

PACESETTER

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

Public schools should meet higher standards, U.S. Supreme Court rules

In a landmark decision, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that public schools must provide children with disabilities an education that is “appropriately ambitious” and tailored to the needs and abilities of every child.

In the case, *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*, the parents of a boy with autism placed their son in an autism academy because the public school was not meeting his educational needs. When Endrew’s learning and behavior showed impressive improvement, his parents sued the school district for reimbursement of the private school’s tuition, claiming the district had violated Endrew’s right to a free, appropriate public education.

Chief Justice John Roberts wrote that IDEA requires schools to provide an education that is “appropriately ambitious” for the student. “Every child should have the chance to meet challenging objectives,” Roberts stated.

Advocates have hailed the ruling. “The Supreme Court has affirmed the promise of IDEA: that children with disabilities can make meaningful educational progress,” said PACER’s Executive Director Paula Goldberg. “When parents and schools share high expectations, children with disabilities can achieve great things.”

Laughing with Leno: PACER’s 35th Annual Benefit



Bill Austin, President and CEO of Starkey Hearing Technologies, and Jay Leno at PACER’s Annual Benefit

Great comedy, great fun, and a great cause were at the top of the agenda on Saturday, May 13, when legendary comedian Jay Leno had the crowd laughing nonstop at PACER’s 35th Annual Benefit, presented by Starkey Hearing Technologies.

“Not only is Jay an amazing performer, he is a wonderful and generous person,” said Colleen McGough Wood, Benefit co-chair. “One of the best parts of the evening was when Jay and Frank Vascellero auctioned off tours of Jay’s legendary garage, which contains nearly 300 collectible cars and motorcycles. Jay himself made a generous donation to PACER.”

Early in the evening, Amy Klobuchar, Minnesota’s senior U.S. Senator, welcomed guests to the Benefit. She expressed her appreciation for PACER, talking about the health challenges her daughter Abigail, now a college student, experienced as a baby. “I called my good friend Paula Goldberg,” Klobuchar recounted. “I’d still be on PACER’s Advisory Board if the Senate didn’t have rules about that type of thing.”

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From failing grades to 'A' honor roll: PACER helped change Ben's life

When Brad Hoyt saw his 12-year-old son, Ben, who has ADHD, struggling to finish his homework, sometimes working for as long as eight hours, he was greatly concerned. "We were at the point of switching schools just to get him the help he needed, and we visited several," Brad said.

"Ben's grades were low and he was not accepted at any of the schools," his mother, Dori Schlamp, said. "We didn't know where to turn."

A close friend suggested that Brad call PACER Center. "I spoke with Virginia Richardson," Brad said. A meeting was arranged at Ben's school that included Virginia (PACER's Parent Training Center manager), Ben's parents, and several school personnel, including the principal and Section 504 director.

"The meeting was an eye-opener for me," Brad said. "Not only did I finally find clarity and understanding of my son's struggles, but I realized they were the same ones that had impacted me my entire life, as well as two of my other children. It was very emotional for Dori and me."

Brad and Dori were amazed at how Virginia quietly but resolutely helped define the issues at the meeting.

"To say her presence was a game changer is an understatement. The firmness with which she advocated for our son, whom she had never met, resulted in the creation of a 504 Plan before we left the room," Brad recalled.

Two years later, Ben's life has changed dramatically. After learning study skills and techniques in his classes and through the attention of his teachers, he made the "B" honor roll. "Most importantly," Brad said, "We had our son back!" The six to eight hours Ben had spent on homework nightly dwindled to two to three.

"He was happy again," Dori said.

Ben continued to thrive, and is now on the "A" honor roll and tennis team at school. "He was recently named an



Brad Hoyt and his son Ben

Outstanding Student along with only two others in his class of more than 300 students," Brad said proudly.

"His social studies teacher, who nominated him, said she was proud to be his teacher," Dori reported. "She said that over the course of the year, Ben has become very attentive

to who he is as a learner. He's shown that he can accurately reflect on his progress and take action when necessary.

"She described Ben as a hard worker who was able to advocate for himself, and who always does his best," Dori said. "She said he is warm, kind, and generous, along with being inclusive

and considerate."

Brad Hoyt credits Virginia Richardson and PACER for the change in Ben's life. "The darkness and despair that ruled our lives two years ago is now only a memory. We are forever in Virginia's and PACER's debt, and we are so thankful for your dedicated service.

"We are extremely fortunate to have Virginia and PACER Center."

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We are extremely fortunate to have Virginia and PACER Center.
”
— Brad Hoyt

PACER's multicultural advocates listen and understand

Since PACER Center first opened its doors in 1978, it has been committed to serving all families, including those from diverse and underserved populations. Families from diverse cultures often have unique experiences when they participate in their child's education.

Today, PACER's team of multicultural advocates focus on four specific populations: Dao Xiong works with the Hmong community; Jesus Villaseñor with Latino parents; Hassan Samantar with Somali families; and Bonnie Jean Smith, Virginia Richardson, and others with African American families. All are members of the communities they serve and all are parents of a child or adult with a disability.

"When you have a child with a disability, usually no one you know understands that experience. We understand the journey," said Richardson, who has worked with families at PACER for more than 30 years. "Kids with disabilities are diagnosed by their limitations, what they can't do. We've all raised children with disabilities, and we have found their strengths."

Samantar shared that it makes a significant difference when the parent advocate understands the language and culture, as well as the challenges that families face. Villaseñor added that it's also meaningful when advocates understand special education law.

"Society tends to stereotype everything, by race, by disability," he said. "We try to humanize everybody."

Xiong said that most parents are more comfortable sharing their experience when an advocate shares their own, particularly the challenges they have faced. Smith agreed.



PACER's multicultural advocates: (front row, L to R) Virginia Richardson and Bonnie Jean Smith; (back row, L to R) Jesús Villaseñor, Hassan Samantar, and Dao Xiong

"All families are relieved when someone listens," she said. "All families are different, and they give us more information when they know we're listening."

In addition to helping parents, PACER's multicultural advocates present to school staff on working with parents from diverse cultures, facilitate trainings and webinars, and adapt and translate PACER materials into Hmong, Somali, and Spanish.

"We have information in their language, but we also understand the emotion," Richardson said. "Our voices express hope."



Congratulations, Carter!

The artwork of Carter Jorgensen, son of Lisa and Jim Jorgensen, was selected as the first place winner of PACER's 10th annual Creative Kids contest for children with disabilities, held on February 25. Carter's beautiful design now graces the front of PACER's 2017 greeting card. Eight-year-old Carter, who is on the autism spectrum, aspires to be an artist at Pixar when he grows up.

A box of eight cards and envelopes is available for \$10 by calling PACER Center at (952) 838-9000 or ordering them online at PACER.org.

'I want to go to school!' Madalina Turza advocates for the rights of Romanian children with disabilities

Madalina Turza founded a Romanian parents' organization that has been working for more than seven years to gain educational rights for children with disabilities. She is in Minnesota for 10 months as a Fulbright fellow at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs, studying inclusive education and interning at PACER Center.

Though the stories Madalina shares about the Romanian education system include abuse, sedation and isolation in closed facilities, her message is ultimately one of hope and the power of parents to change a system for their children.

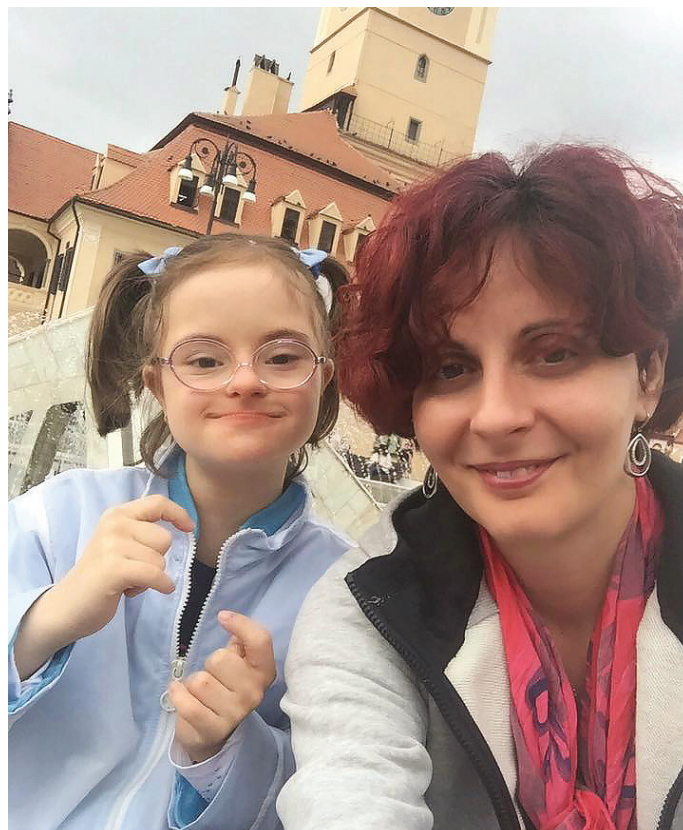
Clara

Madalina's 12-year-old daughter Clara is with her in Minneapolis, attending the sixth grade at a local school. "She is so excited and happy at school here," Madalina shared.

Clara was born prematurely and diagnosed with a heart defect. "They suggested we leave her to die, and have another child," Madalina said. Instead, the Turzas traveled to Germany, where doctors performed the surgery that healed Clara's heart. They also diagnosed her with Down syndrome.

Back home, Madalina was outraged when she learned about Romania's educational system for children with disabilities. "The children were not allowed to attend mainstream schools, no matter what their disability. They were in separate buildings that looked like institutions, with high fences surrounding them. Parents weren't allowed inside."

Madalina was determined to change things. Though she was told she was "crazy" to try to change the educational system, what she really was, was determined. "I was desperate," she said. "It was so unfair! These children deserved some rights."



Madalina Turza and her daughter Clara

The birth of a movement

Madalina and other parents formed the European Centre for the Rights of Children with Disabilities. "We were overwhelmed with calls from parents!" she said. "At first we did legal counseling, and then we started to litigate cases." After winning their first case, "we decided to litigate in a more strategic way, taking cases that had the potential to change things on a macro level," she said.

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“Children with disabilities were not allowed to attend mainstream schools. No matter what the disability — it could have even been ADHD — the children with disabilities were in separate buildings. They looked like institutions, with high fences surrounding them.

— Madalina Turza

Creating kinder communities: PACER's National Unity Awards

PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center and its youth advisory board, the Faces of Change, presented the third annual Unity Awards on May 25 at the Bloomington Center for the Arts. Award recipients were chosen by the Faces of Change board from nominations received from across the United States.

"We hear hundreds of stories every year about individuals who make a positive impact and we're excited to honor some amazing individuals," said Julie Hertzog, director of PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center.

The youth advisory board recognized students and schools that are doing amazing work in their communities with The Faces of Change award:

- Marveon Mabon, Los Angeles, CA
- Elaina Leitzke, Apple Valley, MN
- Mentors and Protectors of Burton Tech High School, Los Angeles, CA
- Students from Watertown-Mayer Middle School, MN

- Wayzata High School Unified Physical Education, MN
- Student Council of North Branch Area Middle School, MN
- Eloise Berdahl-Baldwin, Saint Paul, MN

Master of Ceremonies Mike Augustyniak presented the four National awards:

- **United for Kindness:** The Key Club of Colebrook Academy, New Hampshire, for their outstanding community service
- **United for Acceptance:** Bethany Piotter, a student at the University of Northern Iowa, who founded an inclusive dance club
- **United for Inclusion:** John Schulzetenberg of Minnesota, who stood by a classmate who was ostracized
- **United Against Bullying:** The Bay City Central Anti-Bullying Pledge Club of Michigan, who changed the culture at their high school



Kayla Kleinstuber, Olivia Pierce, Jasmine Toliver, and Rylee Limo



PACER's "The Face of Change" Youth Advisory Board

Continued from previous page

They also developed legislation to grant educational rights to children with disabilities. Meanwhile, "parents were awakening," Madalina said, noting that parent leaders in all 41 counties lobbied members of Romania's Parliament. But no members of Parliament would author the bill. However, under Romanian law, citizens can petition to have legislation heard. It took the Center 10 months to gather and validate the required 100,000 signatures.

The legislation was heard on March 21, 2014, International Down Syndrome Day. Nearly 40,000 parents held peaceful marches in the 21 largest cities in Romania, wearing T-shirts that said, "We want rights, not mercy." The hearings

were carried live on TV, and when Madalina testified, children with disabilities entered the Chamber of Deputies and unrolled scrolls that read, "I want to go to school."

Moving forward

The legislation passed the Romanian Parliament, but in order for it to become law, President Klaus Iohannis must sign it.

Whether or not he does, Madalina will not give up. She has seen how powerful parents can be when they are united on behalf of their children. She is determined that all Romanian children will have the rights they deserve.

The Simon Technology Center: 30 years of innovation

PACER's Simon Technology Center (STC) was developed 30 years ago, after a parent named Judy Norback encouraged Paula Goldberg to create a program to introduce children and youth with disabilities to the benefits of technology. In 1987, the then-named Computer Resource Center (CRC) became Minnesota's first assistive technology center for children and youth with disabilities. Early support was provided by Apple and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE).

The fledgling center received its first federal grant for Project KITE (Kids Included through Technology are Enriched), using a model that trains parents and early childhood educators in the use of technology to improve educational outcomes for young children with disabilities. Project KITE continues today.

The CRC became the Simon Technology Center in 2001; the name change occurred in recognition of the support received from Steven C. Simon and his family.

In 2003, one of the STC's most enduring programs, EXploring Interests in Technology and Engineering (EX.I.T.E.) Camp, a STEM summer program designed specifically for middle school girls with disabilities, was born through a partnership with IBM.

Though the STC is located in Minnesota, its reach is worldwide. PACER held the first international conference

for children with all disabilities in India in 2006. In 2007, Paula Goldberg was instrumental in establishing the first-ever assistive technology center in India (Bangalore) for children with all disabilities. A few years later, PACER participated in a UNESCO meeting in Paris with education and technology leaders from around the world to address education for people with disabilities.

Today, the Simon Technology Center provides a wide variety of programs and services. A child who is homebound or hospitalized can use a robot to fully participate in their classroom. A teen can attend a workshop to learn coding.

Staff do everything from using a 3D printer to create technology and tools for children with disabilities, to adapting a "Go Baby Go" car to meet the needs of a child with a physical disability. The Simon Technology Center, now with a staff of nine, continues to lead the way with cutting-edge technology dedicated to improving the lives and education of children with all disabilities.

"When I look at how rapidly technology is changing, I can't even guess what advances will benefit children with disabilities in the next 30 years," said Bridget Gilormini, director of the Simon Technology. "But I do know that the STC and PACER will be here to serve children with all disabilities."



The first group of EX.I.T.E. campers in 2003. This year will mark the 15th anniversary of this summer program.



Scientists from 3M work with the EX.I.T.E. campers in 2016.

For upcoming Simon Technology Center workshops and events, go to PACER.org/STC

Simon Technology Center launches Tech for Teens club

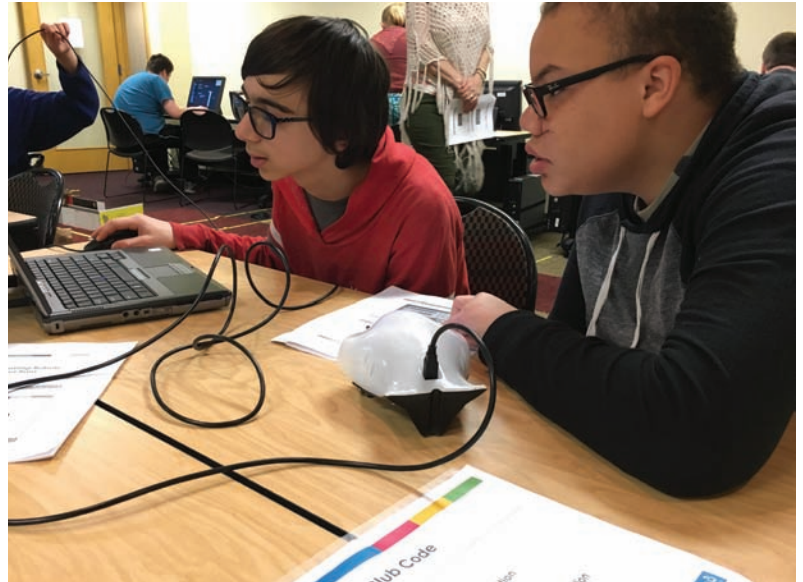
Workshops teach coding skills to girls and boys with disabilities

PACER's Simon Technology Center (STC) has launched an exciting new program, "Tech for Teens." Students are learning about hot topics in coding, including its use in video games, website design, and robotics.

The club has been a great success, said assistive technology specialist Paul Sanft, who facilitates the workshop series. "Coding is so popular right now. There are tons of clubs for kids without disabilities, but this is the first of its kind for kids with disabilities in Minnesota."

In addition to the workshops, open labs allow students a second opportunity to ask questions, receive individualized instruction, or just have more time to work on their projects.

"This takes time to learn, and it takes a lot of practice," Sanft said. "It was really fun to see kids get an 'aha' moment in something that seems so difficult. There were many of those moments. I wish I could do this workshop every day." Sanft noted that many teens in the first two sessions were on the autism spectrum.



Two participants in PACER's Simon Technology Center's new workshop series, "Tech for Teens"

Tech for Teens is more than just fun, Sanft said; the teens are learning important skills. "We want to keep doing this, and we want to expand it to include other topics," Sanft said. "By the time these teens are ready to enter the work force, this knowledge is going to be necessary."

A night at the Oscars: Emagine Willow Creek grand opening benefits PACER

In celebration of the grand opening of the Willow Creek theatre in Plymouth, Minn., Emagine Entertainment co-owner Jon Goldstein invited PACER Center supporters to experience the red carpet treatment for a "Night at the Oscars" on March 6. Guests were welcomed at the door before heading into the luxurious movie theatres, where they relaxed in leather reclining seats.

Five of the movies offered were 2017 Academy Award nominees. Guests enjoyed *Fences*, *Hidden Figures*, *La La Land*, *Lion*, and *Manchester by the Sea*, along with five current releases.

All of the proceeds from the ticket sales for the evening were donated to PACER's programs for children with disabilities and those who are bullied.



Art Serotoff, Sandra Richardson Serotoff, Virginia Richardson, Noy Phongsavath, and Mark Richardson enjoy the red carpet treatment at Emagine Willow Creek's grand opening.

An unforgettable evening benefit



Left: (L to R) Etta Barry, Melanie Barry, and Sharman Davis Barrett

Right: (L to R) Kate Campo, Dan Campo, Megan McNeil, Julie McNeil, and Don McNeil



Angie Erickson and Ted Erickson



Patty Hanson and Wayne Hanson



Sherm Stanchfield and Steve Kraft

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Prior to Leno's performance, the audience was inspired by Erin Barlow, ambassador for PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center. Barlow traveled from Los Angeles, where she is a theatre major at UCLA, to speak about about her personal experience being bullied as a middle school student and the need to help others who are experiencing bullying. Barlow said, "Please know, you are not alone. I am here for you. PACER is here for you. We need PACER. And PACER needs you."

Leno's performance was the highlight of an unforgettable evening for 2,200 people.

"It's fantastic to have such incredible support from PACER's dedicated friends," said PACER Executive Director Paula Goldberg. "We're so thankful for the tireless work of our

Benefit committee, our 400 volunteers, and the corporate sponsors who made this magical evening possible. Proceeds from PACER's Benefit go to fund PACER's services to children with disabilities and their families and those who are bullied. Funds raised for children is what the Benefit is all about."

Goldberg reminisced, "It's amazing to think of how PACER's Benefit has grown, from the first Benefit, which was attended by 75 people.

"What a difference Benefit supporters have made in the lives of children over the last 35 years."

Save the date: PACER's 36th Annual Benefit is May 12, 2018!

enefits children with all abilities



Left: PACER's Executive Director Paula Goldberg and PACER's Board of Directors President Matthew Woods



Right: Mary Frey and Carla Bender



(L to R) Brandon and Stacy Sawalich with their children Amelia and William, Tani Austin, Paula Goldberg, Bill Austin, Teri and Greg Austin



Benefit co-chairs (L to R): Nancy Kaysen, Elly Zweigbaum, Colleen McGough Wood, Anna Hyland, and Mary Holmes (Not pictured: Jessica Broyles)



Marina Wilkerson, Gary Wilkerson, Kristin Geer, and Brad Geer



Ben Bennett, Mara MacMillan, Noel Bennett, Jay Leno, and Muffy MacMillan

Giving back: 11-year-old Xavier raises money for PACER

Giving back to the community is important to the Cunningham family of Lake Elmo, Minn. Andrea is active in Jack and Jill International, an organization of African American mothers, and Bobby is a leader of their son Xavier's Boy Scout troop. Xavier, age 11, is carrying on the family tradition by designating PACER Center for donations through iSOW, an online service that helps young people save, give and spend.

When Andrea established an iSOW account for Xavier, she asked him where he wanted to donate. "Ms. Pat (PACER's advocate Pat Anderson), the PACER Center lady helped us a lot," Xavier said.

Xavier was diagnosed with ADHD in the first grade. "He was on a 504 Plan and not really getting the support he needed at school," said Pat Anderson, who stepped in when Xavier was in third grade.

"Pat helped when there were issues at Xavier's old school, and held our hands when we transferred to a different school," Andrea said. "She encouraged us to move from a 504 Plan to an Individualized Education Program (IEP)."

In addition to being a Boy Scout, Xavier recently earned



Bobby, Xavier, and Andrea Cunningham

his Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do. "He really stuck with it and stayed on track," Andrea said proudly.

He is doing much better in school, too, said Andrea. "Pat's knowledge, research, and due diligence is key to our success," she added.

Donate to Xavier's PACER fundraiser at <https://isow.com/user/profile/Xavier/Xavier>

PACER provides helpful resources for surrogate parents

Federal law recognizes the importance of parental involvement in making decisions about a child's educational programs, particularly special education programs for children with disabilities. But when a child with a disability does not have a parent to serve as his or her educational advocate, who fills that role?

Often, it's a surrogate: a foster parent or a volunteer from the local community. Surrogate parents are appointed by a school district to represent a child with a disability who may need special education services. A surrogate parent has the same rights and responsibilities that parents and guardians have in the special education decision-making process.

PACER's Surrogate Parent Project provides information and resources, including workshops, publications, videos, and an online training guide for surrogates or potential surrogates.

"Surrogate parents play an important role for children with disabilities who need someone to advocate on their behalf," said Surrogate Parent Project coordinator Pat Anderson. "Providing surrogate parents with the information they need helps them to be more successful in that capacity."

For information, visit PACER.org/surrogate, email Anderson at panderson@PACER.org, or call (952) 838-9000.



Jack Shink honored with Otto Bremer Youth Leadership Award

PACER honored Jack Shink with the second annual Otto Bremer Youth Leadership Award at PACER's 35th Annual Benefit. Emcees Amelia Santaniello and Frank Vascellaro presented Jack with the award.

Vascellaro introduced Jack, pointing out his work as Minnesota's 2016 youth ambassador for the National Tourette Syndrome Association. "Jack has spoken around the state to help people better understand 'invisible disabilities' such as Tourette Syndrome that may not be immediately apparent. He is a wonderful advocate not only for himself but for other young people with disabilities."

Jack, who is 16 years old and a student at Wayzata High School, aspires to be a comedian. He spoke backstage with Jay Leno, who was happy to advise Jack. "Keep it personal," Leno said to the budding performer. "People will be interested if you talk about yourself."

The inspiration on the award reads, in part: "Thank you for your outstanding leadership to bring awareness and acceptance for students with Tourette Syndrome and other disabilities. Your ability to educate with humor is inspirational!"



Jack Shink (left) and Jay Leno at PACER's Annual Benefit

ABLE accounts help establish financial stability

In February, Minnesota announced the launch of ABLÉ (Achieving a Better Life Experience) accounts for children and adults with disabilities, allowing them to accumulate savings without jeopardizing their government benefits. The federal ABLÉ Act was signed into law by President Obama in 2014.

ABLE accounts allow for the creation of savings accounts to pay for disability-related expenses, and are not counted against Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Medicaid asset limits. People can save up to \$14,000 yearly (a lifetime maximum of \$100,000). ABLÉ accounts offer tax benefits for qualifying expenses.

"An ABLÉ account is a great new option to assist people with disabilities in attaining financial stability," said Deborah Leuchovius, PACER's transition coordinator.

ABLE accounts are easy to establish, and allow family and friends to gift money. However, if money remains in the

holder's account after their death, it will likely be used to pay back the state Medicaid agency.

ABLE accounts can be used to fund:

- Education (including employment training and support)
- Health care (including prevention and wellness)
- Transportation
- Assistive technology and personal support services
- Financial management and administrative services
- Legal fees
- Expenses for oversight and monitoring
- Funeral and burial costs

"Families should consult with their financial planner or attorney regarding special needs financial planning," said PACER's Assistant Executive Director Gretchen Godfrey. Information about ABLÉ plans is at ablenrc.org.

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

Parent Leadership Summit on Children's Mental Health

Learn how to work with policy makers on state and local mental health issues, and how to participate in policy committees. Space is limited. For more information, call Renelle Nelson at (952) 838-9000.

- **Aug. 25, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (PACER)**

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Improving Learning Outcomes for Your Child

This workshop will help families of young children ages birth to five learn about evidence-based practices and how they can be used to increase family engagement and improve learning outcomes for their children.

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

Back to School: Becoming an Active Partner in Your Child's IEP

This workshop for parents of children ages three to five will provide an overview of the early childhood special education process, including evaluation procedures, writing goals, family rights, and how to take an active lead in the IEP process.

- **Aug. 28, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**
Streaming option also available

PARENT TRAINING

Planning for Educational Inclusion: A Viewing of "Including Samuel"

Filmmaker Dan Habib documented his family's efforts to include their son Samuel, who has cerebral palsy, in all facets of their lives. Includes Q & A with a PACER advocate.

- **June 19, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

"Who Cares About Kelsey?"

Dan Habib's film "Who Cares about Kelsey?" chronicles a teen with emotional and behavioral disabilities who learns how to become an empowered teen. Includes Q & A with a PACER Advocate.

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

Back to School Series: ABC's of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) — A Guide for Minnesota Parents to the IEP

Parents will gain understanding of how to use the IEP to benefit their child, including developing the IEP to meet their child's needs. Parents should bring a copy of their child's most current IEP.

- **Aug. 17, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

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

Participants will learn how to use the information on their child's special education evaluation report to determine how well the IEP addresses the child's unique needs. Parents should bring a copy of their child's most recent school special education evaluation report and current IEP.

- **Aug. 24, 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, and receive tips and tools to help them become more effective communicators as a member of their child's IEP team.

- **Sept. 19, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Norwood)**

SIMON TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Smartphones and Smart Ideas: How to Use Your Smartphones to Boost Your Education, Career Readiness, and Daily Life

Participants will discover the most versatile and effective reading and writing apps for teens. This workshop is designed for students in middle school and older, their parents, and educators.

- **June 27, 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (PACER)**
Streaming option also available

Emerging Technologies

In this exciting presentation learn about the new and emerging technologies to help people with disabilities.

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

Tablet and Computer Accessibility

Tablets and computers have many accessibility settings built into their operating systems. Learn how to make tablets, computers, and smartphones more accessible, including screen magnification, screen reading, and more.

- **July 18, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. (PACER)**
Streaming option also available

Using the iPad to Enhance Summer Learning

Learn how to use apps to keep children and students engaged and learning this summer. Participants of students in grades 3 – 7 will learn strategies for using the iPad.

- **July 19, 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. (PACER)**
Streaming option also available

Today's Top Online Assistive Technology Resources

Whether you learn best from social media, blogs, podcasts or videos, this presentation has some of the best resources for learning about assistive technology online!

- **July 20, 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (PACER)**
Streaming option also available

Managing Time for Teens and Young Adults

Timeliness, scheduling, and efficiency are important skills for high school, college, and the work place. This workshop will explore tools and strategies to help teens and young adults juggle their responsibilities.

- **Aug. 22, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. (PACER)**
Streaming option also available

Accessible Reading for Babies and Tots

Development of reading skills begin even before your baby opens a book. Learn ways to provide accessible reading experiences for little ones.

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

Finding and Funding Assistive Technology

Participants will learn how to find and fund needed assistive technology. From AT in the IEP to low interest loans, there are a variety of resources and strategies to help.

- **Sept. 18, 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (PACER)**
Streaming option also available

Transition workshops continued on next page

Active parent participation key to successful early childhood education

Families are important! Parents of a child with a disability can provide a great deal of information about how their child functions in a variety of settings. This information is particularly helpful in writing an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) for children up to age three, or an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for children ages three to five.

Parent involvement in this process is so crucial that it is mandated by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act IDEA. According to IDEA, nearly 40 years of research and experience has proven that children with disabilities receive better educations when their parents play a major role in their child's education.

The active participation of families is essential for a child to make progress on IFSP outcomes and IEP goals and objectives. Families have the opportunity to voice concerns and gain information about what their child should be able to do at various stages of development.

To further strengthen the role that parents play in the IFSP and IEP process, PACER has partnered with the Minnesota Department of Education to create new resources specifically for early childhood. Among these resources are updated workshops, new handouts and publications, and training materials.

"Every state has a responsibility to offer information for parent training for early childhood, ages birth to age five," said Judy Swett, PACER's early childhood coordinator. "We want to provide this information to parents to help them participate in the process and know what they are entitled to ask for."



Swett noted that the relationship between families and professionals needs to be developed in a way that builds trust and understanding. Families should provide as much information as they feel comfortable sharing and ask questions. Practitioners need to share information in a clear and unbiased manner.

"This active participation will lead to an IEP or IFSP that meets the needs of the child and family," Swett said. "Active parent participation in the process will provide a solid foundation for later successful parent engagement in elementary school."

PACER publishes a number of books, curricula and one-page information sheets about early childhood education. For more information, go to PACER.org/publications/EarlyChildhood.asp

Workshops, continued

TRANSITION

Getting and Keeping the First Job

Competitive employment is the cornerstone of a successful transition to adult living for youth with disabilities. Youth and parents will learn about preparing for and keeping a job. Co-presented by Vocational Rehabilitation Service's Transition Specialist Alyssa Klein.

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

Succeeding on the Job: Using Technology to Boost the Skills Employers Want

Once you have a job, it is important to be able to meet your employer's expectations. Learn about technology to support work performance, such as being on time, communicating, and more.

- **July 25, 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (PACER)**
Streaming option also available

Transitioning to Employment

Families 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. 14, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Mankato)**
- **Sept. 28, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Hutchinson)**

Wellness Technology for Teens and Young Adults

Participants will learn about technology to help teens and young adults with sleep, memory, and fitness.

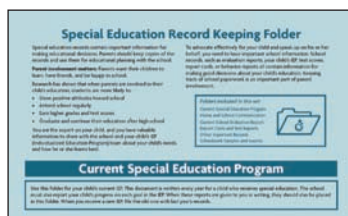
- **Sept. 28, 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (PACER)**
Streaming option also available

Resources

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. 2014.

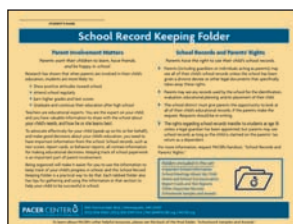
\$10 | 11+ copies, \$8 each | PHP-a5



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 have tips for gathering and using the information to help your child to be successful in school. Also available in Spanish, Hmong, and Somali. 2014.

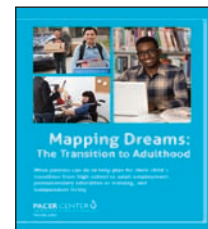
\$10 | 11+ copies, \$8 each | MPC-6



Mapping Dreams: The Transition to Adulthood

What parents can do to help plan for their child's transition from high school to adult employment, postsecondary education or training, and independent living. Includes "Talk to Your Child" sections, checklists, and a resource list. Updated 2016.

◆ \$8 | 10+ copies, \$6 each | ST-40



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. 2014.

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



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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.

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Important symposium on children's mental health and learning disabilities is Aug. 15

Registration is now open for PACER's National Symposium about Children and Young Adults with Mental Health and Learning Disabilities. It will take place on Tuesday, Aug. 15, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Minneapolis Convention Center, and features excellent national speakers and workshop presenters.

The symposium brings together 1,000 parents and professionals for a day-long event that provides outstanding information about children's mental health and learning disabilities, as well as proactive, positive teaching strategies and interventions. The keynote presenters will be Anne Gearity, Ph.D., Richard G. Petty, M.D., and Gil Noam, Ph.D.

The symposium fills quickly every year. The cost is \$35 per person and includes lunch. Six hours of continuing education units (CEUs) are available for educators. Parents and educators can register online at PACER.org/symposium or by calling (952) 838-9000.



Anne Gearity, Ph.D., has a mental health practice in Minneapolis, and is a consultant to many school districts. She also teaches at the University of Minnesota. Gearity is a respected speaker and presenter, and her keynote address will focus on anxiety.



Richard G. Petty, M.D., is a world-renowned authority on the brain and an accredited specialist in psychiatry, neurology, internal medicine, and nutrition. He will speak on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).



Gil Noam, Ph.D., is the founder and director of the PEAR Institute at Harvard University, and is an associate professor at Harvard Medical School and McLean Hospital in Boston. His topic is the essential elements that children and adults need in order to thrive, learn, and develop.

PACSETER

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PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org PACERTeensAgainstBullying.org

(Alternate format is available upon request)

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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 (952) 838-9000.**

Check PACER.org/symposium to learn more about presenters and read workshop session descriptions.

