

PACESETTER

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

Lawmakers postpone NCLB reauthorization

Federal lawmakers have postponed reauthorizing (updating) No Child Left Behind (NCLB). NCLB, which is the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, determines federal policy for America's public schools.

Observers suggest that reauthorizing NCLB could be more difficult in an election year because Congress is less likely to obtain a bipartisan consensus. NCLB was passed in 2001 with support from both major parties.

NCLB is known for its focus on holding schools accountable for providing a high-quality public education for all students. The law requires all states to develop and implement standards and procedures to measure student achievement.

NCLB issues that reauthorization may address include

- Developing better tests to track student progress,
- Expanding a highly qualified work force among teachers, and
- Providing more federal resources to help underachieving schools improve.

NCLB will continue in its present state until Congress acts on it.

For Minnesota state news as it relates to federal education law, see page 3.

PACER Benefit performance to feature Earth, Wind & Fire

Earth, Wind & Fire is often dubbed the "Shining Star" of R&B (rhythm and blues). The legendary group brings its energetic music to PACER Center's 26th Annual Benefit on Saturday, April 26, at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

Known for its charismatic performance and positive music, Earth, Wind & Fire established a reputation as top-ranked musicians when its breakthrough hit, "Shining Star," topped the pop and R&B

charts. A string of multiplatinum albums secured the group's long-lasting popularity. It has won four Grammy Awards, four American Music Awards, and was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2000.

Founded by Maurice White, the group went on to become one of the world's most popular R&B groups. White remains the group's producer. Inspired by soul, funk, pop, and a mix of musical styles, the band recorded a long list of bestsellers, including "That's The Way of the World," "After the Love Has Gone," "September," "Serpentine Fire," and "Let's Groove."

"We're thrilled to have this legendary band perform at the Benefit," said Paula F. Goldberg, PACER executive director. "We look forward to a fantastic evening."

Prior to Earth, Wind & Fire's featured performance, the Annual Benefit also includes silent and live auctions. A pre-Benefit gourmet dinner is available by separate ticket. The fun continues at a postconcert patron party for people purchasing Benefit tickets of \$140 or more.

Benefit Honorary Chairs are Bill and Tani Austin. Benefit co-chairs are Patrice Alkire, Jessica Broyles, Danna Mirviss, and Colleen McGough Wood.

Proceeds from the Benefit support PACER Center programs for children with disabilities and their families. To reserve tickets for the Benefit, visit www.PACER.org, or call (952) 838-9000.



Earth, Wind & Fire

BENEFIT RESERVATIONS

To reserve your tickets for the 2008 PACER Benefit featuring **Earth, Wind & Fire**, please complete the form below and fax or mail it to PACER Center. Reservations can also be made at PACER's Web site (www.PACER.org) or by telephoning (952) 838-9000. Have a special occasion coming up? Gift cards for the Benefit are available.

Benefit Tickets:

Please send me:

- (# of) _____ \$55¹ tickets
- (# of) _____ \$85¹ tickets
- (# of) _____ \$140² Patron tickets*
- (# of) _____ \$200² Patron tickets*
- (# of) _____ \$275³ Patron tickets*
- (# of) _____ \$550³ Patron tickets*

Total amount: \$ _____

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.

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

Dinner Tickets (\$95 per person)

Number of tickets: _____

Total amount: \$ _____

- My checks, separate for the Benefit and dinner, are made payable to PACER Center and are enclosed. *(Tickets will be mailed April 18.)*

Total charge \$ _____ to VISA Mastercard AmEx Discover
 # _____ Exp. _____

Other Contribution/ Volunteer Opportunities

Please contact me about:

- donating**
 _____ (item)
to the Silent Auction

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

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

* Includes post-performance patron champagne and dessert party

- 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 (including yourself):

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

Turn up the heat for

PACER's HOT Party COOL Cause

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2008

At Solera in downtown Minneapolis

Featuring Christy Love
with former members of Boogie Wonderland

Tickets available now!

Visit www.PACER.org to be a part of this HOT event!

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



Minnesota rules hearing conducted in December

By Kim Kang

A hearing on proposed state administrative rules involving Part B of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was conducted on Dec. 3 at the Minnesota Department of Education. Administrative Law Judge Barbara Neilson presided over the hearing where 50 people testified. PACER Center staff, parents, and a student spoke and included support of the following, which are in the proposed rules:

- Least Restrictive Environment, which defines a “free and appropriate education” for students for nonacademic and extracurricular activities.
- Reevaluation criteria, which provides that if a student continues to demonstrate a need for special education and related services, he or she will continue to receive services.

PACSETER

Published by PACER Center, Inc.

Three times a year

Circulation: 109,000

©2007 by PACER Center

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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.

PACER Web site: www.PACER.org

Alliance site: www.taalliance.org

FAPE site: www.fape.org

C³ site: www.c3online.org

Bullying: www.PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org
(Alternate format is available upon request.)

PACER Center recommended changes in the areas of positive behavior interventions and supports, regulated interventions, and specific learning disabilities.

Positive behavior intervention recommendations included registering any room used for locked time-out or seclusion prior to use with any student, requiring that an oversight committee review data for aversive and deprivation procedures twice a year, and requiring additional training for staff.

For regulated interventions, PACER recommended that a physician order be obtained from the child’s doctor for manual restraints, locked time-out, seclusion, and mechanical restraints.

Concerning interventions affecting specific learning disabilities, PACER voiced concern that progress monitoring for evaluations may exceed more than 30 school days and that parents will not be aware of their right to request a special education evaluation at any time. Professionals also testified on a variety of issues.

Minnesota task force convened to compare federal and state special ed laws and rules

By Kim Kang

The 2007 legislative session created a “Special Education Task Force” to compare the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirements with Minnesota laws and rules. The Commissioner of the Bureau of Mediation Services appointed a 10-member committee in September 2007, comprised of parents, attorneys, school officials, and advocates. Virginia Richardson of PACER Center is a member of the task force, which has been meeting to prepare its recommendations to the state legislature by Feb. 15, 2008.

Since Minnesota began educating students with disabilities in the 1950s, it has maintained a national reputation for providing high-quality services that focus on successful outcomes for students with disabilities. Because the federal government did not pass the Education for All Handicapped Act until 1975 (later known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), Minnesota had already established laws, rules and an infrastructure to deliver appropriate services.

Minnesota has reexamined its rules in a variety of stakeholder

groups over the years. The most recent examination was in the spring of 2007 when the Minnesota Department of Education conducted a series of meetings to look at rules that might need to be revised to align with IDEA 2004 mandates.

PACER remains committed to ensuring that children with disabilities receive the services they need to achieve successful outcomes. In that regard, PACER supports Minnesota requirements, some of which may exceed federal requirements.

Project seeks to improve local special ed councils

A new statewide PACER Center project will work to increase the effectiveness of local special education advisory councils (SEACs) by making training accessible to parents and local school districts across Minnesota.

As part of the project, PACER will develop a Web page of centralized, user-friendly SEAC information, training, and support. The project will also include online training for school districts and parents as they implement their local SEACs.

The project is funded through a grant from the Minnesota Department of Education. For information, contact PACER Center at (952) 838-9000 in the metro area or (800) 537-2237 in Greater Minnesota or e-mail SEACSupport@PACER.org.

National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week

With media coverage in *USA Today*, *SmartMoney.com*, television stations, and more, word about PACER Center's second annual National

Bullying Prevention Awareness Week spread quickly across the nation. PACER is the National Center for Bullying Prevention.

As a result of the awareness week, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution supporting the goals of the week, the Minnesota

Minnesota's First Lady visits PACER Center

Minnesota's First Lady Mary Pawlenty became acquainted with PACER Center and its 30 different projects when she visited PACER Center in October.

In addition to discussions with staff on assistive technology, education, and other issues affecting children with disabilities and their families, Pawlenty toured PACER and observed various PACER programs in action.

"We were delighted that the First Lady could see PACER's work for herself," said Paula F. Goldberg, PACER's executive director. "Her warmth and interest in PACER's work with Minnesota families of children with disabilities were wonderful!"



Below, Mrs. Pawlenty met PACER Advocate Bonnie Jean Smith. Smith had worked with a family whose child was helped by Pawlenty, a former Minnesota First Judicial judge, in the court system.

Minnesota's first Lady, Mary Pawlenty, met with PACER Center leaders. Seated from left are Paula F. Goldberg, PACER Executive Director; Mrs. Pawlenty; and Bridget Ames, PACER's Simon Technology Center Coordinator. Standing are John Guthmann, Past President of PACER's Board of Directors; Mary Schrock, PACER Director of Development; Kristi Wieser, IBM and PACER Advisory Board; and Valerie Pace, IBM.



At right, Virginia Richardson, PACER's Parent Training Manager, discussed PACER's work with Minnesota families with the First Lady.



gains state, federal recognition

governor's office issued a proclamation, and groups across the country joined PACER as partners to help prevent bullying in their schools and communities.

Activities, contests, toolkits, and online bullying prevention training marked the week. In addition, more than 70,000 people visited PACER's bullying prevention Web sites and 130,000 bullying prevention bookmarks were distributed in schools across the United States.

PACER will continue its efforts throughout 2008. The Web site, www.PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org,

will have opportunities for communities, parents, schools, and students to be involved in special activities. Additional Webinars on bullying prevention and a new bullying prevention Web site for middle-school and high-school students are planned. Families, students, schools, organizations and other groups are invited to join PACER as a partner during the 2008 National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week, Oct. 5–11.

An estimated 160,000 children in the United States miss school each day as a result of being bullied. Parents and children can learn to make a difference at www.PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org.

Bullying Prevention Awareness Week by the Numbers

A Congressional resolution supporting the goals of National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week

A governor's proclamation decreeing Oct. 21–27, 2007, National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week (Minnesota)

5 cosponsors (National PTA, National Education Association, American Federation for Teachers, National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, and School Social Work Association of America)

62 schools, organizations, and individuals in 23 states and two countries were bullying prevention partners with PACER

70,000 visits to PACER's bullying prevention Web site

130,000 Kids Against Bullying bookmarks distributed to schools nationwide

It adds up to a safer, healthier world for all children.

What people are saying about www.PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org

"I think this is a good Web site for kids because some of my friends have been bullied and I am going to tell them to go on this Web site. This is a very, very, very good Web site to go on. I hope you keep this Web site."
New York, Girl, 9

"Bullying is not cool. You should always be respected no matter how short or if you have big ears, and as long as you're yourself, no one can tease you. You control your life, not bullies, and we are all the same anyway. We have ears and noses and mouths; some have glasses, but who cares.....who cares?"
Maryland, Boy, 12

"Bullying can really hurt me. With you on my side, I think I can make it through. I will always help a person in need of a non-bullying friend. Thank you!"
New Jersey, Girl, 11

"I think this Web site inspired me to stand up for myself and NEVER bully ANYONE!!!!"
Michigan, Girl, 10

"I want to thank you for creating the PACER Kids Against Bullying Web site. This is the most comprehensive, outstanding, creative collaboration of resources (bullying or otherwise!) I have ever found on the Internet or via movies. I love the interactive nature of the site. The movies are excellent. The graphics are fabulous. I appreciate the work that your organization is doing to help keep kids safe."
School Counselor, Texas

India technology center progresses with trainings

Training, technology equipment, and recognition by public officials mark international efforts to bring assistive technology to children and young adults with disabilities in India.

A new technology center for children with disabilities, based on PACER Center's Simon Technology Center, is set to open later this year at the Spastics Society of Karnataka

(SSK) in Bangalore, India. Assistive technology is a device or technology that helps a person with disabilities.

The SSK-PACER connection began several years ago with a visit to the large Indian nongovernment organization (NGO) by PACER's Executive Director Paula F. Goldberg.

With support from international companies such as IBM and Target, plans for an assistive technology center were put into motion. PACER and SSK recently began training SSK staff. In October, PACER's Simon Technology Center Coordinator Bridget Ames traveled to Bangalore to work with SSK staff. She arrived with 122 pieces of software and other technology donated by American vendors and valued at \$20,000. In November, Rabindran Isaac of SSK came to PACER to observe operations at the Simon Technology Center. The PACER-SSK collaboration will continue via the Internet and other means.

"It's very exciting," said Ames. "Assistive technology will change the landscape for children with disabilities in India."



Assistive technology training at SSK coincided with a fall 2007 Governor's trade mission of Minnesota business leaders to India. The business delegates visited SSK in Bangalore where the center, modeled after PACER's Simon Technology Center, will be located. From left, front row, are Deepa Kedor, IBM; Mamtha Sharma, IBM; Paula Pahl, Best Buy; Bridget Ames, PACER Center; Mary Pawlenty, First Lady of Minnesota; and Valerie Pace, IBM. The back row includes Walt Ling, IBM; Shanker Annaswamy, IBM; Rabindran Isaac, SSK; and, at right, Charlie Weaver, Minnesota Business Partnership and member of PACER's Advisory Board.

Teacher-school appreciation is March 7

The annual Teacher-School Appreciation Day is March 7, 2008. Begun by PACER Center in 1997, Appreciation Day offers families of children with disabilities a way to honor teachers and other school staff.

Free certificates of appreciation are specially designed and available from PACER. Families can call PACER at (952) 838-9000 (Metro area) or (800)537-2237 (Greater Minnesota) or download them from www.PACER.org/help/teacher.htm. Families or students can then complete the certificates and present them to those they wish to recognize. Parents may wish to also write a brief note or make a telephone call of apprecia-

tion to people at school who work with their children.

Virginia Richardson, PACER parent training manager, created the event. While the first Appreciation Day was directed to teachers, it later expanded to include all school personnel.

"Many people at school work hard to make a difference in the lives of our children with disabilities," said Richardson. "Often, we don't go back and thank the people at school for the positive impact they've had on our child's life. Teachers and other educators who work well with our children need to be praised and encouraged."

Advocating for your child can make 2008 great

By Marcia Kelly

As a parent, you are the best advocate for your child with disabilities. By gaining knowledge about the disability and disability rights laws, you can help ensure that your child receives the services and education to which he or she is entitled. As you look forward to a new year filled with possibilities, you may want to consider these three ways to be an effective advocate for your child.

1. Understand your child's disability and think about its implications.

"Knowledge is power," says Virginia Richardson, PACER Parent Training Manager. "In order to advocate effectively for your child, it's important to know all you can about your child's disability and how it may affect all areas of his or her life—from education to health care to social relationships."

- Talk to other parents whose children have disabilities similar to those of your child to gain practical information and resources.

- Learn as much as you can from professionals who work with your child and from the Web, library, and other sources.



Virginia Richardson

- Find information and support at PACER Center and the disability organization appropriate for your child.

- Decide what information is useful to you based on your values, priorities, and cultural traditions.

2. Have high expectations within the context of your child's challenges and abilities, and involve your child in his or her own success.

"Remember that your child is a child first," Richardson says. "Acknowledge the difficulty the disability may cause in your child's life, but

always be aware that we all succeed in life based on our strengths. Children need opportunities to explore and develop skills and interests, hobbies and natural talents."

- Affirm your child's strengths, such as a kind heart or good memory.
- Help your child understand how he or she learns—whether by using his or her eyes, ears, hands, or some other way.
- Explore how assistive technology might help your child learn and reach goals.
- Challenge your child—and support his or her efforts at trying new things.

3. Learn about the state and federal laws that address the rights of people with disabilities.

"Three federal laws protect the education and civil rights of people with disabilities," Richardson says. "By understanding these laws, parents can be advocates for their children's rights."

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensures a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for all children with disabilities.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in the workplace, postsecondary education, public services, and community settings.
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits agencies or organizations that receive federal funds from discriminating against qualified individuals solely on the basis of disability.

No one understands your child better than you, and no one else has the vision for his or her future that you do. If you would like more information on the areas mentioned, visit www.PACER.org or call PACER and ask to speak with a parent advocate.

Somali advocate joins PACER



Hassan Samantar

Hassan Samantar joined the PACER Center this fall as an advocate in PACER's multicultural projects.

Samantar was born in Somalia and works with the Somali community. In addition to helping Somali families of children with disabilities, he translates PACER Center documents from English to Somali.

After immigrating to the United States at age 20, Samantar studied at George Washington University in Washington D.C. He then entered the business world and worked for Nordstrom for 13 years in several states.

Minnesota's Somali community is large. Many families struggle to adjust to the American culture and school system, Samantar said, and he wanted to be in a position to help. "I felt I owed it to my community," he said.

A chance encounter directed him to the PACER Center position.

"This is a gratifying job," he said. "When I go home, I feel good about myself for helping families. I wake up every morning wanting to help children and families."

Samantar is the parent of three children, two of whom have disabilities.

EX.I.T.E. offers a Minnesota girl a chance to

By Patricia Bill

Katie Thompson was reluctant to go to IBM's EX.I.T.E. Camp at PACER Center last summer.

"I've been to camps in the past, but I didn't connect with the kids," explained Katie.

Once at IBM EX.I.T.E., however, Katie changed her mind—and life. Within a few days, she went from lonely adolescent to social butterfly.

"At EX.I.T.E., I was accepted for

who I am. I didn't have to pretend," said Katie, who has several diagnoses, including mild autism and ichthyosis, a noncontagious skin condition.

IBM EX.I.T.E. at PACER is designed for middle school girls like Katie. While IBM established the camps across the globe to encourage girls' interest in math, science, and technology, the one at PACER was the first for girls with disabilities.

A sampling of activities at the 2007

PACER camp includes making lip gloss, applying engineering principles to create wearable shoes from cardboard, experimenting with static electricity, taking apart a computer, using cryogenics to make ice cream, trying photography, and attending science-related presentations provided by the Como Zoo and others.

When Sue and Scott Thompson, Katie's parents, heard about EX.I.T.E., they thought it might work for their 13-

National ALLIANCE Conference begins Jan. 30

Parent center staff and other special education stakeholders from across the nation will convene in Washington, D.C. for the Annual Technical Assistance ALLIANCE for Parent Centers National Conference. It is Jan. 30–Feb. 1.

PACER Center is the National Technical Center Assistance Center and plans the conference under the direction of co-coordinators Sue Folger, Sharman Davis Barrett, and PACER Executive Director Paula F. Goldberg.

In addition to breakout sessions and workshops, the agenda includes a number of nationally recognized speakers who will address education issues affecting students with disabilities. Keynoters are

- Alexa Posny, Kansas Commissioner of Education, Kansas Department of Education
- Terry Cross, Founder and Executive Director, National Indian Child Welfare Association, Oregon
- Travis Thompson, Professor, Department of Pediatrics at the University of Minnesota and author of a new book on autism.
- Kris Battaglini, Pyramid Educational Consulting, Delaware
- Pedro Noguera, Professor, New York University, NY and Executive Director of the Metropolitan Center

for Urban Education, Co-Director of the Institute for the study of Globalization and Education in Metropolitan Settings

- Richard Pimentel, Senior Partner of Milt Wright & Associates, Inc. and nationally renowned keynote speaker and expert on disability and employment issues. An activist behind the

passing of the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) his story is featured in the hit movie, "Music Within."

A Reception on the Hill is planned for Jan. 30. It is provided by private funds.

For information about the conference, visit www.PACER.org and click on the link to the ALLIANCE.

Youth sleep out raises mental health awareness

Members of the Minnesota Youth Advisory Board on Mental Health conducted an Oct. 6 sleep out at PACER

Center to raise awareness for the United Nations' World Mental Health Day. The youth displayed banners, pitched tents, ate barbecue donated by Famous Dave's, discussed various issues, played guitar around a campfire, and contemplated sleep. A Bloomington police officer was on the premises, as were Youth Board co-advisers Michelle Ulfers and Michael Carr.



Inspiration for the event came from Bob Fischer, who raises awareness for the homeless through sleep outs. He spoke at

a Youth Board retreat last summer.

"Both Bob Fischer and the youth on this board illustrate how even one person can make a difference," said Renelle Nelson, parent advocate and coordinator of PACER's project on emotional and behavioral disorders.

The youth are considering a sleep out annually, said Carr. For information, contact PACER Center.

learn about science, technology—and more

year-old daughter. Sue had spotted information about the camp online, and she noticed its focus on math and science, areas of strength for Katie. Katie, however, was wary.

“She didn’t want to be hurt again,” explained Sue.

Katie has been bullied and learned to protect herself, in part, by avoiding peers. She also experienced some academic difficulty. As Sue said, “It’s hard to learn when you’re having trouble feeling comfortable at school.”

Over the years, Sue and Scott searched for activities they thought Katie might enjoy. They enrolled her in school and community organizations and activities, with the hope that she would make friends. Sue taught Katie’s religion class, thinking it would be an opportunity to help Katie interact with others. For the most part, the Thompson’s efforts were not rewarded.

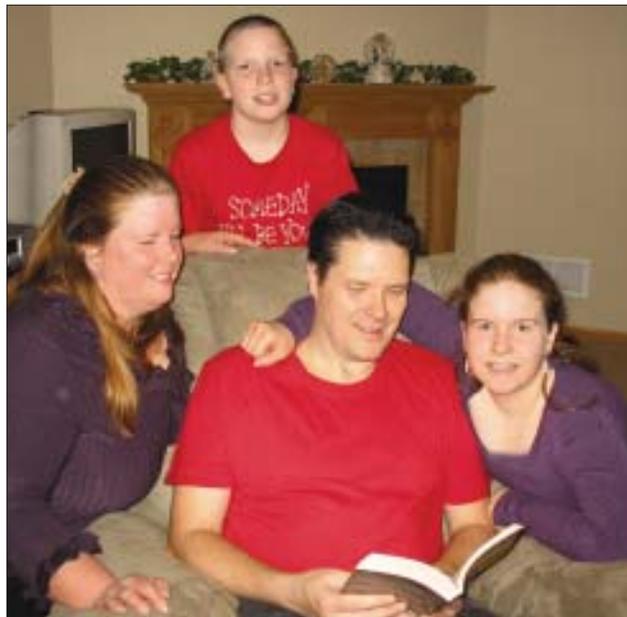
At EX.I.T.E., however, Katie was just one of the bunch, she said. Over a few days, she made many new friends, but three were special. They clicked, and the results were astounding for Katie.

“I’ve never seen such a change in her in such a short time,” said Scott.

As an example, Sue compared first day of EX.I.T.E. Camp to the last:

“On the first day, Katie was glued to our side. There were all sorts of girls there. We told Katie to give it a good try. On the last day, Katie told *me*, ‘Oh, Mom. I want to sit with my friends.’ It was a complete turnaround,” said Sue. “It was nice to see that the other girls wanted to be with Katie as much as she wanted to be by them. We could tell she had made some *real* friends.”

Katie’s progress continues. She participates in EX.I.T.E.-related workshops for girls (see page 19), and



The Thompsons enjoy a family moment. From left are Sue, Ryan (standing), Scott, and Katie.

she maintains contact with EX.I.T.E. friends. On one recent weekend, she was invited to the birthday celebration for one and a sleepover at another’s. Another weekend, she went to a youth group event at her family’s church—

something she wouldn’t have done in the past.

The telephone is symbolic of Katie’s growth.

“Before [EX.I.T.E.] Mom would say, ‘Call your friends.’ I used to dread calling on the phone,” said Katie.

“And now, she stays on the phone *half an hour*,” offered her younger brother, Ryan.

Katie said she wants to go to camp again—the sixth IBM EX.I.T.E. Camp, that is.

Katie said she enjoyed the EX.I.T.E. projects—especially making lip gloss and constructing the model of a bridge.

“I really liked pretty much everything,” she said.

While Katie listed her favorite experiences at EX.I.T.E. and PACER, Sue identified *one* benefit of EX.I.T.E. that will last her daughter a lifetime:

“Katie is learning it’s okay to be a little different—to be herself.”

EX.I.T.E. Camp applications available

Applications for the sixth annual free IBM EX.I.T.E. (EXploring Interests in Technology and Engineering) Camp are available from PACER Center. The summer camp, planned for August, is for 30 motivated middle-school girls with disabilities.

Camp activities include interactive and hands-on work with computers, meeting professionals with disabilities, and touring the IBM Rochester facility. At the 2007 PACER camp, sponsoring corporations were 3M, Medtronic, and Accenture, as well as IBM. Volunteers from the companies participated in the camp, as did speakers from the Como Zoo, Science Museum of Minnesota, Bakken Museum, and Courage Center.

“Families of campers say that EX.I.T.E. has boosted their daughters’ interest in academics and increased their self-esteem,” said Bridget Ames, coordinator of PACER’s Simon Technology Center (STC), which organizes the camp. “EX.I.T.E. would be a great experience for any girl, but it is especially helpful to girls challenged by a disability.”

Meghan Kunz, STC assistive technology specialist, will coordinate the camp. Applications will be accepted until May 1, 2008.

For more information about the camp, call (952) 838-9000 or visit www.PACER.org/stc/exite/camp.asp.

PACER Center: Champions for children

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* disabilities.

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 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 Center projects help children and young

For parents and families of children with special needs

American Indian Project

Individual assistance and information for American Indian parents of children who have or are at risk for developing emotional or behavioral disorders.

Baby Welcome

Information about PACER is given to parents of infants to increase the parents' comfort in seeking resources for their newly diagnosed child.

Dropout Prevention

Information and training for families to reduce the risk of their youth dropping out.

Early Childhood Intervention

Services and support for families of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with special needs.

Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD) and Children's Mental Health Services

Help on education, social services, and mental health or correctional issues for parents of youth with EBD.

Grandparent to Grandparent Program

Information, services, and support for grandparents of children with disabilities.

Health Information and Advocacy Center

Information about the health care system, resources, and advocacy for families of children and youth with special health needs and disabilities.

Housing Project

Information and referral for parents of youth with disabilities to understand their independent living and housing options for the future.

Minnesota Parent Center (MN PIRC)

Information and resources to help all parents be strong partners in their children's education in ways that lead to improvements in student achievement.

Multicultural Services

Bilingual workshops and publications focusing on issues facing families from diverse backgrounds.

Parent Leadership in Special Education

Parents can use their experience and expertise to influence change in local special education advisory committees, interagency collaborations, and public policy.

Parent to Parent Support Project

Parent to Parent Support Project is designed to help parents of children with disabilities enhance their parenting skills.

Parents Helping Parents

Workshops, one-on-one training, and information on special education, communication skills, and other issues affecting children with disabilities.

Surrogate Parent Services

Training and suggestions for selection of surrogate parents to represent children with disabilities in the special education process.

For students, schools, professionals

COUNT ME IN®

Begun in 1979 as a program to foster understanding between children with and without disabilities, the COUNT ME IN® teams of volunteers present puppet shows for preschool and elementary-aged children, teachers, and adults.

Creation Station

Arts and crafts opportunities at PACER on selected Saturdays for children, their friends and families. Birthday parties are welcomed.

EX.I.T.E. (EXploring Interests in Technology and Engineering)

A summer camp for middle school girls with disabilities to increase their interest in math, science, and technology. Additional workshops occur throughout the year.



with ANY disabilities

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.

PACER contact information:

(952) 838-9000 (main number)
(800) 537-2237 (Minnesota toll free)
(888) 248-0822 (national toll free)
(952) 838-0199 (fax)

Where can I learn more about PACER?

- PACER's Web sites are:
- www.PACER.org (principal site)
 - www.taalliance.org (technical assistance for the nation's 100 parent centers)
 - www.fape.org (information on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - IDEA)
 - www.c3online.org (Connecting Youth to Communities and Careers)
 - www.PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org (bullying prevention)

Send e-mail to PACER@PACER.org.

Postal address: **PACER Center**
8161 Normandale Blvd.
Minneapolis, MN 55437

adults with disabilities from birth through 21

Fun Times

Social events and other activities for high school teens with and without disabilities to build relationships that benefit all participants.

Juvenile Justice

Training to help individuals identify the needs of youths whose disabilities may place them at risk for involvement in the justice system.

Leadership Academy

High school students can explore opportunities for postsecondary education

or training and careers, especially in science,

technology, engineering. Youth and their parents participate in workshops and other activities.

Let's Prevent Abuse

Begun in 1984, the LPA project presents shows to children in grades 1-4 along with their teachers, social workers, and other adults at schools. The focus of the program is on identifying abuse, sources for help, and preventing abuse of young children.

Project C3: Connecting Youth to Communities and Careers

A partnership between PACER and state agencies that aligns resources to improve employment outcomes for youth with disabilities through effective collaboration and training.

Project KITE

(Kids Included through Technology are Enriched)

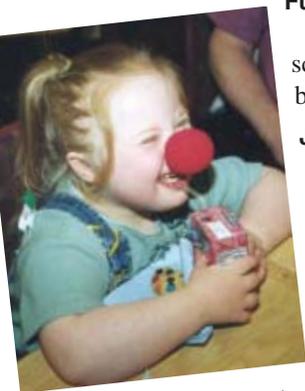
Training for parents and early childhood educational staff to use software and technology that enable children with disabilities to interact with their peers.

Project PRIDE (PACER's Rehabilitation Act Information & Disability Education)

Information and training about the Rehabilitation Act for youth with disabilities, their families, and professionals.

Simon Technology Center

Introduction to educational software and assistive technology to make computers accessible tools for learning and communication. The STC includes a software and device lending library.



National activities

National Center for Bullying Prevention

PACER teaches students and adults how to stop bullying with a focus on children with disabilities.
www.PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org.

National Ted and Roberta Mann Foundation Symposium for Children's Mental Health and Learning Disabilities

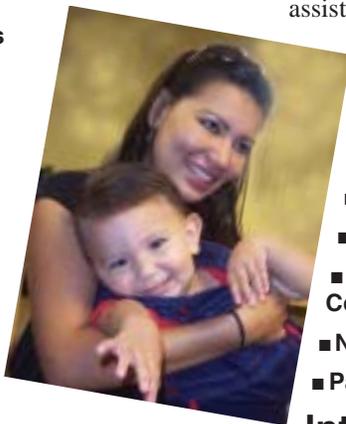
The annual one-day symposium in Minneapolis brings together respected experts on mental health and learning disabilities from across the United States who share their perspectives with parents and educators alike.

Technical Assistance ALLIANCE for Parent Centers National Center (ALLIANCE)

PACER is the national technical assistance center for over 100 federally funded parent centers across the country under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Technical Assistance on Transition and the Rehabilitation Act (TATRA)

PACER serves as the national center to provide education assistance for parent centers that train individuals with disabilities and their families about the services and rights available under the Rehabilitation Act.



National Partnerships

- The Center for Early Literacy Learning
- Family Center on Technology and Disability
- National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center
- National Post School Outcomes Center
- Parents as Collaborative Leaders

International activities

- Assistive Technology Center at SSK in Bangalore, India
- International exchanges and visitors
- International Web site for families

A new puppet joins the PACER COUNT ME IN[®]

By Patricia Bill

From early preparation to exciting arrival, expecting a child entails a bundle of details for any family. Adding a member to PACER Center's family of COUNT ME IN[®] puppets is no exception. COUNT ME IN[®] puppet shows for elementary-age children encourage inclusion of children with disabilities at school and in the community.

After months of anticipation, Connor is here. A handsome, bright-eyed, dark-haired boy, the puppet depicts a child with Tourette syndrome, a neurological disorder. He *really* does. Whereas most of the COUNT ME IN[®] puppets look like children from diverse backgrounds in general, the Connor puppet is modeled specifically after Connor Nielsen, a 10-year-old Washington boy who has—you guessed it—Tourette syndrome.

The Connor puppet project was initiated by Christine Nielsen, Connor's mother. She is a three-year volunteer puppeteer in the COUNT ME IN[®] program at Kennewick, Wash., schools. As she became acquainted with the PACER-based program, she



Lynn Dennis, co-coordinator of COUNT ME IN[®] shows off Connor, PACER Center's newest puppet.

said she wondered if there could be a puppet portraying a child with Tourette syndrome.

Christine called PACER with the idea in 2006. She told Lynn Dennis and Gloria Williams of COUNT ME IN[®] that her son wanted a puppet like him. They explained that PACER would welcome a puppet with Tourette syndrome, but it wasn't in the budget.

Lynn remembered Christine asking, "If I can get funding, would PACER develop a script for my son?" Connor,

the puppet, was on his way.

Christine and her husband, Ryan, own a UPS Store franchise. Christine recalled that We Deliver Dreams[®] foundation, a Mail Boxes Etc.-UPS Stores philanthropic effort, helps individual children. Christine tried to convince the foundation staff that a Connor puppet could touch millions of children. After a number of weeks, an application, and a review process, she did.

In March 2007, UPS Stores and Mail Boxes Etc. presented Christine with a donation for the new puppet project. She then collected the remainder of the cost through gifts from

Kennewick-area organizations and UPS customers.

Meanwhile in Minnesota, Lynn and Gloria concentrated on a script for Connor. The disability was researched for accuracy, the script professionally written, and PACER puppet-maker Charlotte Green designed and constructed the puppet, based on a school photo of Connor Nielsen. The efforts culminated with a field test of the Connor puppet in early November. He will be ready

Connor makes a debut—and a difference

Duncan Masterman, a Twin Cities second grader, has had some tough times explaining the tics (grunting, head bobbing, standing on his toes, and flapping his wrists) of his Tourette syndrome to classmates and even some adults in his community. Duncan's elementary school was the site for the pilot performance of PACER's Connor puppet that portrays Tourette syndrome.

In a follow-up letter to PACER, his family said, in part: "...The puppet show was awesome, and Connor and Mindy from TSA-MN* led a phenomenal discussion session with the children. I believe the puppet show and discussion afterward enabled the children to not only

have a better understanding of Tourettes and how it pertains to Duncan but a greater ability for empathy in their future interactions with all people...

"...The day after the puppet show, Duncan announced to us his intentions for his life. He proclaimed it will be his life's work to teach others about Tourettes for all the kids out there that cannot...

"...His stress level has decreased exponentially since the show, and he has found greater understanding from his classmates."

* Mindy Sipe, Tourette Syndrome Association, Inc., Minnesota Chapter

family to talk about Tourette syndrome

for steady work in early 2008.

“We are delighted to add Connor to PACER’s troupe of puppets,” said Paula F. Goldberg, PACER executive

director. “Children with Tourette syndrome are like any other children. They want to feel accepted and to belong. We are sure that Connor will

help children understand the disability so that Connor Nielsen and others can say, ‘Count Me In.’”

About the PACER puppets...

PACER Center’s COUNT ME IN® puppets are child-size puppets representing several disabilities and diverse ethnic backgrounds. They are featured in entertaining educational shows for elementary-age children. COUNT ME IN® encourages the students to include children with disabilities at school and in the community. The focus of Let’s Prevent Abuse is on identifying and preventing abuse, suggesting sources for help, and helping children understand that abuse is not their fault.

Created by PACER Center in the late 1970s, the copyrighted puppets and scripts are sold to programs across Minnesota and the United States, as well as in several other countries.

For typical hour-long COUNT ME IN® puppet shows, four disabilities are featured. Three, blindness, deafness, and

cerebral palsy, are nearly always presented. The fourth may vary among development disabilities, ADHD, autism—and now Tourette syndrome.

The scripts for each puppet are based on careful research, followed by parents’ and disability experts’ reviews. They include age-appropriate information about the disability and the puppets’ conversations are drawn from everyday experiences. The presentations are interactive; the child audience is encouraged to ask the puppets questions about their disabilities.

“The result,” said Lynn Dennis, COUNT ME IN® and Let’s Prevent Abuse® co-coordinator, “is that children in the audience learn that everyone, including children with disabilities, like to play, learn, have friends—to be counted in.”

New Leadership Academy project to promote technology careers

A new project launched by PACER Center’s Simon Technology Center is helping 11 high school students with disabilities prepare for the future—especially one in technology careers.

Funded by a federal Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act grant, the Leadership Academy 2007-2008 supports students with disabilities in grades nine through 11.

Rockford (Minn.) High School students and their parents are participating in the program, which runs from September to May. They will participate in multiple workshops focused on aiding students as they move from high school to postsecondary education or employment. The youth will also hone self-advocacy skills through job shadowing of professionals in science, technology, engineering, and math careers.

Campus visits and resume writing are also part of the program. Parents will learn how technology can impact education, transition, life, and career skills for their young adults. Teachers will be informed about assistive technology and technology resources,

as well as community resources to aid students in academic and transition success.

The Leadership Academy has been created to be replicated. For more information about it, contact PACER Center.

Tracy Justesen nominated for OSERS spot

Tracy Ralph Justesen of Utah, will likely be named Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) at the Department of Education.

President Bush announced his intent to nominate Justesen to the position in November. Prior to this, Justesen served as an Attorney-Advisor in the Disability Rights Section at the Department of Justice. Earlier in his career, he served as an Associate Director in the Domestic Policy Council at the White House.

Justesen received his bachelor’s degree from Southern Utah University and his master’s degree from Utah State University. He received his JD from Drake University and his LLM from The George Washington University.

For up-to-date information on disability, education, and related issues, visit

www.PACER.org

Testing: It's a fact of life for children,

By Deborah Ottman

"Testing, one-two-three, testing,"

"The following medical tests are recommended ..."

"In a blind taste test, people preferred our brand, four to one!"

Tests—they come in all shapes and sizes, and are given for all manner of reasons. In essence, tests are performed to find out how effectively something is working, be it a sound system, the secret ingredient in a soft drink, or vital organs of the human body.

Visit any school, and it immediately becomes apparent that testing is an integral part of student, teacher, and administrative jobs. They, too, need to measure the effectiveness of the

An article by the Minnesota Parent Center
Minnesota PIRC

learning and teaching taking place within the school. For public schools, testing takes on the added dimensions set forth by the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). Every state is required to test students to determine if they are meeting state standards.

The feedback provided is important to students, teachers, and administrators—and parents, too. When parents understand how testing affects their children and the schools they attend, they are able to engage more fully in supporting their sons' and daughters' academic success.

Involvement passes the test

The nation's goal in public education is to provide an educational system in which all students may grow and achieve. As partners in their children's academic success, parents play an important role when it comes to state assessments. Taking the time to learn about state standards and how they're taught, to understand how the information gathered affects both the child and the school, and to help prepare a student to take the assessments are all significant varieties of parental involvement.

State standards and AYP

Every state has established its own academic standards for reading, math and science. The standards reflect the

Annual STC open house provides info, enjoyment

PACER Center's Oct. 6 Simon Technology Center (STC) Open House introduced more than a hundred children and youth with disabilities and their families to the possibilities of assistive technology.

There were games, face painting, treats, and the opportunity to try varied assistive technology devices. Displays and demonstrations by local vendors and businesses provided information for parents and professionals.

"It was a wonderful event," said Bridget Ames, STC coordinator. "The children had a wonderful time, and parents could see all types of devices and software to help their youngsters learn and communicate."

For information on STC services and resources, call PACER at (952) 838-9000 (metro area) or (800) 537-2237 (Greater Minnesota) or visit www.PACER.org.

Clockwise at right, a young visitor tries manipulating a joystick and switches. A clown's recommended face painting design receives a grin. Paula F. Goldberg, PACER's Executive Director, makes the acquaintance of Kirsten Huston.



parents, and school professionals

state's expectations of what students need to know and what they must be able to do on an annual basis as they work toward graduation. States have also decided how much progress a student must make in mastering core subjects from year to year. The goal is to have tests show that all students are proficient or better in core subjects by the end of high school. Students do not pass or fail these tests. Rather, they are evaluated for making satisfactory gains from one year to the next.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is reached when a school's population has made acceptable advances in tests for the year. When a school does not make AYP for two years in a row, it is identified as "needing improvement."

The federal government wants all states' standards to be rigorous. It compares states' results through the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Under NCLB, states must participate in biennial NAEP testing in reading and math for fourth and eighth graders. If there is a large discrepancy between a state's and NAEP testing results, the state's standards can be raised to a more challenging level.

What and when to test

NCLB requires that all students be tested on a schedule, with the test results reported to parents.

Schools assess students in reading and math every year, third through eighth grade. In grades 10 through 12, the tests are given at least once. In science, children are tested at least once in grades three through five, grades six through nine, and grades 10 through 12.

Accommodations

The NCLB also requires that the tests show progress of students by demographic subgroups: gender, economically disadvantaged, disability, limited English proficiency, and major

racial or ethnic groups. To achieve AYP, schools must include test results of at least 95 percent of students in the various subgroups.

Students with limited English skills or disabilities must be given reasonable accommodations. Like the standards themselves, accommodations vary from state to state. While math and science tests may be given in a student's native language as an accommodation, tests in reading and language arts are to be administered in English after a student's third consecutive year in school. Additionally, students with limited English proficiency are tested to measure oral language, reading, and writing skills in English.

Information aids parents

So, why is this information important to parents? Test scores show an individual student's mastery of a subject compared to other children within the school and the district. It lets parents see their child's academic progress and if he or she is meeting state standards. The results are useful for parents when evaluating a school's decisions about teaching and learning, too. They can ask the school's administrators how the test data are applied to improving a school's quality in curriculum, teacher development, program selection, use of resources, and other areas. Knowing about the decision-making aspect of school is a powerful form of parental involvement.

Testing can affect schools, their students, and families economically as well, often in subtle ways. In schools where at least 40 percent of the children are from low-income households, the school is eligible to receive federal Title I funds. More than half the public schools in the country receive funding under Title I. These funds are used to support programs designed to improve academic

achievement for Title I students; frequently the funds and programs help all children within the school. When a Title I school has been recognized as "Needing Improvement," students may be entitled to two services, at no cost to the family. The first is school choice, which allows a student to enroll in another school within the district that has made AYP; transportation is provided to the student at no charge to the family. Students also may be able to receive free tutoring in reading, math, or science; this is known as Supplemental Educational Service (SES).



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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.

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



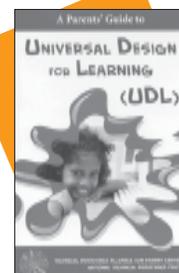
This parent's guide to parent-professional partnership and communication is a "must have" for families of children with disabilities as they plan a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Filled with common-sense tips based on research and practice, it offers a blueprint for building positive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

■ \$6 10+ copies, \$5 each PHP-a19

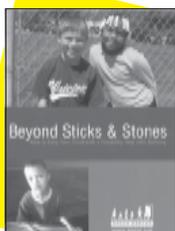
A Parents' Guide to Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

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



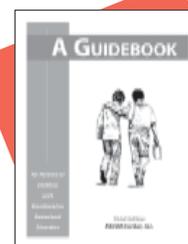
The activity cards, published by Minnesota Parent Center, Minnesota's Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC), are an easy, entertaining way for parents to help their young child build vocabulary and speaking skills—the first steps in learning to read. Simple instructions and comfortable handling make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

INTERACTIVE CD



Top Secret Job Skills: Declassified

This clever and entertaining interactive CD teaches youth basic information and skills for obtaining—and keeping—a job. The exercises advise in a way that invites youth to come to their own conclusions about what is appropriate behavior in the workplace. While it is designed for youth with disabilities, the CD's common-sense content can apply to anyone entering the job market.

\$35 ST-38

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

A newly published 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: _____
(Minnesota residents, 6.65%)

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.

Early Childhood

Communicating Your Child's Strengths and Needs

The workshop will provide strategies to help parents articulate their child's strengths and needs and then provide that information to professionals who work with their child.

May 13, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER Center)

Everything You Need to Know When Your Child Turns Three

The workshop will cover topics such as Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals and objectives, and transition requirements.

March 18, Check for times (Little Falls)

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

April 28, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER Center)

Families Are Important

An overview of families' rights, roles and responsibilities within the early intervention system is featured in the workshop. It also addresses services in the natural environment.

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

Family Leadership Summit

A one-day training that will help parents of children with special health care needs and disabilities enhance their communication and leadership skills. This dynamic and interactive training will also include skill-building sessions and networking opportunities.

April 12, All day (PACER Center)

Nurtured Heart Behavior

Priscilla Weigel speaks on the "Nurtured Heart Approach," an approach for working with children who have challenging behaviors. This workshop helps caregivers see high energy and intensity in children as a "gift."

May 1, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER Center)

Emotional Behavioral Disorder

A Fitting IDEA: Meeting Mental Health and Behavioral Needs for Children with Disabilities

Parents of children with disabilities and co-occurring mental health or behavioral needs will learn how the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or the Individualized Interagency Intervention Plan (IIIP) can help their child.

Feb. 12, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Anoka)

Communication Building for Better Collaboration

This workshop is for parents of children who have disabilities and co-occurring mental health disorders and the professionals who work with them. Basic communication skills, communication attitude, effective written communication and productive partnerships will be discussed within the framework of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

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

Understanding Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

This workshop will help parents and professionals understand the concept of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) and its application for all students. Participants will build a common understanding about PBIS, learn effective alternatives to punishment, and discover how the Bloomington school district is implementing this in a schoolwide program.

Feb. 7, 7 to 9 p.m. (Bloomington)

March 11, 7 to 9 p.m. (St. Cloud)

Housing

Housing and Services: Putting the Pieces Together

What do parents need to know about the housing eligibility process? What housing support options are available to my son or daughter? What level of supports do they need to function as independently as possible? The workshop is designed to help parents think about how to put the pieces together for their sons or daughters.

April 14, 7 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER)

Minnesota Parent Center (PIRC)

A Parent's Guide to School Testing

Join the Minnesota Parent Center for a free computer workshop on how to access state testing results for your child's school and district via the state education Web site. In addition you will learn how you can use the data found there to support your child's education.

April 1, 6 to 8 p.m. (PACER)

Save the date

Minnesota Parent Center Conference

The first statewide two-day Minnesota Parent Center parent involvement conference will honor parents during a celebratory dinner, provide opportunities to engage with community leaders, and offer skill-building leadership workshops for parents.

May 1, 2

Parent Training

Beyond Classification

LeDerick Horne went from failing at school to outstanding student and college graduate. Founder of a property management company, Horne provides down-to-earth suggestions and inspiration to parents of children and youth with disabilities.

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

Charter Schools and Special Education

This workshop will help parents of children with disabilities who attend public charter schools understand the special education process in this educational setting.

Feb. 4, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

Helping Children Help Themselves

This workshop will help parents understand ways they can help their child manage stress, pain, and other issues. It is presented by popular Twin Cities speaker and author Becky Kajander.

March 18, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

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.

Feb. 7, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Fergus Falls)

April 22, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Duluth)

IDEA: Understanding the Special Education Process

This revised 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,

Workshops

resolving disagreements, and the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Feb. 23, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (St. Paul)

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

April 23, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (Ely)

Intervention: A New First Step?

When a child is having difficulty learning to read, the first step may be to use specially designed interventions often called response to intervention (RTI). Presenters are from the Minnesota Department of Education.

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

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.

March 27, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Duluth)

Life Planning for Persons with Disabilities

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

May 8, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

May 22, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

NCLB: No Child Left Behind

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

March 4, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

April 3, 7 to 9 p.m. (St. Paul)

Resolving Disagreements Through the Special Education Process

This workshop presents options and outcomes of dispute resolution. Communication and problem-solving tips will inform parents about dispute resolution. Minnesota Department of Education staff will present at PACER. PACER staff will present in Rochester.

Feb. 5, 9 a.m. to noon (PACER Center)

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

Skills for Effective Partnership

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

April 14, 7 to 9 p.m. (Farmington)

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

Special Ed and Nonpublic Schools

This workshop will help parents understand how public special education can serve children with disabilities who attend private schools.

Feb. 12, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

Special Education in Minnesota

Dan Stewart, supervising attorney at the Minnesota Disability Law Center, provides a view of how Minnesota educates its children with disabilities and presents legislative and other issues that parents should know about.

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

Understanding Your Child's IEP: Practical Tips

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

Jan. 31, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (Mahtomedi)

Public Policy

Speak Up for Special Education

Learn what happened during the 2007 legislative session and the power of your personal story. There will be an opportunity to talk with state legislators about your special education concerns.

Jan. 22, 7 to 9 p.m. (New Hope)

Feb. 4, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Stillwater)

Feb. 26, 7 to 9 p.m. (Hopkins)

Simon Technology Center

AT tools for LD: Reading, Writing, Math

Participants will receive an overview of assistive technology (AT) supports for reading, writing, and math curriculums. Demonstrations and hands-on time will be available. Presenters will provide resources, such as Internet sites and technology vendor catalogs.

Feb. 21, 6 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER Center)

Boardmaker Plus

In this hands-on workshop, participants will learn the basics and beyond of Boardmaker Plus to support augmentative communication. Parents and professionals will learn new skills and shortcuts for making picture communication symbols, schedules, and charts.

Feb. 5, 6 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

Internet Use for Education and Daily Life

This workshop addresses the responsible and creative uses of the Internet. Participants will learn how to use a search engine; how to avoid unwanted sites; how to create a Web page; how to successfully create and use a blog; and suggestions for educational Web sites.

April 5, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (PACER)

Low-tech/No-tech AT Solutions

In this workshop, participants will learn about low-tech assistive technology (AT) that can help their child with reading, writing, math, art, and communication. Presenters will share ideas about how to use the tools at home and in the classroom. Participants will create examples to take home.

April 1, 6 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

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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

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

Workshops

(Continued from page 19)

Technology for Girls: Forensics, Be a CSI!

Middle-school girls with disabilities are invited to come to PACER, put on lab coats, and be a Crime Scene Investigator (CSI)! Participants explore the science of forensics by fingerprinting, analyzing powders, making teeth impressions, and determining someone's height based on their shoe size. Women IBM employees will help test CSI skills by analyzing data and solving a mock crime.

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

Using Assistive Technology in the Classroom: The Student's Perspective

Parents, professionals, and young adults are invited to learn first-hand how assistive technology can be applied to the curriculum. Four students will discuss and demonstrate how they use text-to-speech, speech-to-text, MP3 players, and more to facilitate reading and writing needs.

Feb. 26, 6 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

Web-based Solutions

In this hands-on workshop, participants will discover the freedom of using Web-based resources, which are not dependent on your computer platform. The free and subscription-

based services require Internet access and include such programs as CustomTyping, TheraSimplicity, and more.

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

Creative Kids workshops are scheduled



Deandra Bardell's design became a 2007 PACER greeting card.

PACER Center's Third Annual Creative Kids workshops, in conjunction with the Creative Kids Contest, are Feb. 23 and March 1. The events are for children and youth with any disability. Instructors are nationally renowned artist Anthony R. Whelihan and other local Minnesota artists. Space is limited.

Artwork produced during the workshops and entries received by mail will be entered in a contest to become the cover of the 2008 official PACER greeting card.

For information or to register, call (952) 838-9000, or visit the Web site at www.PACER.org.



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