

PACESETTER

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

PACER offers new children's mental health resources

Families of children with mental health and emotional or behavioral needs often have to navigate multiple systems of care to access supports and services for their son or daughter. PACER has developed new web-based resources to help parents with this process, information that is available at PACER.org/CMH. "Families face so many barriers in accessing care, and they need to know where to turn for help and information," said Renelle Nelson, coordinator of PACER's Center for Children's Mental Health and Emotional or Behavioral Disorders. "We have developed a variety of resources that will help families successfully interact with these services."

More than 100,000 Minnesota children and youth (ages birth to 21) require services due to a serious emotional disturbance. The actual number is probably much higher because these needs often go undiagnosed as a result of fear or stigma, lack of knowledge or information, and inadequate supports.

"We know that treatment can make a significant difference for these children and youth," Nelson said, "but families need to know where to turn for help and information."

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Crosby, Stills & Nash!

Live May 2 at PACER's Annual Benefit

Crosby, Stills & Nash will headline PACER's 33rd Annual Benefit on Saturday, May 2, 2015 at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Proceeds support PACER's programs for children with disabilities and their families, and PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center.

More than four decades since Crosby, Stills & Nash first harmonized in Southern California and played their first-ever concert as a trio at the legendary Woodstock festival, its members continue a creative partnership that is one of the most influential and enduring in music. David Crosby, Stephen Stills, and Graham Nash have each been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame two times — once with Crosby, Stills & Nash, and a second time with The Byrds, Buffalo Springfield, and The Hollies, respectively. They have also been inducted into the Songwriter's Hall of Fame, with the honor recognizing both Crosby, Stills & Nash as a group, and each member as individual solo artists.

Crosby, Stills & Nash's music first became a cornerstone of rock 'n roll with the self-titled debut LP, one of Rolling Stone's "500 Greatest Albums of All Time." Ever since — through changing times, various configurations, and acclaimed solo careers — Crosby, Stills & Nash have continued to tour and record as "three together."

Benefit tickets start at \$70 and include PACER's amazing live and silent auctions. The post-concert Patron Party is included with tickets valued at \$150 or more. To order tickets, please see page 2, reserve online at PACER.org/benefit, or call (952) 838-9000.





Rudi Easterling (right) of United Parcel Service and a member of PACER's Advisory Board, visited PACER for a special delivery — a contribution on behalf of UPS to PACER Executive Director Paula Goldberg.



Seamus Hyland (right), a member of PACER's Board of Directors, recently presented a donation check on behalf of Verizon to board president Dan Levinson (left) and PACER Executive Director Paula Goldberg.

Reservations for PACER's May 2nd Benefit Featuring Crosby, Stills & Nash

To reserve your tickets for the 2015 PACER Benefit on May 2 featuring Crosby, Stills & Nash, please complete the form below and fax or mail it to PACER Center. Reservations can also be made at PACER.org or by calling (952) 838-9000.

Benefit Tickets (Please indicate number of each)

\$70 Friend
 \$100 Supporter
 \$150 Patron*
 \$225 Benefactor*
 \$300 Sponsor*
 \$600 Champion*
 Total amount: \$_____

My check (payable to PACER Center) is enclosed.
 Please charge my credit card.
 VISA MC AMEX DISCOVER Account # _____ Exp. date: _____
 Name on card _____ Billing address _____ City/State/Zip _____
 Phone (h) _____ (w) _____ (c) _____ E-mail _____
 Names of persons for whom you are purchasing tickets: _____

I need: Wheelchair seating (# of spaces _____)
 Sign language interpretation
 Assistive listening device
 Other _____

* Includes post-performance patron champagne and dessert party

Other Contributions/Volunteer Opportunities

Please contact me about:
 donating to the Silent Auction
 being a Corporate Sponsor (includes ticket package and ad)
 advertising in the Benefit Playbill
 volunteering on a Benefit committee

I am unable to attend the Benefit. Please accept my gift of: check charge
 \$600 \$300 \$225 \$150 \$100 \$50 Other \$_____

Many companies match gifts. Please ask your employer for a matching gift form and enclose it with your contribution or ticket order.

Please mail or fax to: PACER Center, 8161 Normandale Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044 Fax: (952) 838-0199

Young Professionals raise a glass for PACER's Simon Technology Center

The conversation was spirited and the laughter flowed freely at the second annual Raise a Glass — A Toast to PACER tasting event Nov. 21, 2014, at the Muse Event Center in Minneapolis. Guests sipped samples of locally made beer and wine and enjoyed live entertainment while being treated to hands-on demonstrations by staff of PACER's Simon Technology Center. Participants enjoyed the best of breweries such as Rush River, Tin Whiskers, Bad Weather, Flat Earth, Brau Brothers, and Burning Brothers, and the Chankaska Creek Ranch & Winery.

PACER's Young Professionals Advisory Board (YPAB) organized this Friends of PACER event which raises funds to provide the latest assistive technology to enhance learning, work, and independence for children and adults with disabilities.



Left to right: PACER staff members Madison Knapp, Jackie Saffert, and Jenna Hanson with Young Professionals Advisory Board members Alex Levin, co-chair Ben Schleuss, co-chair Zach Robins, Robert Short, John Samec, Steven Hentges, Rachel Kruzel, co-chair Win Bennett, and co-chair Ashley Speltz.



Left: Local duo The Cactus Blossoms played a set while guests sampled wine and beer.

Right: Guests Kathy and Mark Hoffman (left) and Marie and Sean McLean



Open House provides families with access to mental health resources and support

Continued from page 1

PACER held an open house in November so that parents could connect face-to-face with providers of resources, services, and supports for children and youth with mental health challenges and emotional or behavioral needs. The event included a presentation by PACER's Youth Advisory Board, which is comprised of students in grades 7 to 12 who have a mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder and are acting as ambassadors of change in their communities.

"It was gratifying to see so many teens at the open house with their families," Nelson said. "This was a great opportunity for teens to meet peers who are working their way through many of the same challenges, and for parents to connect with other parents."

For more information, visit PACER.org/CMH, e-mail pacer@pacer.org, or call (952) 838-9000.



Children's Mental Health & EBD E-news

The PACER "Children's Mental Health & EBD E-news" is a quarterly electronic newsletter that contains helpful information on resources for families, changes in systems of care, special events of interest to families, and related PACER initiatives. The quarterly publication is available at no charge. To subscribe, e-mail pacer@pacer.org.

PACER helps families find the right recipe for success

Jeannette Nevilles has always been comfortable in the kitchen where she demonstrates her culinary creativity on a daily basis as the owner of Gramsky's Sandwiches in Minneapolis. When it came to helping her children receive the special education services they needed, however, Nevilles asked for help. With the assistance she received from PACER Center, Nevilles found the recipe for success that included a pound of information, a gallon of knowledge, and a healthy helping of perseverance that has enabled her children to become successful young adults.

"When I first adopted my son DeLorean, I needed help because there were things going on with him that I did not understand," said Nevilles, whose son has developmental disabilities. "I didn't have any idea what to do and it was overwhelming, but when I talked with PACER it was a relief."

Bonnie Jean Smith, one of PACER's multicultural advocates, helped Nevilles create a plan to meet the specific needs of her family. Nevilles attended PACER workshops and learned how to advocate for her child, as well as access community services and supports. "Bonnie Jean taught me the things that I needed to do, but I was the one who had to do it," Nevilles said. "That gave me a lot of strength and growth."

Nevilles put her new skills to work when her son Kurtis, who has a learning disability, was not receiving the services outlined in his Individualized Education Program (IEP). "They thought I didn't know my rights, but I knew because of what I had learned from PACER," Nevilles said.



Jeannette Nevilles (left) has plenty of help in the kitchen from grandsons Kyran and Kiyon. (Photo courtesy of DJ Bob at partyunit.com)

Nevilles' efforts paid off. Kurtis earned a high school diploma and is now a nationally successful hip hop artist. His sister Kurstin, who also has a learning disability, graduated high school, went on to post-secondary education, and works in the medical field.

The skills, experience, and confidence Nevilles gained through PACER have carried over into other aspects of her life. She used a similar set of ingredients to start her catering business. Nevilles took classes, sought professional advice, enlisted the help of experienced mentors, and never gave up. The results speak for themselves when clients rave about her signature pork tenderloin sandwiches.

"Jeannette is amazing," Smith said. "I told her that it was our job to provide her the information, but it was her job to use it, and that's what she has done. She realized that she was not alone, that PACER is here for her."

PACESETTER

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PACER website: PACER.org

FAPE site: fape.org

MN SEAC site: mnseacinfo.org

BULLYING: PACER.org/Bullying

PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org

PACERTeensAgainstBullying.org

(Alternate format is available upon request.)

Grandparents find support and friendship in PACER's Grandparent to Grandparent Program

When Judy Ekstrom's granddaughter Hannah was born with spinal muscular atrophy type 2, the Minnesota grandmother was thrust into an unfamiliar and challenging new world. Judy was worried about her granddaughter's future, unsure about her role in the new family dynamic, and concerned about her daughter and son-in-law's well-being. "Grandparents of children with disabilities have two generations to worry about: our own children and the grandchild," Judy said. "It can be stressful and overwhelming."

Although her friends provided help and encouragement, Judy felt the need for a support group of people who could relate. She had difficulty locating resources for grandparents — until she found PACER's Grandparent to Grandparent Program.

PACER developed the Grandparent to Grandparent Program many years ago to help grandparents of children with disabilities address their own needs and be effective supporters for their entire family. "We recognize that a grandparent's life is impacted by the birth of a child with a disability," said Paula Goldberg, PACER Center's executive director. "Through the Grandparent to Grandparent Program, we provide a place for grandparents where everyone is going through a similar situation and there is no need for explanation."

The program meets at PACER Center on the third Tuesday of each month from September to April, and hosts speakers on a range of topics, including the Individualized Education Program (IEP), assistive



Members of PACER's Grandparent to Grandparent group meet regularly at PACER Center. They include (back row, left to right) Bill Gary, Virginia Peery, Virginia Richardson of PACER, David Norton, Fred Houts, Carol Rickabaugh, Judy Ekstrom, and Bill Telleen. (Front row, L to R): Jackie Gary, Pam Telleen, Amy Houts, and Sharon Stoebner.

technology, therapies, inclusion, and bullying. Judy says the program has helped her become a better caregiver to 10-year-old Hannah and more effective at supporting her daughter and son-in-law.

The group discusses how the child's disability impacts the family, and shares accomplishments, challenges, strategies, and interests. Between meetings, grandparents often support each other through phone calls and e-mail. "We share the ups and downs, and the little joys and painful moments," Judy said.

Virginia Peery, who lives in the Twin Cities, has two grandchildren with disabilities: 7-year-old Lila, who has Fragile X syndrome, and 4-year-old Liam, who has autism. She appreciates the learning opportunities available to the group, but it's the camaraderie and support that have helped her the most. "It's a really nice group, and everyone is fun and supportive," Virginia said.

"I always feel good after I leave a meeting."

Pam and Bill Telleen, who have a grandchild with Down syndrome, have been co-chairs of PACER's Grandparent to Grandparent program for several years and have been instrumental in the program's success. Many different disabilities are represented in the group, but there's a common thread in each person's experiences. "There are similarities in the dynamics no matter what the disability is," Virginia said. "The sharing is really helpful, and there's often joy in the discussion, even when it's about a challenging situation."

New members are welcome to join the Grandparent to Grandparent Program. To learn more, visit PACER.org/grandparent or contact Debbie Andrews at debbie.andrews@pacer.org or (952) 838-9000.

Minnesota Department of Education works to improve graduation rates for students with disabilities

Graduating from high school is an important milestone for students with disabilities. In an effort to help them be more successful, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is implementing Results Driven Accountability. This approach is aimed at helping states increase outcomes for students with disabilities while maintaining compliance and protecting their rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

"Every child, regardless of race, income, or disability, deserves a high quality education," said Paula Goldberg, PACER Center's executive director. "We support the Minnesota Department of Education for the work they are doing to help increase graduation rates for students with disabilities."

OSEP measures states on compliance and a number of indicators, including graduation rate, dropout rate, and others. In 2014, only 15 states, including Minnesota, met the accountability standards. States that do not meet standards for two years in a row may be required to accept technical assistance, and in some cases may have federal special education funding withheld.

To help states implement the vision for Results Driven Accountability, OSEP now requires states to develop a multi-year State Systemic Improvement Plan. During the three phases of this work, states must identify areas of improvement, create and implement an action plan, and evaluate the plan's effectiveness. States will report their results to OSEP annually. "Holding states accountable for reporting data and improving outcomes is important for special education," said Goldberg.

The Minnesota Department of Education's State Systemic Improvement Plan is designed to improve 6-year graduation rates for all students with disabilities across the state, especially for American Indian and Black students. It will integrate with other state plans focused on increasing graduation rates. It will also outline supports that all school districts can access, plus intensive supports for specific school districts, buildings, and programs.

Minnesota Department of Education Director of Special Education Barbara Troolin stresses the important role that educators, parents, and community members play in increasing the graduation rate for all students. "From early childhood to



Barbara Troolin, Minnesota Department of Education

high school, we have opportunities to positively impact students' lives and remove barriers to graduation," said Troolin. "We all need to work together to ensure that graduation is not an option but an expectation."

For more information on Minnesota's State Systemic Improvement Plan or to provide a comment, e-mail Barbara. Troolin@state.mn.us at the Minnesota Department of Education.

Don't miss the Creative Kids Contest Feb. 28

Children with disabilities, ages 4 to 17, are invited to join in the fun at PACER's 10th Annual Creative Kids Contest on Saturday, Feb. 28 from 10 a.m. to noon at PACER Center. It will be a morning of imagination and creativity, and the winning design will be featured on the 2015 PACER greeting card. To register or donate art supplies, e-mail debbie.andrews@pacer.org or call (952) 838-9000. Space is limited for this special event.



Is your son or daughter college and career ready?

Ensuring that students are ready for college and employment after high school is a top educational priority that is leading states across the country to adopt “College and Career Ready Standards.” States use different names to describe these standards but the goal is the same: to establish clearly what students in grades K-12 are expected to know and do in language arts and math. It is important to have high expectations for all students, including those with disabilities, so that students are ready for college and/or employment. The questions and answers below will help parents.

Q: How can I be sure my child learns the required information and skills?

A: Students receiving special education services have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Parents are part of the IEP team which writes the student’s yearly goals, including those for language arts and math, as well as short-term objectives. These goals should be based on your state’s grade-level standards.

The IEP team should consider how well your child is doing (called Present

Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance) and write goals and objectives that will help your child meet the standard.

Q: What if my child needs extra help to meet the standards?

A: The IEP should describe any help your child may need to achieve the established goals. The IEP team should discuss how your child’s disability impacts the way he or she learns and what services have been helpful before. These could include special instruction, accommodations, assistive technology, or other supports such as digital textbooks or an instructional aide. Some children with significant cognitive disabilities may need more substantial supports or modifications.

Q: Will my child be tested on the standards?

A: All students are required to participate in state assessments. Your child’s IEP should list any accommodations needed for the statewide test — accommodations that should also be used on other school tests. Throughout the year,

you can expect to receive progress reports about your child so that changes, if needed, can be made in the instruction or the IEP.

Q: What about my child’s needs not related to language arts and math standards?

A: IEPs should address all of your son or daughter’s individual needs as determined by the IEP team, not just language arts and math goals. The IEP may include items related to behavior, extracurricular activities, social skills, communication, and other areas of the general curriculum.

To learn more, read two helpful booklets developed by PACER: “College and Career Ready Standards and Students with Disabilities: What Parents Need to Know” (item ALL-72), and “College and Career Ready Standards and Individualized Education Programs: Information for Parents” (item ALL-73). Both are available for free download at pacer.org/publications/taAlliance.asp or may be purchased for \$1.50 per copy (10+ copies 50 cents each). Please call (952) 838-9000 or (800) 537-2237 to order.



Housing Resource Fair is April 11

It’s important for parents of children and young adults with disabilities to explore options for independent living and housing as early as possible. Families can learn more at PACER’s Housing Resource and Information Fair on Saturday, April 11 from 9 a.m. to noon at PACER Center.

Families can meet service providers and discuss housing options, services, and supports. State and county representatives, and resource and referral organizations, will be available to answer questions.

For more information, e-mail Susan.Shimota@pacer.org or call (952) 838-9000.

Schools, communities, and organizations around the world

From New York to New Zealand, thousands of schools, communities, organizations, and individuals came together during PACER's National Bullying Prevention Month in October to raise awareness for bullying prevention. It was the largest demonstration of support for students who have been bullied since PACER initiated the campaign in 2006.

"National Bullying Prevention Month has grown more than we could have ever expected," said Paula Goldberg, PACER's executive director. "In less than 10 years, PACER has helped to create a global bullying prevention movement with millions of supporters. We know it is making a positive difference for children and families."

Unity Day celebrated worldwide

On Unity Day, Oct. 22, PACER's National Bullying Prevention Month reached its pinnacle when students, educators, families, TV personalities, and others wore orange, held events, and shared stories, photos, videos, and more on social media. In Mexico, a middle school held the first international Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying event; students in New Zealand decorated bullying prevention cookies; and a school in Taiwan displayed Unity Day posters.

PACER's campaign was also supported by corporations including: CustomInk, Disney, Facebook, Frito-Lay, Galderma, Green Giant, and the TLC network. Disney employees in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Argentina honored Unity Day in a variety of ways, from wearing orange to dedicating acts of kindness to each other. Australian motivational speaker, author, and PACER partner Nick Vujicic, who was born without arms and legs, held a press conference in Mexico and posted videos for his millions of followers on Facebook. "We are thrilled by the outpouring of support for Unity Day," said Julie Hertzog, director of PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center. "It was amazing and inspiring to see everyone unite to spread an important message of hope."



PACER's Executive Director Paula Goldberg (center) with participants in PACER's fifth annual Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying in Bloomington, Minn.



U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota (left) was welcomed to PACER's 2014 Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying by Dan Levinson (right), President of PACER's Board of Directors. Klobuchar served for many years on the PACER Advisory Board.

More than 400 people participated in PACER's fifth annual Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying presented by American Dairy Queen in Bloomington, Minn. on Sept. 20. U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar spoke and students from local schools shared messages of inclusion and kindness.

l unite during PACER's National Bullying Prevention Month

- In Culver, Ind., local businesses hung Unity Day banners and painted their windows with bullying prevention messages. At schools, inspirational messages were posted on every locker.
- At Incarnate Word Academy in Corpus Christi, Texas, students celebrated Unity Day by wearing orange shirts, placing orange ribbons on locker handles, and participating in bullying prevention activities in the classroom.
- Nearly 500 students and school staff in Hilbert, Wis., showed their commitment by standing together in a gymnasium to spell a giant human U-N-I-T-Y, and doing a district-wide Unity Dance.
- "I'm Good," a powerful bullying prevention song by renowned producer Clinton Sparks and hit recording artists The Mowgli's and Kylie Morgan, was released in October. The song was inspired by creative contributions about bullying from teens as part of the "Band Together to Banish Bullying Campaign," a partnership between PACER and Galderma Laboratories, L.P., the makers of Epiduo® Gel. The song is now available for free download on the #BTProject YouTube channel for those who say something kind via Twitter.



Motivational speaker and PACER partner Nick Vujicic held a press conference in Mexico City in support of Unity Day.



Students at Lakeview Elementary School in Lakeville, Minn., wore orange on Unity Day to show their support for students who have been bullied.

PACER's National Bullying Prevention Month by the Numbers

226,000+

Views of PACER partner Nick Vujicic's Unity Day Facebook video

10,000

Students in Peoria, Ill., participated in Unity Day events

6,000+

Official Unity Day posters ordered by schools

50

States with schools that participated in Unity Day

1

The first international Run, Walk, Roll Against Bullying event held in Mexico

To see additional Unity Day photos, visit PACER.org/Bullying and click on the Facebook logo on the top right of the page.

PACER's VGo Robot opens the doors of inclusion at 2014 EX.I.T.E. Camp

Last summer during PACER's EX.I.T.E. Camp, 12-year-old Talitha Mueller made wonderful new friends, interacted with scientists and engineers, and participated in a variety of hands-on activities — all without leaving her hospital room.

Using a VGo Robot from PACER's Simon Technology Center (STC), Talitha attended camp "virtually" while being treated for leukemia at a Minneapolis children's hospital. It was a bright spot during one of the most difficult times in the young girl's life. "It was the sickest she's ever been," said Laurie Kabes, Talitha's mother, "but going to camp really perked her up."

Talitha was born with a rare disease called Ataxia-Telangiectasia (A-T), which causes progressive loss of muscle control, immune system problems, and a high rate of cancer. Kabes first brought Talitha to PACER when she was 14 months old to explore assistive technology to help her learn and communicate more effectively. Since then, the family has participated in PACER workshops, STC open houses, and technology consultations. "PACER has incredible resources," said Kabes. "They've been a lifesaver for me and my daughter."

It was Meghan Kunz of the STC who suggested that Talitha use the VGo Robot to attend EX.I.T.E. Camp, a PACER program for middle school girls with disabilities that focuses on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). The robot, which is part of PACER's Paul Adelman Collection of innovative communication devices, enables children with disabilities and special health care needs to see, hear, talk,



Talitha (pictured in the VGo video display) was able to attend PACER's EX.I.T.E. Camp last summer, where she made new friends and learned about science and technology with the help of the VGo Robot.

and move around another location without physically being there. As long as there is a wireless Internet connection, others can see and communicate with the user via the robot's video display.

In between therapies and treatments, Talitha operated the VGo with her iPad Mini, joining other campers as if she were actually at PACER. For Talitha, giggling and socializing with new friends was just what the doctor ordered. "Even though she was very sick, she was able to focus and follow along. It was just amazing," said Laurie. "This is an experience she will never forget."

Other campers squealed with excitement when they saw the robot

for the first time, but their interest quickly shifted to the girl "in" the robot. "They ran up to the robot and introduced themselves to Talitha," said Kunz. "Before long, the robot faded into the background and it was as if Talitha was in the room."

The VGo weighs about 20 pounds, is approximately four feet tall, and can easily be transported in the family car. "We were so impressed with it," said Kabes, who now wants her daughter to attend school using the robot. "This would open up a whole new world for her."

To learn more about PACER's Simon Technology Center, the VGo Robot, or EX.I.T.E. Camp, visit PACER.org/stc or call (952) 838-9000.

Fun meets function at PACER's technology open house

More than 300 people attended PACER's Simon Technology Center (STC) free Family Fun Day & Open House on Oct. 11, 2014 where they learned about assistive technology and participated in hands-on games and activities. "Families learned that assistive technology is not only a great tool to enhance the lives of children and adults with disabilities, but it can also be a lot of fun," said Bridget Gilormini, STC director.

Parents discovered the latest technology for education and recreation, including mobile apps, adaptive learning tools, augmentative communication devices, and more. Children especially enjoyed blowing giant bubbles, test driving a VGo Robot, and doing adaptive art.

To learn more about PACER's Simon Technology Center, visit PACER.org/stc or call (952) 838-9000.



And the survey says... Support PACER with SurveyMonkey

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

Apply now for PACER's 2015 EX.I.T.E. Camp

Middle school girls with disabilities won't want to miss the 13th Annual Exploring Interests in Technology and Engineering (EX.I.T.E.) Camp coming this summer to PACER Center, where students discover how much fun science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) can really be. Applications for the free five-day camp are due May 1, and enrollment is limited. For more information, visit PACER.org/stc or call PACER's Simon Technology Center at (952) 838-9000.

Workshops

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

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH, EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIORAL

Responding to Challenging Behaviors at School, at Home, and in the Community:

Children with challenging behaviors are often misunderstood. This workshop will help parents identify and respond to behaviors that may indicate mental health concerns; navigate school and community supports and services; and learn effective parent advocacy skills.

Workshops for Early Childhood and the Elementary School Years

- Feb. 10, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (St. Paul)
- April 11, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. (Duluth)

Workshops for Middle and High School Years

- Feb. 24, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (St. Paul)
- April 11, 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. (Duluth)

Youth with Challenging Behaviors and the IEP: How to Plan for Graduation and Beyond

Planning for graduation and beyond is an important step for youth. This interactive workshop will provide strategies to develop an effective transition IEP for youth ages 14 to 21 with challenging behaviors. Youth are invited to attend and bring their IEP.

- March 10, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (St. Paul)
- April 11, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. (Duluth)

Challenging Behaviors at School: Tips for Parents and the IEP Team on Developing Effective Positive Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP)

Challenging behaviors at school can be difficult to change. This workshop will explore the purpose of behavior and offer tips to address challenging behaviors in the IEP using a Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan.

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

EARLY CHILDHOOD

My Child's IEP: Creating an Individualized Program that Meets Your Child's Needs

This workshop for parents of children ages 3 to 5 will provide an overview of the early childhood special education process, including evaluation procedures, goals that address the child's individual needs, and family rights within the special education process.

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

If I Knew Then What I Know Now: Parents Share Helpful Tips

A panel of experienced parents of children with disabilities will share insights gained while raising and educating their children. Participants will be encouraged to ask questions and share their own insights and experiences.

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

Everything You Need to Learn Before Your Child Turns Three

This workshop will help families understand the transition process from Part C Early Intervention services to Part B preschool services. Topics include transition requirements, least restrictive environment (LRE), inclusion, and Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals and objectives.

- Feb. 21, 9 to 11 a.m. (PACER)

Making the Move from Early Childhood Special Education to Kindergarten

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

- March 7, 9 to 11 a.m. (PACER)

Families Are Important

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

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

Parent Talk

This workshop will provide parents of children ages birth to 5 with tips on how to talk with early childhood professionals about their children's strengths and needs. Participants will have the opportunity to talk and connect with other parents to share experiences and lessons learned along the way.

- March 28, 9 to 11 a.m. (PACER)

Early Childhood Family Leadership Summit

The Family Leadership Summit is a free event for parents of young children ages birth to 7 with developmental delays or disabilities. This dynamic, interactive one-day training will

help parents enhance their communication and leadership skills through sessions and networking opportunities. Please contact Judy Swett at jswett@pacer.org for additional information.

- April 25, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (PACER)

Early Childhood Development and Strategies to Support Early Learning Skills

This workshop is for parents of children from birth to age 5 with developmental delays or disabilities. Participants will learn about the typical stages of child development and strategies to support emerging learning skills so they can become more involved in their child's early education. Participants will also have the opportunity to network with other parents.

- May 4, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)

HOUSING

Three-part Housing Workshop Series: Part 1 – First Steps to Independent Living

Parents will receive an overview of the housing and services options that are available, and the person centered planning concepts to help your son or daughter develop their vision for independent living, housing, and services.

- Feb. 9, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER)

Three-part Housing Workshop Series: Part 2 – Housing Eligibility and Funding

Parents will gain a "big picture" view of how housing is funded through federal, state, and county resources, and learn how their son or daughter can become eligible for and access funding. Topics include income supplements and budgets.

- Feb. 23, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER)

Three-part Housing Workshop Series: Part 3 – Individualized Housing & Services Options

This interactive workshop will provide a more detailed explanation of individualized housing and services options so that parents and young adults can consider what might be a good fit for them. A panel of parents, young adults, and housing providers will share their journey through the housing process.

- March 2, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER)

PARENT TRAINING

The ABC's of the IEP: Making the Individualized Education Program work for your child

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

- Feb. 2, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (Woodbury)
- March 19, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (PACER)

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.

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

Understanding Depression and How to Develop Skills Needed to Help Your Child

In this interactive workshop, Dr. Read Sulik, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, will help participants learn about "The 3s" of Depression – changes in mood, sleep and energy, and thinking – and how to develop skills to help their child.

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

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

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

- March 21, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. (PACER)

Special Education: The Top 10 Topics to Help Your Child Succeed

Parents who participate in this interactive workshop will learn about 10 important areas of focus in special education, and acquire skills and knowledge they can use to help their children with disabilities be more successful.

- March 31, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)
- April 13, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Albert Lea)
- April 14, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Mankato)

Anxiety from the Inside Out

In this interactive workshop, Dr. Read Sulik, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, will explore the "Fight, Flight and Freeze" response, and how chronic stress, trauma, and anxiety can lead to health problems, and emotional and behavioral

issues. Using stories and examples, Dr. Sulik will help participants understand anxiety and why it is easily misinterpreted and misdiagnosed.

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

Planning for Educational Inclusion

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

- April 9, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Northfield)

Six Skills for Effective Advocacy

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

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

Special Education and the Important Role You Play for Your Child

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

- April 20, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (International Falls)
- May 12, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Alexandria)
- August 18, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)

Transition: Pathway to the Future

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

- April 21, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Faribault)
- April 27, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)

Life Planning for People with Disabilities

These two sessions cover different life planning topics, including guardianship-conservatorship laws, power of attorney, trusts, and other issues. Participants should plan to attend both sessions.

- April 28, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Guardianship), (PACER)
- May 7, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Trusts), (PACER)

Tips and Tools for Talking with School Staff

Participants will learn skills to communicate with school staff and effectively resolve differences. This workshop will provide parents

of special education students with practical tips and interactive problem-solving experience.

- May 11, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Marshall)

SIMON TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Little Kids, Big Voices: How to be an Effective Communication Partner for Children with Complex Communication Needs

Technology can help children ages birth to 5 develop big voices and vocabulary. Parents will receive tools and strategies to support language development, from finding the right technology to age-appropriate vocabulary.

- Feb. 10, 6:30 to 8 p.m. (PACER)
Also available by live streaming

eBooks and Bookshare for Parents

Individuals with physical disabilities and visual impairments often have difficulty reading print books, but eBooks can help with features such as text to speech, increased print size, and digital braille. Participants will learn about Bookshare and various eBook sources. This workshop is ideal for parents of students who comprehend grade level vocabulary and concepts.

- Feb. 19, 6:30 to 8 p.m. (PACER)
Also available by live streaming

Designed for Success: Early Childhood Literacy Resources

Participants will learn how to create an inclusive early childhood (birth to 5) learning environment with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) literacy materials, and modify print books for children with visual impairments, sensory needs, and mobility difficulties.

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

Personalized Learning with Assistive Technology (AT)

Participants will discover how to match technology devices with personalized AT tools on multiple platforms (Windows, Mac, iOS, Android, Chrome) to meet their specific learning needs, including reading, writing, research, and note taking.

- March 26, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)
Also available by live streaming

New Technologies, New Opportunities: The Changing World of Assistive Technology

Parents and professionals will learn about current technology trends – digital citizenship, wearable technology, 3D printing, mobile devices, and more – and their potential to help children with disabilities and learning differences.

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

New Technology for Individuals with Complex Communication Needs

There are countless new technology tools to support individuals with complex communication needs. Participants will learn how to find the right augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems.

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

The Device is on – Now What? Practical Implementation Strategies to Support Individuals with Complex Communication Needs on AAC Systems

The augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device may be turned on, but is the user maximizing its capabilities? Participants will learn how to improve the user's experience with practical strategies, including simple techniques to improve language outcomes for individuals with complex communication needs.

- **June 11, 6:30 to 8 p.m. (PACER)**
Also available by live streaming

TRANSITION

Social Security and Benefit Planning for Transition-age Youth: Ticket to Work

This workshop will provide information on how parents of youth with disabilities can apply for Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for young adults at age 18. Parents will learn how Social Security Work Incentives can help their youth meet his or her postsecondary education, training, and employment goals.

- **Jan. 27, 6:30 to 8 p.m., (Rochester)**
- **March 5, 6 to 8 p.m., (Faribault)**
- **March 31, 6:30 to 8 p.m., (Alexandria)**
- **April 28, 6:30 to 8 p.m., (Mankato)**

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

Planning for employment is an important step in preparing your young adult with a disability for life after high school. This new workshop

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

- **March 10, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., (Pine City)**
- **April 9, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., (St. Paul)**

The Next Step: Planning for Success in Employment and Postsecondary Education

Competitive employment and continuing education beyond high school are goals many youth with disabilities have. This free workshop for parents will provide information on the link between postsecondary education and employment success, and offer strategies to help youth prepare for work and education after high school.

- **April 15, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Cloquet)**

Resources

New! School Record Keeping Folders

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

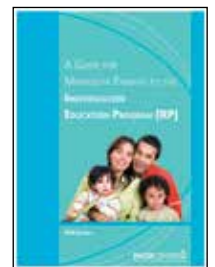
- **\$10 | 11+ copies, \$8 each | MPC-6**



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

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

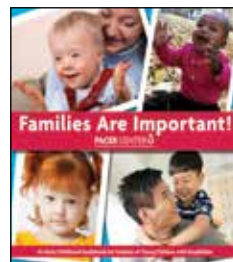
- **\$3 | 10+ copies, \$2 each | PHP-a12**



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

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

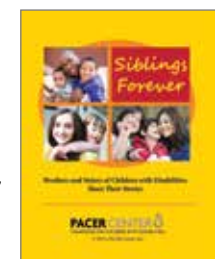
- **\$7 | 10+ copies, \$6 each | AP-44**



Siblings Forever: Brothers and Sisters of Children with Disabilities Share Their Stories

By sharing the feelings and experiences of 21 siblings from age 5 to 47, this booklet provides a way for families to explore the unique challenges and benefits siblings of children with disabilities may encounter. Tips for parents are also included, along with resource and book lists for all ages concerning the sibling relationship. 2013.

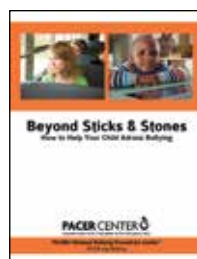
- **\$8 | 10+ copies, \$6 each | AP-44**



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

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

- **\$10 | 10+ copies, \$8 each | BP-7**



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

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

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



To order the listed materials...

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

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 e-mail PACER (see page 3). Payment must be in U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank.

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

Total cost of all items ordered _____

(Minneapolis residents, 7.75%; Hennepin County residents, 7.275%; Anoka, Ramsey, Dakota, Washington counties, 7.125%; most other Minnesota residents, 6.875%)
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E-mail: _____

If a parent:

Birth date of child with disability: _____ Disability: _____

PACER Benefit offers fun, friendship, philanthropy

Continued from page 16

Participating in the live auction was an enjoyable bonus. Over the years Hanson has supported PACER with winning bids for vacations, a snowmobile, and more. "I can't remember all of the things we have done over the years, but it has definitely been fun!" Hanson said. "We have bought some trips and some toys, but the important thing is we have been able to help PACER along the way."

Hanson has also been inspired to support PACER through pledging during the "Count Me In" giving opportunity at the Benefit, providing support for the launch of PACER's first bullying prevention website, sponsoring special events, and raising awareness and funds through his sand art business. "Wayne's generosity is amazing," said Michael Keller, who has played a volunteer leadership role with PACER for many years. "We became friends through the Benefit. He is particularly active during the live auction and usually ends up winning an item or two!"

The Hansons expect to be on hand again Saturday, May 2, 2015, when Crosby, Stills & Nash perform. "I tend to be a pretty low profile person," said Hanson, "but this is a very good cause and it's important that people know about PACER and support the work that it does."

PACER Endowment

There are many different ways to support PACER, including a gift to PACER's \$10 million Endowment Campaign. All contributions are permanently invested and only the annual income is used to support operations.

To learn more, please contact Executive Director Paula Goldberg at (952) 838-9000.

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Change Service Requested

Going once, going twice, sold to a champion for children!

Each year at the beginning of May, Wayne Hanson makes the drive to Minneapolis from northern Wisconsin for an evening of fun, friendship, and philanthropy at PACER Center’s Annual Benefit. He usually comes home with a memorable purchase or two from PACER’s amazing live and silent auctions, as well as the satisfaction of knowing he has made a positive impact on the lives of children.

“It’s an awesome event. It’s such a fun time to get dressed up, see a great show and meet so many interesting people,” Hanson said. “We don’t really attend anything else like it, so for my fiancée Patti and I, the PACER Benefit is really special.”

Hanson was invited to the Benefit for the first time in 2004 by his childhood friend Joel Mirviss and his wife Danna, a PACER volunteer for 13 years and now an employee in charge of the Silent Auction. He knew little about PACER but thought it would be an enjoyable night out seeing the performer Jewel and spending time with old friends. “I don’t have a personal connection to disability or bullying,” Hanson said, “but I was touched in particular by the kids who went on stage and spoke, and was so impressed by the work PACER does.”



Wayne Hanson and his fiancée, Patti

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