

PACER CENTER

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

Minn. ed rights for children with disabilities may be in jeopardy

In a proposal that is puzzling to many parents and advocacy organizations, the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) is encouraging state policymakers to accept the newly reauthorized (updated) Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) and *pending* federal regulations as the standard for educating students with disabilities. MASA's 2006 legislative platform suggests eliminating of all Minnesota special education laws and rules that exceed the minimal federal requirements in IDEA.

"Reducing our state's statutes and rules to the federal level would take away education services and rights for Minnesota's children with disabilities and their families," said Bob Brick, public policy director, at PACER Center. "This ignores our rich past and sets an unfortunate education precedent."

Minnesota has a history of educating students with disabilities long before 1975, when Congress passed the first version of IDEA. In the past when IDEA was reauthorized, Minnesota typically analyzed its own set of statutes and rules affecting students with disabilities and compared them to the new federal requirements. Lawmakers would usually keep the best of the Minnesota system (those that provided needed clarity or added value to the education system).

Examples of what is currently at stake are:

- IDEA does not require early intervention services for infants with disabilities to occur starting at birth while Minnesota does.
- IDEA no longer requires Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to include short-term objectives except for students with the most severe disabilities. Minnesota requires them for all students with disabilities. Educators and families often use them to determine whether a student is progressing.
- The IDEA does not require schools to begin transition services for youth until they turn age 16, while Minnesota requires transition planning to start at age 14. Sixteen is when students can legally drop out, so starting the transition process at 14 may help students stay in school.

PACER's 24th Benefit features Michael Bolton

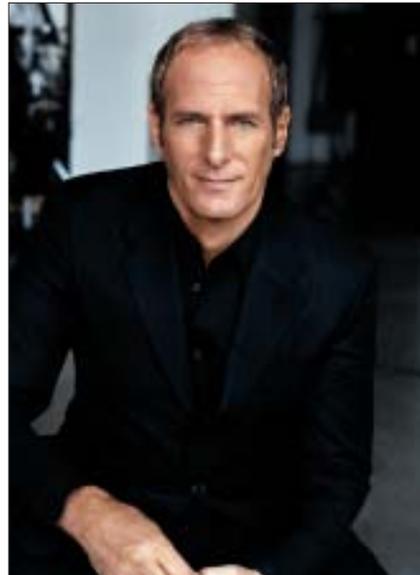
Hits such as "When a Man Loves a Woman" and many others bring accolades to international recording star Michael Bolton and symbolize the essence of pop music. His newest recording endeavor, a tribute to Frank Sinatra, is generating broad excitement—even before its expected spring release.

Bolton, with his company of backup vocalists, dancers and band, headlines PACER's 24th annual Benefit Saturday, May 6, at the Minneapolis Convention Center. (See ticket information on page 2.)

He has major stature in the world of music, and his bio lists why:

"If you made a list of performers who have sold more than 53 million records, won multiple Grammy trophies for Best Male Vocalist and countless other honors, earned a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame and sold out arenas worldwide, Michael Bolton would be on that list.

"But if you tallied all the artists who've sung with Luciano Pavarotti and Ray Charles, written *Steel Bars* with Bob Dylan, written hits for Kiss and Barbara Streisand, played guitar



Michael Bolton

with B.B. King, and been sampled by hip-hop superstar Kanye West, Michael Bolton would be the *only* name on that list."

Bolton's most recent album, "Til the End of Forever," with its new studio songs and diverse selection of live performances, demonstrates Bolton's mastery of an array of styles and the powerful chemistry he

creates with audiences.

Bolton is enthusiastic about the spectrum of musicians, such as the great soul singers, who have inspired him.

"Every night, I get to pay respect to the pioneers, the masters who've been such a great inspiration and influence on all of us," Bolton says of
(Continued on page 2)



It's here!

PACER's new Web site that helps children deal with and prevent bullying is up and running. See page 3.

www.pacerkidsagainstabullying.org

BENEFIT RESERVATIONS

To reserve your tickets for the 2006 PACER Benefit featuring Michael Bolton, please complete the form below and fax or mail it to PACER Center. Reservations can also be made at PACER's Web site (www.pacer.org) or by telephoning (952) 838-9000

Benefit Tickets:

Please send me:

- \$55¹ tickets
- \$85¹ tickets
- \$140² Patron tickets*
- \$200² Patron tickets*
- \$275³ Patron tickets*
- \$550³ Patron tickets*

Number of tickets: _____

Total amount: \$ _____

Dinner Tickets (\$85 per person)

Number of tickets: _____

Total amount: \$ _____

Other Contribution/ Volunteer Opportunities

Please contact me about:

- donating _____
to the Silent Auction
- being a Corporate Sponsor
(including ticket package and ad)
- advertising in the Benefit Playbill
- volunteering on a Benefit committee

Please note: Tax values are listed in the following categories: 1 = \$40 value; 2 = \$50 value; 3 = \$60 value. The amount of the ticket price in excess of the value is tax deductible.

* Patron party tickets

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (H) _____ (W) _____

E-mail: _____

If you wish to sit with friends, the reservations must arrive at the same time.

The accommodation I need is: Wheelchair seating Sign language interpretation
 Assistive listening device Other _____

My checks, separate for the Benefit and dinner, are made payable to PACER Center and are enclosed. (Tickets will be mailed in mid-April.)

Total charge \$ _____ to VISA Mastercard American Express
_____ Exp. _____

I am unable to attend the Benefit. Please accept my gift: check charge
 \$550 \$275 \$200 \$140 \$85 \$55 Other: _____

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

Names of persons for whom you are purchasing tickets: _____

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

PACER Benefit on May 6 features singer Michael Bolton

(Continued from page 1)

the soul classics in his repertoire. "That's a great part of what I do for a living, and it's an incredible honor."

In addition to his music, Bolton is known for his work on social issues, such as problems affecting children and women.

Preceding the performance, PACER's Benefit also includes silent and live auctions. A pre-Benefit gourmet dinner is available by separate

ticket, and a patron party for holders of Benefit tickets of \$140 and more follows Bolton's performance. Proceeds from the event support PACER Center programs for children with disabilities and their families.

Benefit committee co-chairs are Mary Frey, Colleen McGough-Wood, and Danna Mirviss. Honorary chairs are Bill and Tani Austin, Starkey Hearing Foundation.

PACER Center is a national training

and information center for families of children and youth with *all* disabilities and special health needs.

PACER provides varied resources such as publications, workshops, and individualized assistance. It helps families make decisions about education, vocational training, employment, and other services for their child with disabilities.

For information on the Benefit call (952) 838-9000 or visit www.pacer.org.

PACER launches bullying prevention site

PACER's new national bullying prevention Web site is officially online. At www.pacerkidsagainstabullying.org, children can learn how to challenge bullying.

Childhood bullying affects millions of children.

Now, second-through sixth-graders can go to PACER's innovative new Web site to learn what bullying is, how to respond to it, and how to prevent it.

Children will join 12 animated characters to explore bullying. They can play games, watch videos starring celebrities and real-life kids, view

Webisode cartoons, learn ways to deal with bullying, vote in polls, read diaries, look at artwork and stories from other children, enter contests, and more. Geared

for all children, the site includes children with disabilities, who can be particularly vulnerable to bullying.

The Web site project is funded in part by the Robins, Kaplan, Miller and Ciresi LLP Foundation for Education, Public Health and Social Justice, a supporting organization of The Minneapolis Foundation.



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PACER Web site: www.pacer.org

Alliance site: www.taalliance.org

FAPE site: www.fape.org

C³ site: www.c3online.org

Bullying: www.pacerkidsagainstabullying.org

(Alternate format is available upon request)

Teacher-School Appreciation Day is March 6

The annual Teacher-School Appreciation Day, begun by PACER Center to honor school staff who daily affect children with disabilities, is a decade old. The 10th Appreciation Day is March 6.

The event encourages families of children with disabilities to thank teachers, principals, and other personnel at their child's school.

Virginia Richardson, PACER Center's parent training manager, developed the idea knowing that many school people work hard to help children with disabilities and that parents want to express their appreciation.

"Everyone likes to feel appreciated," said Richardson. "This is a way for families to deliver a message of thanks

to the people who make a difference in the lives of children."

Parents are urged to write a brief note or make a telephone call of appreciation to people at school who work with their children. Also, PACER Center provides certificates of appreciation that can be ordered at no cost for families to complete and present to those they wish to recognize. The certificates are available by telephoning (952) 838-9000 or (800) 537-2237 (toll-free in Minnesota) or by downloading them from www.pacer.org/help/teacher.htm. If ordering paper copies, please provide sufficient time to process the requests.

Be alert!

Minnesota's children with disabilities are in danger of losing basic educational rights. From time to time, other challenges arise.

Parents and advocates are welcome to join PACER's alert team to receive regular updates on legislation and other issues. Joining is easy. Go to www.pacer.org, click on the legislative page, and scroll down to Minnesota.

Supreme Court case focuses on education rights

By Patricia Bill

The recent U.S. Supreme Court decision *Schaffer v. Weast* has not taken away the right of parents to advocate for their children with disabilities, despite widespread media coverage that may give that impression.

The closely watched case involved two Maryland parents who sued to receive additional special education services for their son. The Court established that when parents and school staff disagree on how best to teach children with special needs, parents are responsible for the burden of proof—proving the disputed charge or allegation.

Many parents and advocates for children with disabilities hoped for the

Court to rule in favor of the parents and assign the burden of proof to schools in all special education disputes. Nevertheless, the decision does not have the cataclysmic implications claimed by some, according to Matt Cohen, Chicago attorney, special education expert, and advocate for children with disabilities.

First, explained Cohen, many individual states have rules that expressly or implicitly assign the burden of proof in special education cases to the school districts. The *Schaffer v. Weast* decision expressly avoided a ruling that overturns individual states' burden of proof rules for special education cases. Unless the courts change them in the future, the

state rules will remain.

Second, Cohen explained, the burden of proof is a highly important, but technical, litigation rule. In most cases, the burden of proof is not the legal threshold that determines cases. In cases where evidence strongly favors either party—parents *or* schools—the burden of proof should not be an issue.

Third, Cohen said, the Court recognized that schools have a “natural advantage” in information and expertise. The decision emphasized the importance of schools providing parents with “all records that the school possesses in relation to their child.” It also stressed the importance of “an independent educational evaluation...(based on) all the materials that the school must make available.” The Court emphasized that for the process to be fair, the parents must have a “realistic opportunity to access the necessary evidence” and have access to experts “with the firepower to match the opposition.”

Some courts have dismissed the value of outside evaluations compared to the opinions of school evaluators. However, said Cohen, the *Schaffer* decision should make clear:

- 1) the importance of outside evaluators having access to sufficient information to make accurate findings, not only to records but also to observing the child and program
- 2) that such outside evaluations be given equal weight to the school's evaluations.

“Some schools, based on media reports and advice from lawyers, may conclude that the *Schaffer* decision is a license to do less. While assigning the burden to the schools in all cases would have been an even stronger outcome in support of parents rights, the *Schaffer* opinion should not be read as blanket permission for schools to do what they wish or to provide inadequate programs,” said Cohen.

Microsoft grant supports PACER's work



Corporate and government officials gathered for a presentation of Microsoft Corporation's \$285,000 gift of software to PACER Center last fall. From left are Dennis Velazquez, strategic account manager, Microsoft; Alice Seagren, Minnesota Commissioner of Education; Brian Scott, vice president, Retail and Hospitality, Microsoft; Sen. Steve Kelley (DFL-Hopkins); Paula F. Goldberg, executive director, PACER; and Mary Schrock, director of development, PACER. In front with plaque: Tess Kavanagh, relationship marketing manager, Microsoft. The software will be used in PACER's projects to help children with all disabilities and their families.



Minnesota Sen. Norm Coleman (center) talked with John Guthmann, PACER board president, and Paula Goldberg, PACER executive director, at the ALLIANCE conference's Reception on the Hill, sponsored by Best Buy. Fourteen U.S. senators, including Minnesota Sens. Mark Dayton and Coleman, attended the event.

PACER organizes national ALLIANCE conference

More than 350 parent advocates from 100 parent centers across the nation attended "Parents United for Children with Disabilities: Together We Can Do So Much," the ninth annual conference of the Technical Assistance ALLIANCE for Parent Centers. It was Jan. 25-27 in Washington, D.C. and featured more than 50 sessions.

PACER Center is the national center for the ALLIANCE and plans and administers the conference. ALLIANCE co-directors are Paula Goldberg, PACER executive director; Sue Folger and Sharman Barrett, both of PACER. Regional centers are in New Jersey, North Carolina, Florida, Ohio, Colorado, and California.

"From the comments we've heard, the conference was a great success. People are telling us it was the best one yet," said Folger.

PACER Center named Creative Kidstuff partner

Creative Kidstuff has chosen PACER Center as its Charity Partner for 2006. Recognized for whimsical

and imaginative toy stores, Creative Kidstuff has six Twin Cities locations and others located in airports across the nation.

During February, Creative Kidstuff will help PACER in reaching out to children by selling coupon books at all their store locations.

Each coupon book will contain discounts on a variety of Creative Kidstuff toys, gifts, and services. They are \$5 and can be used throughout 2006. Customers may purchase multiple coupon books. The February proceeds will be donated

directly to PACER Center. In turn, these funds will help PACER to continue providing services and resources to parents of children with disabilities at no charge.

"We at Creative Kidstuff are proud to focus our charitable giving on a partner who is as committed to helping children as we are," said Roberta Bonoff, president/CEO of Creative Kidstuff.

The Web sites, www.pacer.org and www.creativekidstuff.com, will carry current information.

PACER Center plans leadership conference

PACER's 6th annual Parent Leadership Conference, "Champions for Children with Disabilities," provides the tools and training parents need to influence decisions and policy at a systemwide level.

The conference is open to Minnesota parents of children with disabilities who serve, or are preparing to serve, on special education or interagency councils or committees. The event will be April 28-29 at PACER Center and is funded through a grant from the Minnesota Department of Education.

Space is limited. For more information and an application, please contact Barb Ziemke of PACER at (952) 838-9000 or (800) 537-2237 (Greater Minnesota), e-mail bziemke@pacer.org, or visit www.pacer.org/parent/leadership.htm.

Leave a Car, Help a Child

Leave a Car, Help a Child is a PACER program that allows donations of used cars for a tax deduction. Profits from the contribution will support PACER Center programs for children and young adults with disabilities.

PACER accepts a variety of vehicles, from cars to personal watercrafts. Cars should be 1990 or newer and in running condition. Exceptions can be made, depending upon the car's condition. Donors can drive their car to PACER or, if necessary, arrange for the vehicle to be picked up from their home. The donated car, truck, or boat will then be sold with proceeds benefiting PACER's 30 programs. PACER will provide all donors with a letter of acknowledgment to certify the value of the donation following the sale.

For information on donating a vehicle to PACER, call the PACER Development Office at (952) 838-9000 or visit www.pacer.org.



Keeping your child safe

Ideas to help prevent maltreatment

By Patricia Bill

The pain can be immense if a parent learns that a son or daughter with disabilities has been mistreated. It hurts especially when the parent entrusted the child to the perpetrator's care.

Mistreatment or abuse can happen almost anywhere—with a hired caregiver at home, in residential facilities, or at school, explained Julie Hertzog, mother of a child with Down syndrome and coordinator of PACER's bullying prevention program.

Some individuals are especially vulnerable to abuse, said Hertzog. Children or youth with particular disabilities may not know that the abuse is wrong. Others cannot articulate what is happening to them. Many are easily manipulated—they may be afraid to say anything because the abuser warned: "something bad will happen if you tell." Parents and others must be very careful to learn the facts, Hertzog said.

While no one can guarantee safety, parents can take steps that may help to protect their child with disabilities.

Preventing abuse:

Talk about it with your child

Tell your child what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior, said Hertzog. A discussion can be as simple as "It is *not* okay for someone to hurt you [hit, say bad things to, etc.]. Please tell me if anyone does." Some children quickly understand; others may need concrete descriptions or the help of props such as pictures, puppets, or dolls.

Abuse involving exploitation or sexual abuse will need more sensitivity and detail.

"It is important for a child to know the proper names of body parts," said Deb Jones, parent of an adult son with disabilities and former coordinator of PACER's Let's Prevent Abuse

project. "The child will also be deemed more credible if an investigation or a court action is needed."

Hertzog advises parents to begin the discussions about mistreatment when the child is young—two or three years old—and repeat them regularly as the child becomes older.

Do your homework

The first step in placing your child in another's care is to find out about the caregiver. Families seeking a personal care attendant (PCA) or residential program will probably have the assistance of a social worker—but they may wish to do some fact-finding on their own.

School. If your child attends a local school, visit the school and meet with staff. Become acquainted with other

parents, and compare notes from time to time.

PCA. PCAs are not licensed in Minnesota, but they must register with the state. Thoroughly interviewing a prospective PCA and checking references are important. The Minnesota Department of Human Services provides a free *Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Program – Consumer Guidebook*. You can download it from <http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfs/edocs/dhs.state.mn.us/lfs/edocs/DHS-3858-ENG> or obtain it by calling the department at (651) 296-9116.

Residential program. If your child or youth is moving from the family home, research the provider, advised Roberta Opheim, ombudsman for mental health and mental retardation for the State of Minnesota. Remember that licensing is based on *minimum* standards, and most families want more than that for their child, she said.

Opheim suggested checking for citations against proposed providers—it is public information. You can call the licensing office of the Minnesota Department of Human Services at (651) 296-3971 or the Minnesota Department of Health at (651) 215-8701 (depending on the type of program) with the name of the program. If your child is in a correctional facility or placement, call the Minnesota Department of Corrections at (651) 642-0200.

State regulations for some types of providers call for abuse prevention policies, said Jones. If it applies to your child's program, you should receive a copy. If one is not offered to you, ask for it, she added.

Id safe: treatment

Tell caregivers about your child

Disability-related behavior of some individuals can trigger negative responses in caregivers who are tired or uninformed, pointed out Hertzog. Make sure the caregiver knows about your child, she advised.

Opheim suggested that parents do a “tip” sheet to explain their child’s behavior to caregivers or staff. For example: “When my child does [behavior], it is because [he feels frightened, confused]. At home, we handle it by [leading her to a quiet place, giving him a favorite toy, etc.]”

If staff are not receptive to using the information, Jones advised that parents call the advocates at PACER or someone who can put the information in the child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) or other program. Accommodations can make a difference, added Jones. Where her son sits in the van or how he is supervised at work affects his behavior, she said.

Build relationships

“I make it my business to know who’s caring for my son,” said Jones.

Frequent, positive interaction with the staff and caregivers leads to open communication and the opportunity to learn about what happens during your child’s day. Collaborate with staff and caregivers; encourage them to think of you as a partner, advised Jones.

Dropping in at your son’s or daughter’s school, job, or home is one way to check on things, but such visits can disrupt structured schedules. That is why it is important to develop a good relationship with staff or caregivers, explained Jones. Learn when it is appropriate to stop by. Develop rapport that helps staff feel comfortable when

you are in their presence.

On the other hand, warned Jones, consider it a red flag when a staff member is adamant that you never visit unannounced.

Signs of mistreatment

Behavior

“The No. 1 issue in recognizing abuse is when your child’s behavior changes from what family members are used to seeing,” said Opheim. Hertzog, Jones, and others agreed.

The changes may be subtle, such as increased fearfulness, anxiety, or agitation, Opheim said. The child or

young adult may not know why they are behaving that way when asked, she continued.

“It often takes a while to sort through,” Opheim added.

Parents may zero in on the situation by considering:

- How significant is the change of behavior?
- How long it has been going on?
- Does it center on a particular activity, such as going to school or returning to the group home after a weekend visit?

(Continued on page 8)

‘I never dreamed it could happen in my own house’—A mother

By Patricia Bill

When her 16-year-old daughter lost 60 pounds in four months, Jeanne (not her real name) was frantic—and the doctors were perplexed.

Jeanne’s daughter, a normally cheerful young woman who has complex developmental disabilities, would not eat, tried to isolate herself, and began talking to people who weren’t there. When a physician suggested their daughter might have a mental illness, Jeanne and her husband struggled to cope.

Then, during a consultation at the hospital, Jeanne noticed that her daughter’s personal care attendant (PCA) was interrupting and correcting Jeanne and her husband—taking control of the conversation.

“I suddenly realized, ‘It’s her!’ and pieces of the puzzle began to fit,” said Jeanne.

For a couple days, Jeanne and her husband discussed the possibility that the trusted personal care attendant was mistreating their daughter. They considered the damage to the personal care attendant, their family, and others, should they be mistaken. The more they talked, however, the more they became convinced that the personal care attendant was causing their daughter’s distress by mistreating her.

When Jeanne finally confronted the personal care attendant, the woman immediately resigned, leaving behind a trail of lies and chaos. Within two weeks, however, Jeanne’s daughter began to improve. Three years later, her daughter still has some behaviors related to the situation, but the family hopes for continued improvement, said Jeanne.

“[The personal care attendant] was the most reliable person we ever had working for us,” said Jeanne. She had been a paraprofessional at their daughter’s school and appeared devoted to the girl. Whenever the family needed help—even at a moment’s notice—she was there, willing to assist.

In hindsight, Jeanne realized she ignored signals that made her feel uneasy about the personal care attendant. For example, there were inconsistencies in the personal care attendant’s conversations, she took charge of things aggressively, and a second attendant working with Jeanne’s daughter resigned without much explanation. At the time, Jeanne attributed her negative feelings about the personal care attendant to the challenge of letting go of a child, and she chided herself for being overly protective, she said. Today, she would respond differently.

She tells other parents: “If there is just one ounce of gut feeling—you’d better listen to it! [The situation] nearly destroyed our family. We are involved parents...I never dreamed it [mistreatment] could happen in my own house.”

PACER involvement helps a young

By Marcia Kelly

Sometimes, a ring is more than a piece of jewelry. Sometimes, you come across one that is the keeper of a story, the symbol of a journey brought full circle, and the promise of a bright future.

Such is the case with the ring that rests on the hand of its designer, Lisa Goldner. At 19, the young woman has demonstrated more than artistic talent. She has shown how courage, support, and perseverance can lead the way

through difficult times. Her story, and that of the ring, are intertwined.

The Story Begins

“When Lisa was in kindergarten, her teacher nicknamed her ‘Miss Giggles,’” says Kathy Goldner, Lisa’s mom. “Lisa had that special gift of caring about others around her.”

By sixth grade, she was still a bubbly child, but school was becoming difficult for her. “I had a lot of trouble with reading comprehension, keeping

up with assignments, and paying attention in school,” Lisa says.

Though it was not yet diagnosed, Lisa had attention deficit disorder (ADD).

Lisa remembered that her parents tried to find help for her in school.

“They kept...having meetings with the school, but everyone kept telling me I didn’t meet the requirements for special education.” She eventually received some accommodations for her ADD and asthma under the Americans with Disabilities Act

Keeping your child safe

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“Look for clues. I can pick up on subtleties in my son’s behavior. Most parents can,” Jones said. “Are you seeing secretive behavior? Is a staff member treating your child as ‘special’ by buying gifts or inviting your child to activities outside the realm of work? Your child may offer inklings such as, ‘So-and-so is extra nice to me.’ ‘I think she likes me better.’”

Physical evidence

Bruises or other visible injuries may be signs of physical abuse. Be particularly aware of explanations that do not match the injury, advised Deena Anders of the Domestic Abuse Project in Minneapolis.

Infection or irritation that could indicate sexual abuse necessitate a medical examination.

What if you suspect maltreatment?

Listen to intuition

If you have suspicions, “Trust your instincts,” say parents and professionals over and over. “Parents know their child better than anyone else.”

“Ask your child,” said Hertzog. “Most children are honest. Too often we believe adults before we believe children.”

Most parents can tell if their child is telling the truth, but bear in mind that individuals with certain disabilities may make up allegations, said Jones. For that reason, seek evidence to support your child’s claim.

If you suspect a problem, seek help from a professional, such as a psychologist or medical professional skilled in interpreting behaviors.

Report

If you believe your child is being abused, contact the agency that licensed the caregiver, said Jones. After notifying the appropriate investigative unit, call social services if maltreatment is among family members. Call the local police or sheriff’s department if you suspect that maltreatment is occurring with someone outside the family.

“Be assertive in reporting it,” said Opheim. You can also contact her office at (651) 296-3848 in the Metro area, call toll free 1-(800) 657-3506 from Greater Minnesota, or visit www.ombudmhm.state.mn.us/

If you suspect your child is abused at school, the Minnesota Department of Education has a student maltreatment program and a 24-hour reporting line at (651) 582-8546. Information is at www.education.state.mn.us. Scroll the tan-colored bars (at the left side of the page) and click on “Student Maltreatment” under the “Accountability Programs” heading.

No matter what the agency, keep following up until you have adequate response, advised Jones and Opheim.

In a crisis, call for help

If you believe your child is in immediate danger and the proper authorities are unavailable, call the local police, said Jones and Opheim.

Caution: In crisis, the immediate reaction of most parents is to remove their child from the setting. If your child is there because of a court order, however, moving him or her without proper procedures has legal consequences, warned Opheim.

Jones, agreed, but added a mother’s perspective: “The bottom line is, I’m going to keep my child safe.”

woman's strengths come full circle

Section 504 plan, but it was not enough to meet her needs.

"After I went through three years of middle school and one year of high school without the help I needed, it was becoming too hard, and I couldn't handle it anymore. I'd sit in the bathroom and cry," Lisa says. "I was a straight F student. I felt hopeless and just extremely lost."

In 10th grade, the situation hit rock bottom. Lisa was failing in school and sinking deeper into depression. School administrators were concerned but felt the 504

plan was sufficient. Her parents discovered that their daughter was cutting herself and covering it up under a veil of baggy clothes. The happy child she had been was gone. "That person had disappeared," Kathy says.

Kathy called PACER Center. She had consulted with an advocate months earlier, seeking information about her rights to request special education testing for Lisa. After working with Kathy over the phone for a few months, the advocate attended a meeting at school with the family. "Just her presence put the tone of the meeting into an action mode," Kathy says, noting that the school then agreed to provide special education services for Lisa. "Without PACER's involvement, I don't think we would have had that turning point," Kathy adds.

Another turning point came a short while later, when Lisa was hospitalized for depression. "We found out she had been a victim of violence on a cruise we had taken when she was 13. She kept it from us for several years," said Kathy.



Not an ordinary class ring, Lisa Goldner's is a symbol of success and personal triumph.



started there, I earned straight As, every class, every year. I graduated on May 25, 2005," she says with well-earned pride.

The Promising Future

The only problem was the lack of a school ring. Her school, being quite small, didn't have one—and Lisa wanted a reminder of this special place. The solution, Lisa decided, was to design her own class ring. She selected a mold, ordered a gemstone from Thailand, and flanked it with six small stones.

With the special

ring, "she'll carry the support of the school with her for the rest of her life," Kathy says.

The ring is a symbol of coming full circle, from happy girl to happy young woman.

"Lisa is such a success story," Kathy says. "She's a role model. She was nurturing other students at school. That person I was describing in kindergarten came back."

For anyone who might be facing similar challenges, Kathy offers encouragement and support. "Listen to yourself and your heart. If you think there's an issue or problem, exhaust all avenues. Use the resources that are out there, like PACER Center. Ask for help. It's tough to ask, but in the long run it strengthens you."

The future looks bright. Currently working in a pet supply store, Lisa hopes to go to college and study youth counseling. It's a new beginning that already has happiness, friends, success, and optimism—and that has a nice ring to it.

A Journey Comes Full Circle

It was a bleak time. For Lisa, it seemed even bleaker when her case manager at the hospital didn't want her to return to her school. "They were trying to send me to a different high school," she says.

"I went kicking and screaming," Lisa says. She pauses, then adds with a smile, "and I loved it there every day." The transformation was dramatic.

"I had a real connection with the teachers. The students were fun. The staff did so much for every student. It was incredible," Lisa says. With a very low student-teacher ratio, she finally began to receive the attention and services she needed to succeed. The social workers, chemical dependency counselors, case managers, and teachers, all trained in special education, worked as a team to help students with a range of issues. "Everyone had time for you," Lisa says.

"They helped me focus on school work," she adds. "From the time I

Preparing for possible disaster may help in

By Marcia Kelly

Katrina. Rita. September 11.

The words are small, but the images they conjure are larger than life. The scenes of loss, confusion, and disruption that they evoke are sobering reminders that emergencies can arise at any time, anywhere.

Would you know what to do if the unthinkable happened to your home or family? Do you have an emergency plan? Emergency experts recommend that everyone develop one. (See sidebar to learn how.)

If you have a child with a disability, your plan may need to address special needs, situations, and supports. For example, can your child communicate? Do you have a supply of medications? What if you can't reach it? Who will help if you and your child are apart when the disaster occurs?

Answering these and other questions now can help reduce panic and increase safety should disaster strike. Here is some expert advice* specifically for people with disabilities.

Create a support network

If your child with a disability may need assistance in a disaster, ask relatives, friends, neighbors, and teachers to be available. Include people who live in your area and those who live out of town. You might:

- Tell the people in your network where you keep your emergency supplies.
- Give a friend, neighbor, or relative a key to your home.

PACER staff conduct post-hurricane training

PACER's Project C³ (Connecting Youth to Communities and Careers) training on the "Solving the Employment Puzzle" curriculum was recognized as a step toward normalizing parent advocates' work in Louisiana following Hurricane Katrina. The curriculum addresses employment for youth with disabilities. That topic, itself, symbolizes hope, pointed out Sean Roy and Sue Fager of Project C³.

The two conducted the training in mid-October in Baton Rouge. A collaboration of parent organizations from throughout the state and the Louisiana Department of Education sponsored it. Project PROMPT (Louisiana's Parent Training and Information Center) was instrumental in the planning.

Although the hurricane hit the state's Gulf Coast region, it affected all 20-plus training participants from across the state. If they did not experience property damage themselves, they knew someone who had, said Roy and Fager.

Many people attending the two-day training were housing friends and relatives.

"It was a first opportunity for staff of the parent groups serving families of children and youth with disabilities from Louisiana to be together after the storm," said Roy. "The Department of Education began each day of the training by acknowledging 'Here's what happened.' Then, they moved to, 'How do we help one another?'"

The hurricane's impact seemed to be an undercurrent of everything in Louisiana, said Fager. The disaster relief agency offices were across the street from the hotel where they stayed; the convention center, which had housed refugees, was next to the hotel; traffic was often snarled; and some schools remained closed.

Nevertheless, the parent advocates put aside distractions and focused on employment of youth with disabilities, said Roy. They went through the training as they normally would—with plans to use it, he said.

Hurricanes aside, the training was noteworthy for another reason, said Roy. Advocates and the Louisiana state government view it as an effort to develop—across organizations and agencies—a consistent message concerning the transition of youth with disabilities from school to jobs. PACER Center developed the "Solving the Employment Puzzle" curriculum through funding from the Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).



From left, Sue Fager of Project C³, Diane Frugé of the Louisiana Department of Education, Cindy Arseneaux of Project PROMPT, and Sean Roy of Project C³ provided a training to parent advocates shortly after Hurricane Katrina.

keeping your child with disabilities safe

- Show others how to operate your child's wheelchair or other equipment.
- Provide detailed information about your child's medical regimen. Include the names and dosages of all medications your child takes, how they are administered, and exactly where you keep them. Also note any allergies your child may have.
- List emergency contact numbers for friends and family in your area and out of town. Include the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of your child's doctors and pharmacist.

Prepare supplies

In addition to the standard emergency supplies all families should have on hand, you may need to consider special supplies for your child with a disability, such as:

- Prescription medicines
- Extra eyeglasses and hearing-aid batteries
- Extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen
- Backup equipment in a separate location
- Medical insurance cards
- List of doctors or others who should be notified if your child is hurt

Know community resources

Depending on the emergency, your child may need to rely on public safety and medical resources in the community.

- Contact your city or county government's emergency information management office. Many local offices keep lists of people with disabilities so they can be located quickly in an emergency.
- If your child is dependent on dialysis or other life-sustaining treatment, know the location and availability of more than one medical facility.

Plan for your child's specific disability

Your plans should be tailored to your child's needs. For example:

If your child has a speech, language, or hearing disability, you may want to:

- Provide a writing pad and pencils your child could use to communicate
- Provide a flashlight that could be used to signal others
- Ask people in your support network to convey emergency information to your child if you can't be there

If your child has cognitive disabilities, you may want to:

- Teach your child what to do during and after specific types of disasters, such as a fire or tornado. Practice

evacuating from where your child spends time (home, school, day care, etc.).

- Consider using a medical alert bracelet or having your child carry a written copy of information a rescuer might need to know. For example: "I communicate using an augmentative communication device. I can point to simple pictures or key words, which you will find in my backpack."

Disasters can strike at any time. Being prepared can help you make the best of the worst situations and keep your child safe.

**This information was compiled and adapted from a variety of sources.*

Resources address emergency preparedness

The following resources can help you develop an emergency plan for your child with a disability.

From the American Red Cross

- www.redcross.org/services/disaster/0,1082,0_603_,00.html links you to *Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs*, a comprehensive guide that can help you ask the right questions so you'll be prepared for an emergency. It encourages you to think about such things as what help your child might need with personal care, adaptive equipment, transportation, evacuation, communication, and much more.
- www.prepare.org/index.htm provides disaster preparedness information for the general public, people with disabilities, pet owners, and more. Offered in several languages, it also provides tip sheets on specific disabilities, including cognitive, communication, emotional, hearing, medical, mobility, and visual.

From the Department of Homeland Security

- www.ready.gov includes a section on special needs items you may need in an emergency.
- www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interapp/editorial/editorial_0666.xml provides disability-specific information.

From the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

- www.fema.gov/areyouready is a comprehensive resource on individual, family, and community preparedness. In English or Spanish.
- www.fema.gov/library/disprep.shtm offers tips on disaster preparedness for people with disabilities.

Being a good parent: It's the most im

By Paula Watts

Each year, millions of people begin the most important job in the world without training, experience, or an instruction manual. The job? It's parenting.

PACER Center's Parent to Parent Support Project, funded by The McKnight Foundation, is designed to help parents of children with special needs enhance their parenting skills. Consider the following tips to help you be the best parent you can be for your child with or without disabilities:

1) Teach and model important life skills.

Show your children how to make good decisions and take care of themselves and others. Teach your child how to be a self advocate, withstand peer pressure, and cope with adversity, change, and loss.

2) Provide structure.

Set clear rules and limits for your children, follow through with consequences, and be consistent. Talk about family values and expectations of family members. Prioritize family time. Teach your child how to tolerate and adapt to different rules and expectations.

3) Have effective family communication.

Have weekly family meetings. Make time to talk with and listen to your child each day. Teach your child how to identify and articulate feelings and needs. Model and teach good problem-solving skills. Encourage honesty.

4) Help your child to develop strengths and interests.

Notice your child's strengths and interests, and talk to your child about them. Encourage your child to explore his or her interests. Help your child to use his or her strengths and interests to promote success in areas of life that are challenging.

5) Be involved in all areas of your child's life.

Know your child's friends and their families. Be involved in your child's education and school. Be involved in your child's community. Facilitate friendships and experiences for your child that can enrich your child's life.

6) Have family traditions.

Develop activities, sayings, celebrations, and rituals that are symbolic for your family. Maintain a record of your family traditions; use photo albums, keepsakes, videos, family journals, or storytelling with family members.

Dispute Resolution: Solving problems positively helps

By Carolyn Anderson

Parents and school staff are partners in sharing a goal of educating children with a disability effectively. Parent-school communication is an integral part of partnerships. Watch for a book on the subject soon to be published by PACER. It is entitled Working Together.

Tips to help resolve disputes:

When parents and schools disagree, they can make their points without weakening the partnerships. If you are a parent, you can

- Disagree without being disagreeable. Express that you don't want the disagreement to interfere with your continued partnership.
- Apologize whenever appropriate.
- Make a positive move to start a process of restoring the relationship.
- Accept responsibility for your own part of the problem or issue and solution.

- Realize that neither parents nor professionals have all the answers.
- Pick the battles. Not everything is worth the effort of disagreement and resolution.
- Consider the risks of facing an issue or avoiding it.
- Assume good faith on the part of those with whom you disagree. Try to understand their perspective.
- Make sure your statements are accurate.
- Base discussion on facts and data rather than opinions or emotions.
- Try to resolve the disagreement as quickly as possible. Don't wait to see if it will go away by itself.
- Separate the problem from the person.
- Begin where the problem started. Do not go up the chain of command unless necessary. Discuss the problem with the person(s) directly involved.

- Be sure the solutions reached are written into the Individualized Education Program (IEP) document. Ask who will do it and when. Be sure to obtain a copy of the document.
- Use compromise or a trial period as a key to resolution, such as "Let's try this until *(date)* and see how it goes."
- Monitor what you say in front of your child. This means that parents and school staff should discuss troublesome issues among themselves as adults. If an older child participates in the IEP team meeting, be an example of how to communicate effectively.

A plan to help parents and schools solve a problem:

- Describe the problem clearly.
- Encourage input from all members of the IEP team.
- Brainstorm (without evaluating the ideas).
- Choose a solution by consensus (all agree).

important goal for most moms and dads

7) Be an informed parent.

Be aware of typical developmental milestones, health concerns, and common behavioral issues. Be familiar with your child's disability and its impact on your child as an individual. Seek out professionals who are knowledgeable about your child's disability and work well with your family. Connect to other parents, parent-friendly agencies, and resources within your community that can help support your efforts.

8) Take care of yourself.

It is easier to help your child when you feel good. Try to maintain your health by eating right, exercising, and having enough sleep. Maintain connections and activities that replenish your energy and spirit. Have a comprehensive support system that is easily accessible to you when you need it. Recognize when you need breaks and develop a plan to ensure you get them.

9) Help your child to understand the difference between needs and wants.

This is a difficult concept to grasp in our society of immediate gratification. Teach your child how to control impulses and how to cope with societal pressures. Limit your use of material

items for rewards. Help your child internalize the good feeling of doing the right thing versus doing it because they will receive a reward.

10) Have fun with your children.

Try to take some time each day to enjoy your child. There is nothing more entertaining than watching children experience life. Think of their smile, the way they look at you, and their ever-evolving interpretations of the world around them. Your child gives essential meaning to every aspect of your life. Sometimes, given the pressures of daily life, we forget just how precious our child is.

For more information on the Parent to Parent Support Project, visit www.pacer.org/p2p or call PACER Center at (952) 838-9000.

PACER provides varied many free resources such as publications, workshops, and individualized assistance to Minnesota families of children with disabilities. It helps families make decisions about education, vocational training, employment, and other services for their children with disabilities.

benefit the child

- Develop a plan. Define who is responsible for an action and when will it be done.
- Put that plan in writing.
- Create a timeline and criteria to evaluate success.
- Follow up.

If you have tried without success to resolve your concerns through IEP team meetings, there are also formal methods of resolving differences for parents and schools to use. They include (but are not necessarily used in this order): mediation, conciliation, facilitated IEP, filing complaints, and due process hearings.

Information on all of these methods is available from PACER Center at (952) 838-9000, (800) 537-2237 (toll free in Minnesota), or www.pacer.org.

Resolution will not only solve a problem, but it may actually improve the relationship.

EXITE Camp applications are available



Applications for the fourth annual free EXITE (EXploring Interests in Technology and Engineering) camp are available from PACER Center. IBM and PACER sponsor the summer camp for motivated middle-school-aged girls with disabilities. The camp serves 30 girls who will be in the sixth-ninth grades during the 2006-07 school year and who are interested in science and technology.

Camp activities include interactive and hands-on

work with computers, meeting professionals with disabilities employed in technology, working with a mentor, and touring the IBM Rochester facility.

"This is such a neat collaboration and a wonderful opportunity for young women to find a technology interest. You wouldn't believe the fun these girls have meeting new friends and obtaining hands-on technology experience!" said Kristi Hansen, coordinator of the Simon Technology Center.

The 2006 EXITE Camp will be on July 24, 26, and 28, Aug. 1 and 3. Applications will be accepted until May 1, 2006. For more information about the camp, call (952) 838-9000 or visit www.pacer.org.

Investigating postsecondary options

By Deborah Leuchovius

Preparing for future employment takes important planning by young adults with disabilities—and their family. A four-year college is not for everyone—nor is it the *only* path to a good-paying, highly skilled job. Community college courses, technical training, certificate programs, or trade schools may be the best means of acquiring competitive job skills for some students, including those with intellectual, severe, or multiple disabilities.

Identifying student interests and exploring various postschool options is part of the transition from high school to the broader world. For example, some of a student's special education services could include attending technical college, taking a university class while still in high school, or attending a transition program for 18-to-21-year-olds that is located on a college campus. Some colleges and universities have summer programs designed to give students an early taste of the postsecondary experience. Then, if students learn from these experi-

ences that one of their transition goals is inappropriate, their Individualized Education Program (IEP) team can revise the IEP and services accordingly.

Whether they are interested in a four-year college, a community college, or a trade school, students should visit programs in which they are interested.

Don't just tour the campus, advise transition experts. Sit in on a class of your choice and talk with other students at the school about their experiences. In addition, visit the school's Disability Support Services (DSS) offices. That is essential.

Disability Support Services

Most postsecondary schools have a DSS office that provides some level of service, support, or accommodations to students with disabilities. Nevertheless, it is important for youth and families to know there is not a universal process for determining educational assistance for students with disabilities once they leave high school.

In general, the approach to academic accommodations at the

postsecondary level differs significantly from the special education system. Postsecondary institutions are required by law only to provide equal *access* to their programs and services for students with disabilities — access to facilities, course materials, lectures, discussions, and examinations. Students with disabilities may be given testing accommodations (such as extra time or testing in a separate environment); however, they are expected to master the same content and skills as students without disabilities.

Typically, DSS offices offer students a limited menu of possible accommodations and supports. In addition, accommodation practices can vary widely from one program to the next. For example, some postsecondary schools focus on meeting the minimum requirements of the law, while others are more liberal in meeting all students' needs. Likewise, the expertise of disability support personnel available on campuses varies extensively.

Since some postsecondary programs are better than others in providing needed supports and accommodations, it is important to talk with DSS before selecting a program. Success in postsecondary education is closely linked to accommodations, services, and technical and instructional supports, so students and families should learn as much as they can about what prospective schools provide to their students with disabilities.

The most frequently used postsecondary accommodations include:

- Extra time to take tests or complete assignments
- Quiet or alternate learning environment
- Communication with an instructor

Volunteer!

Join PACER in helping families

PACER serves the community by helping families of children with disabilities. Take a look at the opportunities below and think of how you can help make a difference in the lives of children with disabilities.

Volunteer Opportunities

Be a Puppeteer for

- *COUNT ME IN*
- *LET'S PREVENT ABUSE*

Help with PACER Center events

- *Annual Phonathon*
- *PACER Benefit Silent Auction*

Do clerical tasks at PACER

For information, call PACER at (952) 838-9000 or visit www.pacer.org

leads to later satisfaction

about their disability

- Tutoring services
- Priority registration or scheduling options
- Low-tech, inexpensive assistive technology, such as talking books, specialized tape recorders, and portable note-taking devices and mouse/switch options.

Colleges are not required to grant requests for accommodations that would fundamentally alter an academic program. Some colleges grant course substitutions or waivers of required coursework, such as a foreign language, but students are advised to investigate whether this is an option before they count on it.

Self-reliance

Postsecondary administrators and instructors expect students with disabilities to

- make a request if they need services,
- work with DSS personnel in planning accommodations, and
- negotiate accommodations with each instructor.

To prepare for these adult responsibilities, it is essential that students come to postsecondary programs with a basic understanding of their disability, knowledge of the accommodations they will need in the classroom or program, and the ability to articulate both to others.

If they expect to reap the benefits of furthering their education, students must be ready for the challenges. Some individuals may be more successful with additional life experience behind them before they enroll in a program. For example, a growing number of Americans are postponing college education until they are older. According to 1990s statistics from the Census Bureau and the U.S. Depart-

ment of Education, 40 percent of college students were over 25 years old and approximately 50 percent of college students were part-time students; more than 70 percent of part-time students were 25 and older.

Options for students who may need more time to mature or build skills leading to postsecondary success include:

- working or participating in community activities for a year or two before enrolling in a program
- starting out with a lighter course load until they feel confident they can handle full-time student status

- attending adult education courses such as cooking, exercise and fitness classes, computer, or learning a foreign language
- taking private lessons to develop skills needed for a particular kind of job—such as music or singing lessons

Whatever decisions students with disabilities make about postsecondary education, if they are prepared for the experience, they can begin with confidence.

For information about transition planning, contact PACER at (952) 838-9000, (800) 537-2237 (from Greater Minnesota) or visit www.pacer.org.

Creation Station invites creativity of all children

Children of all abilities are welcomed aboard at Creation Station, a place for arts and crafts at PACER Center. The project offers a nonstop ticket to imagination, inspiration, and artistic masterpieces by providing materials and activities that encourage children's creativity.

"At Creation Station, children with and without disabilities can develop new interests and try new skills in a supervised and supportive environment," said Paula F. Goldberg, PACER executive director. "The goal is to help them feel successful and to build their self-confidence."

The Creation Station is open the second Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to noon. Registration is required. Staff and volunteers facilitate activities, but adults must accompany participating children.

Families can schedule children's private birthday parties for the second Saturday of each month from 2 to 4 p.m. The fee for parties is \$25 per group. PACER will supply arts and crafts projects and space for serving treats. Hosts scheduling the party must provide adult chaperones, party favors, and any food or beverages for the party. The Creation Station takes party reservations on a first-come, first-serve basis.

For more information about the Creation Station activities or birthday parties, call PACER at (952) 838-9000.



Leather tooling is one of many activities.

Resources

NEW



No Child Left Behind and Students with Disabilities: A Curriculum for Parent Trainers

The new curriculum includes topics that families need to know about to ensure a quality education for their children with disabilities.

School choice, supplemental services, and adequate yearly progress are only a few. The curriculum is in an electronic PowerPoint™ or printed overheads format.

\$15 CD-ROM ALL-27

\$295 Overheads in 3-ring binder ALL-28

NEW



Toys: Universal Tools for Learning, Communication and Inclusion for Children with Disabilities

Most experts agree that play affects any child's development. The toys used in play can be extremely important to children with disabilities. The booklet outlines age- and ability-appropriate toys, in addition to

information on buying toys and tips for adapting toys for specific needs.

■ \$3 10+ copies, \$2.50 each CRC-14

Record-Keeping Folder



This tool helps parents organize important papers related to their child's education. It also offers tips for working with your child's teachers. Sets are designed for records of students in special education *or* regular education.

They are available in English or Spanish and there are inserts in Hmong and Somali.

Regular ed: \$10 Price breaks for quantities MPC-6

Special ed: ■ \$10 Price breaks for quantities PHP-a5

Disability Awareness Manual



This book is a MUST for every parent and professional working with children with disabilities. The readable, but comprehensive, content covers a multitude of issues affecting children and young adults with disabilities.

From questions about inclusion to a chapter on the law, it features helpful, usable resources.

\$15 10+ copies, \$11 each CMI-1

NEW

Facilitated IEP Meetings: An Emerging Practice

The eight-page guide introduces the idea of IEP facilitation to help special education planning teams reach agreements. It is published by PACER's Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers project (the Alliance) and the Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE).

■ \$3 10+ copies, \$2 each

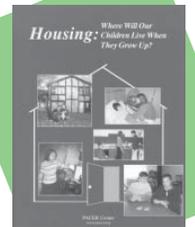
ALL-26



Where Will Our Children Live When They Grow Up?

This long-awaited resource offers concise, easy-to-read-and-understand information about housing options for people with disabilities. Whether their child is near adulthood or a newly diagnosed preschooler, parents of children with disabilities will find that the book answers many of their questions about housing and future choices to make with their child.

■ \$8 10+ copies, \$6 each PHP-a26



Is Your Child a Target of Bullying?

The new, one-of-a-kind, 30-page curriculum is for parent audiences. The appealing design and easy-to-understand suggestions are sure to inform and encourage families as they address this troubling problem. Transparencies are available on CD-ROM or in three-ring binder.

\$15 CD-ROM ALL-19 (English) or ALL-19sp (Spanish)

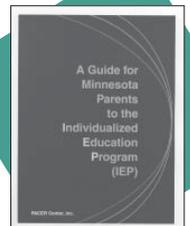
\$165 color transparencies and script in a notebook binder ALL-20 (English) or ALL-20sp (Spanish)



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

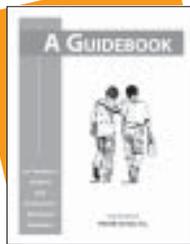
The 2005 edition of this booklet continues to be a staple for Minnesota parents of children in special education. It explains why parent involvement at IEP meetings is so important, and it guides families through the IEP process, clarifies the Minnesota forms, and explains the information parents need for them to make informed decisions about their child's education.

■ \$3 10+ copies, \$2 each PHP-a12



Resources

NEW EDITION



A Guidebook for Parents of Children with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders

The popular book presents basic information about emotional and behavioral disorders, the type of professionals who provide mental health services to children and adolescents and how to select them, school-based services, recommended reading, and more. The 144 pages of this third edition are packed with pertinent suggestions for parents.

■ \$12 10 + copies, \$7.50 each PHP-a8

NEW DVD

Technology: Making a Different World

The three-minute overview of PACER Center's Simon Technology Center shows how assistive technology can help children and adults with disabilities develop and use skills that lead to inclusion at school and in employment. \$5

IT'S HERE!

PACER Center's Catalog of Publications

The free catalog describes more than 200 PACER resources for families of children with disabilities and professionals working with them. Most listed items are free to Minnesota families of children with disabilities.

To order the listed materials...

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

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.

The items listed on these pages are also available through PACER's *Catalog of Publications*.

Order number	Name of publication/video ordered	Quantity	Per item cost	Total item cost
Total cost of all items ordered →				

Amount of order: Sales tax: _____ Total amount enclosed: _____
(Minnesota residents, 6.5%; Minneapolis residents, 7%)

Please complete the following:

Parent Professional Other _____

Name: _____

Organization (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: (h) _____ (w) _____ E-mail: _____

If a parent:

Birth date of child with disability: _____ Disability: _____

Workshops

Attention Deficit Disorders

Are We Overmedicating Behavioral Problems in Our Children?

Speaker Barry Garfinkel, M.D., will lead a discussion of medication and its use with behavioral disabilities, including attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and bipolar disorder.

April 18, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER Center)

Schools in Step with ADHD

Presented by Dixie Jordan, national speaker and PACER staff member, parent, and expert on the education rights of children with disabilities, the workshop explores how parents and professionals can help children with ADHD to develop education goals and accommodations.

May 3, 6:30 to 9:30 (PACER Center)

The Gift of LD/ADHD: Beyond 'Disability'

National speaker Jonathan Mooney believes many students with learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders have gifts of creativity and visual thinking. He will share his personal story and offer concrete strategies for parents.

April 5, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

Early Childhood

Understanding Early Childhood Services in Minnesota

This early childhood workshop for parents of children birth to 5 and professionals emphasizes rights, roles, responsibilities, and the interagency planning process. Persons attending the workshop will learn skills for communicating with professionals.

Feb. 23, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER Center)

March 4, 9 to 11 a.m. (PACER Center)

Parent Leadership Institute

Participants will learn how to build skills, such as communicating concerns with medical professionals and members of the interagency team. Participants will study and discuss family involvement in parent-professional collaboration to improve outcomes for young children with disabilities and their families.

April 1, All day (PACER Center)

Emotional Behavioral Disorder

Basic Educational Rights for Children with Disabilities and Co-occurring Mental Health Needs

The workshop for parents discusses basic educational rights for children with disabilities and co-occurring mental health needs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '04) with an emphasis on mental health.

Feb. 22, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER Center)

Developing Goals and Related Services to Meet Mental Health Needs

The interactive workshop explains how to write mental health goals and supports into Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

April 27, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Elk River)

IDEA 2004 and Positive Behavior Interventions

The event offers information on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '04), which includes an enhanced emphasis on positive behavior interventions for parents of children with disabilities.

May 4, 7 to 9 p.m. (Anoka)

May 9, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER Center)

Partnering for Progress

For professionals, the workshop covers cultural issues that affect identifying disabilities, positive behavioral supports, and communicating with families.

March 9, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER)

Successful Strategies

For parents, the workshop covers positive behavioral interventions and supports, children's mental health issues, the Minnesota Comprehensive Children's Mental Health Act, and communicating with professionals.

March 6, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Edina)

Successful Transitions

The workshop covers planning for transition to and from different education sites as well as transition into adulthood for youth with mental health issues.

March 2, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER)

Transition for Youth with Disabilities and Behavioral Needs

The innovative workshop addresses transition for students with disabilities who may experience behavior problems that are

secondary to their disability.

March 28, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER)

What Is Good Infant Mental Health?

Participants will improve awareness and recognition of the emotional cues in infants that may be indicators of mental health needs.

March 23, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER)

Parent Training

Effective Transition Services for Adolescents with Emotional Disabilities

Professor Mike Bullis, Ph.D., national expert on adolescent transition, will share research and experience to help parents of adolescents with emotional disabilities plan for an effective transition to life after high school.

April 24, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER) or

April 25, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. (PACER)

Getting the First Job

A new workshop for parents and students with disabilities, the session will include writing resumes, interview practice, and suggestions for working with the supervisor.

June 20, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

Helping Children Become Better Readers: Points of Entry into Literacy

Speaker Gay Ivey, national expert in reading education, will share stories and techniques to help parents and teachers understand how to meet the needs of struggling readers.

March 21, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

IDEA 2004 and Specific Learning Disabilities: Vital Knowledge for Parents

Margaret Jo Shepherd, national expert on learning disabilities, will explore recommendations in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '04) for identifying students with specific learning disabilities and the use of "response to intervention."

March 30, 1 to 3:30 p.m. (PACER Center)

or March 30, 7 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER)

IDEA: Understanding the IEP

The workshop explores the essential components of Individualized Education Program (IEP) development, including evaluation, team planning, resolving disagreements, and an expanded section on writing measurable goals.

March 7, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Austin)

April 4, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Brainerd)

Workshops

IDEA: Understanding the Special Education Process

The workshop outlines the basic principles of special education with materials to help parents organize their child's special education records. Topics include free appropriate public education, evaluation, resolving disagreements, and the IEP.

March 2, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (St. Paul)
March 6, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (New Ulm)
March 16, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER)
April 3, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Alexandria)

Life Planning for Persons with Disabilities

Each of two sessions covers different information, including guardianship-conservatorship laws, power of attorney, trusts, and other issues. Participants should plan to attend both sessions.

May 2, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)
May 16, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

NCLB: What Parents of Children with Disabilities Need to Know

The workshop will help parents understand the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law and its implications for students receiving special education.

March 8, 7 to 9 p.m. (Mankato)
March 20, 7 to 9 p.m. (Hutchinson)
May 1, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

Prepare for the Future

For families of youth with disabilities ages 14 and older, this new workshop will look at

IDEA '04 as it applies to planning for a future after high school.

April 17, 7 to 9 p.m. (Anoka)

Skills for Effective Partnership

This interactive workshop will offer ideas for parents of special education students to use when communicating with school staff. It will also address options for resolving differences.

May 9, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Duluth)

Understanding Your Child's IEP: Practical Tips

This workshop is the next step for parents who have attended a basic special education process workshop. PACER advocates will lead small discussion groups on IEP development and content.

March 27, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER)

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

(See Simon Technology Center listing for May 18)

Using the Special Education Process for Resolving Disagreements with Schools

Communication strategies and problem solving tips will be included in this workshop, which is designed to increase parents' knowledge about dispute resolution options.

March 13, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (St. Cloud)

Using the Special Education Process for Resolving Disagreements with Schools

Minnesota Department of Education staff

will present options and outcomes of dispute resolution. Communication strategies and problem solving tips will be included to increase parents' knowledge about dispute resolution.

April 20, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (PACER Center)

Simon Technology Center

Alternative and Augmentative Communication (KITE)

This workshop, for parents of young children and professionals, explores communication devices available in today's market and discusses their capabilities, similarities, and differences.

March 11, 9 a.m. to noon (PACER Center)

Being Creative with BuildAbility and Clicker 5 (KITE)

Reading and writing is difficult for many children with literacy needs. Clicker 5 and BuildAbility can make the tasks more enjoyable and greatly boost self-esteem. This workshop allows hands-on experience with two early childhood multimedia software programs, BuildAbility and Clicker 5.

May 13, 9 a.m. to noon (PACER Center)

Technology for Girls: Engineering

Targeted to middle-school girls with disabilities, this free workshop is led by EXITE (EXploring Interests in Technology and Engineering) high school interns and women employed in technical fields at IBM. Hands-on group activities include building bridges.

Feb. 21, 6 to 8 p.m. (PACER Center)

(Continued on page 20)

Workshop Registration

PACER Center workshops are free to parents of Minnesota children with all disabilities. Persons wishing to attend a workshop are asked to register in advance. In addition to the brief information above, the workshop events are described in more detail on PACER's Web site at www.pacer.org.

For easy online workshop registration, go to



www.pacer.org/workshops

You may also register by telephone at (952) 838-9000 (Metro area) or (800) 537-2237 toll free (Greater Minnesota)

Workshops – Continued

(Continued from page 19)

Technology for Girls: Women in Technology

For middle-school girls with disabilities, the EXITE (EXploring Interests in Technology and Engineering) workshop offers hands-on group activities that illustrate the importance of math, science, and creative problem solving for women. In addition, the girls will learn about women who are famous in the areas.

April 18, 6 to 8 p.m. ((PACER Center)

Universal Design

The central practical premise of universal design is that a curriculum should include alternatives to make it accessible and appropriate for children with different needs and backgrounds. The workshop explores how technology can promote universal design for learning and includes discussion on state and national initiatives and a demonstration of technology options.

May 18, 6 to 8 p.m. (PACER Center)

Using IntelliTools Classroom Suite with Young Children (KITE)

The session shows parents and teachers

how using IntelliTools Classroom Suite can meet the needs of a diverse classroom and ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all students.

Participants receive a 45-day trial version of the full IntelliTools Classroom Suite to use in classrooms.

April 15, 9 a.m. to noon (PACER Center)

Transition

Higher Education and Students with Asperger Syndrome

Students with Asperger Syndrome may qualify academically for higher education options, but they need preparation to succeed. The workshop tells how to prepare students, parents and teachers for students' transition to postsecondary environments.

Feb. 27, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

Solving the Employment Puzzle

This workshop is for families of youth with disabilities that are in the transition process. It will help families look to the future as they learn about numerous options for

postsecondary education, employment, and adult services.

April 11, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Monticello)

Employment is for Everyone

The workshop helps parents of youth with intellectual or developmental disabilities identify options and strategies that can lead to successful, inclusive employment. Co-sponsored by Kaposia, it covers self-determination skills, building work experience, and other important topics.

April 27, 7 to 9 p.m. (St. Paul)

Save the date!
Saturday, May 6, 2006

PACER Benefit

featuring
fantastic

singer-songwriter

Michael Bolton

(To order tickets, see page 2)



PACER Center, Inc.

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