

# PACESETTER

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

## PACER's STC plans Nov. 1 open house

PACER Center's Simon Technology Center (STC) annual open house is Saturday, Nov. 1, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This popular event for children, parents, and professionals includes demonstrations of assistive technology, educational software, and resources for children with disabilities.

The theme of the 2008 event is Low-Tech and Free. Participants are invited to explore low-tech and low-cost assistive technology options. The open house also includes tours of the Simon Technology Center, art activities for all, local vendors sharing their AT solutions, prizes, and much more.

The event is free, but participants must preregister by calling PACER Center at 952-838-9000 or visiting [www.PACER.org/workshops/index.asp](http://www.PACER.org/workshops/index.asp).



## Partner with PACER! Bullying Prevention Awareness Week Oct. 5

On the East Coast, the mother of a young man with special needs has written a play about bullying prevention. In the Midwest, a teacher has invited students to write poems about bullying. Out West, a parent center regularly uses a PACER Web site to teach children about dealing with bullying.

Across the country, a quiet groundswell is gaining momentum as parents, schools, children, teens, and communities join PACER to eliminate bullying from children's lives. You can be part of it by participating in PACER's third annual National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week, Oct. 5 – 11.

The week is sponsored by PACER Center's National Center for Bullying Prevention and cosponsored by the American Federation for Teachers, National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, National Education Association, National PTA, and School Social Work Association of America.

Be a partner by choosing at least one of the week's fun activities:

- Groups and schools that become partnering organizations will be listed as a link on PACER's bullying prevention Web site and can distribute the National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week press release and audio files through newsletters or e-news.
- Elementary school students can visit PACER's bullying prevention Web site, [www.PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org](http://www.PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org), try out some new stick puppet role plays, enter a poster contest, and more.
- Middle- and high-school students can check out video stories from people

*(Continued on page 2)*



*Jennifer DeFranco, (top right) PTA president at a school in Palatine, Ill., holds a proclamation designating the 2008 Bullying Prevention Awareness Week in Illinois. Partnering with PACER, she's worked with her school to plan events and speakers for October. Mathew St. Clair (left) is a member of a drama troupe in Virginia. He performed in an original play about bullying written by his mother, Marie St. Clair, after she was inspired by PACER's Web site.*

# PACER Center: Champions for Children with ANY Disability

Being a parent is challenging, and having a child with a disability may bring extra challenges. That's why there's PACER Center.

A Minnesota and national parent center, PACER has served families of children with disabilities and special health needs for nearly 30 years. PACER provides expertise and resources to help families make decisions about education, vocational training, employment, and other services for children and youth with *any* disability.

## How can PACER help me?

If you have a question or need help for your child with a disability, contact PACER. Most PACER staff are parents or family members of children with disabilities. They share your experience. They understand.

PACER has more than 30 projects. Many are specific to Minnesota. Some are national or international in scope. All focus on ways to help children with disabilities succeed at home, at school, and in the community.

If you live in Minnesota, you can call PACER's parent advocates who will help you understand the laws that affect children with disabilities.

## How do I contact PACER?

By telephone, Web sites, e-mail, or fax.

If you call during PACER office hours, a staff member will answer the telephone and take information about your situation and link you to the appropriate PACER project. If you are not directly connected, a staff member from that project will call you back, usually within 48 hours.

PACER telephone numbers are: (952) 838-9000 (main number)  
(800) 537-2237 (Minnesota toll free) (888) 248-0822 (national toll free)  
(952) 838-0199 (fax) Send e-mail to [PACER@PACER.org](mailto:PACER@PACER.org).

PACER Center's postal address is: PACER Center, 8161 Normandale Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55437

## What are PACER hours?

PACER's switchboard is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday–Friday. There is voice mail at other times. PACER observes federal holidays.

## Where can I learn more about PACER?

PACER's Web sites are:

- [www.PACER.org](http://www.PACER.org)
- [www.taalliance.org](http://www.taalliance.org) (technical assistance for the nation's 100 parent centers)
- [www.fape.org](http://www.fape.org) (information on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - IDEA)
- [www.c3online.org](http://www.c3online.org) (Connecting Youth to Communities and Careers)
- [www.PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org](http://www.PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org) (bullying prevention)
- [www.PACER.org/international](http://www.PACER.org/international) (Global family resources)

## Minnesota Parent Center - MN PIRC

Minnesota Parent Center is Minnesota's Parental Information and Resource Center (MN PIRC) and a project of PACER. It helps parents be strong partners in their children's education and encourages community involvement to help all children, with or without disabilities, succeed at school. Call 952-838-9000 with questions or visit [www.PACER.org/mpc/index.asp](http://www.PACER.org/mpc/index.asp).

# Partner with PACER

*(Continued from page 1)*

who have been affected by bullying.

•Parents and professionals can use PACER's toolkit with daily activities for elementary school classrooms, lesson plans, informational handouts, and more.

Bullying prevention takes more than a week, of course. That's why PACER will launch a groundbreaking bullying prevention Web site for teens in January. Videos, poetry, role plays to do with younger kids, and lots of opportunities to make a difference will be available. Learn more at [PACER.org](http://PACER.org).

## Opening Doors Conference Nov. 10

PACER Center is a partner in the national Opening Doors conference, Nov. 10–11, at the Hyatt Regency in Bethesda, Md.

This "state of the science" event focuses on accessing services for children and youth with disabilities and special health care needs.

Sessions will focus on early screening for disabilities and special health care needs; inclusive recreation; and adolescent transition. The keynote is motivational speaker and disability advocate Greg Smith.

Opening Doors is a five-year Rehabilitation Research and Training Center funded by the U.S. Department of Education National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). The conference is sponsored by NIDRR, the HSC Foundation, the Maternal Child Health Bureau, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

For more information or to register visit [www.openingdoorsforyouth.org/sos/or](http://www.openingdoorsforyouth.org/sos/or) call 617-287-4314.

# PACER director honored for leadership

Paula F. Goldberg, executive director of PACER Center, Minneapolis, Minn., was recently honored for her national leadership in helping children with disabilities and their families throughout the United States. She was honored by Sinergia of New York, N.Y., a nonprofit Parent Center serving families of youth with disabilities.

“Paula’s work has made a difference — in the lives of children with disabilities and in promoting parent knowledge, training and advocacy,” said Myrta Cuadra-Lash, Executive Director of Sinergia. “I have known Paula for well over two decades and have admired her dedication, commitment, and unwavering assistance and support to Parent Centers nationwide. Paula has created a body of work that is legendary.”

Goldberg was honored at Sinergia’s

30<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala held at the New York Botanical Gardens.

Goldberg co-founded the nonprofit PACER Center in 1977 to serve children and youth with any disability. With more than 30 programs, PACER provides individual assistance, workshops, publications, and other resources to help families make decisions about education and other services for their child or young adult with disabilities.

PACER is also a national Parent Center, assisting 105 Parent Centers throughout the United States to provide training and information to parents of children with disabilities and to professionals who work with them.

Goldberg has helped develop Parent Centers in the United States since 1978. She has been recognized for her leadership in the Parent



Paula F. Goldberg

Center movement by many national and local groups.

“Paula is a visionary, a great leader, collaborator, and champion for children, youth and adults with disabilities and their families,” said Mary Schrock, PACER Center’s chief operating and development officer.

“She has gained, and truly deserves, the

local, national, and global respect of many.”

Goldberg is also working globally to help children with disabilities. In 2006, she helped organize the first International Indo-U.S. Conference on Technology for children and adults with disabilities in India. She has initiated the first center on technology for children and adults with disabilities in India. The model center opened Sept. 13, 2008.

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PACER Web site: [www.PACER.org](http://www.PACER.org)

ALLIANCE site: [www.taalliance.org](http://www.taalliance.org)

FAPE site: [www.fape.org](http://www.fape.org)

C3 site: [www.c3online.org](http://www.c3online.org)

BULLYING: [www.PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org](http://www.PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org)  
(Alternate format is available upon request.)

## Roy reappointed to Rehabilitation Council

Sean Roy, director of transition and workforce partnerships for PACER Center, was recently reappointed by Gov. Tim Pawlenty to the State Rehabilitation Council.

Roy was reappointed as the representative of PACER to a three-year term on the council that expires Jan. 3, 2011.

At PACER Center, Roy also co-directs Project C<sup>3</sup>: Connecting Youth to Communities and Careers, a partnership among several Minnesota state agencies and PACER Center ([www.c3online.org](http://www.c3online.org)). He is also a member of the Council for Exceptional Children, Association for Persons in Supported Employment, and the Minneapolis

Work Investment Act (WIA) Youth Council.

The State Rehabilitation Council assists the Rehabilitation Services Program of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development in making decisions about the state’s Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program ([www.deed.state.mn.us/rehab/index.htm](http://www.deed.state.mn.us/rehab/index.htm)).

Vocational Rehabilitation serves thousands of persons with severe disabilities throughout the state, helping them reach their vocational goals.

The council is made up of 19 members appointed by the governor. The director of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program is Kim Peck.

# EX.I.T.E. intern makes dreams come true

By Julie Holmquist

Sitting for eight hours in a 38-degree cooler while someone sculpts a likeness of your head in butter isn't what everyone would wish for.

Yet for 18-year-old Ann Motl, being chosen as a Minnesota Dairy Princess and having her features carved in butter at the Minnesota State Fair is a dream come true. As the daughter of dairy farmers Mike Motl and Kim Harff of Browerville, Minn., Ann grew up waving to dairy princesses in parades and hearing about Princess Kay of the Milky Way.

Now she's been selected from a field of 72 contestants to compete for the Princess Kay title. Achieving this goal, following a mock radio interview, a three-minute speech, and a personal interview, was just one of Ann's many accomplishments this past year.

The former participant in PACER's and IBM's 2003 EX.I.T.E. program graduated as the salutatorian of Browerville High School last spring with a 4.2 grade point average. She was also awarded the Board of Governor's Engineering Scholarship at the University of St. Thomas, where this fall she's working on realizing a new dream: becoming a biomedical engineer.

"EX.I.T.E. really introduced me to what engineering was," says Ann, who uses a wheelchair and has Charcot Marie Tooth Disease, a neuromuscular disease. "That really got me started, and the EX.I.T.E. internship took me further on the course."

EX.I.T.E. (Exploring Interests in Technology and Engineering) is annual camp held at PACER and sponsored by IBM (See article on Page 5).

After a half-day job shadow experience at Blue



*Ann Motl, a Minnesota Dairy Princess, was selected from a field of 72 contestants to compete for the Princess Kay of the Milky Way title.*

*"EX.I.T.E. really introduced me to what engineering was."*

Sky Design, which was part of the EX.I.T.E program, Ann discovered her career path.

"I was so excited I couldn't sleep that night," Ann recalls.

This time of her life has been filled with one exciting success after another: winning her high school's science award, speaking at her high school graduation, competing at the National Forensics League Tournament in Las Vegas in June, and attending to her Dairy Princess duties in parades and events in Todd County.

Ann's parents are understandably proud. Her mother will gladly list more of Ann's accomplishments: She was a two-time Minnesota state forensics medalist in original oratory and Grand Champion at the State Fair in 4-H Knowledge Bowl, just to name a few.

"She's very goal oriented and has a positive outlook," Kim says of her daughter. Despite obstacles such as friends' homes that are not accessible to wheelchairs, no accessible driver's training available in her area, and other barriers encountered over the years, Ann maintains an upbeat attitude.

"Some parts of growing up with a disability were hard, but I never focused on that. I focused on what I could do," she says.

What she can do is impressive, and at 18, she's only just begun.

"I couldn't be a sports star, but if I did well in school, I could achieve success," she says. "An education is very important if you have a disability, and always trying your hardest."

# Math, science EX.I.T.E-ing at PACER, IBM camp

Thirty middle school girls learned about polymers, microprocessors, video shoots, cryogenics and more at the sixth IBM EX.I.T.E. (Exploring Interests in Technology and Engineering) Camp at PACER Center in August.

The six-day event encourages girls' interest in math, science, and technology. The girls were able to make new friends, learn from women who chose careers in science and technology, and hear from speakers including Belinda Jensen from KARE 11, Terrence Flower, a NASA Ambassador, and Alissa Gilbert of the Bakken Museum.

IBM established the camp at PACER and conducts other EX.I.T.E. camps across the world. Other sponsors at the PACER camp included the Charlson and H.B. Fuller Foundations, Medtronic, Accenture, and 3M.

Megan Kunz, assistive technology specialist at PACER's Simon Technology Center (STC), coordinated the camp. Bridget Ames is the STC coordinator.

*Girls learned about polymers (below) and filming and editing techniques while making music videos (right).*



For more information about the 2009 EX.I.T.E. camp and to view 2008 camp photos and video, visit [www.pacer.org/stc/exite/Camp.asp](http://www.pacer.org/stc/exite/Camp.asp) or call 952-838-9000.

## Election 2008

### A time to ask candidates about special education issues

*By Kim Kang*

For parents of children with disabilities, the 2008 election season provides an important opportunity to ask candidates about special education issues and to take part in the legislative process.

Special education funding is a main area of concern. At the federal level, special education is still underfunded at 17 percent of the cost to educate students with disabilities, even though Congress had promised to pay 40 percent of the costs after the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was initially passed in 1975.

Likewise, the state of Minnesota has shifted some of its funding responsibility for public education to school districts. School districts must now rely on passing property tax referendums in order to adequately finance their schools.

On the federal and state level, special education will continue to face challenging times. That's why it's important to support candidates who will be champions for children in the legislative process. Here are a few ways to be involved during this election season:

#### **Ask the candidate questions**

When speaking with candidates, ask questions to determine if and how they will support children with disabilities. Key questions include:

- Do you believe that we are adequately funding early childhood through high school education for all children?
- Do you have any special insights on educating children with disabilities?
- Also use this opportunity to share a parent's perspective. Some candidates may not be familiar with the joys and challenges of being a parent of a child with a disability. Share a family story, including what has been helpful for your child, but be brief: Tell it in three minutes or less.

#### **Volunteer**

Be sure to support favored candidates by volunteering. Many campaigns, especially local and state races, rely heavily on volunteers.

#### **Write to the local newspaper**

By writing a letter to the editor, parents can publicly thank a candidate and educate the local community on the importance of special education.

#### **Be sure to vote!**

Make sure to register to vote in Minnesota's primary election on Sept. 9 and the general election on Nov. 4. In addition, remind friends and family members to register and vote. For more information on voter registration, visit the Minnesota Secretary of State Election Center at [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us).

# New workshops focus on visual strategies so parents, children improve communication

By Julie Holmquist

A picture says a thousand words, and those pictures — and all types of visual aids — can improve communication between parents and their children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) or other disabilities.

Beginning this fall, PACER's Simon Technology Center (STC) will offer a series of workshops for Minnesota parents wishing to learn more about using visual strategies at home. The workshops are possible through a grant from Autism Speaks, a national autism organization.

"Visual supports were traditionally created to help kids with ASDs understand directions, their world, and what is expected of them," says Bridget Ames, STC coordinator, "but they can and do help all kids."

Visual supports can benefit children in many ways. Their use can help children develop management skills, improve reading comprehension, and make it easier for children to learn about the passage of time and sequencing (what comes first, second, etc.). Visuals can also help a child organize a routine. Pictures of a child's schedule (having a snack, exercising, brushing teeth), for example, can help children understand and predict events in their day.

At the workshops, parents will learn about a variety of tools, including software for creating picture boards, software that children can use to compose thoughts using symbols; and resources such as the News 2 You newspaper,

which provides weekly current event news in the form of symbol-supported text in several different reading levels.

Parents will also learn about creating "social scripts," which use text and pictures to teach children social rules. The stories help children learn typical social behaviors, Ames says, such as covering their ears if it's noisy instead of using a hurtful behavior.

"You can also use visuals to reduce unwanted behavior," Ames says. "Oftentimes, unwanted behavior is communicating something, like 'I'm frustrated,' 'I don't want to,' or 'I don't feel good.'"

Between each workshop, parents will be able to attend hands-on labs at STC. At the labs, parents will have the chance to use a variety of tools to create something functional and useful for home. Participants attending three of the five workshops in the series will also receive a membership to the STC library.

For more information, call 952-838-9000 and ask for the Simon Technology Center.

*The author(s) of this publication hereby acknowledge Autism Speaks Family Community Grants as the funding agency for the project leading to this publication. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily express or reflect the views of Autism Speaks or any other funding agency.*



## United Way and CFC can support PACER

PACER Center is eligible for donations made through United Way campaigns and Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), the workplace charity campaign for federal civilian, military, and postal employees. PACER is a tax-exempt 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization.

### United Way

The United Way accommodates employees wanting to support PACER. United Way

pledge cards have a location in which to write PACER's name and address (PACER Center, Inc., 8161 Normandale Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55437).

### CFC

PACER will be listed under "National/International Independent Organizations," in local campaign charity lists. PACER's code number for CFC contributions is 12272,

and donors should use the code in designating their gift to PACER.

For information on how to support PACER through the United Way, CFC, or other workplace charity campaigns, call PACER's development office at 952-838-9000 or visit [www.PACER.org](http://www.PACER.org) and click on Get Involved, Make a Donation.

## Learn about family-centered care plans at Health Information Center

Parents caring for children and youth with special health care needs must often navigate a maze of services and multiple appointments with doctors and health care professionals.

Coordinating that care can often be overwhelming. Parents can create a medical home for their child to make that navigation easier and provide better health care for children.

Parents can learn more about family-centered care and creating a medical home by contacting Wendy Ringer, coordinator of PACER's Family-to-Family Health Information Center (F2F HIC).

A medical home is not a building, house, or hospital, but a way to provide high-quality, family-centered health care services in a cost-effective manner. Families who have children with disabilities or special health care needs work with many doctors, nurses, and other health, education, insurance, and social service professionals. In a medical home, health care professionals and parents work together as partners to identify and access all the medical and nonmedical services needed to help children and their families.

A medical home benefits a family and their child's physicians by having an organized way of providing coordinated care and a centralized way to access information. In a medical home, a primary doctor partners with the family to develop coordinated care plans, communicate and co-manage care with other professionals, exchange information, and share decision making.

One example of how a medical home can benefit families is by helping to develop a care plan for your child. "A care plan is a tool that can help you and all of your child's



Wendy Ringer, F2F HIC coordinator

doctors, nurses, school staff, and others understand your child's needs and communicate better," Ringer says.

In addition to assisting families as they create a medical home, the Health Information Center can also help families develop health care notebooks and individualized plans for emergencies, home, and school.

PACER's F2F HIC provides even more: It's a central source for parents to obtain support, advocacy, and information about the health care system. It also provides information about:

- Understanding health insurance – including employer-based insurance and public programs
- Understanding Medical Assistance, TEFRA, parental fees, waivers, and Consumer Directed Community Supports.
- Filing an appeal with insurance
- Social Security Disability
- Understanding legal rights in the health care system.

Parents can also learn from other families locally and around the nation about changes in public and private sector health care issues through **Family Voices**, a grassroots advocacy network. Learn more by calling Ringer at 952-838-9000. F2F HIC is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

## Online training offered for local ed councils

Members of local Minnesota Special Education Advisory Councils (SEACs) now have a new, easy way to secure training on organizing and operating a council. Online training presentations created by PACER Center under a grant with the Minnesota Department of Education are available on the SEAC Web site, [MNSEACinfo.org](http://MNSEACinfo.org). A live, interactive Webinar explaining how to use the site and the online training presentations will be provided. PACER Center will also offer an October workshop on the training modules. For more information, call Barb Ziemke or Carolyn Anderson at 952-838-9000 or 800-537-2237 or e-mail [seacsupport@PACER.org](mailto:seacsupport@PACER.org).



PACER uses e-mail to deliver time-sensitive messages:

- Upcoming PACER Events
- Legislative Updates
- Workshops
- Monthly PACER E-news

Go to

[www.PACER.org/forms/index.asp](http://www.PACER.org/forms/index.asp)

and complete the form to be on PACER's e-mail list.

Your e-mail address and other contact information is considered confidential and will not be shared.

Want more information? Call PACER at (952) 838-9000.

# Parents can ease child's fears

The transition from elementary school to middle school can pose new challenges for teens and added concerns for youth with disabilities. Studies also show that students who drop out of school often struggle making the shift from elementary to middle school or middle school to high school. A parent's support and involvement at this pivotal time, however, can pave the way to a successful school life and help a student maintain a positive view of school.

Following are the typical challenges of moving on to middle school and how parents can help students prepare for them.

## **New building and new staff**

Preparation in the following ways can help your child's adjustment to an unfamiliar setting and new teachers.

- Request an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting just prior to the start of school. Parents can request that all of their child's regular education teachers be invited to the meeting. They can also write a short introduction to their child and leave a copy with each teacher. The introduction should briefly describe when their child was diagnosed, what the child's needs are, and growth in development from year to year. Parents can also give a brief overview of their child's strengths and needs to the teachers at the meeting. Children may also come to the meeting so they can talk about what works best for them in school. "Not all kids will do that," says Jody Manning, PACER advocate. "If they can't come, bring a recent photo of your child."

- Request a copy of your child's schedule. An unknown schedule can be a source of anxiety for students, Manning says. Parents can lessen that anxiety by taking their child to school and finding the classrooms on the schedule.

- Mail the introduction to teachers who weren't able to attend the IEP meeting. Parents should also provide phone and/or e-mail contacts so teachers can contact them. Two to three weeks after school begins, parents may want to e-mail teachers asking them if they have any concerns about their child or the IEP.

## **New and larger group of peers**

Oftentimes, students in middle school are moving to a building that incorporates students from other elementary schools, which means more new faces. To help children meet more students their age, parents can enroll them in summer opportunities such as community education classes, citywide sports teams, or summer camps. Adaptive recre-

ation assistance that supports inclusion in activities may also be offered in a community.

## **More than one teacher a day**

Greater organizational skills are required when students have multiple teachers and classrooms. Parents can support their child in these ways:

- Provide organizational tools, such as a three-ring binder with pockets for storage.
- Keep an eye on their organizational needs for the first few weeks. If a student is having great difficulty, request an IEP meeting to discuss this new need and some possible accommodations. For example, parents can request an extra set of textbooks at home, assistance with a locker, or having a cubby in classrooms where students can leave supplies.
- Help the student develop a checklist that he or she can review each morning to make sure needed materials are ready.

## **Teens likely want more privacy and independence**

At the middle school age, parents are challenged by finding a balance between encouraging independence and providing and enforcing guidelines that teenagers still need.

"Parents should set fair and consistent rules with boundaries," Manning says. "The boundaries help children learn that responsibility comes with new independence."

## Transition Tips for Schools

Studies show that schools can create an environment that makes transition easier and drop-out rates lower.

Fewer students drop out when schools have:

- Smaller enrollments
- Focused, rigorous, and relevant curriculum
- Better interpersonal relationships among students and adults
- Supportive teachers
- Extra support with teaching teams or small learning communities



# of move to middle school

Other ways to strike the right balance in the relationship with young teens include the following:

- Be involved in their education at school. Parents can do this by volunteering, joining school committees, building relationships with teachers, visiting the school, and attending parent-teacher conferences. One mother graded school spelling sheets at home. “She felt like part of the school community, and her children had pride in her,” Manning says. Research shows that when parents are involved in their child’s education, children earn higher grades in school and have better behavior.

- Keep the lines of communication open. Talk every day about what happens at school; ask often if there are messages from school. If teens bring concerns home from school, listen and offer help to improve the situation. “If a teen brings bad news home, they’ve probably already been disciplined,” Manning says. “They would benefit from a discussion about possible solutions. At the middle school age, it’s time to step into a solution mode.”

- Review the IEP and school records each year.
- Get to know other parents and form support groups to work on problems and issues of mutual interest.

## Minnesota schools receive progress report on IDEA

Minnesota’s public schools excel in some areas of service to students of disabilities but need improvement in two particular areas, according to the second IDEA progress report issued by the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

Minnesota Commissioner of Education Alice Seagren received the report in June.

The progress reports are officially known as “U.S. Department of Education Determination Letters on State Implementation of the IDEA.”

IDEA is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which provides public education to the nation’s nearly 7 million children with disabilities. Minnesota has approximately 122,000 children and youth receiving special education services. For funding accountability, IDEA requires states to

show that they are meeting the education needs of children with disabilities.

Each state develops its own state performance plan (SPP) based on federal guidelines. The state then submits an annual report to OSEP telling how it met the targets for the 34 “indicators” or areas for reporting in the plan. Areas addressed include graduation, dropout, and suspension/expulsion rates; performance on statewide tests; and special education settings. OSEP sends progress reports to states in June, indicating if states met requirements or need assistance or intervention. Minnesota did exceptionally well in three areas, but needs to improve in two other areas.

Minnesota reported 100 percent compliance with moving young children with disabilities from Part C services (infants and preschoolers)

to Part B services (students age 3 to 21) with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed and implemented before their third birthday. There was also a high level of compliance in resolving written complaints to the state Department of Education within a 60-day limit.

Areas needing improvement include:

- secondary transition services
- timely correction of IDEA non-compliance at schools

Because Minnesota, like 22 other states, was determined by OSEP to need assistance in both the 2005 and 2006 reports, the state must use technical assistance to address areas where it is out of compliance.

For more information visit: [www.pacer.org/newsandevents](http://www.pacer.org/newsandevents).

## PACER offers archived training Webinar on Early Childhood

PACER Center now offers its first archived Minnesota training Webinar online: *Serving Diverse Families: Strategies for Early Childhood Service Providers*. The Webinar was designed for early childhood intervention and special education professionals who want to increase their effectiveness in working with families from diverse cultures who have young children with disabilities. A highlight of the two-hour training is a panel

presentation by PACER’s multicultural parent advocates titled, “Practical Tips for Successful Interactions.” The Webinar materials were developed in part with funding from a federal grant from the Minnesota Department of Education. Access the Webinar at [www.PACER.org/pacerwebinars/#paragraph1](http://www.PACER.org/pacerwebinars/#paragraph1) or call 952-838-9000 for more information.

# Frey Foundation challenges others to give to PACER Housing Project by December

When parents of youth with disabilities question how they will provide future housing arrangements for their children, they can find answers at PACER.

Last year, nearly 3,000 people turned to PACER's Housing Project for help and information on affordable, accessible housing. The program helps parents of young adults and children with disabilities understand their options for independent living and housing, and it helps them prepare for future needs. Finding help is now even more vital, due to limited funding, availability of supports and services and affordable housing.

To keep PACER's Housing Project operating, the Frey Foundation is offering PACER a \$30,000 challenge grant. To earn the money, PACER must raise \$30,000 from individuals by Dec. 20, 2008.

Housing needs are well understood by Jim Frey, who along with his wife, Mary, directs the Frey Foundation. Improving housing conditions is a mission of the Frey Foundation, as is giving to nonprofits that support people with disabilities.

"That springs from my own experience," said Jim, who is a paraplegic

and uses a wheelchair.

Anyone investing in the Housing Project would be making a wise donation, he added.

"It's clearly one of the best investments you'd make in the future. PACER's Housing Project encourages self-sufficient behavior and is heading off future problems," he said.

Research shows that providing affordable, stable housing positively influences many areas, he added, including job performance, school attendance, and health. That's why the Frey Foundation makes housing issues a priority.

The challenge grant offered to PACER is meant to encourage others to join the Frey Foundation in giving generously. Donations will support PACER's Housing Project services, which include:

- Individual assistance through information and resource referral
- Workshops on housing options, services and supports
- Distribution of a housing guidebook that includes national and state housing resources to individuals with disabilities and their parents
- An annual housing resource and information fair

## Housing Fair Oct. 4

PACER's Fifth Annual Housing Resource and Information Fair is an opportunity for families of children and young adults and service providers to meet and discuss housing options, services, supports, and related issues for children and young adults with disabilities. State and county representatives will be available to answer questions. The Fair will be Saturday, Oct. 4, 9 a.m. to noon at PACER Center. For more information, call 952-838-9000 or visit [www.PACER.org/housing](http://www.PACER.org/housing).

"I wish I would have known this information several years ago so we could have been pro-active," said one parent about the program.

For more information about the grant or the Housing Project, call 952-838-9000 or visit [www.PACER.org/housing/index.asp](http://www.PACER.org/housing/index.asp). To contribute online, go to [www.PACER.org](http://www.PACER.org), click on "housing challenge" or donate by calling 952-838-1316.

## New ideas for promoting early literacy available online

Interested in learning infant sign language, finding new finger plays for your toddler, or discovering ways to encourage your preschooler to talk?

Parents can find practical ideas online for providing young children with the building blocks for learning to read, write and talk, thanks to The Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL).

CELL recently published 70 new guides to help parents and practitioners promote early literacy skills of children with disabilities or delays. The guides are organized by child age and type of literacy skills. The 31 infant, 22 toddler, and 17 preschool guides can be printed and used by

parents or practitioners. Find the guides at [www.earlyliteracylearning.org](http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org).

CELL is a research-to-practice technical assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Research to Practice Division. CELL promotes the use of evidence-based early literacy learning practices by early childhood intervention practitioners, parents, and other caregivers of young children, birth to five years of age, with identified disabilities, developmental delays, and those at-risk for poor outcomes. CELL is a major initiative of the Center for Evidence-Based Practices at the Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute.

# Practical advice, new insights highlight third Ted and Roberta Mann symposium

By Marcia Kelly

More than 900 parents and educators gathered at the Third Annual National Ted and Roberta Mann Foundation Symposium about Children and Young Adults with Mental Health and Learning Disabilities to hear dynamic national speakers share insights and inspiration. They weren't disappointed. After a surprise musical performance by former Miss America Dorothy Benham, keynote speakers emphasized themes of resilience, acceptance, and dedication as they shared personal and professional insights.

With a delightful blend of humor and straight talk, Adolph "Doc" Brown emphasized the importance of looking past a child's appearance or difficult behavior and seeing the person first. "But it's not enough to see them," he added. "You have to do something about it." That "something" is modeling good character and bridging the trust gap so children can learn coping skills and strategies that will help them develop independence, self-sufficiency, and autonomy. Brown is a child and family psychologist and master teacher who has a daughter with cerebral palsy.

Jonathan Mooney's energetic presentation focused on the theme that children with learning differences aren't "broken," but the system that sees them that way is. "We need to stop seeing disability through the lens of pathology" and accept it as a facet of diversity, he said. The heart of educational empowerment is respect, a commitment to connecting children to their interests or passions in education, and modifying the environment, not the child, he said. Mooney is an activist, writer, and speaker with dyslexia who has expertise in learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, disabilities, and alternative education. He is founder and president of Project Eye-To-Eye, a national mentoring and advocacy organization for students with learning differences.

After losing half his hearing during the Vietnam War, Richard Pimentel became a disability rights activist. His message for the audience was three-fold: There's nothing wrong with people with disabilities—only how society reacts to them; impairment resides within the individual, but disability lies within the environment; and all joy is equal. "You are the teachers of these children's callings," he reminded attendees. "You are in the business of bringing joy." Pimentel spearheaded the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A full-length motion picture of his life story, "Music Within," starring Ron Livingston,



Attending the Symposium were (L to R): Gina and Scott Gage, Paula F. Goldberg, PACER executive director, and Barbara Gage, PACER Advisory Board.

Melissa George, and Michael Sheen, was released last year.

PACER's Youth Advisory Board for teens with mental health and learning disabilities also gave poignant testimony. These six teens shared their personal journey through life with a mental health disability and talked about techniques that help them cope and succeed.

Other highlights were breakout sessions led by compelling speakers that included:

- Pete Earley, a former reporter for The Washington Post and author of "CRAZY: A Father's Search Through America's Mental Health Madness," which was one of two finalists for the Pulitzer Prize in 2007.

- Susan Jenkins, M.D., director of the Bluestem Center for Child and Family Development in Rochester, Minn., which focuses on the needs of children and adults with neurodevelopmental disorders including autism, ADHD, and more.

The free, popular event was generously funded by Roberta Mann Benson, whose lifelong passion has been to raise awareness about mental health and learning disabilities. Through her work as a life coach, therapist, and philanthropist, Mann Benson has promoted a message about resilience, strength, and the contributions all people can make to the important work around mental health and learning disabilities in both children and adults. PACER, which has cosponsored the event for three years, thanks Roberta for her important support of this symposium.

# Leadership Academy helps teens, parents see new possibilities

By Julie Holmquist

A high school student with learning disabilities thought college was out of the picture until she found herself enrolled in a new PACER program called the Leadership Academy.

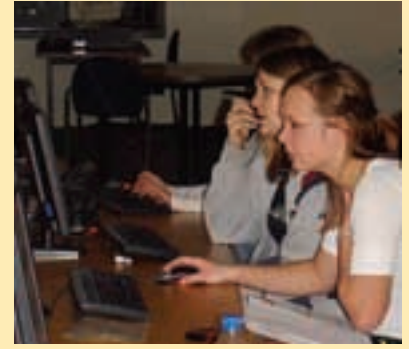
“I never thought I could go to college because I can’t spell or write very well, but all of the experiences the Leadership Academy gave me made me realize I can go to college, and I will,” says this student from Rockford High School, Rockford, Minn.

She wasn’t the only student to discover new possibilities through the Leadership Academy, a nine-month program piloted last fall in partnership with Rockford High School. The program was designed PACER’s Simon Technology Center (STC) for ninth- to 11<sup>th</sup>-grade students with learning disabilities who have an interest in postsecondary education but need support to help them succeed.

Funded by a federal Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act grant, the Leadership Academy offers students a chance to explore assistive technology (AT), attend a career fair, tour colleges, and learn about Web and community resources as they consider future careers in science, technology, engineering, and math fields.

Research shows that students with disabilities could improve school performance by using AT, but studies also reveal few students are trained to use the technology.

Learning how to use speech recognition software or other AT tools during the program made a significant impact on many students and their parents, says Erika Frake, Leadership Academy coordinator. STC staff



Rockford High School students explored how various assistive technology devices and software can help them achieve.

## Students comment on Leadership Academy

*“I remember the first time meeting at PACER and reading the banner that stated ‘PACER: Champions for Children with Disabilities’ and thinking, I don’t want to be here and I don’t have a disability. However, I have learned to accept that I do have a disability and it’s okay and I am just as good as anyone else.”*

*“After the campus tour, I am no longer scared of college, but am excited to go and I know I can and there are people and resources to help me.”*

met personally with the program’s 11 students to match them with appropriate AT tools and training.

“Some kids have trouble with spelling or have physical difficulties using a keyboard, causing them to write at a level that may not be representative of their knowledge and skills,” Frake says. “Using speech recognition software [speaking into the computer to produce text] or word prediction software [word choices are offered as a writer types] can allow the user to display written text that’s more representative of what they know.”

Through the Leadership Academy, Rockford students discovered a network of support as well as a new view of themselves and their future.

By the end of the 2007 – 08 school year, several students had received grants for personal laptop computers and three were planning summer job internships.

“I used to hate to leave class for tests or use the computer in class because all the other kids knew I was different and I didn’t like this,” says one student. “But now I don’t care. I know I am doing these things to help me and I am smart.”

The students’ new perspective is supported by teachers and parents who were essential components of the Leadership Academy. Rockford High School teachers were trained on the technologies, engaged in the program, and provided with a free membership

*(continued on page 13)*

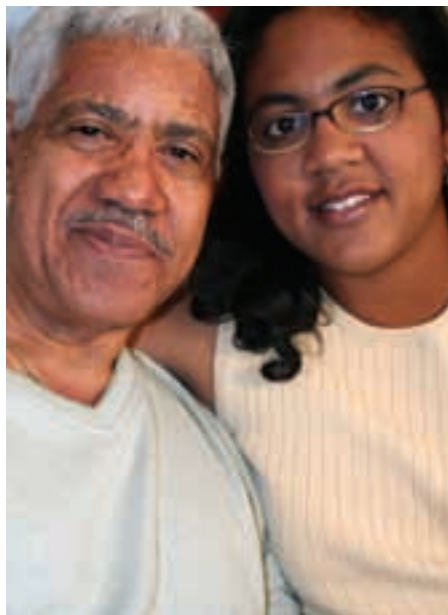
# Grandparents invited to share common interests

By Hannah Rose, intern

Are you the grandparent of a child with a disability and looking for a support group that is both relaxing and informative? Consider the Grandparent-to-Grandparent project at PACER. The Grandparent-to-Grandparent project is a group for grandparents of children who have any type of delay or disability.

The support group offers the chance to meet other grandparents of children with special needs and share joys, concerns, stories, and common interests. The first fall meeting will be Monday, Oct. 13, 7 to 8:30 p.m. at PACER Center and will provide an opportunity to become acquainted with other grandparents in a fun, relaxed atmosphere.

Future gatherings will include informational presentations so grandparents can learn helpful strategies for encouraging communication between generations and for supporting their



children and families. Special programs will highlight services available for children with disabilities and will support, inform, and empower grandparents. Participants are also welcome to propose topics they'd like

to discuss or learn more about.

"PACER knows the importance and value of grandparents in the lives of grandchildren," said Jane Johnson, former coordinator of the PACER Grandparent-to-Grandparent project. "Whether it is reading to your grandchildren or talking to them on the telephone or Internet, you are making an impact on them by being a source of comfort and support. This is especially true if you are the grandparent of a child with a disability."

"It is such a joy to come and share your cares and problems with other people who have grandchildren with disabilities," said a participant. "I leave there feeling like I am not the only one who has a grandchild with a disability. It's a wonderful, wonderful program."

For more information, call PACER at 952-838-1308 and ask for the Grandparent project.

## Leadership Academy *(continued from page 12)*

to the STC Library.

"I was really amazed with what the students got out of it," says Kim Andres, a Rockford High School special education teacher who worked closely with PACER on the program. Not only did the Leadership Academy foster students' acceptance of their learning differences, students also gained self-advocacy skills, she says. Andres has applied for an AT&T grant to provide funds for the program's continuation at Rockford High School.

Parents also became part of the Leadership Academy team as they attended workshops and experimented with AT software on computers that were sent home. As a result, parents learned more about AT and how to help their teens transition from high school to employment or further education.

"Learning assistive technologies opens doors to those areas that were previously closed," says parent Barbara Eitel. "I believe this program is vital to students with learning disabilities. I certainly see the value and know that others will too. The possibilities are endless."

The Leadership Academy can be replicated. To learn more, visit [www.pacer.org/stc](http://www.pacer.org/stc) or call Erika Frake at 952-838-9000.

## *A simple bequest can change lives*

It's easy to make a bequest — a gift that lives after you. Simply remember PACER with a statement in your will or trust.

Your bequest in your will provides a legacy of your concern for children with disabilities and their families. It will support important PACER programs that truly make a difference in the lives of children.

Bequests can be in cash, real estate, securities, or other assets, and they may be deducted from your estate taxes. PACER Center, Inc., is registered as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation in Minnesota.

For information on how you can make a bequest to PACER, contact Mary Schrock, PACER Center's chief operating and development officer, or an attorney who represents your interests.

**PACER Center, Inc. 952-838-9000**

# Parents can assist with homework at all stages

Back to school for children also means back to school for parents. Fall is a time when children's lives focus on school and learning, and parents can help by supporting learning at home. Many researchers have shown the importance of parent involvement in the school life of a child.

Often parents think that parent involvement means spending time at the school building, but what they do to support their child's education outside of school and at home is also important. Being involved in education means that parents support student learning, whether at school or at home.

Parent involvement includes such at-home activities as: encouraging reading for fun and for information, maintaining high expectations, and helping with homework. Reading together, talking to children about books, and building a habit of reading all help children become better readers and better students.

High but realistic expectations for school become increasingly important as children grow. When students understand their parents' high expectations, they try harder and work to meet their parents' expectations.

Parent involvement also means helping with homework. It's important that parents set a time and a place for their children to do homework and check to see that the assignments are completed and turned in. Some additional tips to help children with homework are:

## For all grade levels

- Remember that each child is unique and learns differently. Let your child decide what works best, as long as he or she does the homework.

MINNESOTA PARENT CENTER  
Minnesota PIRC

- Make homework a priority in your child's schedule. Let your child know you expect it to be completed regularly and turned in on time.

- Watch for signs of frustration or anger when your child is doing homework. Contact the teacher if this happens often.

## Elementary school

In general, homework should increase as children grow; 10 minutes of homework for each grade level. A second grader should have approximately 20 minutes of homework, while a fifth grader can expect 50 minutes. These are just guidelines, but speak to your child's teacher if you see a big difference.

- Ask your child daily if he or she has homework. Check backpacks for assignments or worksheets that may have been forgotten.

- Help your child develop the habit of placing completed homework back into his or her back pack or in a designated spot in your home.

## Middle school

- Help your child build responsibility for tracking, completing, and turning in assignments by learning to write them down in a school planner or on a calendar.

- Work with your child to break down larger, long-term assignments into smaller pieces.

- Introduce the idea of studying as homework. Work with your child to review notes and texts daily, even when she doesn't have any written homework.

## High school

- Continue to monitor attendance, homework, quizzes and tests, and connect with the school as soon as you see a problem.

*(continued on page 15)*

## Free conference offers parents ideas for school success

Parents are invited to attend "Welcoming, Honoring, and Connecting," an event offering parents ideas and resources for supporting their child's education.

The dinner and conference are Thursday, Oct. 23 and Friday, Oct. 24 in Bloomington and sponsored by the Minnesota Parent Center, MN PIRC, a PACER project.

The event features an exciting speaker and helpful workshops that

will inspire parents to support their children's education in new ways. On Oct. 23, a Welcoming & Honoring dinner for parents celebrates parents' dedication to helping their children succeed in school. On Oct. 24, the Connecting conference explores ways parents can become involved their children's educational achievement.

Advance registration and application are required. Stipends are

available for child care and travel, if requested. To register, call 952-838-9000 or visit [www.PACER.org/mpc/workshops/asp](http://www.PACER.org/mpc/workshops/asp).

For more information, call 952-838-9000 or e-mail [MNPIRC@PACER.org](mailto:MNPIRC@PACER.org). All parents of children with or without disabilities may attend one or both of these special events at no cost.



Minnesota Parent Center  
MN PIRC staff

*Minnesota Parent Center - MN PIRC staff includes:(from left) Hassan Samantar, Dao Xiong, Lucy Favorite, Coordinator Heather Kilgore, Marge Mann, Deborah Ottman, Jeff Longenecker.*

## Parents can assist with homework (continued from page 14)

- Help your child to identify his or her own strengths and weaknesses to continue building his academic skills. For example, if your child puts off working on a big project, ask him or her to create a work schedule.
- Help your child build regular review of class notes and texts into daily homework time rather than cramming for hours the night before a test.

Minnesota Parent Center is Minnesota's Parental Information and Resource Center (MN PIRC), a federally funded project that works statewide to build effective parental involvement in all schools, especially Title I schools.

- The Minnesota Parent Center provides:
- free research-based training for schools, including Title I schools
  - individual assistance
  - information handouts

The Minnesota Parent Center-MN PIRC helps parents be strong partners in their children's education and encourages community involvement to help all children succeed at school. Call 952-838-9000 with questions, school-related problems, or to schedule training. For more information, visit [www.PACER.org/mpc/index.asp](http://www.PACER.org/mpc/index.asp).

## ***Do you want to make a difference? Change attitudes?***

### **Order PACER's COUNT ME IN<sup>®</sup> puppets!**

*"What a great way to dispel myths and raise awareness!"  
Minnesota teacher*

Help children learn about disabilities with your very own set of COUNT ME IN<sup>®</sup> hand-and-rod puppets. The puppets represent children who have various disabilities and are the stars of 45-minute to 60-minute educational programs for preschool and elementary grades 1-4.

#### ***The puppets are for sale in sets:***

**BASIC SET:** Six puppets with scripts for preschool and elementary shows.

**STARTER SET:** Three puppets with scripts on several disabilities for elementary students.

All sets include puppet wheelchair and props, "Disability Awareness: A Guidebook for Families and Educators," and a "Coordinator's Handbook" for creating a COUNT ME IN<sup>®</sup> project with volunteers. Training is also available.

Visit these engaging puppets at [www.PACER.org/puppets!](http://www.PACER.org/puppets!)



*For more information e-mail [puppets@PACER.org](mailto:puppets@PACER.org) or call PACER at 952-838-9000.*

## Resources

### New



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

Parents of youth with disabilities will find that the new (2007) edition of this attractive, easy-to-use book answers many questions about future housing choices to make with their child. From housing options to a resource directory, there is a wealth of information.

■ \$8 10+ copies, \$6 each PHP-a26

### New

#### **Educating Your Child with an Emotional Disturbance**

This concise guide will help parents of children with emotional or behavioral disorders participate effectively in planning their children's special education. Easy to read and understand, it covers school discipline policies, placement options, student support needs and much more.

■ \$5 10+ copies \$4 each PHP-a21



#### **Working Together**

This parent's guide to parent-professional partnership and communication is a "must have" for families of children with disabilities as they plan a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Filled with common-sense tips based on research and practice, it offers a blueprint for building positive family-school relationships. There are national and Minnesota versions.

■ \$6 10+ copies, \$5 each PHP-a19

#### **A Parents' Guide to Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**

A common-sense booklet, it introduces parents to the background and principles of UDL. It tells how UDL can help students with disabilities succeed in the classroom with an adaptable curriculum to meet their individual learning needs. It is published by the Technical Assistance ALLIANCE for Parent Centers at PACER Center.

\$2 10+ copies, \$1.50 ea ALL-38



#### **Beyond Sticks and Stones: How to Help Your Child with a Disability Deal with Bullying**

More than 160,000 children, many with disabilities, miss school each day to avoid harassment and intimidation by classmates. This long-awaited book helps you to help your child address the problem of bullying.

■ \$6 10+ copies, \$4 each BP-7

#### **Parents Can Be the Key**

The eighth edition of this popular handbook for parents of children and youth with disabilities describes basic special education laws and procedures and parents' rights and responsibilities in their children's educations. Published in 2006.

■ \$3 10+ copies, \$2 each PHP-a1



#### **Let's Talk Activity Cards**



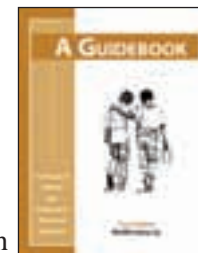
The activity cards, published by Minnesota Parent Center, Minnesota's Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC), are an easy, entertaining way for parents to help their young child build vocabulary and speaking skills—the first steps in learning to read. Simple instructions and comfortable handling make the cards enjoyable and easy to use. For all children, ages 2-6.

■ \$4 10+ copies, \$2.50 each or 100+, \$2 each MPC-9

#### **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 128 pages of this fourth edition are packed with pertinent suggestions for parents.

■ \$12 10+ copies, \$7.50 each PHP-a8





## Resources

**New**

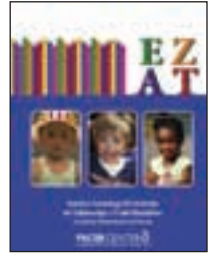


### **A guide for Minnesota Parents to the Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

Helps parents work with schools to address each child's special needs through understanding the required components of the IEP. Includes examples from the Minnesota state recommended form. 2008.

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

### **EZ AT** Assistive Technology Activities for Children Ages 3–8 with Disabilities



A compilation of activities for children with disabilities is the result of submissions by parents and professionals across the nation. Many of the ideas are simple and inexpensive to incorporate at home and school. All represent best practices for children that most effectively use technology to promote learning and inclusion.

\$10 | 10+ copies, \$8 each | STC- 16

## 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 2). 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: \_\_\_\_\_

(Minneapolis residents, 7.4 % Hennepin County residents, 6.9 % Anoka, Ramsey, Dakota, Washington counties, 6.75 % Most other Minnesota residents, 6.5% ) Varies with specific location.

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

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

### Creation Station

#### Art Extravaganza

*So you say you like sequins and glitter? This day is for you. Use buttons, pom poms, stickers, google eyes, and a variety of art materials to make one-of-a-kind 3-D masterpieces.*

**Oct. 11, 10 a.m. to noon (PACER Center)**

#### Making Memories

*Create unique memory boxes for a keepsake or to give as a gift. Make your own special design with mosaic paper squares and an assortment of fun materials.*

**Dec. 13, 10 a.m. to noon (PACER Center)**

#### Open House Fun

*Join the creation station at the Simon Technology Center's annual Open House. Try a variety of adapted art tools including: wheelchair sidewalk chalk machines, pogo paint sticks, and more.*

**Nov. 1, 10 a.m. to noon (PACER Center)**

#### Go Wild with Batik

*What do you get when you cross hot wax, fabric, and dye? The awesome art of batik! Learn about this ancient technique as you batik t-shirts using wild colors of dye.*

**Jan. 10, 10 a.m. to noon (PACER Center)**

### Early Childhood

#### ABCs of Early Literacy

*Nancy Kaczrowski, Early Reading First GET READY coordinator for the Bloomington public schools, presents the workshop. It focuses on building skills for children from birth through age 5, emphasizing strategies for families.*

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

#### Parenting with Positive Behavior Support: Part One and Part Two

*Participants will learn about Positive Behavior Support (PBS), a problem-solving process that helps parents find strategies for teaching their child new behaviors to replace challenging behaviors. Part One will focus on understanding PBS and Part Two will focus on developing strategies based on the PBS approach.*

**Part One: Oct. 14, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)**

**Part Two: Oct. 21, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)**

### Emotional Behavioral

#### A Fitting IDEA: Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Children with Disabilities

*Parents of children with disabilities and co-occurring mental health needs will learn how to use the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or the Individual Interagency Intervention Plan (IIIP) to help meet their child's needs at school.*

**Oct. 20, 7 to 9 p.m. (Monticello)**

#### Focus on the Positive: Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

*Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a consistent and positive approach to discipline that can be used for all students. This workshop will provide an overview of PBIS, information on current PBIS initiatives in Minnesota, and strategies for including positive approaches to school discipline in IEPs and behavior intervention planning.*

**Oct. 27, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER)**

#### Successful Transitions: Planning for Youth with Disabilities and Mental Health or Behavioral Needs

*This interactive workshop covers planning for transition to and from different education sites as well as transition into adulthood for youth with mental health or behavioral needs. Transition age (14-21) youth are invited to attend!*

**Nov. 10, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (St. Paul)**

#### Parent Mentor Training

*Parents who have experienced multiple systems of care for their child with a disability and a co-occurring mental health issue are invited to share their experiences and hope for the future with parents and caregivers new to the process. Interested parents need to fill out an application to be accepted. Please contact [rnelson@pacer.org](mailto:rnelson@pacer.org) for more information.*

**Nov. 17, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)**

### Health Information, Advocacy

#### Getting the Help You Need

*This workshop will cover public programs such as medical assistance, TEFRA, home and*

*community based waivers, consumer-directed community supports, county services, and county grants.*

**Oct. 28, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Anoka)**

#### Who Pays? Taking the Maze out of Funding

*Come learn about sources of funding and other resources for families whose children have special health care needs and disabilities. Topics include: MinnesotaCare, Medical Assistance, home and community-based waivers, Supplemental Security Income, third party billing and other funding.*

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

#### Overview of Personal Care Assistance (PCA) services

*Participants will receive an overview of personal care assistance (PCA) services, benefits, and consumer options. Information on who is eligible for the service; how to request an assessment; and locating a PCA service provider will also be provided.*

**Nov. 12, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)**

### Housing

#### Housing Resource & Information Fair

*Where will your child live in adulthood? PACER's 5<sup>th</sup> Housing Fair is an opportunity for families of children and young adults and service providers to meet and discuss housing options, services, supports, and related issues for children and young adults with disabilities.*

**Oct. 4, 9 a.m. to noon (PACER Center)**

### Juvenile Justice

#### Juvenile Justice and Students with Disabilities

*This workshop addresses issues related to special education and youth at risk for involvement with the juvenile justice system. Topics include special trends, special education rights, zero tolerance, risk factors, and best practices and strategies for parents and professionals.*

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

### Parent Training

#### A Viewing of "Including Samuel"

*Come watch and discuss the movie, "Including Samuel," produced by photojour-*

## Workshops

nalist Dan Habib. The one-hour, award-winning film features Habib's son and includes interviews with other families, teachers, and disability right experts. The film is designed to help schools, families, community groups, and others work toward educational inclusion.

Nov. 6, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Goodhue)

### IDEA: Understanding the Special Education Process

This 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 Individualized Education Program.

Sept. 23, 6 to 8 p.m. (St. Paul)

Oct. 1, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Pipestone)

Oct. 7, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (S. Washington County)

Oct. 21, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Detroit Lakes)

### IDEA: Understanding the IEP

This revised Individualized Education Program (IEP) workshop explores new IEP requirements and components of IEP development, including evaluation, resolving disagreements, and an expanded section on writing measurable goals.

Oct. 2, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Wilmar)

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

Oct. 27, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Albert Lea)

### Is Your Child a Target of Bullying?

This workshop offers intervention strategies for parents of children with disabilities who may be targeted by bullies at school.

Oct. 9, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

Nov. 10, 7 to 9 p.m. (Anoka)

### No Child Left Behind

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

Sept. 25, 7 to 9 p.m. (St. Cloud)

Oct. 9, 7 to 9 p.m. (Richfield)

Oct. 28, 7 to 9 p.m. (Brainerd)

### The House of IDEA

The special education process is like building a house. There is a logical order to both. This workshop will cover how you use the building blocks of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to develop appropriate services for your child.

Oct. 23, 7 to 9:30 p.m. (Northfield)

### Tips for Talking with School Staff

What's the difference between saying "You should" and "How can we"? Find out in this workshop that provides parents of special education students easy-to-use, practical tips for communicating with school staff and resolving differences in effective ways.

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

Oct. 7, 6 to 8 p.m. (St. Francis)

Oct. 27, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (St. Cloud)

### You Don't Have to be Mad to Say NO!

Learn positive strategies for parenting your young child with disabilities and promoting growth and development. Presented by Rebecca Kajander, C.P.N., M.P.H., a nurse practitioner who has helped hundreds of children take care of themselves using self-care skills.

Nov. 10, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

## Public Policy

### Speak Up for Special Education

Learn what happened during the 2008 legislative session and the power of your personal story. There will be an opportunity to talk with state legislators about your special education concerns.

Oct. 2, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Duluth)

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

Oct. 9, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Rochester)

Oct. 16, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (St. Cloud)

Oct. 22, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Minnetonka)

Nov. 11, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Roseville)

Nov. 18, (collaboration with Hopkins SEAC) 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. (Hopkins)

## Simon Technology Center

### Foundations for Using Visual Strategies

(Made possible by a grant from Autism Speaks)

Visual Strategies can be a powerful tool in helping learners understand directions, expectations, schedules, and much more. This workshop will lay a foundation for understanding what visual strategies are and how to use them. This begins a five-part series on visuals supports that can benefit parents and professionals working with students with autism and with other children with disabilities. Participants attending four of the five workshops in the series will receive a free membership to the Simon Technology Center Lending Library.



Sept. 30, 6 to 9 p.m. (PACER)

### AT for Reading, Writing and Math

Participants will receive an overview of assistive technology for reading, writing and math curriculums. The session includes demonstrations, hands-on experiences, and information on resources.

Nov. 13, 6 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

### Introduction to Board Making Tools

There are a variety of tools available to help parents and professionals create visual supports for their learners. This hands-on workshop, part of the Visual Strategies series, will introduce participants to five different board making tools: Boardmaker Plus 6.0, Overboard, TheraSimplicity, Visual Essentials, and Word. Presenters will give

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## Workshop Registration

PACER Center workshops are free to Minnesota parents. If you wish to attend a workshop, please register in advance. In addition to the brief information above, the workshops are described in more detail at PACER's Web site.

For information and easy online workshop registration, visit

[www.PACER.org/workshops](http://www.PACER.org/workshops)

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

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## Change Service Requested

## Workshops

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an overview and comparison of these tools. Participants will then have time to explore the programs.

**Oct. 28, 6 to 9 p.m.**  
(PACER computer lab)

### STC Open House

The Simon Technology Center invites open house participants to explore low-tech, low-cost assistive technology solutions. The annual event includes tours of the Simon Technology Center, art activities, local vendors, prizes and much more.

**Nov. 1, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (PACER)**

#### Tech for Girls: Dream It, Build It!

If you can dream it, you can build it! Middle school girls will test their creative thinking skills while designing bridges, boats, and more. Toothpicks, pennies, aluminum foil, and other common materials will be used to make a variety of structures that will then be tested for strength.

**Oct. 7 6 to 8 p.m. (PACER Center)**

### Using Symbol Supported Text

Part of the Visual Strategies Workshop Series, this workshop will introduce partici-

pants to symbol supported text. Symbol supported text is taking a line of text and using symbols to increase comprehension of the text or concept. A variety of tools and software including, News-2-You, PixWriter, and Clicker 5, will be introduced. (Made possible by a grant from Autism Speaks)

**Dec. 16, 6 to 9 p.m.**  
(PACER )

### Visual Strategies Open Labs

Part of the Visual Strategies Workshop Series, these open labs invite participants to drop-in between 5 and 7 p.m. to use tools introduced in previous sessions. Assistive technology specialists will be available to help you create a schedule, a sequence board, a social story, and other practical solutions for home and school. (Made possible by a grant from Autism Speaks)

**Nov. 11, 5 to 7 p.m. (PACER Center)**

## Transition

### Transitioning To Postsecondary

This workshop will help parents, students, and school staff understand and learn strategies to successfully make the transition from secondary to postsecondary education.

Topics will include accommodations, assistive technology, disclosure, self-advocacy, and Section 504.

**Oct. 21, 7 to 9 p.m. (Burnsville)**

### Focus on Transition

Families of youth with disabilities (age 14 and over) will learn about opportunities and strategies for youth as they enter and complete high school and move toward postsecondary education, work and adult services.

**Nov. 13, 6:30-8:30 p.m. (Bemidji)**

### Social Security for Transition-Age Youth

A Social Security representative will speak about programs for transition-age youth. Topics include the difference between Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), what the "Ticket" program involves, and what "PASS" means for young adults.

**Oct. 23, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Anoka)**

**Nov. 12, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Pine City)**

Save the date!  
Saturday, May 2, 2009  
PACER Benefit