

PACERSETTER

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

Join Bullying Prevention Awareness Week Oct. 4 - 10

As part of PACER Center's fourth annual National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week, Oct. 4 - 10, 2009, children, teens, adults, schools, and communities across the country are encouraged to partner with PACER to prevent bullying.

Organizations and schools can partner with PACER by sending an e-mail to bullying411@PACER.org with the name of their school or organization. Partners are listed on PACER's bullying prevention Web sites.

The movement is being given a boost with the launch of PACER TeensAgainstBullying.org—a relevant, edgy Web site created by and for teens. In addition to videos, stories, blogs, and social networking, the site features a toolbox of things teens and schools can do to address bullying—from creating their own videos to performing role plays for younger students.

Every day, more than 160,000 children nationwide stay home from school to avoid bullying. Up to one-third of the nation's students are bullied during the academic year, and more than 60 percent witness bullying daily. The results

(Continued on page 7)



Julie Hertzog (left), PACER's Bullying Prevention Coordinator, and Disney star Demi Lovato cut the ribbon Aug. 7, officially launching TeensAgainstBullying.org.

Teen star helps PACER launch Teens Against Bullying Web site

PACER's new TeensAgainstBullying.org Web site received a major publicity boost when Disney star and music sensation Demi Lovato helped launch the site Aug. 7. More than 150 fans, parents, PACER friends, and local media applauded as Lovato cut the ribbon, launching the edgy, relevant site that PACER has developed over the last two years.

Bullied in seventh grade, Lovato is passionate about bullying prevention. That's why she's signed on as the celebrity spokesperson for the site and is partnering with PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center in its movement to end bullying.

"Working together we can make a difference," Lovato says. "I hope that by sharing my story, it will encourage other teens to speak out. No one deserves to be bullied." Read more about the launch on page 8.

Teens: your vote can earn funds for PACER!

Teens, you have the power to decide where Best Buy's "@15 Change Exchange" will donate \$250,000. One of the options? PACER's Teens Against Bullying! This opportunity ends Oct. 31, so learn more about @15.com on page 9.

Minnesota passes seclusion, restraint law; federal report finds nationwide allegations of abuse

By Julie Holmquist

Minnesota school children with disabilities will be protected by a new law governing seclusion and restraint procedures when it takes effect Aug. 1, 2011.

Minnesota's new law was passed in June after several years of debate on the issue. The law allows schools to use the restrictive procedures in emergencies only, encourages schools to establish effective positive behavior interventions, and requires specialized training for school staff.

Many states have no regulations concerning school children and the use of restraint (forced immobilization of a child's body) and seclusion (forced isolation). In addition, no federal laws restrict the use of these procedures in schools.

Restraint and seclusion procedures, which are used to stop a child's negative behavior that could harm the child or bystanders, were the focus of a Congressional report released in May. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) found hundreds of allegations that school children had been abused, and some had even died, as a result of inappropriate uses of seclusion and restraint over the last two decades.

What the GAO Report Found

- Practices were used disproportionately on children with disabilities.
- In some of the cases examined, ropes, duct tape, chairs with straps, and bungee cords were used to restrain or isolate young children.
- Only five states require schools to report when restraint and seclusion are used. (Minnesota schools will be required to document each use when the new law takes effect).
- State regulation and oversight var-

ies greatly.

- Unlike in hospitals, other health care facilities, and most non-medical community-based facilities that receive federal funding, no federal laws restrict the use of seclusion and restraint in public or private schools.

"GAO's report shows that in too many cases, a child's life wound up being threatened even though that child was not a threat to others," said U.S. Rep. George Miller (D-CA), the chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee who requested the report.

Following the hearing, U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan asked states to report specific plans to him to that would ensure student safety when seclusion and restraint are used.

What Parents Can Do

Because no federal laws regulate the use of these procedures in schools, and state laws are widely divergent, parents should be aware of regulations regarding the issue in their own state.

"If you are the parent of a child where seclusion and restraint are being used or considered, it is important to understand the issue, including the latest research," says Virginia Richardson, director of parent training at PACER.

To read Minnesota's new state

law and the full GAO report, visit: PACER.org/newsandevents/news.asp. Learn if your state has laws on the issue by checking the GAO report's "Summary of State Laws."

"Parents can also learn about positive behavioral interventions and supports, and how schools can use these strategies to reduce behavior problems," says Renelle Nelson, coordinator of PACER's Emotional or Behavioral Disorders Program. "Parents can promote using these strategies at their school." (See story on page 9 and PACER.org/pbis/index.asp.)

In addition, parents can:

- Request in writing that their child's school use positive behavioral interventions with their child and that a positive behavioral plan be included in their child's Individualized Education Program.
- Ask if staff members are trained to use restraint procedures.
- Ask if the school has a seclusion room and request to see it. Does it have a window, is it ventilated, and does it comply with safety and building codes and any size or door requirements?

To learn more, call PACER at 952-838-9000 and ask to speak to an advocate or contact a Parent Center in your state (find a national directory at taalliance.org).

Don't miss PACER's e-news!

Interested in breaking news affecting children with disabilities or the latest updates on PACER events?

Don't miss the latest news!

Send your e-mail address to PACER@PACER.org to receive up-to-the-minute happenings through PACER's monthly e-news.

Tickets available for **HOT** Party, **COOL** Cause

PACER's sixth annual HOT Party, COOL Cause is Saturday, Sept. 26, at the Fine Line Music Café in downtown Minneapolis.

Support PACER's new Teens Against Bullying Web site while you enjoy fabulous hors d'oeuvres and the music of Christy Love and You Know Who, featuring former members of Boogie Wonderland.

Why is bullying prevention the COOL Cause? Bullying is a major problem with devastating



Support this COOL cause and have a HOT time!

Expected to draw more than 500 young parents and professionals who support PACER's programs for children with disabilities, this premier social event of the year is hosted by the Friends of PACER Advisory Board.

Reserve your HOT Party, COOL Cause

effects for many children and teens. PACER takes on the issue with an innovative, edgy Web site, PACERTeensAgainstBullying.org.

tickets at PACER.org/hotparty. Tickets are \$75 for Champion Sponsors, \$50 for General Admission, and \$60 at the door.

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8161 Normandale Blvd.
Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044

Voice: 952-838-9000 TTY: 952-838-0190
Toll-free: 800-537-2237 (Minnesota)
Toll-free: 888-248-0822 (National)
FAX: 952-838-0199
E-mail: PACER@PACER.org

PACER Executive Director:
Paula F. Goldberg
Senior Writer-Editor: *Julie Holmquist*
Writer-Editor: *Marcia Kelly*

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PACER Web site: PACER.org
ALLIANCE site: taalliance.org
FAPE site: fape.org
C3 site: c3online.org

BULLYING: PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org
PACERTeensAgainstBullying.org
(Alternate format is available upon request.)

Try out resources at Simon Technology Center open house

Sample assistive technology (AT) and learn how it can make a difference for children with disabilities at the annual Simon Technology Open House on Saturday, Nov. 14 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at PACER Center.

This year, parents and professionals will not only see demonstrations of AT, educational software, and resources, they'll also have the opportunity to learn about technologies and resources available in their own backyard.



Children of all age levels and disabilities can also enjoy playing interactive games.

For more information, call 952-838-9000.

A mother shares tips on how to talk to others

By Marcia Kelly

Experience is the best teacher, as the saying goes—and one of its big lessons is how to communicate about your child’s disability. For Kathy Graves, the learning began when her son Sam, then 1, was diagnosed with cerebral palsy (CP).

“He was born on his due date and was healthy,” she recalls. “Then he contracted meningitis when he was a week old.” At the time, Sam seemed to recover and was reaching all his developmental milestones. “But at six months, he didn’t crawl,” Kathy remembers.

Eventually, doctors discovered that the motor part of Sam’s brain had been affected.

“I remember well getting that diagnosis and thinking, ‘now what?’ I remember not knowing who to call, who to tell, or how to tell it. There’s not a road map for you,” Kathy says.

Sam is now 16. Over the years, experience has taught Kathy some important lessons about communicating with others about her son’s disability.

As a result, she has developed a philosophy about whom, what, and how much to tell, as well as how much energy to expend on it. Here’s what she’s learned.

Lesson 1: Find People You Trust

“My husband and I started slowly by calling people we could really trust and talk to without having to make them feel good,” she says. “My sister-in-law and brother-in-law both work in special education, and they felt like the right people to talk to.

“We also learned early on that you need people outside the family. Find three or four people who are always there for you, without judgment; people you want to go through this



Kathy Graves first became acquainted with PACER by visiting its Simon Technology Center, which she says has been very helpful for Sam (above).

with,” she says. “Stage one for us was having someone listen and not try to fix it or say ‘everything will be fine.’” she says.

As time went on, they also found friends who have children with disabilities. “There’s nothing better than that. You can call them on days when you’re really down. They understand.”

Lesson 2: Learn and Share—But Set Limits

“Stage two was educating ourselves about the disability,” Kathy says. That paved the way for communicating with professionals. “You get further with teachers and doctors,” she says, if you’re knowledgeable about the disability. “Help those closest to you understand, too,” she adds, but let them know you’re still learning.

“When people ask questions, it can feel like pressure. Tell them, ‘Hang in there with us. We’ll tell you what we know as time goes along.’ Plus, it’s not what we wanted to talk about first all the time. It wasn’t helpful for us.”

What was useful was a question

someone asked early on: Well, what’s the future likely to look like? “It was so helpful because it had hope in it,” Kathy says. “Ask me questions about what you think our future will be like. Have it be forward looking, with hope, not grief.”

Lesson 3: Be Prepared for Questions and Stares

“In the beginning you think you have to explain the disability to everyone,” Kathy says. “You get exhausted telling your story that much. It helps to have short, medium, and long answers, depending on who you’re talking to,” Kathy says.

“If kids ask, they’re okay with a two-sentence reply,” she says. “Adults will ask ‘how did it happen?’ It’s like a defense mechanism; they want to know how to stop it from happening to them. They’re not trying to hurt you; they may just be fearful. I try to remember that in responding to them, but the honest answer, which I believe is the best, is that sometimes things just happen. It’s as simple as that.” Then there are people who stare and ask inappropriate questions.

about your child's disability

“One doctor told us if people stare, just stare back until they quit looking,” Kathy says. “If an adult says, ‘what’s wrong with him,’ I feel it’s my job to say ‘nothing is wrong. He has CP.’ Their insensitivity is wrong. You don’t have to tell them anything.”

“You constantly have to help people understand,” she adds.

When someone talks down to Sam or treats him like he’s a little child, Kathy finds that gentle reminders about Sam’s teen activities and interests help to change the interaction.

Lesson 4: Talk about Strengths

“In one of my very first [Individualized Education Program] IEP meetings, there was a physical education teacher who said, ‘Let’s talk about what Sam can do.’ That was the best advice. A lot of this world focuses on what he can’t do. We just started to focus immediately on Sam’s assets and what he could do. It’s an amazingly powerful way to refocus yourself and your child’s future,” Kathy says.

“It is tempting for people to pin everything on your child’s disability,” she adds. But sometimes the challenge is unrelated. “Not everything is about the disability.” He’s a person with

strengths who also has CP, Kathy says.

The disability doesn’t define him, and that’s a message she always communicates.

Experience—both good and bad—has shaped Kathy’s philosophy about communicating with others about Sam’s disability. Time, too, has played a role. “In the early days, I spent a lot of energy on it. I tried to learn everything about CP and interpret it to the world. I do that less now. Most days, I think about getting lunches packed, getting the kids off to school, getting to lessons and games—just regular, plain old life. The effort is less as time goes by, at least for us,” she says.

For others, she offers this simple advice. “You have to carve out your own philosophy. Every child is different, and you need to honor who that child is. Focus on their strengths, and let people know that to you they’re no different than any other child. A diagnosis of a disability is the start of something, not the end of something.”

And remember, Kathy adds, “you don’t have to figure out everything at once. One day at a time is a beautiful thing.”

Learn about options at Oct. 3 Housing Fair

Parents: don’t miss this chance to learn more about future housing options for your child. PACER’s sixth annual Housing Resource and Information Fair is an opportunity for families of children and young adults and service providers to meet and discuss housing options, services, supports, and related issues for children and young adults with disabilities.

“Parents should start thinking about possible housing options when their

child is 12, so they can be prepared for their child’s future,” says Susan Shimota, PACER’s housing program coordinator.

State and county representatives will be available to answer questions. The Fair will be Saturday, Oct. 3, 9 a.m. to noon, at PACER Center. For more information or to register, call 952-838-9000 or visit PACER.org/housing.

Grandparent group meets monthly

Beginning in September, PACER’s Grandparent to Grandparent Program will meet at 7 p.m. on the third Monday of each month at PACER.

People with grandchildren of any age and any disability are invited to meet others; share concerns, joys, and interests; discover resources; and learn how they can provide support to their children and grandchildren. For more information, call 952-838-9000.

Encourage literacy with these guides

It’s never too early to start teaching your child literacy skills—including things such as listening, speaking, enjoying books, and learning to use writing tools, such as crayons and markers. “Practice Guides for Parents” can help families provide their infants, toddlers, or preschoolers with fun and exciting literacy learning experiences. “Practice Guides Especially for Practitioners” also are available

Parents can help their preschooler develop listening and language skills with one of the parent guides called “Wacky Word Games.” This guide provides ideas for everyday opportunities for playing word games, such as asking your child what he sees that’s green while you’re waiting in line at the grocery store.

The guides are from the Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL), a research-to-practice technical assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Research to Practice Division. CELL is a major initiative of the Center for Evidence-Based Practices at the Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute. Learn more at earlyliteracylearning.org/pgparents.php.

Mann Symposium has record attendance

A total of 1,100 parents and teachers attended the inspirational and informative Fourth Annual National Ted and Dr. Roberta Mann Foundation Symposium about Children and Young Adults with Mental Health and Learning Disabilities on Aug. 12.

Early childhood teacher Jennifer Johnson of Minneapolis was one of the many teachers attending the event at the Bloomington Sheraton.

“I love it,” she said. “The speakers have passion, excitement, and core knowledge. It’s contagious for all of us, and we can bring this knowledge back and share it.”

A special education teacher from St. Paul also appreciated the conference. “I found so many helpful ideas and interesting research results that I can use on the job.”

A parent of three children with disabilities commented, “I learned so

much from this wonderful collection of speakers and resource people.”

Those comments reflect the goal of Dr. Roberta Mann Benson, who generously funds this free event which is cosponsored by PACER. Through the symposium, Dr. Mann hopes to educate more people about these issues and reduce the stigma of mental health and learning disabilities, which will ultimately provide more support for children and their families.

The demand for attending the symposium has been great: Attendance has grown from 300 attendees to this year’s total of 1,100.

“I’m totally overwhelmed by the response from this symposium,” Dr. Mann told the packed ballroom.



Dr. Roberta Mann Benson

In opening remarks, former U.S. Senator Dave Durenberger noted that Dr. Mann has committed her whole life to helping others.

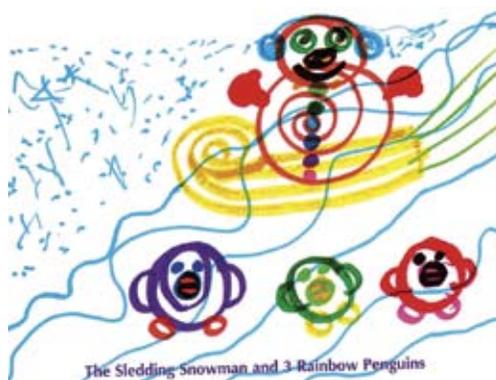
“She has a special heart,” added Paula Goldberg, PACER executive director. “And she does it all without fanfare. We thank her so very much for making a difference in the world.”

Order PACER holiday cards; deadline is Sept. 30

Delight your colleagues, customers, and others with PACER’s amazing holiday cards, customized with your own special greeting.

When you send PACER’s holiday cards, you warm hearts twice—once when the recipients open them, and again as your purchase supports PACER programs for children with disabilities. You also make a statement to the world that you care about your community.

Measuring 4 3/4” x 6 1/4”, these full-color cards are printed on glossy card stock and come with white envelopes. PACER cards are created during the annual Creative Kids Contest sponsored by artist Tony Whelihan, a time when children with disabilities express their artistic side. Each



year, a child’s artwork is chosen to be featured on the cards. This year’s winner is Nick Sullivan, 16.

Ordering is Quick and Easy

Whether you order online, by phone, or by e-mail, simply provide us with:

- the number of cards you want (100 minimum)
- your customized greeting
- your company name or logo
- the date your cards are needed (after Oct. 26)

Order now!

- Online: PACER.org/help/creativecustom2009.asp
- Phone: Nicole Stanich, 952-838-9000
- E-mail: nicole.stanich@PACER.org

Please Note: Orders must be received by **Sept. 30, 2009**. Payment is due at the time of your order.

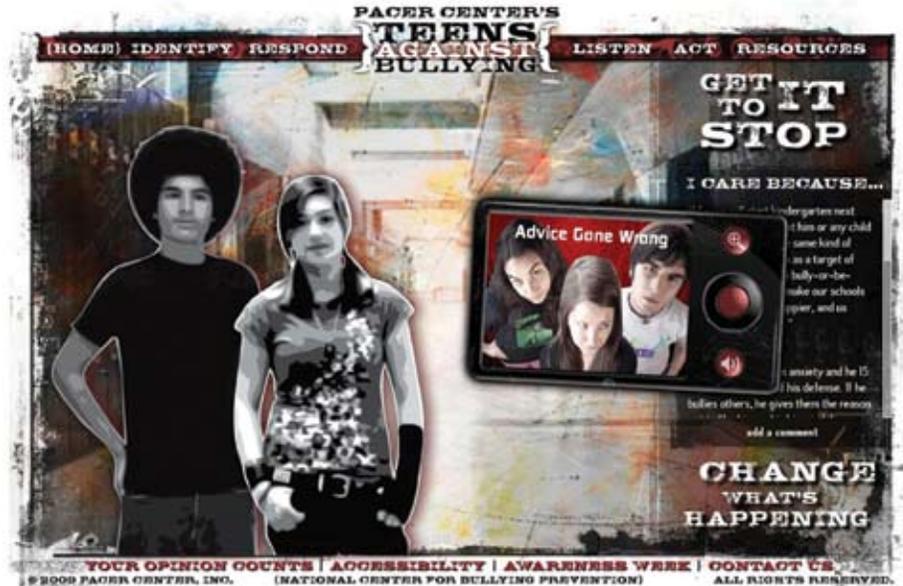
Bullying Prevention Awareness Week Oct. 4-10

(Continued from page 1)

of bullying can be devastating—or even tragic.

“Our mission is to engage, educate, and empower teens to care about bullying,” says Paula Goldberg, PACER’s executive director. “We encourage people nationwide to work together during National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week to increase awareness of the prevalence and impact of bullying on all children.”

In addition to visiting PACERTeensAgainstBullying.org for teens and PACERKidsAgainstBullying.org for elementary school children, people can help prevent bullying in several ways. Free activities to help reduce bullying in schools, recreational programs, and community groups, and materials such as contests, classroom toolkits, and more are available at PACER.org. “It’s time to take action,” Goldberg says. “Teachers, parents, students, and adults throughout each community must work together to create a climate



that doesn’t accept bullying. When bullying is addressed, communities will see more students with higher self-esteem, better school attendance, less physical and mental stress, and better school performance.”

The week is sponsored by PACER’s National Center for Bullying Prevention, which is for all children, including those with disabilities. It

promotes national bullying awareness and teaches effective ways to respond to bullying. National Bullying Prevention Awareness Week is cosponsored by the American Federation for Teachers, National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, National Education Association, and School Social Work Association of America.

United Way and CFC can support PACER

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

United Way

The United Way accommodates employees wanting to support PACER. United Way pledge cards have a location in which to write

PACER’s name and address (PACER Center, Inc., 8161 Normandale Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55437).

CFC (federal, military, and postal employees)

Look for PACER in your local campaign booklet under the Children’s Charities of America (CCA) heading or alphabetically. You also can see a video about a PACER program by visiting cfcvideospeakersbureau.org and

entering PACER as the keyword. To designate your gift to PACER, use code 12272. This code is unique to PACER and should be used under any heading where you see PACER’s name listed.

For information on how to support PACER through the United Way, CFC, or other workplace charity campaigns, call PACER’s development office at 952-838-9000 or visit PACER.org and click on Get Involved, Make a Donation.

Demi Lovato tells teens: don't be afraid to speak out about bullying

By Julie Holmquist

In a whirlwind two hours at PACER on Aug. 7, 16-year-old Disney star Demi Lovato helped launch PACER's TeensAgainstBully.org, signed autographs for young fans, and filmed public services announcements to champion the issue.

"We hope everyone will join with PACER and Demi to make this a reality – to end bullying in Minnesota and across the country," says Paula Goldberg, PACER's executive director. "As a society, we can't allow bullying to continue."

Lovato agrees. The music sensation whose latest CD recently hit No. 1 on the Billboard charts says she hasn't forgotten the hurtful words that were once aimed her way. After enduring threatening text messages and verbal abuse during seventh grade, Lovato asked her mother to homeschool her.

"They say sticks and stones may break your bones but words will never hurt you, but with my experience, I've learned that's completely not true," she says.

Lovato says she knows not everyone in a bullying situation has the opportunity to be homeschooled. Her advice? "Put all of your energy into something good," and tell an adult about the bullying.

"One of the mistakes I made was not sharing it with everybody, because I felt it was my fault that I was being

bullied," Lovato says. "If I just told people earlier on, a lot of things could have been done. If you tell your parents, I know it might be embarrassing. But it actually can make a difference. Don't be afraid to speak out."

Lovato also advises teens to "watch what you say, and make your friends aware of what they're saying." Whether the message is sent via text, MySpace, Facebook, or Twitter, the words can affect someone, she says. "Just be careful. Make the messages you're sending inspirational."

Lovato posed for photos with fans and teens who provided their time and talents to create the Web site. Below: PACER Executive Director Paula Goldberg gives Demi Lovato her favorite flower. Photos by Jonette Novak



During her visit to PACER, Demi Lovato also filmed public service announcements about bullying prevention and TeensAgainstBully.org. The announcements were filmed thanks to the donated services of Hoffman Communications, Inc. Photo by Jonette Novak

PACER's Mary Schrock thanked Lovato for joining the bullying prevention movement, and also expressed appreciation for the many people who donated funding, time, and services to make PACERTeensAgainstBullying.org a reality.

Students from Convent of the Visitation School and Saint Thomas Academy helped write video scripts and film them for the Web site. Shout Radio Productions of Minneapolis and Savvy Jack, a creative communications company, also donated services.

As the launch ceremony concluded, Michael Keller, chair of PACER's Marketing Advisory Board and chief brand officer for International Dairy Queen, led the crowd in a pledge. Everyone repeated, "The end of bullying begins with me!"

Special education makes gains in state policies

By Kim Kang

Despite a state budget deficit, special education was level-funded in Minnesota for 2010 at \$734 million and for 2011 at \$781 million. Some positive changes were also made during Minnesota's 2009 legislative session, most notably with the passage of the state's first law concerning restraint and seclusion.

Policy Changes

The special-education task force, a legislatively mandated group created two years ago, provided its final report to the Legislature during this session.

The task force was created to compare the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirements with Minnesota laws and rules and to determine which laws and rules exceed the federal ones. Comprised of equal numbers of school professionals, parents, and advocacy organizations, the task force also made recommendations on which laws and rules could be eliminated and which ones could be revised.

Because of the group's recommendations, key areas of Minnesota special education laws and rules that exceed federal regulation were retained, including transition at ninth grade, short-term objectives in Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), conciliation, and facilitated IEPs.

However, the burden of proof in a due process hearing was changed to the "party seeking relief." Consequently, it will be more important than ever for parents to keep good documentation and records of all school communications in case they need to exercise their due process rights.



Franni Franken, wife of U.S. Senator Al Franken, talked with PACER Executive Director Paula Goldberg during a tour of PACER in May.



Kristi Weiser of IBM (far right, front row), recently received the IBM Helping Hand Volunteer Service Award for her contributions to PACER. Celebrating with her are (front row from left) Heidi Kraemer, IBM; Bridget Gilormini, PACER's Simon Technology Center; (back row from left) Mary Schrock, PACER's chief operating and development officer; Greg Murphy, IBM; and Paula Goldberg, PACER's executive director.

Teens' votes can raise money for bullying prevention

Best Buy's @15 Change Exchange program has chosen PACER as one of four organizations to receive a charitable donation. Teens' votes determine what percentage of \$250,000 PACER will receive.

Here's how it works: Teens age 14 to 18 can go to at15.com, where they register and earn

points by taking part in the site in various ways. The more they do on the site, the more points they earn.

During the last two weeks of October, they can click on the "@15 Change Exchange" link to give their points to Teens Against Bullying.

With teens' help, PACER could earn up to \$250,000 for its National

Bullying Prevention Center and its new TeensAgainstBullying.org Web site.

Please tell teens you know to sign up now and pass the word! Teens can earn more points for PACER when they refer a friend to the site.

Social networking sites: consider the l

By Julie Holmquist

Social networking sites have become an integral part of today's culture, especially for teens.

Of the 65 percent of teens using sites such as Facebook and MySpace, 61 percent use them to send messages to their friends and 42 percent send messages to friends every day this way, according to a recent study by the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

That's why it's important for parents to consider the special concerns and benefits involved for teens with disabilities using the sites, says Bridget Gilormini, coordinator of PACER's Simon Technology Center.

"We need to understand the culture so we can educate our sons and daughters," she says.

Social Networking Benefits

While teen use of social networking sites poses certain safety concerns, it can also help teens with disabilities develop the skills they need to move toward independence and adult life, says Deborah Leuchovius, coordinator of PACER's Technical Assistance on Transition and the Rehabilitation Act (TATRA) Project.

"One obvious benefit is that youth can expand their circle of friends and even communicate more often with extended family," Leuchovius says. "Understanding that you have a personal network of friends and family may someday help a young person use that network to find a job. Drawing on one's own personal networks is one of the most effective strategies



for finding employment."

Teens with disabilities may also benefit by:

• Practicing social skills

One teen with a disability created a Facebook page with the help of his sister, and within a week had a network of 30 Facebook friends (all classmates).

"It was interesting that these same kids didn't approach him at school," Leuchovius says. "For whatever reason, it may be easier for teens to initially approach a student with a disability on a social networking site instead of face to face. Conversing with someone on the computer may feel less awkward for both parties. Hopefully it will break the ice and lead to more comfortable face-to-face interactions."

A recent study by the MacArthur Foundation shows that online activity can help teens learn important social skills and develop and extend friendships, while another study suggests that the structured environment is helpful for practicing those skills.

"Social networking sites open up a big world of communication," Gilormini says. Instead of having to reply

instantly during a direct conversation or on the phone, teens have time to think about a response. For teens who have difficulty speaking because of disabilities, online social networking can be liberating.

"It removes the time barrier," Gilormini says. A teen who uses a speaking device to talk, for example, says he prefers communicating through Facebook because it is a quicker method for him.

• Learning to use technology

Becoming comfortable with social networking sites may also help teens adapt to a world that functions more and more with complex technologies.

"Even entry-level jobs require that new workers have basic keyboard and computer skills. It's also common for colleges and other postsecondary institutions to use computer networks to communicate with students," Leuchovius says. "Using networking sites at a younger age may make the transition from high school to college easier."

• Developing independence

Adolescence is a time when teens typically learn to become independent from their parents, spend more time with peers, and form a personal identity. Moving toward independence can be difficult for teens if disabilities keep them dependent on their parents for longer periods of time.

"Social networking sites can provide a way for teens with disabilities to make connections apart from their parents and gain autonomy," Leuchovius says. By joining an online group

benefits, concerns for your teenager

with a common interest through a social networking site, teens can build social supports and “hang out” with peers, even as they sit in their living room.

• Expressing personality

Talking on a social networking site may also bring a teen’s personality to the forefront, while the focus on a disability lessens. “When teens communicate on Facebook or MySpace, the people they’re talking to don’t see the disability,” Gilormini says. “All they see are the words.”

Social Networking Concerns

• Bullying

Some research has shown that youth with disabilities are at a greater risk of being bullied, and bullying can also occur on social networking sites. A “friend” accepted by your teen to a site might use the opportunity to send hateful messages. People can also create false identities as a way to harass someone.

• Misuse of personal information and passwords

Personal information or photos shared

by a user can cause embarrassment, teasing, or pain for teens. Sharing information that is too personal, such as an online diary, could be used by teens who bully to ridicule others. Sharing passwords can also allow others to assume a teen’s identity.

“Once something is shared, the user loses control of how the information is used in the future,” Gilormini says.

Classmates of a teen in Canada, for example, posted a video on the Internet that that he meant to keep private. He was so troubled after millions downloaded the two-minute clip of him emulating a Star Wars light saber fight that he left the school and sought counseling.

In addition to these concerns, teens struggling “offline” with issues related to their disability may encounter difficulties online, too. A teen having trouble reading social cues, for example, may become troubled by misinterpreting an online message.

While it’s important to be aware of possible problems, parents should avoid focusing on rare or hypothetical

dangers, according to a 2008 report from the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University.

The report, called “Enhancing Child Safety and Online Technologies,” focuses on use of social media. It advises parents to help their children understand and navigate the technologies, creating a safe context so their children will turn to them if there are problems.

“Trust and open lines of communication are often the best tools for combating risks,” the report states.

Among the report’s findings:

- Social networking sites are not the most common space for solicitation or exposure to problematic content.
- Youth are not equally at risk online. Those most at risk often engage in risky behaviors in other parts of their lives.
- Family dynamics and a youth’s psychosocial makeup are better predictors of risk than the use of specific technologies.

What Parents Can Do

First, decide if social networking is right for your teen. Consider your teen’s maturity, the nature of your teen’s disability, and his or her personality while weighing the benefits and concerns. If you believe your teen is ready for social networking or already uses a site, create your own profile and learn how it works. Explore the site’s features, read the fine print, ask the service provider about parental controls, and teach your teen about the options.

Options include choosing privacy settings so “only friends” (not friends of friends) are allowed on your teen’s site. Consider using the setting options that do not allow photos of your child to be shared or e-mailed. You can also:

- Talk with your teen about:
 - What photos, if any, will be posted on the site

- What will be posted on a profile
- Cyberbullying (Learn about preventing bullying by visiting PACER.org/bullying/index.asp.)

- Tell your teen:
 - Accept “friends” only if you know them offline.
 - Use manners. Don’t send a message if you’re angry.
 - Online content lasts forever.
 - Save your most personal thoughts for a paper diary.
 - Keep your password private.
- Keep the computer in the family room.
- Consider monitoring your teen. “One way to give your teen a sense of accountability is to require that you are a ‘friend’ and are allowed to go on the site,” Gilormini says. Parents can also require that their teen share their username and password.

Perseverance helps mom, son conquer learning challenges

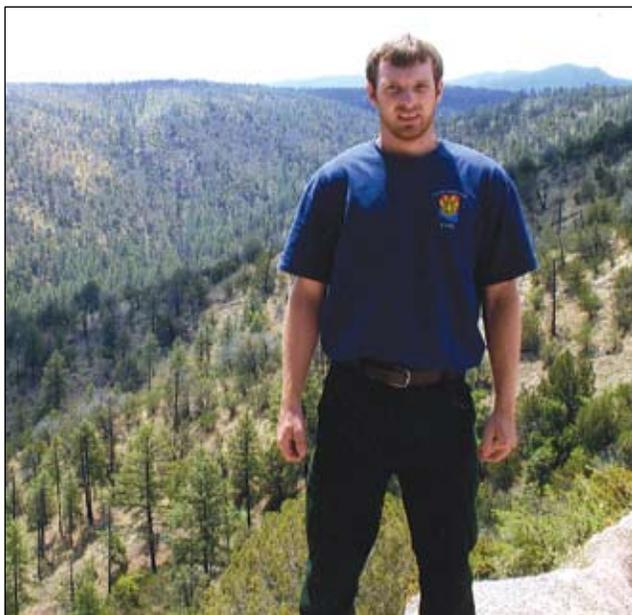
By Julie Holmquist

Noah Melhorn, 21, is a wildland firefighter battling blazes most recently in Arizona. But for most of his life, he fought a different type of battle with the help of his mother, Terri Fierstine.

Diagnosed with dyslexia and learning disabilities when he was in fourth grade, Noah struggled to read.

“He wasn’t catching on, and I kept wondering when he would be able to read a paragraph,” says Terri, who now lives in Walker, Minn. “Both of us were frustrated.”

When special education services during the school year didn’t help him progress, Terri sought additional tutoring help in the summer. She was eventually able to secure payment for the service through the school district her son attended at that time. Along the way, she referred to PACER’s information on writing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).



Noah Melhorn in Arizona, where he recently worked as a wildland firefighter.

“Through perseverance, many meetings with teachers, numerous IEPs, phone calls, e-mails, and summer tutoring, Noah caught up in high school,” Terri says.

In fact, Noah was on the honor roll throughout high school and received numerous scholarships when he graduated in 2006. After graduating from a wildland firefighting program at Itasca

Community College in Grand Rapids, Minn., Noah found work fighting fires in Arizona and loves the challenging job, says Terri, a mother of four.

Through the toughest school years, Terri and Noah just kept trying. “Noah always kept everything positive,” she says. “He taught me a lot. He taught me to take breaks. When things were too hard, we would shut the book and come back to it later.”

Though they took breaks, Terri and Noah didn’t let discouragement keep them from pressing forward.

“During challenging times, don’t give up,” Terri advises. “Instead, take a deep breath and realize that you are your child’s strongest advocate. Persevere for your children’s special needs in education. The rewards are a lifetime of happiness in seeing your child’s dreams become a reality and knowing you did everything you could for them!”

IBM, PACER offer free Spanish translation software

A new automatic translation program offered by IBM and PACER Center helps Spanish speakers access Internet resources and communicate more fully with school and other professionals.

¡TradúceloAhora! (Translate Now!) is IBM’s automatic Spanish translation software available to parents and professionals nationally through PACER Center at no cost. The Web-based software automatically translates Web sites and e-mails.

“We’re happy to work with IBM and share this great resource,” said PACER’s Gretchen Godfrey.

“And we’re excited about the fact that the program continually improves based on user feedback.”

To use the software, participants need to send their name and e-mail address to gretchen.godfrey@PACER.org. Participants will then receive an e-mail invitation from the ¡TradúceloAhora! Web site with the required registration passcode.

For more information on the program, visit traduceloahora.org or call Gretchen Godfrey at 952-838-9000.

School-wide positive behavior initiative makes a difference for parents, students, schools

By Julie Holmquist

For Lynn Bjork, Minnesota's initiative on School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SW-PBIS) means a more positive atmosphere throughout her son's elementary school, better communication with teachers, and more of a focus on preventing negative behavior. SW-PBIS is used by some schools for improving behavior for all students, and Bjork says she has seen it help in many ways.

"What's great for us is that it teaches that everyone counts," says Bjork, whose son, Matt, has developmental delays. "And that makes inclusion easier." Communication between home and school is also easier with SW-PBIS, she says, because behavior expectations at school are clearly defined, and the way behavior is handled is more consistent from one classroom to the next – and beyond. Even Matt's bus driver uses the SW-PBIS strategies. "As a parent, you know what to expect. It's much more proactive, it's schoolwide, and it's easy to talk to Matt about it."

Next year, approximately 150 Minnesota schools will use SW-PBIS to create a positive learning environment. The Minnesota Department of Education launched the initiative to help schools implement SW-PBIS in 2005.

"It's a unique approach to discipline," says Renelle Nelson, coordinator of PACER's Emotional or Behavioral Disorders Program. "It's about catching them doing the right thing."

With SW-PBIS strategies, schools encourage positive behavior by providing a common approach to discipline that includes procedures for:

- teaching expected behaviors,
- reinforcing the expected behavior,
- and discouraging inappropriate behaviors.

Schools implementing SW-PBIS have gained more instructional time, have fewer out-of-school suspensions, fewer discipline referrals, and fewer referrals to special education because of behavior.

"The goal is to increase academic performance, and that will happen if kids

are in class more and teachers aren't problem-solving behavior issues," Nelson says, noting that research shows that positive, predictable school environments lead to better academic performance for all students.

For SW-PBIS to work best, parents need to be involved so students experience the same positive reinforcement at school and home. "Parents can use the same strategies at home to encourage positive behaviors," Nelson says. "When parents are involved, students show more positive attitudes and behaviors, feel school is important, and achieve more in school."

To be involved, "ask if your school is a PBIS school," Nelson says. "If not, bring some information to the administration or a parent organization. If it is a PBIS school, find out how you can be involved and bring the approach outside the school doors and into the community."

To learn more, visit PACER.org/pbis or contact Renelle Nelson at 952-838-9000 or rmelson@PACER.org.

New handout helps prepare youth for police questioning

PACER Center's Juvenile Justice and Youth with Disabilities project has developed a new handout for parents whose children or youth may be at risk for arrest by police at school or in the community.

"What Youth Need to Know if They Are Questioned by Police: Tips for Parents to Prepare Their Youth with a Disability" helps parents understand their child's rights. The free handout can be downloaded at PACER.org/publications/juvenile.asp.

PACER's Juvenile Justice Project

was established in response to the knowledge that youth with emotional, behavioral, learning, and developmental disabilities are at a higher risk for involvement with the juvenile justice system.

The project serves parents and professionals through individual advocacy, training, and the ongoing development of new resources. PACER assists parents and professionals by:

- Helping parents work with police, public defenders, and other professionals.

- Informing parents and professionals about the special education and mental health rights of children and youth in short- and long-term correctional placements

- Training corrections staff, attorneys, public defenders, police officers, and other professionals about mental health issues, effective interventions, and rights under federal law

For more information, call Lili Garfin-
kel at PACER, 952-838-9000.

Parents play vital role in teens' education: try

By Heather Kilgore

How do you encourage your teenager to be successful at school? While being involved in your teen's education may be challenging, research shows that when parents are involved, students achieve more.

Parents can support their teen's education by:

Communicating with school

This can be more difficult during the teen years. Adolescents are often forgetful, and they may not bring home notices on purpose if they don't want parents to participate in a conference or event. Teens also may not communicate because they fear parents' reactions.

When problems arise, focus on what your teen can do to overcome them and provide possible solutions. This will increase the likelihood of good communication. Parents can also help teens remember to communicate by regularly asking about messages from school.

Helping with homework

Parents can help a teen with homework even if they don't remember chemistry, literature, or geometry.

MINNESOTA PARENT CENTER

Minnesota PIRC A project of PACER

First, it's important to agree on a time and place for homework. Many teens enjoy doing homework with friends. This can be a great way to make sure homework is completed, though it might take longer than it would by working alone.

Parents can also help by asking questions, especially those that connect current work to prior knowledge. For example, ask: "What do you know about this already?" Providing access to books, the Internet, calculators, and other resources is another way parents can help their teenager. Finally, remember that learning is a skill and parents are more experienced learners than children. If your teen doesn't understand an assignment, help him or her think of specific questions to ask the teacher during the next class.

Making sure your teen takes standardized tests

Beginning in middle school, students may take several standardized tests in addition to the state-required

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA II). Students must do well on the MCA II to graduate. It's also important that students take other tests, such as the

ACT (formerly known as American College Testing) and SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test). Scores on these tests are used in the college admissions process and many students take them in 11th grade. Other tests can help families make decisions about high school courses and student interests. They include pre-tests to the ACT called Explore (8th grade) and Plan (10th grade) and the pre-test to the SAT called the Preliminary SAT[®]/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) taken in 10th grade or earlier. High scores can qualify students for special programs.

Participating in decision-making at school

Being involved at the school building can be just as important in middle and high school as it was in elementary school. Parents may join parent teacher organizations, site councils, or advisory committees just as they did when their children were younger. In middle and high school, parents

Free conference offers parents ideas for school success

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

"Great information!" said one parent attending last year's event. "Thanks for the information and support." "Thanks for inviting me to learn more ways to help my child," said another.

This year's dinner and conference are Thursday, Oct. 22 and Friday, Oct. 23 in Bloomington and sponsored by the Minnesota Parent Center, MN PIRC,

a PACER project.

The event features a keynote by Mindy Greiling, a Minnesota state representative and a well-known education expert, as well as helpful workshops that will inspire parents to support their children's education in new ways.

On Oct. 22, it will also include a Welcoming & Honoring dinner, which celebrates parents' dedication to helping their children succeed in school. On Oct. 23, the Connecting conference explores ways parents can

become involved their children's educational achievement.

Advance registration and application are required. Stipends are available for child care and travel, if requested. To register, call 952-838-9000 or visit PACER.org/mpc/workshops/asp.

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

these six ideas to help your teen

may also be able to join booster clubs and event committees or become an activity coordinator. Showing support for your teen, the school, and education can be a great way to encourage not only your child, but others as well.

Planning classes

One critical way for parents to be involved is in planning their teen's education and choosing challenging classes. Though students may have counselors and advisors helping them make course selections, parents

should be engaged as well. Parents will want to make sure their teen meets all graduation requirements, and they may also want to encourage their teen to meet course requirements for college admission.

There are also opportunities for students to earn college credit while still in high school. In Minnesota, students can choose from many options, several at no cost to you. Ask your teen's school counselor about options and encourage your teen to participate. Sometimes the motiva-

tion of taking college classes and the challenge of more difficult material can encourage a teen to perform well.

Supporting teachers

Make a point to have positive, face-to-face contact with teachers early in the year to demonstrate support for their role. Even though middle and high school students have many teachers each day, it's important to show your support. Doing so will make it easier for you to work with a teacher if issues occur later in the year.

Take part in Parent Involvement Month in October

October is Minnesota Parent Involvement Month, a time to celebrate the powerful role parents play in their children's education.

The month is sponsored by the Minnesota Parent Center, Minnesota's PIRC (Parental Information and Resource Center), a project of PACER

Center. It's cosponsored by the Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Association of School Administrators, Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association, Minnesota Association of Administrators of State and Federal Education Programs, and

Minnesota PTA.

Families can nominate their school in a statewide Family-Friendly School contest, find a family activity calendar, and more by visiting PACER.org/MPC or calling the Minnesota Parent Center, 952-838-9000; toll free 800-537-2237.

Do you want to make a difference? Change attitudes?

Order PACER's COUNT ME IN[®] puppets!

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

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

The puppets are for sale in sets:

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

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

All sets include puppet wheelchair and props, a guidebook on disabilities, and a "Coordinator's Handbook" for creating a COUNT ME IN[®] project with volunteers. Training is also available.

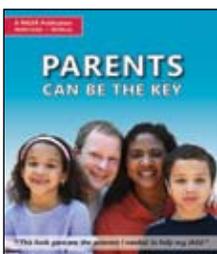
Visit these engaging puppets at PACER.org/puppets!



For more information e-mail puppets@PACER.org or call PACER at 952-838-9000.

Resources

New



Parents Can Be the Key

This updated handbook for 2009 describes basic special education laws and procedures.

■ \$3 10+ copies, \$2 each PHP-a1

New

High Expectations

Having and maintaining high expectations for your child with a disability is very important. This eight-page booklet outlines how to have high expectations yourself, challenge your child, and encourage high expectations from others.

■ \$3 10+ copies, \$2.50 each PHP-a34



New



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

Updated for 2009. This book helps families of children with disabilities or delayed development understand

Minnesota's early intervention system and how to access services for their child.

■ \$7 10+ copies, \$5 each PHP-a9

New

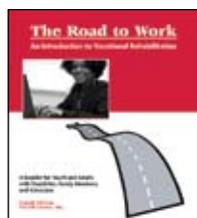
Honorable Intentions: A Parent's Guide to Educational Planning for Children with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders, 4th Edition.

This updated comprehensive guide includes information on comprehensive evaluation, functional assessments, positive interventions, effective communication, and writing meaningful Individualized Education Programs.

■ \$15 10+ copies, \$12 each PHP-a29



New



The Road to Work: An Introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation

Discusses the issues related to the Rehabilitation Act, including eligibility criteria for vocational rehabilitation

services, transition planning for high school students, the Individual Written Rehabilitation Program, appeals procedures, legislation and self-advocacy skills. Fourth Edition. 2009.

■ \$8 10+ copies, \$6.50 each VO-1

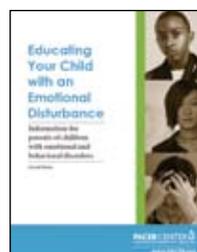
Housing: Where Will Our Children Live When They Grow Up?

Parents of youth with disabilities will find that 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



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

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

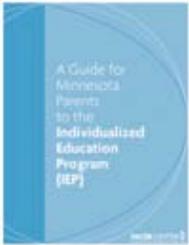
More than 160,000 children, many with disabilities, miss school each day to avoid harassment and intimidation by classmates. This book helps you to help your child address the problem of bullying.

■ \$6 10+ copies, \$4 each BP-7



Resources

New



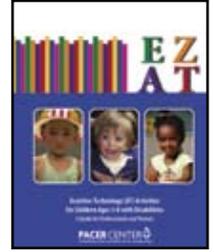
A Guide for Minnesota Parents to the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

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

■ \$3 10+ copies, \$2 each PHP-a12

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

This 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 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 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
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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 PACER.org.

Creation Station

Monet in Your Own Way

Pretend you're the famous French artist and make an impression with your paintings. Your mini-Monets will be worthy of hanging on your living room wall!

Oct. 10, 10 a.m. to noon (PACER)

Simon Technology Center Open House

Explore art through a variety of activities in the Creation Station at the Simon Technology Center's annual open house, where parents can watch technology demonstrations, attend mini-workshops, tour the library, and more.

Nov. 14, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (PACER)

The Art of Leatherworking

Use leather, stamps, and dye to create unique bracelets, key chains, and ornaments. (Bring ear plugs if loud sounds alarm you: Hammering the leather is noisy!)

Dec. 12, 10 a.m. to noon (PACER)

Sculpey™ Extravaganza

However you squish it, squash it, or squeeze it, Sculpey™ clay gives shape to imagination. Create amazing necklaces, key chains, bracelets, or whatever you can imagine!

Jan. 9, 2010, 10 a.m. to noon (PACER)

Early Childhood

Families are Important

An overview of families' rights, roles, and responsibilities within the early intervention systems is featured in this workshop. It also addresses services in the natural environment, the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), and child and family outcomes.

Sept. 26, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. (PACER)

Building Blocks of Early Literacy

Nancy Kaczrowski presents the workshop. It focuses on building skills for children from birth through age 5, emphasizing strategies for families.

Oct. 5, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (PACER Center)

Understanding and Addressing Challenging Behavior in Young Children

Parents of young children with developmental delays and/or disabilities will learn about brain development and behavior, differ-

ent temperament types, stages of development, and strategies to provide children with acceptable ways to get their needs met.

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

Understanding the IFSP/IEP

This workshop will help parents understand the essential components of Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) development, including evaluations, team planning, writing goals, and resolving differences.

Oct. 26, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Marshall)

Nov. 5, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Proctor)

Nov. 12, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Willmar)

Emotional Behavioral

Understanding Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SW-PBIS): What Parents and Professionals Need to Know

Learn how SW-PBIS can help schools achieve a positive school climate that helps all students do better academically. Discover how SW-PBIS works, how parents can be involved, and how effective alternatives to punishment can be used at school, at home, and in the community.

Oct. 5, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (Moorhead)

Health Information, Advocacy

Getting the Help You Need

This workshop will cover public programs such as medical assistance, TEFRA, home and community-based waivers, consumer-directed community supports, county services, and county grants.

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

Who Pays? Taking the Maze out of Funding

Come learn about sources of funding for families whose children have special health care needs and disabilities. Topics include: MinnesotaCare, Medical Assistance, home and community-based waivers, Supplemental Security Income, third-party billing, and other funding. Cosponsored by PACER's Early Childhood Project.

Nov. 19, 6:30 to 9 p.m. (PACER)

Housing

Housing Resource & Information Fair

Where will your child live in adulthood? PACER's 6th annual housing fair is an opportunity for families of children and young adults and service providers to meet and discuss housing options, services, supports, and related issues for children and young adults with disabilities.

Oct. 3, 9 a.m. to noon (PACER)

Housing: First Steps Toward Independent Living

Families can learn the first steps needed to help their son or daughter with a disability move from home. Topics include independent living skills, person-centered planning, support networks, and parents' real-life journeys through the housing process.

Dec. 8, 7 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER)

Parent Training

A Viewing of "Including Samuel"

Watch and discuss the movie, "Including Samuel," produced by photojournalist Dan Habib. The one-hour, award-winning film is designed to help schools, families, community groups, and others work toward educational inclusion.

Oct. 29, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (St. Cloud)

IDEA: Understanding the IEP

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

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

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

IDEA: Understanding the Special Education Process

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

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

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

Workshops

Oct. 29, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER)

Is Your Child a Target of Bullying?

This workshop offers intervention strategies for parents whose children with disabilities may be targets of bullying at school.

Oct. 1, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER)

Tips for Talking with School Staff

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

Oct. 12, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)

Keeping it Positive: Meeting Behavior Needs in the IEP

This workshop provides an overview of educational rights for children with disabilities and behaviors. Participants will learn about developing Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals and services to meet behavioral needs, as well as positive behavior interventions and supports.

Oct. 19, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER)

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 interventions (RTI). Presenter is from the Minnesota Department of Education.

Oct. 13, 7 to 9 p.m. (PACER)

Foster & Surrogate Parents: Understanding Special Education

Foster and surrogate parents will learn about the special education process, the identification and evaluation of children with disabilities, and how to represent special needs children.

Nov. 5, 7 to 9:30 p.m. (PACER)

IDEA: Blueprint for Special Education

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

Oct. 27, 7 to 9 p.m. (Anoka)

Speak Up for Special Education

Learn what happened during the 2009 legislative session and how to use the power of your personal story. There will be an opportunity to talk with state legislators about your special education concerns.

Oct. 5, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Little Falls)

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

Oct. 12, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Marshall)

Oct. 15, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (PACER)

Public Policy

Be a Special Education Parent Policy Leader

This privately funded workshop is for parent leaders who want to become public policy advocates. Learn how to influence the state legislature and prepare an effective personal story to support an issue. Elected officials will provide feedback.

Sept. 26, 1 to 5 p.m.

(St. Paul, State Capitol)

Federal Stimulus: What It Means to Your Child in Special Education

Parents can learn how the federal stimulus bill will provide approximately \$205 million in additional special education funding to Minnesota schools, how this can impact special education, and how they can make sure schools use the funds appropriately.

Oct. 20, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Minnetonka)

Nov. 5, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (St. Paul)

Simon Technology Center

Free Software and Internet Resources

Learn how to find and use free software and Internet resources for writing, e-mailing, translating, sharing photos, and more.

Sept. 23, 1 to 2:30 p.m. (Minneapolis)

How to Access, Download, and Play Free Digital Books for Children

Did you know there is a wealth of free books for children to read, learn, and grow with on the Internet? Participants will learn how find and use them.

Oct. 1, 10 to 11:30 a.m. (Minneapolis)

Tech for Girls: Dream It, Build It!

If you can dream it, you can build it! Middle-school girls with disabilities will design bridges, boats, and more using everyday materials and then test the strength of their structure. Which ones will fall or stand?

Oct. 6, 6 to 8 p.m. (PACER)

Computer and Assistive Technology Basics (Somali)

Learn basic computer and Internet skills, discover assistive technology and how it can benefit individuals with disabilities, and find free Web resources at this workshop conducted in English and Somali.

Oct. 6, 1 to 2:30 p.m. (Minneapolis)

Hands on with Read and Write Gold

Come to a hands-on software training of TextHelp's Read and Write Gold, Windows version 9. This versatile literacy utility program includes word prediction and one-touch scanning. Previous experience is not required; space is limited.

Oct. 14, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (PACER)

A Comparison of Board Making Tools

This Webinar will introduce parents and

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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

PACER.org/workshops

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

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Change Service Requested

Workshops

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professionals to several board making tools that can be used to create visual supports for learners. Register at: www2.gotomeeting.com/register/541931498.

Nov. 17, 2 to 4 p.m. (Webinar)

Tech for Girls: My Messy Little Experiments

Does an egg float or sink in water? Can a raisin really dance? Find the answers to these science questions and more as you experiment. Be ready to get messy!

Jan. 12, 2010, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. (PACER)

Visual Social Supports

At this Webinar, participants will discover a variety of tools used to create "social scripts," which help children learn social rules. Register at: <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/759905810>

Jan. 13, 2010, 2 to 4 p.m. (Webinar)

Transition

Focus on Transition

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

Oct. 7, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (International Falls)

Nov. 12, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Monticello)

Social Security and Vocational Rehabilitation Services for Transition-age Youth

Hear a Social Security representative discuss programs for transition-age youth, the difference between Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and Vocational Rehabilitation employment services.

Oct. 20, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (Duluth)

SAVE THE DATE!

*PACER's 28th Annual Benefit
is May 8, 2010*