Minneapolis MN 55437 under the “Donor Choice” designation.

PACER is not a United Way agency organization and therefore doesn’t receive support from United Way’s general funds. However, PACER can still benefit from the donor choice funds when you write in PACER Center.

Name of Agency PACER Center
Address 8161 Normandale Blvd.
City Minneapolis, MN 55437

Bottle rockets and bowling robots: Girls have STEM fun at 13th annual EX.I.T.E. Camp

Every summer, middle school girls with disabilities come to PACER for a one-in-a-lifetime experience at the annual EXploring Interests in Technology and Engineering (EX.I.T.E.) Camp, five days of educational fun in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). This year EX.I.T.E. Camp was held in mid-August.

PACER's partners brought talent and volunteers to work with the girls on amazing projects. Partners included Accenture (project management), C.H. Robinson (third party logistics and supply chain), 3M (rockets), IBM (Lego robotics) and Medtronic (engineering and robotics). Special guests included KARE-11 meteorologist Belinda Jensen, Eagan's Green Girls robotics team, the Bakken Museum, Como Zoo, and The Works Museum.

Girls participated in not one but two rocket launches. For the indoor launch, the girls pumped compressed air into recycled pop bottles. They then shot the rockets at targets and measured the distance the rockets covered. PACER's parking lot was the venue for the outdoor launch of rockets fueled by vinegar and baking soda.

The girls also made purses from duct tape, toured a supply chain truck hooked up to PACER's loading dock, programmed a Lego robot to bowl, learned about the weather and meteorology, and snacked on ice cream made from liquid nitrogen.

EX.I.T.E. Camp was funded by Boston Scientific, C.H. Robinson, Donaldson Company, and Xcel Energy.



Far left: EX.I.T.E. campers pose for a picture next to PACER's sign.

Left: A camper designs and creates a purse.

Dyslexia experts, continued from page 1

Sally Shaywitz signed copies of her groundbreaking book, *Overcoming Dyslexia*.

Sally and Bennett Shaywitz wrote about the event in the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity newsletter, and discussed the work of PACER and the intersection between bullying and dyslexia. They concluded, "We very much look forward to continuing and growing the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity relationship with PACER Center."



Dr. Sally Shaywitz (far left) with PACER Executive Director Paula Goldberg and Dr. Bennett Shaywitz

PACER on Capitol Hill: Legislation and children with disabilities

PACER held its biennial Reception on the Hill in Washington, D.C., on July 18. More than 250 people attended, including a record 14 members of Congress!

U.S. Senators in attendance were John Boozman (AR), Al Franken (MN), Amy Klobuchar (MN), Maggie Hassan (NH), Bob Casey (PA), and John Barrasso (WY).

U.S. Representatives in attendance were Jared Huffman (CA), Darren Soto (FL), Jackie Walorski (IN), Tom Emmer (MN), Glenn (GT) Thompson (PA), Sheila Jackson Lee (TX), Bobby Scott (VA), and Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA).

The reception was co-sponsored by PACER Center, the National Coalition of Parent Centers, and the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA). In attendance were congressional staff, parent center staff, and representatives of national disability organizations.

The purpose of the event, which was presented by Best Buy, was to share with national decision makers the real-life impact of legislation and policies. “It’s so important for policy makers to hear the stories of families and their children with disabilities,” said Gretchen Godfrey, PACER Center Assistant Director. “We hope that hearing about how legislation impacts families makes a difference when Congress crafts, debates, and votes on legislation.”



Above: Michelle Lewis (far left), and Bonnie Dunham (far right) of the Parent Information Center of New Hampshire with New Hampshire Senator Maggie Hassan.

Left: Minnesota U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar and U.S. Representative Tom Emmer.

It starts with a plan: Four tips for a successful IEP meeting

The parent of a child with a disability may have questions before they meet with a team from their child’s school to put together an Individualized Education Program (IEP). “Spending the time to prepare for the IEP meeting helps parents feel more comfortable, and leads to an easier process,” said Jody Manning, director of PACER’s Parent Training and Information Center.

Here are some tips for a successful meeting:

1. **A parent can request a meeting about their child’s IEP needs at any time.** If a child has received a new diagnosis or a parent has noticed a new need or area of concern, it may be time to meet with the IEP team. To request this meeting, a parent should contact the IEP case manager.
2. **There should be no surprises at the meeting.** A parent should always receive notice of the IEP meeting. The notice should include the purpose of the meeting, the time, date and location, and who will be attending.
3. **Materials should be shared in advance.** A parent can ask their child’s IEP case manager to send them copies of any information the team will be using for decision-making at the meeting. It helps a parent to be able to read and process this information ahead of time, so they can be better prepared to be an informed, active participant at the meeting.
4. **Technology can be a key to learning and independence.** Assistive technology (AT) devices or services are required to be considered as part of every IEP. If a child needs AT to benefit from special education services, or if AT would maintain or improve a child’s ability to function in school, the IEP team will evaluate AT options and the IEP will be written accordingly.

Manning said, “Parents know their child best, and when they combine that knowledge with an understanding of the IEP process, they have the best chance for a good outcome.”

Record number attend inspiring PACER symposium

There were 1,100 parents, teachers, administrators, and others who gathered at the Minneapolis Convention Center on Aug. 15 for PACER's 12th Annual National Symposium About Children and Young Adults with Mental Health and Learning Disabilities.

"I enjoyed that there were three keynote speakers through the day," said a parent. Gil Noam, Ed.D, founder and director of the PEAR Institute at Harvard University and associate professor at Harvard Medical School and McLean Hospital, spoke about how parents and educators can support psychological well-being. Anne Gearity, Ph.D., a clinical social worker and University of Minnesota faculty member, discussed how parents and teachers can support children who experience debilitating anxiety. Richard Petty, M.D., a psychiatrist, neurologist, and internal medicine specialist who is scientific director of the Promedica Research Center, spoke about medication and lifestyle approaches to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in children.

Other presentations covered dyslexia, communication, refugee mental health, eating disorders, nutrition, time management for youth, social media and mental health, and social-emotional learning. The presentation by PACER's Youth Advisory Board on Mental Health on their experiences as youth with mental illness earned a standing ovation.

Several of those in attendance remarked that the day's only flaw was having to choose which of the amazing presentations to attend. A professional remarked, "I cannot say enough about the PACER Symposium. This was my third year in a row attending, and I have loved every one. Thank you so much to those who organized this! I learned some great information from every speaker who presented today."



Gil Noam during his keynote presentation

“ This is a wonderful gift PACER gives to our community. Thank you.

– Symposium attendee ”

Facilitated IEP meetings an option when parents, schools disagree

Sometimes schools and parents aren't able to come to an agreement during the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. If this occurs, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) offers a facilitated IEP meeting. This option is available for IEP, IIIP (Individual Interagency Intervention Plan), and IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan) meetings. Either parents or the school can request a facilitated IEP meeting, but both parties must agree to use this voluntary process.

The facilitated IEP meeting is run by an impartial, independent facilitator, who provides a structured environment to help the team understand each other's perspectives and work together. Independent facilitators focus on the child's needs, maintain open communication between the parents and the school, and help members stay

on task to complete the IEP. Typically, the IEP is developed at this meeting.

PACER staff advocates can help parents in preparing for facilitated IEP meetings. Advocates assist parents in identifying their child's strengths, needs, interests, and major educational concerns. Staff advocates also encourage parents to be willing to listen carefully to what the school is saying and to consider other solutions and options. An advocate may attend the facilitated IEP meeting, upon the parent's request.

For more information, call PACER Center at (952) 838-9000 or toll free at (800) 537-2237, and ask to speak with an advocate. Additional resources are available online at PACER.org/disputeresolution or on MDE's website at education.state.mn.us/MDE/fam/sped/conf.

Fitting in can be challenging for teens with mental health needs

For teens with a mental health, emotional, or behavioral disorder, a new school year can mean social challenges. Friendships may not survive. Extracurricular activities can be difficult for some who feel they just don't fit in.

Members of PACER's Youth Advisory Board on Mental Health recently talked about the challenges they faced to feel socially connected and offered the following tips for teens:

- Accept yourself first. One teen said that in order to feel comfortable with others, she had to accept herself. "Body image is an issue for me, and I always felt ashamed of who I am and what I look like. Through therapy, I learned to accept myself for who I am, and then I could put myself out there to be included."
- Find a place where you aren't afraid to share ideas and listen to others' ideas. It can be hard to fit into an organized group. Use your personal interests to create your own group. One teen created a bullying prevention group at school. With the support of a teacher-sponsor, he advertised the club's first meeting. It was well attended, and the club was off to a great start!
- Pursue your passion. One teen said, "I experienced significant social anxiety as a child. There were times when I was included but my social anxiety made me feel as if I didn't fit in." This teen was afraid to compete for a role in a school production. Instead, she enrolled in a community education acting class.



Members of PACER's Youth Advisory Board on Mental Health

"It was wonderful to be with people my age, but who didn't know me. I was able to be myself and gained confidence." A role in a community theatre production led to other productions.

- It's okay to opt out. "There's social pressure to be part of a group," said one teen. "I like walking around the lakes because there are people in groups but also a lot of people, like me, walk alone. It's okay to do that. It helps me feel better about myself."

PACER is currently accepting applications for its Youth Advisory Board. Middle school and high school students with a mental health diagnosis, or emotional or behavioral disorder are eligible to apply. For more information, go to PACER.org/cmh/youth-advisory-board/about.asp

Simon Technology Center's Family Fun Day and Tech Expo is Sept. 23

Children and youth with disabilities, their families, and professionals will be able to explore the latest in assistive technology and enjoy interacting with a variety of devices for children, teens, and adults at PACER's Simon Technology Center on Saturday, Sept. 23 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Attend mini sessions to see iPad app demonstrations. Get creative with accessible art and do-it-yourself technology. Learn about PACER's resources and enjoy light refreshments. There are activities for all ages at this free event, held at PACER Center. Advance registration is required; go to PACER.org/workshops or call PACER at (952) 838-9000. In greater Minnesota, call (800) 537-2237.



PACER partners with State of Minnesota on career pathways for transition-age youth

One of PACER's significant partnerships is with the State of Minnesota's Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). "Currently, we are partnering on a very exciting pilot project for at-risk youth with disabilities," said PACER transition specialist Deborah Leuchovius. "The Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) is focused on providing pathways to careers that build on the interests of individual youth and are needed by employers: job-driven training opportunities."

Leuchovius offered an example. "A young person might have a goal of becoming a registered nurse (RN), a career where there is a shortage of workers. With DEED education and training support, the person's career path could begin with a position as a home health aide, and eventually progress to the career goal of RN," said Leuchovius.

DEI focuses on three rural areas, and centers on youth who have been historically viewed as harder to employ, said Kay Tracy, Director of Youth Services at DEED. "We have a special focus on youth with disabilities from culturally



diverse communities, as well as youth who may be low income, homeless, involved with the juvenile justice system or teen parents."

Tracy said PACER's involvement is key to the project's success. "PACER is a national expert on the Guideposts for Success. PACER has helped us have high expectations for youth, as they transition from school to adulthood. PACER has helped us in viewing them as youth first, youth with disabilities second. PACER brings a youth-driven, person-centered focus that helps in individualizing planning with youth."

One of the reasons for the rural focus is the additional challenges workers in these areas face, Tracy said. "One of our areas covers 18 counties. It's not just transportation to a worksite, it's that there are fewer overall opportunities for private sector internships and apprenticeships."

Tracy hopes to eventually replicate parts of the program statewide. She views people with disabilities as a valuable resource with talents that are often overlooked. "We have a skill shortage in Minnesota," she said, "And we have talented individuals. We have to make sure we utilize that talent."

PACER's National Parent Center on Transition and Employment is located at PACER.org/Transition. For more information about the DEI, go to mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/disability-employment-initiative.

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Paris is on her way to the career of her dreams

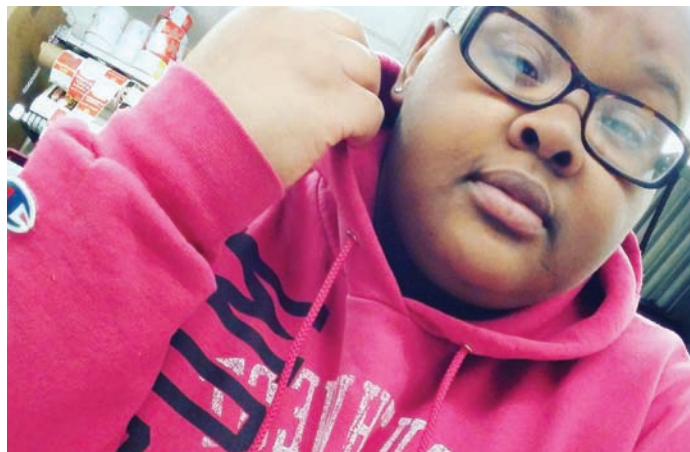
It was just seven months ago that Paris Clifton walked into the Minnesota WorkForce Center in Marshall, Minn., referred by the special education department of her high school. Paris, who is diagnosed with an emotional/behavioral disorder, entered a program for young people with disabilities through Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, a WorkForce Development Area that trains workers to fill needed positions. PACER is a partner in this DEED program.

Paris told Leah Hastad, the Council's Disability Resource Coordinator, that her dream was to one day own a restaurant. Together, the two mapped out a plan that combined training, education, and practical experience. Hastad and her colleagues work with individuals, tailoring programs to fit their needs and skills.

Hastad said, "When I first met Paris, she had just graduated from high school." Hastad placed Paris in a job at a long-term care facility in the dietary department. "This provided her with work experience on a job site," Hastad said. The Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council paid Paris' wages through their work experience program, and the employer mentored and coached Paris, who worked with the cook and took food orders from the residents.

The job was a success. After the trial period, Paris was hired by the facility — first part-time, then full-time. "She is even helping to train some of the new employees," Hastad said. "She has come out of her shell and really flourished. She's picked up extra shifts. Paris has her own apartment and although she is working full-time, she also has a second job at a convenience store.

"Paris' employer reports that she has grown in her



Paris Clifton

position, and that the residents and the staff are very glad to have her there," Hastad said.

Part of the work of the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council is building on career pathways. College is in Paris' future, Hastad said. "Paris wants to work on her basic skills to get into college. She will first work toward an associate degree online; if that goes well, Paris may be interested in transferring to the culinology program at Southwest State University," Hastad said. Culinology is a new discipline; it is a blend of the culinary arts and food science.

Though Paris' apartment has wi-fi, she doesn't have a laptop — something every college student needs. Hastad says that is something the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council can help with. Right now, Paris is so busy with work that finding time to complete her FAFSA (federal financial aid form) is a bit of a challenge. However, Hastad has no doubt it will happen. It's in Paris' plan.

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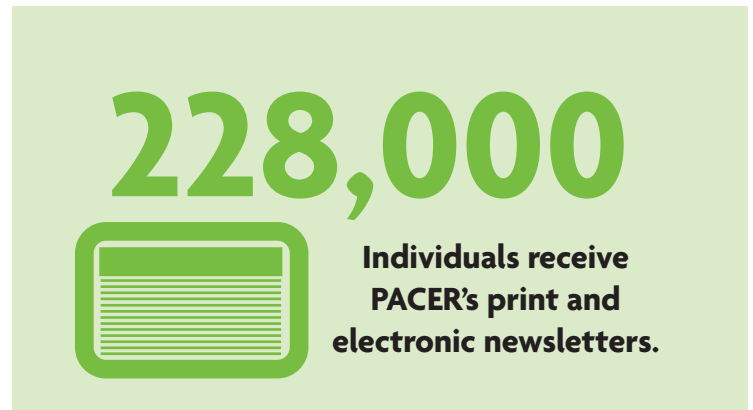
PACER Center enhances the quality of life and expands opportunities for children, youth, and young adults with all disabilities and their families so each person can reach his or her highest potential. PACER operates on the principles of parents helping parents, supporting families, promoting a safe environment for all children, and working in collaboration with others. PACER is also the National Bullying Prevention Center, offering innovative resources for students, parents, educators, and others.

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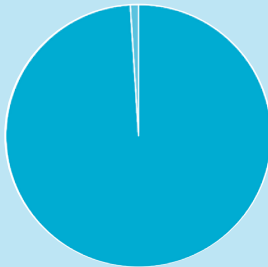


By the numbers: PACER Center 2016 highlights

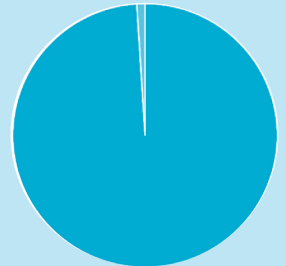
PACER continues to surpass its goals and expand its services to meet the changing needs of families. Here's a look at how PACER served families in 2016.



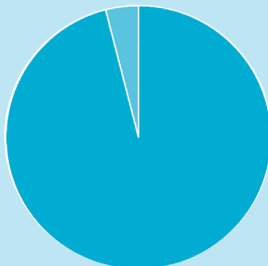
99% of parents who consulted with PACER's Simon Technology Center said they received useful information in selecting assistive technology.



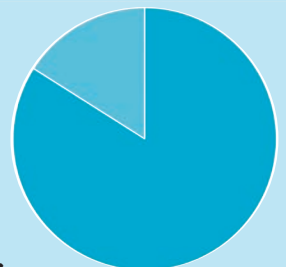
99% of participants reported that they would use the information learned at PACER workshops to help improve their child's or student's educational outcomes.



96% of educators reported that a PACER presentation helped them to better understand how to engage diverse families in their children's education.



84% of PACER's funds go directly to programs. As stated by auditors, PACER's management and fundraising expenses are only 16%, well below the industry standards.



PACER Resources

Order these resources today for the school year!

Special Education Record Keeping Folders

Special education records contain important information for making educational decisions. This set of six folders helps parents organize school paperwork to help them make good decisions about their children's education. Also available in Spanish, Hmong, and Somali.

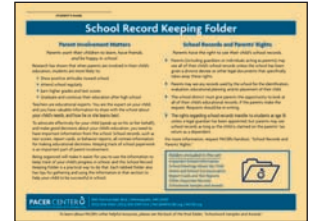
\$10 | 11+ copies, \$8 each | PHP-a5



School Record Keeping Folders (General Education)

This School Record Keeping Folder is a practical way for all 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. Also available in Spanish, Hmong, and Somali.

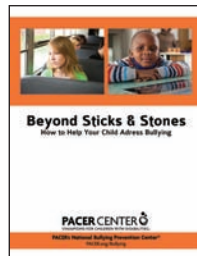
\$10 | 11+ copies, \$8 each | MPC-6



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.

◆ \$5 | BP-7



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

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



To order the materials above:

1. Specify how many you want of each item and their 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. 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 email PACER (see page 11). 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 |
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(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:

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Name: _____ Organization (if applicable): _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ (h) _____ (w) _____ (c)

Email: _____

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, or visit PACER.org/workshops.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH, EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIORAL

Challenging Behaviors and School Success: The Role of Section 504 and Special Education

Every child has the right to an education. Children with challenging behaviors often struggle with school success. This workshop covers how Section 504 and special education can address school-based concerns.

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

Crisis Planning at School for Children with Challenging Behaviors: Making a Plan That Works

When children or teenagers experience escalating behaviors at school, a proactive crisis plan can help support recovery and wellness. This session provides information on strengths-based planning in the school setting.

- **Oct. 12, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Mankato)**

Challenging Behaviors and the Individualized Education Program (IEP): Making a Plan that Works

Sometimes children and youth with challenging behaviors struggle to stay successful in school, despite having an IEP. This workshop provides information for parents and others to help address IEP-based concerns.

- **Oct. 17, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**
Streaming option also available

Challenging Behaviors, Positive Supports, and School Success

Children and youth with challenging behaviors often struggle at school. This workshop offers information, resources, and tips on how positive supports and school-based services can increase school success.

- **Nov. 2, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (St. Cloud)**

Parent Leadership Training on Children's Mental Health

Parents of children with behavioral health challenges play an important role in their child's services and supports. This training covers how parents can use these experiences to help others.

- **Jan. 18, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**
Streaming option also available

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Becoming an Active Partner in Your Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

This workshop describes early intervention services, the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), how families can be involved in writing child and family outcomes, and how to become active participants in the IFSP process.

- **Sept. 26, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**
Streaming option also available

Understanding and Addressing Your Young Child's Challenging Behaviors

Parents of young children with developmental delays or disabilities will learn about behavior, temperament types, stages of development, the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and the Individualized Education Program (IEP), and strategies to support their child's positive behavior.

- **Oct. 16, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**
Streaming option also available

Everything You Need to Learn Before Your Child Turns Three

This workshop helps families understand the transition process from Part C Early Intervention services to Part B preschool services. Parents will also learn how to actively participate in the transition process.

- **Oct. 21, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. (PACER)**
Streaming option also available

Making the Move from Early Childhood Special Education to Kindergarten

Kindergarten is a big step for any child. Parents of young children with disabilities will learn to plan for this transition and learn strategies to help their child be successful.

- **Nov. 11, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. (PACER)**
Streaming option also available

Becoming an Active Partner in Your Child's IEP

This workshop for parents of children ages 3 to 5 provides an overview of the early childhood special education process and how to take an active lead in the IEP process.

- **Nov. 20, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**
Streaming option also available

HEALTH

Care Coordination: Empowering Families

Parents of children with special health care needs will learn to organize medical information, coordinate care, navigate the health care system, including waivers and insurance, and improve communication skills. Email Linda.Cherwitz@pacer.org for an application to participate.

- **Oct. 21, All day event (Twin Cities area)**

HOUSING

Incorporating Home Living Skills Into Daily Life for Your Middle School Youth

Come and have fun exploring the necessary skills, tools, and technology to work with your son or daughter at home, and at school, using the Individualized Education Program.

- **Nov. 13, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. (PACER)**

PARENT TRAINING

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. 2, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Mpls.)**

"Who Cares About Kelsey?"

Dan Habib's film "Who Cares about Kelsey?" features a near-dropout teen with emotional and behavioral disabilities. She learns how to become an empowered teen. Includes Q & A with a PACER advocate.

- **Oct. 3, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**
- **Jan. 8, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

The ABCs of the IEP: Making the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Work for Your Child

This workshop helps parents understand how to use the IEP to benefit their child. Parents will learn how each required part of the IEP can be developed to meet the child's needs.

- **Oct. 5, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Winona)**
- **Oct. 9, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Bemidji)**
- **Oct. 10, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Alexandria)**
- **Nov. 2, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

Special Education and the Important Role You Play for Your Child

Participants will learn how parents can use their rights and abilities to advocate for their child and work effectively with the school.

- Oct. 9, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Brainerd)
- Jan. 23, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)

10 Topics to Help Your Child Succeed in Special Education

Participants will learn about 10 important areas in special education, and acquire skills, knowledge, and tools they can use to help their child with disabilities be more successful.

- Oct. 10, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Grand Rapids)
- Nov. 6, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Forest Lake)

Bullying Prevention – Everyone's Responsibility

Bullying can be isolating, not only for the kids involved, but for parents, too. This workshop offers a comprehensive overview for parents to learn how to address and prevent bullying.

- Oct. 12, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)

How Parents Can Effectively Communicate with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team

Parents will learn to advocate for their child in the special education process. They will receive tips and tools to help them become more effective communicators as a member of their child's IEP team.

- Oct. 24, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Duluth)
- Nov. 28, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Maple Grove)

Tips and Tools for Talking with School Staff

This workshop provides parents of special education students with practical tips and interactive problem-solving experiences to build the skills necessary to communicate effectively with school staff and resolve differences.

- Nov. 9, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Stillwater)

Hot Tips on the Individualized Education Program (IEP): Is Your Child's IEP Individualized and Appropriate?

Parents will learn to use their child's special education evaluation report to determine how well the IEP addresses their child's needs. Parents must bring the child's most current school evaluation and IEP.

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

SIMON TECHNOLOGY CENTER

How to Use Your Smartphone to Improve Learning, Work, and Life

Smartphones can be used for more than just games and texting. Learn how they can be part of a larger strategy to increase independence and improve organization and time management skills.

- Sept. 11, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. (PACER)
Streaming option also available

Improving Study Skills with Assistive Technology

Study skills are fundamental for students' academic achievement. Learn about a variety of assistive technology tools and creative strategies for student study success.

- Oct. 26, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (PACER)
Streaming option also available

Take Apart a Computer

In this fun STEM activity, teens will take apart a computer and learn about its inner workings as they recycle old technology.

- Nov. 4, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (PACER)

Technology for Dyslexia: Navigating High School and Beyond

This workshop addresses reading support, note-taking tools, and writing strategies. The tools introduced may also be helpful for people as they transition to the work environment.

- Nov. 8, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. (PACER)
Streaming option also available

Staying Organized at Work: Technology Tools for Task Management and Focus

This workshop addresses the use of technology to support task management and focus. Whether you have ADHD or simply struggle with organization, learn about tools and apps to help you succeed at work.

- Dec. 6, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. (PACER)
Streaming option also available

Assistive Technology to Support Children's Sensory and Behavior Development

This workshop discusses the wide range of assistive technology available to help support children's sensory and behavior needs. Tools, apps, and resources will be discussed and demonstrated.

- Dec. 7, 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (PACER)
Streaming option also available

Appy Hour: Apps for Health & Wellness

Learn about a variety of apps to support health and wellness for all ages, including those for monitoring mood, tracking physical activity, learning about guided meditation, and more.

- Jan. 18, 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (PACER)
Streaming option also available

TRANSITION

Supplemental Security Income (SSI): First Steps

This workshop provides basic information on how to apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Learn how SSI can help your youth meet his or her postsecondary education, training, employment, and independent living goals.

- Aug. 29, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Duluth)
- Sept. 6, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Rochester)

What Families Need to Know about Youth Career Pathways and WorkForce Centers

Families will learn about career planning options for in-school and out-of-school youth with disabilities, and where to find help launching youth on the path to employment.

- Sept. 13, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Marshall)

Transitioning to Employment

Families of youth will receive information on career exploration and planning, including preparing their youth for employment and information about agencies that provide independent living, financial, and employment services and supports.

- Sept. 28, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Hutchinson)
- Oct. 12, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Mankato)

Transition: Pathway to the Future

Parents of students in eighth grade and above who have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) will learn how to develop transition services to support planning for life after high school.

- Oct. 10, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (Arden Hills)

ABCs of the IEP for Transition Age Students and Their Parents

Parents and their students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in eighth grade and above will understand how to use the IEP to assist with the transition to adulthood.

- Dec. 7, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (Mpls.)

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Change Service Requested

Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying is October 7



Register now for PACER's annual Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying, presented by the Friends of PACER! This fun family event, which raises awareness and funds for PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center, takes place at Mount Normandale Lake Park in Bloomington, Minn.

The main events are a four-mile (chip-timed) run and a two-mile fun walk/roll. Participants are encouraged to form teams. The day includes performances, guest speakers, prizes, and more. Healthy snacks, coffee, and water are provided. Registration is \$20 for ages 16 and older, and \$10 for ages seven to 15. It is free for children six and younger. For information and to register, go to PACER.org/RWR.

Schedule of Events

- 9 AM Check-in, day-of registration, activities
- 10 AM Run, Walk, Roll! 4-mile run chip-timed run, 2-mile fun walk & roll
- 10:45 AM Activities, guest speakers, performances, prizes, and more! Healthy snacks, coffee, and water will be provided.