

# PACERSETTER

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

## 108th Congress reauthorizes IDEA

By Bob Brick

Congress passed the long-awaited reauthorization (update) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) in late November and President George W. Bush signed it into law in early December 2004. The IDEA guarantees the right to a free, appropriate public education to children with all disabilities.

The new law took two years of intense work by members of Congress, key committee staff, and a variety of education stakeholders, including parents of children with disabilities. It is a compromise that changes parts of IDEA '97.

Most provisions of the new law take effect July 1. The U.S. Department of Education will now develop federal rules, a process that could take many months and possibly a year. Rules clarify the law.

In the coming months, states will also compare their laws and rules to IDEA 2004. So long as state laws and regulations do not conflict with federal law, states may enact or retain state provisions that exceed or supplement federal requirements. Many states currently offer students with disabilities and their parents rights and protections beyond what the federal law requires. To be certain that the state provisions are retained, many advocates representing students with disabilities say they believe it is important for parents of children with disabilities to be involved in state policy efforts.

(For more on IDEA, see pages 10-11)

## Lionel Richie headlines PACER's Benefit May 7

Lionel Richie, one of the world's most recognized and rewarded performers, headlines PACER's 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Benefit May 7 at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

Richie's popular hits "All Night Long," "Truly," "Hello," and "Endless Love" are examples of why he has

- sold nearly 100 million albums,
- notched 22 Top 10 hits,
- received Grammy Awards, an Oscar, a Golden Globe, and numerous American Music Awards and People's Choice Awards.

Richie's music spans a spectrum of talent ranging from his rich and mellow vocals to his co-composing of the famous "We Are the World."

Audiences across generations applaud his work. Timeless, it satisfies the demands of accepted tradition *and* ever-changing musical trends.

Accolades for his newest album, *Just For You* (2004), laud Richie's creativity in expanding his recognized talent and musical expertise in new directions. Some songs include a Celtic flavor, Middle Eastern whirl, or a touch of soulful gospel.

Only Richie and Irving Berlin have scored No. 1 hits in nine consecutive years. Richie believes that a hit song is rendered with great craft and conveys simple ideas that are heartfelt and resonate with listeners of



Lionel Richie

every age, race, and nationality, he said.

"And that's why the music has stayed around so long," he added.

PACER Benefit tickets include a silent and live auction, in addition to Richie's performance. A pre-Benefit gourmet dinner is available with a separate ticket.

Benefit co-chairs are Mary Frey, Judy Jaffee, Colleen McGough-Wood.

Proceeds from the event support PACER's programs, which serve families of children and young adults with all disabilities.

See page 2 for ticket information.

## BENEFIT RESERVATIONS

To reserve tickets for the 2005 PACER Benefit featuring Lionel Richie, please complete the form below and fax or mail it to PACER Center. Reservations can be made at PACER's Web site (<http://www.pacer.org/help/benefit/>) or by telephoning (952) 838-9000.

### Benefit Tickets:

Please send me:

- \$55<sup>1</sup> tickets
- \$85<sup>1</sup> tickets
- \$140<sup>2</sup> Patron tickets\*
- \$200<sup>2</sup> Patron tickets\*
- \$275<sup>3</sup> Patron tickets\*
- \$550<sup>3</sup> 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

\* Patron party tickets

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.

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

# Parents, PACER to recognize teachers March 7

The Ninth Annual Teacher-School Appreciation Day is Monday, March 7, 2005. 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.

"There are special people at schools who are committed to helping our children with disabilities," said Richardson. "Everyone likes to feel appreciated. 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). Please provide sufficient time to process the requests.

Families wanting information can visit <http://www.pacer.org/help/teacher.htm> or e-mail [pacer@pacer.org](mailto:pacer@pacer.org)

# Legislature likely to tackle special ed issues

By Marcia Kelly

The Minnesota Legislature faces a budget deficit, increased funding needs, and a pledge of no new taxes. How will decisions affect families of children with disabilities?

The 2005 Minnesota Legislature convened Jan. 4, and parents of children with disabilities can expect to see discussion on several subjects that may affect them.

“This is a budget-setting year,” said Bob Brick, PACER Center’s director of public policy. The state faces a deficit that by some estimates exceeds \$1 billion. Because Gov. Tim Pawlenty appears firm in his resolve not to im-

plement new taxes, proposals to increase funding in one area of the budget will mean reductions in other areas.

For example, if increased funding for K-12 schools is approved and no new revenue sources are available, legislators would need to take money from other parts of the budget. In that case, “parents ought to be preparing themselves for cuts in health and human services programs,” Brick said. This could include cuts in waiver programs, residential programs, and programs funded by the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982 (TEFRA).

Another issue: aversive and deprivation procedures for children whose behavior puts themselves or others at risk. A bill will propose changes to

current regulations.

PACER Center collaborates on a number of legislative issues with the Coalition for Children with Disabilities. They include:

- a loan forgiveness program for teachers working with children who have emotional and behavior disorders
- the adoption of universal design standards for learning
- more coordination between children’s mental health services and the school;
- increased special education funding.

People who want more information on the topics can visit [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org) to sign up for legislative alerts. There are also links to state representatives and senators, key committees, and more.

## PACESETTER

Published by PACER Center, Inc.

Three times a year

Circulation: 98,000

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PACER Center expands opportunities and enhances the quality of life for children and young adults with disabilities and their families. The mission is based on the concepts of parents helping parents and working in coalition with others. An Equal Opportunity Employer, PACER is funded by grants from the U.S. Departments of Education, Labor, and other sources, and from foundations, corporations, and individuals. Views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Departments or other donors. Contributions to PACER are tax-deductible. For information, call Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## IRIS project helps prepare professionals

PACER Center is a partner in a national effort to ensure that college graduates in specific disciplines are prepared to work with students with disabilities and their families.

The IRIS Center for Faculty Enhancement at Vanderbilt University was designed in response to a request from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). It focuses on preparing K-12 general educators, school administrators, school counselors, and school nurses. Free Web-based course modules and materials are available. They address instruction and interventions, interaction among disciplines, and coordination of school improvement efforts to support results for students with disabilities. Focus groups and other activities provide parent views to IRIS on preparing the educators, administrators, and nurses.

Sharman Davis Barrett of the Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers project at PACER works with the partnership.

Parents are encouraged to visit the IRIS Center for Faculty Enhancement Web site at <http://www.taalliance.org/IRIS.htm>

## PACER Center offers committee resources

If you serve on a special education or interagency advisory committee, PACER Center offers resources and assistance that can help.

- Special education directors and interagency committee chairs with open positions may contact PACER to inquire about the availability of trained parent leaders in their community.
- PACER advocates can provide technical assistance to local Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs) and can speak at SEAC meetings regarding parent involvement.
- PACER publishes handouts for parents and professionals regarding effective parent involvement. They are available in PDF format online at [www.pacer.org/parent/leadership.htm](http://www.pacer.org/parent/leadership.htm), or by calling PACER at (952) 838-9000 or (800) 537-2237 (toll free in Greater Minnesota).

# Local teenagers initiate 'Fun Times'

By Patricia Bill

An occasional giggle, squeal, or playful jab to the shoulder punctuates the hum of chatter as the teenagers move past the shops on their way to the food court. It's an ordinary Saturday at the Mall of America.

The group of teens is anything but ordinary, however. It's an even mix of high school students with and without disabilities. They are part of Fun Times, a new social inclusion project at PACER Center.

The trip to the mall is only one of their events. The group has attended baseball games, bowled, gone to the movies, visited an aquarium, and consumed a goodly amount of fast food. The main attraction, however, is just being together.

PACER and a handful of Twin Cities high school students launched Fun Times in 2003. The idea is to provide opportunities for students with and without disabilities to meet and develop one-on-one relationships and group camaraderie through activities.

Win Bennett of Orono and a couple of his friends developed the concept, based on personal experience. Win's sister, Mara, has Williams Syndrome, a disability with developmental and medical characteristics.

When they were children, friends would think of the two, who are a year apart in age, as a pair, Win said. If people asked Win to go swimming, they asked Mara, too. If there was a birth-



Win Bennett

day party, both names were on the invitation.

That changed, however, as Win and Mara grew older. Win noticed that others began to leave Mara out. By the time the two reached high school, their social schedules were like night and day, he said.

"It occurred to me that if Mara, who is very outgoing, was sitting at

home on weekend nights, what about teenagers with disabilities who are not as social?" Win said.

He also felt that some of his classmates and other teens were missing an opportunity to make some great friends, Win said. He suspected that once they interacted with teens with disabilities, they would find out that "people with disabilities are fun and interesting."

Win and his friends Jordan Bechdol and Alex Gray decided to take action. Win knew about PACER and its services through his family. He contacted Paula Goldberg, executive director, and Mary Schrock, director of development, and asked to meet with them about the Fun Times idea.

"We didn't know quite what to expect before that first meeting," admitted Goldberg, "but after listening to Win, we realized what a fantastic idea it was. It matches a main thrust of PACER's mission: 'to expand opportunities and enhance the quality of life of children and young adults with disabilities and their families.'

Win is an amazing young man."

"Children with disabilities face many challenges on the road to adulthood. Socializing is one of them," explained Schrock. "While PACER works with parents on many issues, we hear a common theme: 'My child is left out of ordinary social activities. There are very few opportunities to be with other children and make friends.'

"Disability experts agree that developing social skills is impor-



From left, friends Win Bennett, Andy Ulseth, and Eric Tulberg zero in on common interests at a recent Fun Times event—a day at the Mall of America.

# for everyone

tant to helping children and young adults with disabilities succeed in future employment and as part of the community,” continued Schrock.

After several planning meetings and PACER board approval, there was an informal gathering of six teenagers in Summer 2003 for a Minnesota Twins game—Fun Times’ first event.

Today, teenagers and PACER Center staff collaborate on the project. The teens help plan the event and provide volunteers without disabilities from among several Twin Cities high schools. PACER administers the program, invites students with disabilities they know would enjoy the program, and provides adult supervision.

While Fun Times fills a niche for students with disabilities, it also benefits students without disabilities, pointed out Win. It broadens their horizons and gives them a better understanding of the world, he said. The students have discovered many similarities among themselves and their new friends, he said. Those without disabilities are developing a new appreciation for how students with disabilities confront routine challenges: navigating doors, using the restroom, counting change, carrying a food tray.

Now that Fun Times has a track record of several events, Win said he is elated:

“We found out this actually works! The sky is the limit.”

Then he confessed, “Fun Times is also something that is a little selfish. It’s something I really like to do. I really wanted to share what I love to do with others. The truth of it is, we get to go out and have fun.”



*Clockwise from top left, Paula F. Goldberg, left, and Marge Goldberg, right, PACER founders, posed with Paul Ackerman, the parent center’s first U.S. Department of Education program officer. Right, Leslie Fish and Malcolm Walker met U.S. Rep Jim Ramstad (R-3rd), who received PACER’s Champion for Children Award. Bottom, PACER recognized successful young adults with disabilities through an honor roll.*

## PACER event celebrates 25 years

Youth with disabilities, families, advocates, educators, policymakers, staff, and volunteers celebrated PACER Center’s Silver Anniversary with a gala dinner Sept. 20 at Le Meridien Minneapolis. One of several anniversary events, the dinner recognized PACER’s 25 years of help to families of children with all disabilities.

Dinner co-chairs were Melanie Barry and Rosemary Fish. General chair for anniversary events was Kathy Graves. Paula F. Goldberg is PACER’s executive director, and Mary Schrock is director of development

The program focused on successes of children and youth with disabilities served by PACER and the people who made the successes possible. It featured remarks by young adults with disabilities, U.S. Rep Jim Ramstad (R-3rd), and Paul Ackerman, PACER’s first U.S. Department of Education program officer. Heidi Kraemer of IBM presented an IBM Minnesota Community Partnership award to PACER, and other PACER friends and supporters spoke.

PACER honored four individuals with Norma Hexter Volunteer Awards:

- Kathy Graves, PACER Board of Directors, former Benefit co-chair, and volunteer in other capacities;
- Ruth Levine, former Benefit co-chair and long-time volunteer in COUNT ME IN and other PACER activities;
- Don Davidson, chair of Benefit corporate-sponsor committee and PACER supporter for two decades; and
- Nancy Lehrman (daughter of the late Norma Hexter), former Benefit co-chair and involved volunteer.

Also recognized for outstanding support to PACER Center were Connie Kunin, Mary Sue and Steve Simon, and Frank and Muffy Bennett.

PACER was founded by Paula Goldberg and Marge Goldberg (retired). A parent training and information center, PACER provides varied resources such as publications, workshops, and individualized assistance for parents of children with disabilities and special health needs and professionals in Minnesota and across the nation. It helps families make decisions about education, vocational training, employment, and other services for their child with disabilities.

# National Alliance Conference convenes in DC

More than 350 parent center staff and board members, policy makers, government agency representatives, and others who advocate for children with disabilities attended the eighth annual national conference of the Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers (the Alliance). It was Feb. 3-5 in Washington, D.C.

As the national technical assistance center for the Alliance project, PACER Center provides information and resources to the 100 Parent Training and Information centers (PTIs) and

Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs) across the nation. PACER planned the national conference.

Titled "Our Combined Voices: Making a Difference for Children with Disabilities," the event:

- explored ways for special education stakeholders to collaborate,
- introduced ideas for partnerships with business and technology,
- provided research on education strategies,
- offered opportunities for parent

centers to network,

- brought nationally recognized speakers to the podium, and
- participated in a Capitol Hill reception with members of Congress, Department of Education staff, and representatives from other organizations that help children with disabilities.

PACER Executive Director Paula F. Goldberg, Sue Folger, and Sharman Davis Barrett are co-directors of the Alliance project.

# Parent leadership conference planned for April

Parents put time and effort into preparing their children with disabilities for the road ahead. But who makes sure the road is paved, plowed, and free of roadblocks when they arrive?

The answer, in part, is parents themselves. By participating in state and local boards and committees,

parents can have a big impact on policy and education decisions that affect children with disabilities. PACER's annual Parent Leadership Conference provides the tools and training parents need to be effective advisors at the state and local level. When parents become leaders, they help clear the

road for all children with disabilities.

Participants at this year's conference will:

- Receive an update on current legislative and policy issues, including the newly reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation
- Learn key elements of effective local Special Education, Early Intervention, and Community Transition Interagency Advisory Committees
- Explore opportunities on special education and disability-related advisory committees
- Learn tips on working effectively with policy makers
- Hear success stories from a panel of parents who have made a difference in their communities
- And more!

The conference is open to Minnesota parents of children with disabilities who serve, or want to serve, on an interagency or special education board, council, or committee. The event will be April 15-16 at PACER Center.

Space is limited. Please contact Barb Ziemke of PACER at (952) 838-9000 or (800) 537-2237 (Greater Minnesota), or e-mail [pacer@pacer.org](mailto:pacer@pacer.org).

## Literacy expert to speak at PACER

"Making the General Curriculum Work for My Child with a Disability," a free, public workshop for parents of children with disabilities, features Douglas Fisher, national expert on literacy and education. It is March 30 and 31, at PACER Center.

Fisher speaks the language of parents.

"He has been in the classroom. He has talked and worked with kids. He gives concrete examples of his ideas and strategies for working with children with disabilities," said one mother. "He doesn't just give out numbers on who succeeds and who doesn't."

Fisher has taught a range of courses, including teacher education, literacy, and language development, at San Diego State University. The City Heights K-12 Credential Program, which he co-directs, won a 2003 Christa McAuliffe Award given by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities for leadership and innovation in teacher education.

Fisher is a popular speaker at local, state, and national conferences. He has published a number of articles on literacy, instruction, accommodations, and curriculum.

The PACER workshops are from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. on March 30 and from 9 a.m. to noon on March 31. To attend either, register online at <http://www.pacer.org/text/workshops/> or call PACER at (952) 838-9000 or (800) 537-2237 (toll-free in Minnesota).

# Interagency collaboration helps families

By Patricia Bill

It sounds logical—various state agencies work together to create a network of services for children with disabilities. Their efforts prevent duplication while addressing a spectrum of needs.

Minnesota pioneered the idea in the mid-1990s, and emerged a national leader for interagency collaboration affecting children with disabilities and their families.

“It’s like creating a cloth,” explained James R. Huber, director of the Minnesota Department of Human Services Division of Community Partnership. “Threads are woven together to form cloth. Left by themselves they are just threads.”

There used to be loose threads in Minnesota. Then, about a decade ago, what is now the Minnesota Department of Education began weaving the state’s interagency services. It created a “think tank” on interagency collaboration and invited representatives of the departments of Health and Human Services to participate, remembered Huber, one of the original members.

## What’s the IIIP?

The IIIP (Individual Interagency Intervention Plan) replaces multiple agency plans, such as the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Individual Service Plan (ISP), but retains the elements of each plan.

For example, a child with cognitive disabilities who receives special education *and* county services could have one meeting with school and county representatives, resulting in a single document (the IIIP).

Because the state law builds on existing local systems of interagency collaborations, the IIIP process differs among Minnesota communities. Families can receive information from their school district’s director of special education.

Four other state agencies—Employment and Economic Development, Commerce, Corrections, and Human Rights—eventually joined them.

The group used Minnesota’s successful interagency approach for young children as a springboard for their plan to expand the network of services for children from birth to adulthood.

In 1998, Minnesota passed the Interagency Services for Children with Disabilities Act. Among other things, it produced 1) the Minnesota System of Interagency Coordination (MnSIC), an interagency service system for chil-

dren with disabilities from birth through age 21 and 2) the Individual Interagency Intervention Plan (IIIP).

MnSIC includes representatives from 13 education- or disability-related agencies and associations. Huber is a Department of Human Services representative. Another representative to MnSIC, the Department of Education’s Norena Hale, manager, Special Education Policy, was also a member original think tank.

The IIIP is an option for families. It allows a family to meet jointly with everyone who provides services to the child. Together they can solve problems, coordinate services, and share information.

Through changes in laws, government administrations, technology, best practices, and many other factors that affect children with disabilities, the desire to collaborate is a constant among many education and disability stakeholders.

“With slim budgets, we need to do everything we can to work together,” Huber said.

## Jim Huber advocates for children with disabilities and collaboration

A social worker for decades, Jim Huber admits to a passion for helping children with disabilities.

Huber would like to see each Minnesota child receive the best services available, and he believes that interagency coordination helps make that possible, he said.

As director of the Division of Community Partnership, Minnesota Department of Human Services, he has the opportunity to put the belief into practice. His work involves a range of components from dealing with the human services aspect of Part C (early childhood) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004)—to refugee resettlement—to supports and resources for adults with disabilities.

Huber encourages families to be involved in their children’s lives. Parents, he said, know their child and their child’s needs better than anyone else.

“Parents need to voice their position on their child’s care and education,” he said.



Jim Huber

# Digital books bring inclusion

By Janet Peters and Annette Cerreta, Simon Technology Center

Books by computer? It's the greatest change to publishing since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Just as printing presses brought reading to the general population 500 years ago, digital books bring inclusion to many people with disabilities.

The newly reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) addresses the importance of providing instructional materials, such as digital textbooks, in alternative formats to students with disabilities. The federal law includes language about the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS), which many parents and professionals say is a step in putting 21<sup>st</sup> century technology to work for everyone.

A look at the benefits of digital



*Digital books give students access to information in a number of ways. They also help teachers by giving flexibility in presenting material.*

materials shows their potential role in the education of all children:

- Digital textbooks (through the Internet or on CD-Rom or DVD) can have pictures, video, and interactive features that make them come alive for students in ways not possible with traditional print textbooks.

- Teachers have more flexibility. The information in online digital textbooks is usually current and in-depth, and a teacher can present it in many ways. For example, he or she can project graphs and charts on a screen to illustrate points. Digital text also makes it easier for teachers to modify the lesson and worksheets based on an individual's need.

- Digital materials are more accessible than printed publications for

many students with disabilities. For example, they offer children with visual or learning disabilities more options for participating in a school's general curriculum. They also improve access for students with physical disabilities who cannot handle books or other tactile materials.

- Digital materials support a "Universal Design for Learning" (see page 9) approach to education. They can be

- read aloud with a screen reader
- listened to using a portable player
- received through a computer using an assistive technology device
- modified to meet the specific needs of each learner. For example, users can enlarge or edit text and add or omit text

Despite the many benefits for students with and without disabilities, digital textbooks are often underused. A large part of the problem is the variety of electronic formats. Without a national standard for producing and distributing digital textbooks, many states established their own file format standards. The result: a patchwork of regulations

## EXITE camp seeks applicants

PACER and IBM seek 30 motivated girls with disabilities to participate in the free EXITE (EXploring Interests in Technology and Engineering) Camp at PACER. Girls must be entering the sixth, seventh, eighth, or ninth grades during the 2005-2006 school year.

The camp, which meets in five sessions between July 21 and Aug. 4, is for girls with disabilities who are interested in science or technology. Activities include varied interactive and hands-on work with computers, meeting professionals with disabilities who work in technology, receiving a mentor, and touring the IBM Rochester facility.

"PACER is very much looking forward to the third year of collaboration with IBM. This is an amazing opportunity for young girls to meet others just like themselves and to have fun with science and math," said Kristi Hansen, coordinator of the camp.

Applications can be obtained by calling (952) 838-9000 or by visiting [www.pacer.org/stc/exite.htm](http://www.pacer.org/stc/exite.htm). The application deadline is May 2, 2005.

# to many with disabilities

## Universal Design for Learning

The central practical premise of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is that a curriculum should include alternatives to make it accessible and appropriate for individuals with different backgrounds, learning styles, abilities, and disabilities in widely varied learning contexts. — *Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)*

for publishers and schools. The situation complicated and slowed the production and distribution of digital textbooks to schools across the nation.

In 2002, however, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special

## PACER develops Web site on bullying

Bullying keeps 160,000 children home from school each day in this country. Children with disabilities can be especially vulnerable to such harassment.

To help deal with the problem, PACER Center will develop an innovative bullying prevention Web site, with special emphasis on children with disabilities. This project, to be launched in 2005, is made possible by a grant from the Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ceresi Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation.

The Web site will have information for second- to sixth-graders who need information on bullying, including those who witness it. The site will include such features as:

- Animation
- Celebrity videos featuring the Minnesota Twins and others
- Contests to submit artwork about bullying.

Watch for details about the new Web site at [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org).

Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) began to address the need for a streamlined approach to accessible textbook production and distribution. A panel of experts assembled to determine how to simplify the process.

The panel recommended creating a national file format standard (NIMAS) for electronic instructional materials. The intent was to expedite delivery of accessible instructional materials to schools and the students who need them while reducing costs for both publishers and schools.

The U.S. Department of Education endorsed NIMAS in 2004, and language for adopting standards was included in IDEA 2004.

Many special education stakeholders claim that including NIMAS in law

is a victory for students with different learning needs that can revolutionize education. All agree that it is a sign of the times.

PACER's Simon Technology Center will conduct a free workshop on "Universal Design for Learning," (see page 19).

## Want to try new software?

IBM and PACER are collaborating in a pilot project that offers Web Adaptation technology for people with disabilities. Free software is provided to participants.

If you are interested in participating, call the Simon Technology Center at (952) 838-9000 or (800) 537-2237 (Greater Minnesota) or e-mail [stc@pacer.org](mailto:stc@pacer.org)

## 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. For information, call Rianne Leaf at PACER (952) 838-9000 or (800) 537-2237 (toll-free in Minnesota).*

#### Volunteer Opportunities

- Puppeteer for
  - COUNT ME IN
  - LET'S PREVENT ABUSE
- Help with PACER Center's Benefit on May 7, 2005
  - Donate Silent Auction items
  - Contact friends, businesses for
    - Silent Auction donations
    - Playbill ads
    - Corporate sponsorships
    - Help on Benefit day
- Do clerical tasks at PACER

#### Donations

- Include PACER in my will or life insurance policy
- Obtain and use PACER memorial/special occasion envelopes
- Bring Change for Children to PACER
- Contribute to PACER at Panera Bread locations
- Make a tax-deductible gift to:
  - COUNT ME IN Puppet program
  - Simon Technology Center
- Purchase PACER water and merchandise

To learn of other opportunities, visit [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)

# IDEA 2004: A new law

The information below is a sample of the changes in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004). Many organizations have analyzed the new law, and parents are encouraged to read as many as possible. Minnesota parents can contact PACER Center at (952) 838-9000 or (800)

537-2237 toll free to keep abreast of the rule-making process and discussions that the state will undertake. More information on IDEA is at <http://www.pacer.org/legislation/index.htm>

Information in the article below comes from a variety of sources, including Bob Brick of PACER Center and Kathy Boundy of the Center for Law and Education.

## Public comment on regulations

The next step in the process for IDEA 2004 is for the U.S. Department of Education to develop regulations to clarify the law.

As the Department develops the regulations, it is soliciting public comments, due by **Feb. 28, 2005**. The Department accepts comments by mail, e-mail, or via the Department Web site. When submitting comments, do so only once and include a description of your area of involvement (i.e. special education, early intervention) and your role in the area.

Mail comments to: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS), U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, Potomac Center Plaza, Room 5126, Washington, D.C. 20202-2641

They can also be e-mailed to [comments@ed.gov](mailto:comments@ed.gov) (in the subject line, please indicate "Comments on IDEA-2004") or entered at <http://www.regulations.gov>

The last of several public meetings to solicit comments will be in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 24, 2005

PACER Center's Web site carries information on the IDEA at <http://www.pacer.org/legislation/index.htm>

## Pilot projects

**Multi-year IEPs.** Up to 15 states can now apply to participate in a pilot project that, among other things, will allow local school districts to offer, with parental consent, a multi-year Individualized Education Program (IEP), not to exceed three years

**Paperwork reduction.** Upon federal approval, 15 states proposing to reduce excessive paperwork and non-instructional time burdens can waive statutory and regulatory requirements for up to four years. Requirements related to civil rights or the right of a child to a free appropriate public education cannot be waived.

## Funding

When they passed the first federal special education law in 1975, lawmakers pledged to pay 40 percent of the cost of educating students with disabilities, but did not make it mandatory. To date, about 19 percent is the highest level of federal support.

The new IDEA outlines a "glide path" to full funding over the next seven years. Shortly after passing the law, however, Congress increased special ed funding for the next fiscal year at \$1.7 billion less than what IDEA calls for in the first year of the "glide path."

## Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

**Short-term objectives.** In IDEA 2004, short-term objectives for meeting each child's measurable annual IEP goals cease for most children. They are required for only the few children identified as having significant cognitive disabilities (generally less than 1 percent of all students being assessed) "who take alternate assessments aligned with alternate achievement standards"—different from those established for all other students. The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), caps, at 1 percent, the number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who can be counted or reported as proficient for having met the alternate standards on these particular assessments that measure different standards. [Note: other students with disabilities may be assessed based on alternative assessments aligned to the same standards set for all students or based on assessments with accommodations.]

**Progress reports.** Schools must report a child's progress toward meeting the annual IEP goal. The new law, however, removed "the extent to which the progress is sufficient to attain the goal by the end of the year." Parents may understand that their child is progressing all year, only to realize in June that it was *not enough* to meet the goal. Parents can ask specifically if the amount of progress reported is sufficient to enable the child to meet his or her annual goals. If it is not, parents can ask what additional steps, will be taken to get there.

**Transition.** The IDEA states that not later than the first IEP to be in effect when a student with a disability is 16 years, the IEP must include

appropriate measurable post-secondary goals for education, training, employment, and independent living skills and needed transition services (including courses of study). The IEP containing these elements must be updated annually. Parents can request that the student's IEP, when appropriate, include a statement of interagency responsibilities and any needed linkages, because this language is no longer in the statute.

**Team attendance and participation.** A new section authorizes IEP team members to be excused from attending the IEP meeting if their area is not being discussed. However, written parental consent is required before members of the IEP team can be absent from the meeting. IEP meetings provide an opportunity to inform all persons connected with a particular child's education about the child's disability as it relates to educational and other needs. The new provisions allow other ways to participate in meetings (e.g., conference calls). New provisions also authorize combining reevaluation meetings and other IEP meetings and, in certain instances, changing the IEP without meeting.

**Transfers between school districts.** When a child with disabilities moves between school districts during the school year, the new district must provide services comparable to those in the IEP and be in effect before the transfer. In a transfer *within the state*, the services must continue until the new district adopts the previous IEP—or develops, adopts, and implements a new one. If the transfer is to another state, the new school district must also continue to provide services comparable to those on the incoming student's IEP, until the new district conducts an evaluation of the child (if necessary) and "develops a new IEP."

## Discipline

**Stay put.** The right of a student with a disability to “stay put” in his or her current educational placement pending an appeal is eliminated for alleged violations of the school code that result in removing the student from his or her current educational placement for more than 10 days after a finding that no manifestation exists between the student’s alleged behavior or action and his or her disability. The previous law denied “stay put” rights during the pendency of an appeal by a student challenging the denial of a manifestation, or the alleged misconduct, or the proposed interim educational placement, *only to students with disabilities involved with illegal drugs or weapons or determined dangerous to self or others.*

**Case-by-case determination.** Discipline provisions now allow school personnel to consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether to change the placement of a child with a disability who violates a school code of conduct.

**Manifestation determination review.** Under the new law, the school district, parents, and relevant members of the IEP team (no longer the IEP team and “other qualified personnel”) will determine (based on information in the student’s record, including the IEP, teacher observations, and relevant information provided by the parent), if the behavior was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the disability—or if the conduct was the direct result of the school’s failure to implement the student’s IEP. Under prior law, the school district had to find that a manifestation existed between the behavior prompting disciplinary action and the child’s disability, unless the IEP team and “other qualified personnel” found 1) that the student’s IEP—programming and placement—was appropriate and special education, related services, including appropriate behavior intervention strategies, were

being implemented consistent with the student’s IEP, 2) that the student’s disability did not impair the student’s ability to understand the impact and consequences of his or her behavior, or to control the behavior at issue. Because of the significant changes, educators and advocates recognize that parents will need to pay careful attention to the behavioral needs of their child in developing the IEP.

**Interim alternative educational settings.** Under IDEA 2004, a child is entitled to programming and services necessary for him or her to receive a free appropriate public education while he or she is in an interim alternative education setting. In addition to receiving an education consistent with the state’s education standards, the student must receive services that allow him or her to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress toward meeting the goals in the IEP.

**Special circumstances.** Schools have always had the authority to respond to an emergency and to unilaterally remove any student with or without a disability who is causing serious bodily injury to another. Now schools can also unilaterally remove children for 45 days for “inflicting serious bodily injury.” This term is defined as involving a substantial risk of death; extreme physical pain; protracted and obvious disfigurement; or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a body member, organ, or mental faculty.

**45-day limit.** The 45-calendar-day limit on removing students for these offenses is changed to 45 school days, a significantly longer time.

**Functional Behavioral Assessments.** The requirements for Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavioral Intervention Plans are maintained in the discipline provisions.

## Dispute Resolution

**Procedural safeguards notice.** The procedural safeguards notice now must only be distributed once a year except that a copy shall be distributed upon initial referral, when a parent requests an evaluation, when a due process complaint is filed, or whenever a parent requests a copy.

**Statute of limitations.** For the first time the federal statute states that parents have a two-year limit, from the time they knew or *should have known* that an IDEA 2004 violation occurred, in which to file an administrative due process complaint about any matter concerning the identification, evaluation, placement or provision of a free appropriate public education. The statute says that the two-year limitation will apply unless it is inconsistent with state law.

**Due process hearing notice.** Parents who wish to file a complaint because they believe their child’s educational rights are being compromised must file a due process hearing notice with the school district (with a copy to the state). The hearing notice must identify the child’s name and contact information, describe the problem with supporting facts, and to the degree possible, suggest a proposed resolution. The school district must respond to the parent’s notice within 10 days—unless the district notifies the state hearing officer within 15 days that it is challenging the sufficiency of the parent’s due process hearing

notice. The state hearing officer has five more days to make a finding.

**Dispute resolution session.** Parents who file for a due process hearing must first go through a mandatory “resolution session” with the school district, unless both parties agree to use the mediation process or go directly to due process.

**Mediation.** Mediation is to be available whenever there is a dispute about the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child, or the provision of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE). Mediation agreements are legally binding, and discussions in mediation are confidential.

**Attorneys’ fees.** Parents’ attorneys may be responsible for paying the school’s attorneys’ fees if the complaint is—or the pursuit of the litigation becomes—frivolous, unreasonable, or without foundation. Parents or the parents’ attorney may be responsible for the school system’s attorneys’ fees if the parent complaint or subsequent action were presented for any improper purpose, such as to harass or to cause unnecessary delay or needlessly increase the cost of litigation.

**Qualifications for hearing officers.** There are now explicit qualification requirements for hearing officers.

## Learning disabilities

**Eligibility changes.** The new definition of “specific learning disability” means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, in which a disorder may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations.

## Early intervention

**Age eligibility.** The new law lets states serve children through early intervention programs until they enter elementary school rather than requiring them to transfer to public school programs at age 3. To use the option, parents must provide informed consent that their children will not receive their right to FAPE from the public school as they are entitled to receive under Part B, and the children must have already received Part C early intervention services.

# Autism: Are we ready for a

*Autism affects an estimated 1.5 million Americans—and the number is growing at an annual rate of 10 to 17 percent, according to government estimates. First described in 1943, autism can affect people regardless of their parents' racial, ethnic, social, or economic background, lifestyle, or education level.*

*Children with autism can have a combination of symptoms, from mild to severe. Some, for example, may have a heightened sensitivity to sound or other sensory stimulation, an insistence on sameness, or a tendency to repeat words or phrases. Others may avoid cuddling and eye contact.*

## University researcher raises questions

By Marcia Kelly

For the past decade, there has been a low rumble on the horizon. Like a potential storm brewing in the distance, it has not been close enough to draw much attention or cause alarm. Indeed, many people have not been aware of it at all.

Jim Gurney has noticed it, however. An associate professor in the pediatrics department at the University of Minnesota, Gurney conducts research on autism. The distant rumble he hears signals a dramatic change in autism trends in Minnesota. He sees the gathering storm in these statistics: From 1992 to 2002, the number of children in the state with autism spectrum disorder increased 16-fold.

In raw numbers, it means that in just 10 years, schools statewide went from having 251 children with that diagnosis to having 4,094 such students. There are no signs that the trend is slowing. In 2004,



Jim Gurney

for example, the number of Minnesota schoolchildren with autism climbed to more than 5,000. That compares with more than 160,000 nationwide, according to Gurney.

“The implications are enormous for schools and social services,” said Gurney, who conducted the research. “Like baby boomers [entering] the Social Security system, these students will be working through the school system. Schools have a mandate to provide services, but they don’t have the resources to handle the increased prevalence.”

Then there will be a ripple effect when these children graduate from the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) and start receiving social

services, Gurney said.

“It will put great stress on social services to keep kids healthy, safe, and integrated,” he added.

No one knows for sure what is causing the increase. Regardless of the cause, one fact remains the same: Schools, social services, and families must find ways to provide services for the growing number of children and adults with autism.

Gurney hopes to help. He is planning a study that will work with parents and professionals in education and social services to assess what is working, what gaps in services exist, and what consequences result from those gaps. He plans to develop tangible data that people can take to the legislature or foundations to develop and maintain needed services. “It will be evidence based, not anecdotal,” Gurney said.

The need is critical, Gurney added. “If we don’t increase our capacity to work toward successful transition [from school to adulthood], families will be severely stressed,” he noted.

Gurney’s article, “Analysis of Prevalence Trends of Autism Spectrum Disorder,” describes his research and findings. It appeared in the professional journal *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, Vol. 157, July 2003.

### Did You Know...

PACER Center offers resources to parents of children with all disabilities. From individual advocacy to varied workshops parents can find support and information by calling (952) 838-9000; (800) 537-2237 (in Greater Minnesota); or (952) 838-0190 (TTY). Learn more at [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org).

# wave in the future?

*How do these children fare as they move through the education system? What happens when they transition from the services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) into a wider world of social services? Is society ready to provide assistance and jobs?*

*The PACESETTER looks at the questions from two angles. Jim Gurney, a University of Minnesota researcher, takes a look at what impact the increasing prevalence of autism may mean for families, schools, and social services. Megan Hopper shares her story of living with autism and her hopes for the future.*

## Student with autism reaches for the stars

By Marcia Kelly

Anyone looking at one of the logos that Megan Hopper has designed will see a lovely balance of elements—warm colors, pointy stars filling a rounded basket, and a feeling of promise. The logo is for PACER Center, but it could serve as a metaphor for Megan herself.

A graduate of Brown College (Twin Cities) with a degree in graphic design, Megan, 23, has autism.

When asked about her disability, she explained that it is just one element of her life. “It factors into my life importantly,” she said, “but it doesn’t consume me.” To assume it defines her would be like mistaking one of the stars in her logo for the whole design.

“[Autism] is different for different people,” she added. “Lots of us have different ways of coping. I’m high functioning. I talk to people and go out. But everyone has their own standards. I don’t judge other people by my standards.”

Her academic path started with a natural talent for art. “At first, I thought about fine arts,” she said. “But mainstream art is what I really like to do.” Her time at Brown gave



Megan Hopper

her the training she needed to pursue her dream.

“I faced moderate challenges [at college], what every student goes through,” she said with a modest shrug. “I’m an average student. I wasn’t on

the honor roll, but I didn’t get D’s either.”

Having just completed a graphic design internship at PACER Center, she says her goal is to work for a major design company or a video game company. “That’s a hot job right now,” she added. To help clinch her chances, she plans to go back to Brown for its game design program.

Like the logo with the basket full of stars,

Megan’s future comprises many elements that create a harmonious feeling of promise: talent, ambition, education—and a family full of support. “My mom and dad are behind me 100 percent,” she said.

### National project supports parent leadership

“Parents as Collaborative Leaders: Improving Outcomes for Children with Disabilities” is a new national project of the University of Vermont. PACER Center is a collaborating partner. The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSERS) funds the project.

The project, under the direction of Susan Hasazi and Katharine Shepherd Furney of the University of Vermont, will develop research-based training materials and internships to help parents of children with disabilities assume leadership in policy development and evaluation. The result will lead to improved educational outcomes for children with disabilities.

For information, contact PACER at (952) 838-9000 or (888) 248-0822.

## Juvenile Justice program provides resources

By Patricia Bill

Sally has an anxiety disorder and learning disabilities. Sometimes apprehension about schoolwork or other things overwhelm her, and she will not leave the house. Sally recently faced truancy charges (in a court of law).

Joe has an attention disorder and depression. Frustrated one day at school, he threw his jacket and it brushed the teacher as it landed. Joe was charged with fifth degree assault.

Sally and Joe are not their actual names, but the scenarios are real. Moreover, the data are irrefutable: more than half of the youth in the juvenile justice system have one or more mental health, cognitive or learning disabilities—many like Sally's and Joe's.

Research shows that some types of disabilities (emotional-behavioral, attention deficit, learning disabilities) may put youth at a higher risk for involvement with the corrections system. If a child or youth with disabilities has been arrested or if parents believe their child may be at risk for such a situation, PACER Center's Juvenile Justice Project offers help.

The project focuses on a number of issues:

1. Obtaining access to research that a) pertains to the connection between specific disabilities and illegal behavior and b) effective ways to prevent youth with disabilities from entering the delinquency system
2. Informing parents and professionals about how to recognize behavior and disability characteristics that are common among youngsters in the juvenile justice system and how to address them using disability-centered interventions in school, home, and the community
3. How to help children receive appropriate special education and other



Lili Garfinkel

services if they are already in the juvenile justice system so that their education is not interrupted or set back

Under the coordination of Lili Garfinkel, PACER's juvenile justice program has several components:

■ **Individual assistance, referrals.**

Families and professionals seek project information in addressing specific situations regarding disabilities, behaviors, and juvenile justice. Garfinkel works not only with parents and school officials, but also with law enforcement officers and the courts to resolve some issues.

■ **Training for professionals and parents.** Topics range from how to recognize characteristics common to youth in the juvenile justice system to education rights of incarcerated youth with disabilities. Garfinkel trains professionals and parents not only in Twin Cities neighborhoods and Greater Minnesota, but also across the nation.

■ **Resources.** The program makes available materials such as a manual

entitled *Unique Challenges: Hopeful Responses*, a video tape, handouts, and the most recent research in Web site documents.

■ **National partnership.** Through collaboration with the National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice (EDJJ) at the University of Maryland, PACER's program represents parents' voices in juvenile justice research and policy initiatives.

PACER's juvenile justice project began 11 years ago and its work has gained national attention, (particularly in recent years.) For many reasons, more children are currently being referred to the police for behavior that would have been handled very differently a few years ago, explained Garfinkel.

Garfinkel points out that with news-making incidents of violence in recent years, the climate of schools has shifted. In addition, changes in the law make it easier to prosecute younger and younger children, she said. If a youth has a disability that contributes to his or her behavior, the situation becomes more complex, she continued.

"Everyone agrees that there should be consequences for any child or youth who seriously misbehaves or commits a crime," she said, "but, we need to be sure that the child or youth understands what he or she has done wrong and that the consequences for the behavior are appropriate and help change the behavior."

For information about the project or to contact Garfinkel, call PACER at (952) 838-9000 or (800) 537-2237 (toll-free in Greater Minnesota), or visit [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org).

**PACER's 23rd Annual Benefit**  
May 7, 2005  
See pages 1 and 2

# Alex Favorite earns a vote of confidence

By Marcia Kelly

At 15, Alex Favorite has a few favorites of his own—wrestling, hunting, and golfing sit high on the list. A strapping 6-foot freshman at Spring Lake Park High School, he can also take pride in recently being elected to the student council.

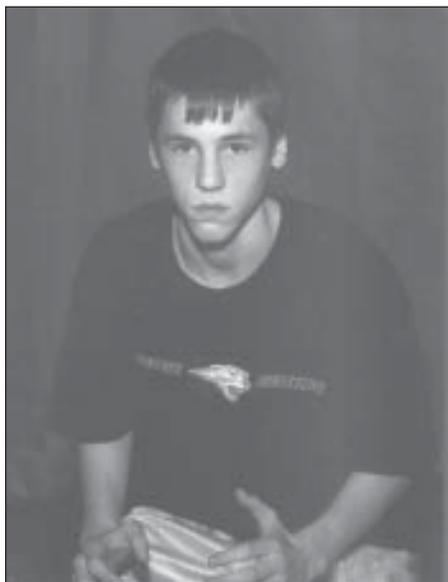
Perhaps one of the most satisfying things about the election is that this success did not come easily. Diagnosed with dyslexia and attention deficit–hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) when he was in the fourth grade, he has always found school to be a challenge. Language skills in particular have been a tough opponent. So when the application for student council candidacy required him to write information on why he wanted to run, it was like facing a formidable opponent on the wrestling mat.

Fortunately, Alex is a fine wrestler and is not afraid of a challenge. He took on the application with the same skill and determination that he brings to the mat.

He did it for a good reason: “I wanted to be able to help out my school,” he said.

After submitting his grades and reasons for wanting to run, he and the other contenders did what all candidates do: Wait for the people to vote. On Oct. 5, a fellow student came up and said, “Congratulations!” Then another one. And another. It was then that Alex learned that the election results had been posted on a sign in the school. He had won a seat on the student council.

Like any other proud 15-year-old, he went home—and did not say a word about it. Later, on the phone, he mentioned it to a cousin, and she told some other family members. “It wasn’t until several days later, at a family gathering, that I heard everyone talking about it,” said his mom, Lucy Favorite.



*Alex Favorite, high school wrestler and student council member*

Looking back, Lucy recalls how hard the early years were. In kindergarten, Alex would avoid schoolwork that involved pencils or writing. When she expressed concerns to the school, she was told that she was “an over-worried parent” and that he would catch up. By the end of first grade, the school assessed him. He scored one point too high to qualify as having a learning disability. That meant he would not be able to receive special

services, even though he clearly was struggling.

By fourth grade, Alex was failing. “I called PACER as a crying parent,” Lucy said.

At PACER, she obtained the information she needed to advocate for Alex. She requested and received an early reassessment from an independent evaluator. The result: Alex has both dyslexia and ADHD. With a diagnosis, Alex was eligible for the additional services and accommodations he needed to succeed in school.

“Over the years, Alex has had a wonderful IEP [Individualized Education Program] team,” Lucy said. “They contributed to his success. I don’t know what we would have done without PACER’s help.” Alex has worked hard and has achieved a great deal since those early days. With his student council victory, a winning record in wrestling, a place in the choir, and an invitation to try out for the school play, Alex knows what he is talking about when he tells other kids with disabilities to not give up on their dreams.

“Don’t be afraid to attempt something for the first time,” he advised. “You may never have the opportunity again.”

## SEAC training scheduled at PACER

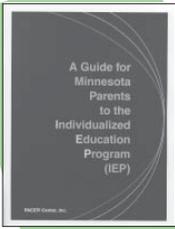
PACER Center plans a one-day specialized training session for Minnesota parents who serve on their local Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). Participants will:

- Receive tips and tools for increasing their SEAC’s effectiveness;
- Find out what other groups are working on;
- Learn how school accountability for student outcomes under the newly reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation affects students with disabilities and their families.

The training is Friday, May 13, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at PACER Center. For more information or to register, contact Carolyn Anderson of PACER at (952) 838-9000 or (800) 537-2237 (in Greater Minnesota).

## Resources

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



The 2004 edition of this popular booklet continues as a staple for Minnesota parents of children in special education. It explains why parent involvement at IEP meetings is so important and guides families through the IEP process, clarifies the Minnesota forms, and explains the information parents need to make informed decisions about

their child's education.

■ \$3 10+ copies, \$2 each PHP-a12

### Parents Can Be the Key



Parents rely on this popular handbook that describes basic special education laws and procedures. Written in easy-to-understand language, it offers insight on important aspects of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '97).

■ \$3 10+ copies, \$2 each PHP-a1

### Record-Keeping Folder



This organizational tool helps parents manage important papers related to their child's education, such as communications with school staff, artwork or awards, and attendance records. It also offers helpful tips for working with your child's teachers. Sets are designed for records of

students in special education *or* regular education.

Regular education: \$10 Price breaks for quantities MPC-6  
Special education: ■ \$10 Price breaks for quantities PHP-a5

### NEW

### No Child Left Behind and Students with



**Disabilities:** A Curriculum for Parent Trainers

The new curriculum includes topics that families need to know to ensure a quality education for their children with disabilities. School choice, supplemental services, and

adequate yearly progress are only a few. It is

available in an electronic PowerPoint™ or printed overheads format.

\$15 CD-ROM ALL-27

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

### Working with Doctors:

A Parent's Guide to Navigating the Health System

The book helps parents be effective advocates for their children in the health care system. The easy-to-read content covers information such as effective advocacy, communicating with medical professionals, choosing a physician, medical record keeping, and other important topics.

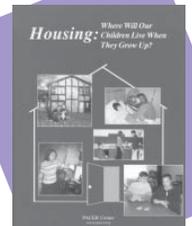
■ \$8 10+ copies, \$6 each HIAC-h11



### 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 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)

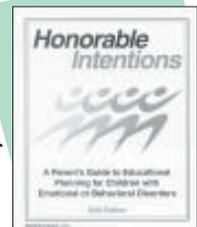


### Honorable Intentions:

A Parent's Guide to Educational Planning for Children with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders

This third edition carries up-to-date information on issues challenging parents of children with EBD. A comprehensive 172-page guide for parents, advocates, and others, it addresses assessments, IEPs, school discipline, mental health services, communication, resolving differences, and more.

■ \$15 10+ copies, \$12 each PHP-a29



## Resources

### NEW

#### Facilitating IEP Meetings:

An Emerging Practice

The 8-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

#### Here to Stay (Video)

The 15-minute video for professionals offers a glimpse of how the Minnesota's special education services affect children with disabilities in the Hispanic community. "Here to Stay" focuses on four families. As they relate their experiences, the parents offer insights that can inform and assist school staff working with the Hispanic community. Spanish and English are exchanged throughout the video.

\$35 Rental \$10 (three weeks) VID-27



PACER's *Catalog of Publications* lists more than 200 items for families of children with disabilities and the professionals working with them. For your free copy, call PACER at (952) 838-9000 or (888) 248-0822 (toll free).

## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me a PACER *Catalog of Publications*

## Workshops

### Early Childhood

#### Strategies to Address Challenging Behaviors in Early Childhood

*Topics such as the importance of communication, coping with behaviors at home or school, and behavior strategies are incorporated.*

**March 3, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)**

### Emotional Behavioral Disorders

#### School Discipline and Children with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

*This Minnesota Statewide Family Network workshop will be presented by Dixie Jordan and is for parents and service providers of children with behavioral and mental health issues. Topics covered will include IEP planning, laws related to suspension, collaborating with other agencies, and what parents can do.*

**March 14 (Cass Lake)**

### Parent Training & Information

#### IDEA: Understanding the IEP

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

**March 10, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER)**

**April 5, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (New Ulm)**

**April 7, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Minneapolis)**

**April 18, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Rochester)**

#### IDEA: Understanding the Special Education Process

*The workshop outlines the basic principles of special education with new materials for helping parents organize their child's special education records. Topics include FAPE (free appropriate public education), evaluation, resolving disagreements, and the IEP (Individualized Education Program).*

**Feb. 24, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (St. Paul)**

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

**April 19, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Hastings)**

**April 25, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Blaine)**

**May 2, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Bemidji)**

**May 3, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Ely)**

#### Life Planning for Persons with Disabilities

*Each session covers different information, including guardianship-conservatorship laws, power of attorney, trusts, and other issues.*

*Participants should plan to attend both sessions.*

**May 10 & 17, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER)**

#### Linking Behavior Support Between School and Home

*National speaker George Sugai, Ph.D. will discuss practical research findings to help parents find strategies to link behavior support between home and the child's school.*

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

#### Making the General Curriculum Work for My Child with a Disability

*Douglas Fisher of San Diego State University will present ideas for inclusion and accommodations that allow children with disabilities to participate in the general curriculum.*

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

**March 31, 9 a.m. to noon (PACER)**

#### NCLB: What Minnesota Parents of Children with Disabilities Need to Know

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

**March 17, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER)**

**April 13, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER)**

#### Parent and Professional Communication and Partnership

*This interactive workshop will present ideas for parents of special education students to use when communicating with school staff. Options for resolving differences will also be covered.*

**Feb. 17, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Anoka)**

#### Parent- or Consumer-Owned Housing

*This new workshop provides an opportunity for families to learn about parent- or consumer-owned housing options for their son or daughter with disabilities.*

**April 26, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER)**

#### Parenting a Child with ADHD or Mood Disorders

*Nationally recognized child psychiatrist Barry Garfinkel, M.D., addresses parent questions such as "What might help to manage my child's behavior? What does recent research say? and What does the future look like for my child?"*

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

#### Positively EBD: Learning a New Way of Thinking About Your Child's Behaviors

*This interactive workshop for parents will discuss the purpose of behavior and the need to advocate for behavioral instruction. An overview of the concepts of functional behavior*

*assessment, positive behavior interventions and writing IEPs to support behavioral and mental health needs will be provided.*

**March 1, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER)**

#### Reading: What Does Research Say?

*Most children learn how to read, but many find it difficult. Bonnie Houck will discuss research-based practices in reading instruction and practical tips for parents. She is the author of Raising a Reader and a reading specialist for the Minnesota Department of Education.*

**March 15, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER)**

#### There's a New IDEA

*National speaker Dixie Jordan will explain the new Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004). IDEA is the important federal law that provides special education for children with disabilities.*

**April 11, 1 to 4 p.m. (PACER)**

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

#### What Every Parent of a Child with a Disability Needs to Know about Stress, Fear, and Anxiety

*Workshop presenter is Read Sulik, M.D., the medical director of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry of St. Cloud Hospital Behavioral Health Services. Dr. Sulik will discuss topics such as early signs of emotional conditions, medications, and questions to ask your doctor.*

**April 21, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

### Simon Technology Center

*Because of equipment needs, workshop attendees must register in advance.*

#### Beginning the Road to AT

*Want to know how to use assistive technology (AT)? This workshop provides an overview of the many available tools and devices that improve the lives of people with disabilities. Participants will learn about a number of statewide resources and review the Minnesota AT Manual for selecting assistive technology.*

**Feb. 24, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (Hibbing)**

#### IBM Web Adaptation Technology – Online Workshop

*This workshop demonstrates software to make Web sites more accessible to individuals with disabilities. IBM developed the software and PACER's Simon Technology Center is piloting it. Participants receive a copy of the software. Participants can attend the workshop with WebEx technology for remote access. All that is required is Internet access and a telephone.*

**March 16, 1 to 2 p.m. (Online)**

## Workshops

### IntelliKeys Overlay Maker

*This workshop is an opportunity to try IntelliKeys and Overlay Maker 3 software for different learning applications. The workshop focuses on overlay templates and importing a variety of graphic files. Participants will receive a free trial version of Overlay Maker 3. The cost is \$30 for professionals and a \$30 refundable deposit for parents and consumers.*

**May 14, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. (PACER)**

### Project KITE Saturday Workshops

*The free trainings are modules of a five-part series, but participants may attend single sessions. Each session offers hands-on training to early childhood parents and educators.*

**March 19, 9 a.m. to noon** - Alternative and Augmentative Communication (PACER)

**May 21, 9 a.m. to noon** - Universal Design in the Early Childhood Classroom (PACER)

### Read and Write Gold— Hands-on!

*Read and Write Gold is a utility program that includes voice recognition, word prediction, text-to-speech, and other features. Participants receive a demo software CD. The cost is \$30*

*for professionals and a \$30 refundable deposit for parents and consumers. .*

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

### Reading and Writing with Clicker 4 Hands-on!

*This workshop is an opportunity to try Clicker 4 software that helps young children with disabilities read and write. The workshop demonstrates strategies, and it features a case study where Clicker 4 is used in a local first-grade classroom. The cost is \$30 for professionals and a \$30 refundable deposit for parents and consumers.*

**March 10, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. (PACER)**

### Technology Just for Girls

*Targeted to middle school girls with disabilities, this free workshop is led by women employed in technical fields at IBM. Hands-on group activities illustrate the importance of math, science, and creative problem solving. Women in Math and Science is highlighted in this session.*

**March 21, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)**

### Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

*The workshop explores how technology can promote UDL—ways that make a school's curriculum accessible for everyone. It features*

*discussion on state and national initiatives and demonstrates technology options.*

**May 5, 6 to 9 p.m. (PACER)**

## Emotional Behavioral

### Successful Strategies for Youth with Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Needs.

*For parents and caregivers of children with mental health needs, the workshop focuses on positive behavioral supports, communicating with professionals, and understanding the Minnesota children's mental health system.*

**Feb. 24, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER)**

## Transition

### Solving the Employment Puzzle

*The workshop is for families of youth with disabilities that are in the transition process (age 14 and older). It will help families look to the future as they learn about numerous options for postsecondary education, employment, and adult services.*

**May – date to come (Stillwater)**

## Workshop Registration

Persons planning to attend workshops are asked to register by calling PACER Center at (952) 838-9000 or (800) 537-2237 (Greater Minnesota) or clipping and mailing or faxing the form below to PACER Center, 8161 Normandale Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55437. Fax: (952) 838-0199.

### February

- Feb. 17, Communication (Anoka)
- Feb. 24, IDEA-process (St. Paul)
- Feb. 24, Beginning...AT (Hibbing)
- Feb. 24, EBD-Strategies (PACER)

### March

- March 1, Positively EBD (PACER)
- March 2, Parenting a Child-ADHD (PACER)
- March 3, Early Childhood Behaviors (PACER)
- March, George Sugai (PACER)
- March 10, IDEA-IEP (PACER)
- March 10, Clicker 4 (PACER)
- March 14 EBD (Cass Lake)
- March 15, Reading-research (PACER)
- March 16, IBM Web Adapt (Online)
- March 17, NCLB (PACER)
- March 19, KITE Alternative and Augmentative Communication (PACER)
- March 21, Women in Math & Science (PACER)

- March 28, Read-Write Gold (PACER)
- March 30, Fisher-curriculum (PACER)
- March 31, Fisher-curriculum (PACER)

### April

- April 4, IDEA-process (Marshall)
- April 5, IDEA-IEP (New Ulm)
- April 7, IDEA-IEP (Minneapolis)
- April 11, New IDEA (PACER)
- April 11, New IDEA (PACER)
- April 13, NCLB (PACER)
- April 18, IDEA-IEP (Rochester)
- April 19, IDEA-process (Hastings)
- April 21, Stress, Fear, Anxiety (PACER)
- April 25, IDEA-process (Blaine)
- April 26, Housing (PACER)

### May

- May 2, IDEA-process (Bemidji)
- May 3, IDEA-process (Ely)
- May 5, Universal Design (PACER)

- May 10 & 17, Life Planning (PACER)
- May 14, IntelliKeys Overlay (PACER)
- May 21, KITE- Universal Design (PACER)
- May, Employment Puzzle (Stillwater)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (H) \_\_\_\_\_

(W) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date of child w/disability: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's disability: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

*(If a professional)*

# About PACER...

## What kind of help can I receive?

PACER assistance ranges from helping parents and professionals understand special education for an individual child with disabilities, to finding state-of-the-art assistive technology or up-to-date information about research and resources for families and children.

PACER's staff have information about regular and special education, No Child Left Behind, insurance, technology, and other issues affecting children with disabilities or special health needs. PACER has many resources to share. They include newsletters, books and booklets, handouts, brochures, videos, curriculums, and workshops.

## What is the cost?

Most PACER services and materials are free to Minnesota families of children with disabilities.

## How do I contact PACER?

By telephone, Internet Web site, e-mail, or fax. When parents call for help during PACER office hours, a staff member answers the telephone, takes information, and directs the caller to the appropriate staff person. More than 30,000 persons sought assistance from PACER last year. Parents and professionals can reach PACER at:

(952) 838-9000 (metro area)      (800) 537-2237 (Minnesota toll-free)  
(888) 248-0822 (national toll-free)      pacer@pacer.org (e-mail)      (952) 838-0199 (fax)

## What are PACER's hours?

PACER's switchboard is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday. Federal holidays are observed. Voice mail is available when PACER is closed.

## Where can I learn more?

PACER's Web sites include: [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)      [www.taalliance.org](http://www.taalliance.org)      [www.fape.org](http://www.fape.org)



**PACER Center, Inc.**  
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