Several years ago, I met a woman who asked me about my son with Down syndrome, who was then five years old. I remember telling her about “an ordinary day in the life” complete with kicking a ball with his siblings on the front lawn, doing household chores, and learning how to read. Basically I shared all the same mundane things he was doing that we would expect from any of our children. Her face changed dramatically, and she said, “That is so amazing! When my brother was born with Down syndrome 30 years ago, my parents sent him away somewhere because they were afraid my mother was going to have a nervous breakdown.” Before laws were spelled out to defend and protect the civil rights of individuals with disabilities, one can only speculate what it must have been like. What choices did a parent of a child with a disability have —wanting to keep the child home yet wondering where to turn for help— when all doors were closed?

One such family, who was eager to capture for their young son the most basic elements of a typical childhood, knocked on a preschool door in 1970. And it opened! Without the aid of lawyers, advocates, assistive technologies and research-based methodologies Danny Chitwood was completely and fully included that year and the next years at Resurrection Preschool in Alexandria. His parents, Steve and Janet, forged with the director, Win Anderson, a partnership to find solutions to overcome obstacles. This simple and uncomplicated concept - that children with disabilities reach their greatest potential when parents and professionals enjoy an equal and respectful partnership - became the underlying principle for founding the Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center in 1978.

In the 21st Century, PEATC dares to encourage families and their children with disabilities to dream about possibilities and face the uncertain future with hope. As we look ahead to the next 30 years, let us make no mistake about it. Progress toward the goal of full inclusion of people with disabilities within our communities is not where it should be. But progress is occurring and people with disabilities are finding their own respectful place in American society. Pivotal to this movement is the family. When parents find ways to work with professionals to achieve results, children learn that partnership is a natural part of navigating life. When children hear their parents ask for help respectfully, and see professionals respond thoughtfully, they learn how they can advocate for themselves. Thirty years and thousands of families later, we are finding that partnering is not an outdated ideal. It is the core value for building positive futures for children with disabilities and their families.

Please help us thank the PEATC founders and celebrate their wisdom and forthright lessons about partnerships.

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Cherie’s Corner

30 Years of Navigating the Maze

By Cherie Takemoto, Executive Director

Success for a parent of a child with disabilities can be like playing poker. At first, you might not like the cards you are dealt. The odds that a child with disabilities will grow up a winner in the game of life are not that great. In poker, you can increase your odds of winning by knowing how to play the game. But parenting a child with disabilities is different. It is not enough for parents to simply know the rules of special education. They must know important words to use, find helpful allies, and forge partnerships.

That’s where PEATC comes in. Founded in 1978 by Win Anderson, Stephen Chitwood, and Deidre Hayden, we enjoy a national reputation as an authority on services for children with disabilities. Whether it is through information, training or teaming relations with educators, PEATC lets parents know they are not alone and where to turn.

We can help so many families because of our vast partner network. Our Multicultural Early Childhood Team Training, used in more than 30 states, was co-produced with George Mason University. Another collaboration, the LiteracyAccess Online website, equips parents, tutors and educators with techniques for struggling 3rd through 8th grade readers. We distribute our video training series, The Managed Care Maze, The Managed Care Maze for Teen Parents and Fostering Health in the Foster Care Maze, through the Adult Learning Services of the Public Broadcasting Services. We are serving an even greater number of children, their families, and schools through our Parent Information Resource Center, launched in 2006 and the NEXT STEPS Transition Program for Families Youth and Professionals launched in 2007.

Yes, our history offers much to celebrate! More than 25 years ago, our founders published Negotiating the Special Education Maze. I have joined the original writing team on the 4th edition of this classic guide to be released in the spring of 2008.

It’s great to be part of a dedicated team committed to one of our nation’s most vulnerable populations: children with disabilities. So what about that poker game? Consider the possibilities if everyone who cares about children with disabilities would share their cards. If we pooled our cards to create a new poker hand, there would be no guarantee of success, however, the odds would be much better. Our nation’s children with disabilities and their possibilities should not be a gamble based on good or bad luck but based on the life that we, as partners, dream possible for them and that they dream possible for themselves.

As we countdown to a landmark PEATC year, let us recommit to the shared journey that brought us to where we are, and where we have yet to travel. For, as always, it is our collective effort that will make a world of difference. Thank you!
**PEATC Calendar of Events**

**PEATC Training Workshops Around Virginia**

**Thursday, January 10, 2008**, “Advocacy Meetings: With the Virginia Coalition for Students with Disabilities”  
Thomas Jefferson Library, 7415 Arlington Blvd., 6:30pm - 8:30pm, Falls Church

**Saturday, January 12, 2008**, “How To Talk So Schools Will Listen and Listen So Schools Will Talk”  
Fairfax County Government Center, 11:00am - 12:30pm

**Saturday, January 19, 2008**, “How To Talk So Schools Will Listen and Listen So Schools Will Talk”  
Woolridge Road Church, 9:00am - 12:00pm, Moseley

**Thursday, February 7, 2008**, “How To Talk So Schools Will Listen and Listen So Schools Will Talk”  
Exact location TBA, 6:30pm - 8:30pm, Norfolk Virginia (snow date Feb. 28, 2008)

**Thursday, February 21, 2008**, “Understanding Special Education”  
Exact location TBA, 6:30pm - 8:30pm, Colonial Heights (snow date Feb. 28, 2008)

**Thursday, March 6, 2008**, “Positive Behavioral Interventions”  
Exact location TBA, 6:30pm - 8:30pm, Roanoke

**PEATC Coffees**

**Tuesday, February 12, 2008** and **Tuesday, March 11, 2008**, “Cultural Sensitivity Training”  
Presented by Cathy Brown, Bilingual Outreach Mgr., I&R 2-1-1 Virginia of United Way and Barbara Ingber, Barbara Ingber, ESL/Parent Liaison Richmond Public Schools, 10:00am-3:00pm, PEATC office in Richmond

**In Spanish/En Español**

**Invierno & Primavera 2008**  
Hora, 10:00am a mediodía, Lugar, PEATC, oficina principal en Falls Church, VA

**Sábado, 19 de enero**, “Las Familias son Importantes”  
Intervención temprana para familias de niños pequeños con demoras en el desarrollo

**Sábado, 16 de febrero**, Participación de los Padres en la Educación Especial y sus Derechos Bajo la Ley de IDEA

**Sábado, 15 de marzo**, Entendiendo Educación Especial

**Sábado, 12 de abril**, El Proceso del PEI (IEP siglas en ingles)

**Viernes, 25 de enero**, 29 de febrero, 28 de marzo,  
Grupos de Apoyo para padres Latinos que tienen hijos con discapacidades, 10:00am a mediodía

**Sábado, 12 de enero**, La Importancia de la Participación de los Padres en la Educación de sus Hijos Kenmore Middle School, 200 Carling Springs, Arlington, Virginia, 10:00am a mediodía

**Viernes, 9 de febrero**, La Importancia de la Participación de los Padres en la Educación de sus Hijos 3304 Culmore Court, Unit B, Falls Church, VA, 10:00am a mediodía

**Sábado 8 de marzo**, La Transición en Educación Especial

Kenmore Middle School, 200 Carlin Springs, Arlington, Virginia, 10:00am a mediodía

**Measurable Annual IEP Goals**

**Tuesday, January 8, 2008**, Norfolk Technical Center, Tea Room, 1330 North Military Highway, 12:30pm – 1:30pm, Norfolk

**Monday, January 28, 2008**, Suffolk County Schools Parent Resource Center, 2316 William Reid Dr., (mobile unit 1, beside Elephant’s Fork E.S.), 6:30pm – 9:00pm, Suffolk

**Wednesday, February 13, 2008**, (exact location TBA) 6:00pm – 8:00pm (snow date Feb. 20, 2008), Winchester

Virginia’s NEXT STEPS Transition Program for Families, Youths and Professionals: “Building Effective Partnerships and Accessing Resources”

**SAVE THE DATES!**

PEATC has developed tools specific to the needs of families who have students transitioning from high school to life. Our acclaimed NEXT STEPS trainings have been enriched by a webinar series designed to expand and promote effective partnership development. Join PEATC NEXT STEPS “Transition: Accessing Resources and Building Effective Partnerships” for 3 one-hour webinars streaming on March 3, 10 and 17, 2008.

To register and learn more about the series please visit www.peatc.org. We look forward to helping build more seamless transitions for you and your student.

PEATC is continually scheduling workshops and trainings. Please contact Judy Dunbar at 800-869-6782 or dunbar@peatc.org if you are interested in having a workshop in your area. Check the PEATC website at www.peatc.org and click on the “events calendar” to find PEATC workshops and other free/low cost workshops related to special education, parent/professional partnerships and/or disability issues. PEATC reserves the right to cancel or postpone workshops due to the level of registration or response.

**Interested in attending a workshop?**

- Find out more about workshops in and around Virginia by visiting our Web site at www.peatc.org.
- Please register by the Monday before the workshop by calling 703-923-0010 or 800-869-6782 or e-mail partners@peatc.org.
- Let us know if any special accommodations are needed. Share information with others.
- Post this sheet on bulletin boards and hand it out at meetings.
Para Nuestra Comunidad

Las 10 Ideas que las Familias, Estudiantes y Profesionales Necesitan Saber Sobre la Transición | by Cathy Healy and Catherine Burzio
Cultural Translation by Rosalia Fajardo

La vida es llena de transiciones.

Las familias que tienen niños con discapacidades muchas veces se sienten tan confundidas que no desean ver el futuro como algo cercano. Sin embargo, la carencia de no planear a largo plazo puede crear tensión adicional innecesaria.

La siguiente es una lista de las 10 ideas más importantes que las familias, estudiantes y profesionales que trabajan para realizar una transición exitosa para los jóvenes con discapacidades.

**Comienzo temprano**

¡Tan pronto como se identifiquen a los individuos que tienen necesidad del servicio, la discusión sobre la transición debe comenzar! Cuando éramos jóvenes, cuántas veces nos preguntaron, “¿Qué quieres llegar a ser cuando crezcas?” El soñar comienza temprano. Pero usted piensa y dice, “Mi niño no habla, no se siente no se mueve por sí solo.” ¿Qué sueños pueden él tener?” Por ahora ellos no pueden valerse por sí mismos; ese es el momento donde deben comenzar los sueños, de las familias y cuidadores, hasta que nuestros niños pueden comenzar hacerlo por sí mismos... Establecer buenas relaciones desde el principio con los adultos que cuidan de ellos puede ayudar hacer una transición más efectiva.

**Para lograr grandes cosas debemos no sólo actuar pero también soñar, no sólo planear pero también creer** - Anatole

**Utilice un lenguaje común**

En una entrevista de trabajo, un empleador preguntó a un joven acerca de su diploma. El joven contestó, “Sí, recibí un diploma.” No convencido, el empleador pidió ver el “diploma.” Al hacer la revisión, el documento que había dentro de la cubierta de cuero del diploma, este era un “certificado de terminación” y no de un diploma verdadero. ¿Qué es un diploma? ¿Qué es un certificado? Para diversas agencias, esto significa diversas cosas. Cuando miramos en el laberinto de posibilidades de la transición, este es bastante confuso aun mas si no “usamos un mismo lenguaje” Construir un lenguaje común ayudará a determinar funciones y a comprender responsabilidades.

**Dos monólogos no hacen un diálogo** - Jeff Daly

Haga preguntas una y otra vez! (Autovaloraciones continuas)

Mientras que la ley de educación especial IDEA requiere un acercamiento organizado, formal a la transición a la edad 16 anos, es importante recordar que hay una variedad de opciones de diplomas disponibles para los estudiantes en Virginia. Las decisiones sobre los diplomas se toman generalmente antes de que un estudiante alcance los 16 anos. Una discusión sobre hacia donde se debe encaminar a un estudiante no se hace una sola vez, los estudiantes pueden no saber sobre dónde desean ir en el futuro, sin embargo los adultos que hacen parte de su entorno necesitan guiarnos a los jóvenes de una manera efectiva para que los resultados académicos sean ambiciosos y reales. Continuamente los estudiantes necesitan ser apoyados por los adultos que los rodean para conducir su propia realidad y definir sobre su futuro. ¡Los estudiantes pueden tomar la iniciativa de dirigir esta discusión... déjelos! Estas continuas autovaloraciones motivan a estudiantes para fortalecer habilidades de la autodeterminación, permitiéndoles moverse hacia adelante con confianza.

**Las grandes cosas son solamente posibles con peticiones claras** - Thea Alexander

Sea claro sobre la diferencia entre derecho y la elegibilidad

Las líneas entre El derecho y elegibilidad pueden ser confusas. Los estudiantes que se encuentran elegibles para los servicios bajo la ley que protege a los individuos con discapacidades (IDEA por sus siglas en Ingles) dan derecho a una educación pública gratis y apropiada (FAPE por sus siglas en Ingles). Éste es el derecho más importante producido para los niños en nuestra nación. Sin embargo, una vez que los estudiantes dejen la red de seguridad de los servicios financiados bajo la ley (IDEA), la capacidad de tener acceso financiado con los dineros públicos como adultos a los servicios pueden ser ilusorias. Aunque los adultos jóvenes pueden ser encontrados...
La transición necesita estímulo para buscar jóvenes con discapacidades realizando el proceso, pero el padre puede hacer que los padres sean renuentes a participar. El miedo a lo desconocido, cambio y crecimiento desconocido para toda la familia. El temor a lo desconocido puede ser la llave a que abra las puertas para una transición acertada a la vida. ¿Cuál es la receta para el éxito? Thomas Edison dijo una vez: “El éxito es un 1% la inspiración y el 99% -----.” ¿Qué hace que nuestro estudiante haga tic tac? ¿Qué éxito él o ella han logrado en escuela y en vida? ¿Cómo podemos mezclar esos éxitos con experiencias prácticas para construir una base con el conocimiento y desarrollar las habilidades desarrolladas para mover a ellos hacia vida adulta? El propósito de la educación debería ser enseñarnos cómo pensar en vez de que pensar; debería enseñarnos como mejorar nuestros pensamientos para permitirnos pensar por nosotros mismos; en vez de cargar la memoria con los pensamientos de otros hombres - John Dewey

Tome en cuenta que ha trabajado (y que no ha trabajado)

Al encontrar obstáculos para proporcionar experiencias positivas a sus niños en la transición, muchos padres y educadores han creado oportunidades increíbles para la adquisición de la habilidad y la preparación de la vida. Mirar ejemplos de que trabajado en la escuela de su propio hijo joven qué ha trabajado para los adultos con discapacidades vivían actualmente en su comunidad puede ser la llave a que abra las puertas para una transición acertada a la vida. ¿Cuál es el valor de la familia? Los cambios que nuestro estudiante haga tic tac, qué hombres que trabajaron para sus hijos, cómo se diferencian de los jóvenes. Cuando los cambios aparecen aceptarlos puede ser una tarea difícil para algunos mientras que para otros puede ser fácil para algunos mientras que para otros puede tomar toda la vida. La transición es un tiempo de cambios para toda la familia. No todo lo enfrentamos se puede cambiar, pero nada puede ser cambiado sino lo enfrentamos - James Baldwin

La transición de la escuela secundaria es un tiempo excelente de contribuir de gran manera a la sociedad. Asegúrese que el o ella adquiera las habilidades necesarias para estar listo al llegar a la edad adulta. ¿Es la transición una época de crisis o de oportunidad? La transición de la escuela secundaria es una época de gran oportunidad para una persona joven. Es el momento para explorar fortalezas e intereses comenzar a estructurar la vida para realizar el crecimiento personal y contribuir de gran manera a la sociedad. La transición es un tiempo excelente de cambio y crecimiento desconocido para toda la familia. El temor a lo desconocido puede hacer que los padres sean renuentes a participar en el proceso, pero el joven con discapacidades realizando la transición necesita estímulo para buscar educación superior, o aplicar para un empleo inclusivo para sonar con un futuro independiente de su familia. Este un periodo en los viejos sueños son rotomados y nuevas sueños se amobican. Cuando esta escrita en el idioma Chino la palabra crisis se compone dos caracteres - uno representa peligro y el otro representa oportunidad - John F. Kennedy

Descubra qué existe y qué no existe

Los padres necesitar ser listos para saber qué ayuda estará disponible cuando los servicios bajo la ley que protege los individuos con discapacidades (IDEA) terminen. Cuando miramos los servicios para ayudar a facilitar una transición sin inconvenientes en la vida de nuestra juventud con discapacidades, puede haber barreras. No es mucho lo que podemos hacer individualmente para asegurar que servicios comunitarios sean financiados, así que mientras que el estudiante está todavía en escuela asegúrese que el o ella adquiera las habilidades necesarias para estar listo al llegar a la edad adulta. Si usted no pide, usted no consigue - Mahatma Gandhi

¿Cómo es el valor de la familia?

La familia es el núcleo de la civilización - William J. Durant

Los jóvenes discapacitados no son las únicas que están en la transición

Mientras que estaba parado en la graduación de la secundaria de mi hijo mayor, la película de la su vida vino a mi mente. ¿Hace tan poco lo matricule en sus primeras clases? ¿Adónde se fue el tiempo? ¿Qué hace es este hombre joven en el lugar donde mi pequeño debe estar? Mi papel cambió ese día y esto un ajuste. Él está tomando el control y yo estoy aprendiendo cómo dejarlo ir. Mientras que los niños crecen, los padres asumen el papel de los jóvenes. Cuando los cambios aparecen aceptarlos puede ser una tarea fácil para algunos mientras que para otros puede tomar toda la vida. La transición es un tiempo de cambios para toda la familia. No todo lo enfrentamos se puede cambiar, pero nada puede ser cambiado sino lo enfrentamos - James Baldwin

Para más información sobre transición visite:
www.alliance.org
www.pacer.org
www.ncset.org
Proposed Virginia Special Education Regulations

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is in the process of revising the special education regulations to be consistent with the federal regulations and IDEA 2004. Even though many changes are required by law, Virginia can add or eliminate provisions that promote active and informed involvement and provide clarity to rights for children and responsibility for the school system. During the last revisions process, parents made the difference. After extensive public comment, the Virginia Board of Education enacted regulations that went beyond what was mandated by the federal government. Since these regulations can still be changed here are some things parents may wish to review as they submit their own comments. The following are some changes proposed by the VDOE with their corresponding page number.

1. VDOE has chosen to require that secondary transition services begin before the child enters high school but beginning no later than the first IEP in effect when the child turns 14. It can also begin younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team. (p. 155). This provision maintains the practices in the prior regulations, but is TWO years before IDEA 2004 requires those services to begin.

2. Parental consent would no longer be required for a partial or complete termination of special education and related services. (p. 127)

3. The federal regulations allow the use of the Developmental Delay (DD) label for children 2-8 years old: VA draft would curtail the use of this eligibility category after age 5. (p. 121)

4. While the default time frame for eligibility is 60 calendar days, Virginia would allow 65 business days (an additional 3-5 weeks). The parent and eligibility group may also be able to extend the 65 day timeline for re-evaluations to obtain additional data that could not be obtained within 65 business days. (p. 109)

5. A Functional Behavioral Assessment can be either a formal (needing parental consent) assessment or a review of existing data. (p. 27)

6. Although parents of children with disabilities would still be a required majority, administrators and teachers would be able to be appointed members of the local special education advisory committee. (p. 273)

7. The draft would eliminate separate teacher licensure for Mental Retardation, Emotional Disturbance and Learning Disabilities. (p. 21 of Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities)

8. There would be limitations for when schools need to provide Prior Written Notice unless they refuse to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, educational placement of the child, or if the change would impact the provision of a free appropriate public education for the child. (p. 201)

9. Provisions are included that limit the use of tape recorders at meetings and benchmarks and short term objectives in the IEP.

10. There is no mention of a clear requirement for ensuring a “level playing field” for parents during resolution sessions.

The Coalition for Students with Disabilities will be working with Virginia parents to promote their involvement in the process. For more information, contact Cheryl Ward at cwdPolicy@endependence.org or call her at 757-461-8007 or 1-866-323-1088.

The Virginia Department of Education estimates that the regulations will be released for public comment around mid-January 2008. Once released, we encourage everyone to make public comment on what they like and don’t like in the proposed regulations during the 60 day public comment period. Public comment may be submitted at any time via email, fax, or mail to:

EMAIL: ReviseSpedRegs@doe.virginia.gov
FAX: (804) 786-8520
MAIL: Special Education Regulations Revision Process, Office of Dispute Resolution and Administrative Services, Virginia Department of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120

There will also be opportunities to give oral public comment at eight public hearings.

Dates, places, proposed regulations and additional information regarding the Virginia Regulations are available at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/dueproc/regulationsCWD.html, or by contacting Melissa Smith at (804) 371-0524, or Suzanne Creasey at (804) 225-2923.

The Coalition for Students with Disabilities will be working with Virginia parents to promote their involvement in the process. For more information, contact Cheryl Ward at cwdPolicy@endependence.org or call her at 757-461-8007 or 1-866-323-1088.
Focus on PEATC

New Virginia Parent Information Resource Center (V-PIRC) Staff

Johnette H. Walker, BA, is the Program Administrator for Virginia’s Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program.

Pat provides comprehensive training in the Born to Learn curriculum to state and local home visiting programs. She is also responsible for the early childhood component of the V-PIRC. Before coming to PEATC, she was the Executive Director of the East District Family Resource Center, an outgrowth of the Annie E. Casey Foundation Urban Mental Health Initiative, where she directed an effort to improve outcomes for children and families in Richmond’s Historic Church Hill. Johnette brings a diverse background in program development, working with disadvantaged communities, process facilitation and program implementation.

Ivan K. Tolbert, M.P.A., M.A.T., is a V-PIRC Partnership Facilitator with a long history of school and community collaborations. He has taught at the middle school, high school and university levels. During the Warner and Kaine administrations, Ivan helped to develop and implement KIDsafe Virginia, the Protect & Respect Intergenerational Mentoring Program and youth anti-gang initiatives. He was appointed as the Virginia Governor’s representative to the National Network of Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities. Ivan facilitated a 13-agency state government coalition and wrote Gaining Traction, Virginia’s five-year comprehensive plan for improving youth substance abuse prevention programs.

Larry L. Lindsey, MA/Psychology is a partnership facilitator for the V-PIRC and is the founder and Executive Director of F.I.R.S.T. Contractors Inc., a Job Readiness and Life Skills Management Training Experience that prepares young adults for the continuum of employability and life. Over the last 15 years Larry has learned a great deal about Job Readiness and Life Skills Training. As a Staff Psychologist with Virginia’s Department of Juvenile Justice Services, Larry found that traditional career preparation agendas were non-effective - especially for high risk populations. Larry was recognized as Richmond’s 2006 History Maker for Promoting Stronger Communities.

Catherine Burzio returns to PEATC as the new Transition Coordinator after serving on the PEATC Board of Directors (past President) and as PEATC Regional Trainer. She is a former Transition Specialist for a public school system and volunteers with an international disease-specific organization where she works with families on building capacity for advocating through the medical and educational systems. Using both practical and professional experience, Catherine encourages families to take an active role in advocating for their children with special needs. She is the grateful mom of four children and wife of a very supportive husband.

www.peatc.org

Negotiating the Special Education Maze first published over 25 years ago by PEATC founders Winifred Anderson, Stephen Chitwood and Deidre Hayden, has taken parents, advocates, and special educators step-by-step through the special education cycle used by PEATC in its workshops. PEATC Executive Director, Cherie Takemoto has joined the original writing team as they have revised and updated this classic guide. The 4th edition, published by Woodbine House, is coming soon. Check www.woodbinehouse.com for details.

Discover the Next Virginia Icon

2008 Talent Competition For talented Middle School and High School Students
Sunday, April 13th—2:00 pm
Alden Theater, McLean Community Center
Judges are professional musicians, producers and talent agents.
Cash prizes, recording studio time and professional DVD recording for winners. Come support Virginia’s talented teens!
For sponsorship or more information call 1-800-869-6782 or visit www.VirginiaIcon.com. All proceeds benefit PEATC. www.peatc.org.

For the Valentine in Your Life...

The PEATC Board will be hosting a Silpada Sterling Silver fundraiser. On Thursday, January 17th for folks who want to come to the PEATC Main Office any time between 4:00 – 8:00 pm. Visit www.silpada.com to view the catalog.
About 25 years ago, I was considering going back to school to teach. I had a friend who was trying to find out more about special education for her children, so I told her. “Let’s go to this PEATC workshop together.”

It was interesting to find out how special education is organized and that parents play a key role. The PEATC workshop helped me understand that parents can be more constructive when they don’t blame the school or deny the child’s disability. Being more informed and prepared meant that they could go to the school and say, “We have to work together. We are all on the same path and we want the same goals for our children.”

After attending the training, I knew that I wanted to go into special education. I still draw on the key concepts about the power of partnerships when I’m mentoring or training other teachers. I’m also impressed with how my friend used what she learned to become an informed and effective advocate for her sons. Both of her sons turned out well. One is a fireman and the other is a priest.

About 25 years ago, PEATC was instrumental in working with the Virginia Department of Education to establish Parent Resource Centers (PRCs) in many local school systems across the Commonwealth. Parents can go to PRCs to get good information and find out about what opportunities there are for their children.

Today, I see PEATC as an independent resource and know that they will give parents honest information that is based on research. We share the same perspective about the need for open communication about what the child needs and what can be offered. We are in this together: the family, the school and the student. It is especially important that students focus on their strengths, accept their disabilities, be realistic, and understand the need to plan.

Joyce Kelly – Transition Coordinator, Wakefield High School, Arlington

When Kerry was born almost 17 years ago with down syndrome, I didn’t know what our expectations should be. We lived in Quantico and the Bethesda National Medical Center made a referral to PEATC. I called you when Kerry was only a few days old. You put me in touch with other parents who helped me put down syndrome in perspective. That helped me tremendously. We were able to also start early intervention services when Kerry was six weeks old. I received the PEATC Press which was a great help. I would hang on every word and found out about even more possibilities.

Kerry has always been at her home school and rides the regular bus. Some of her high school classes are self-contained and others are in the regular classroom. Right now she is taking gourmet cooking. Last year I asked if Kerry could help out as a manager on the field hockey team because everyone in our family loves field hockey. The coach said that she didn’t want Kerry to be a manager. She wanted her to bring her stick and try out for the team. Kerry played in every freshman game.

I feel like Kerry’s opportunities are exponentially greater than if I had not gotten a perspective early on from parents who had older kids. They reminded me that Kerry was a little girl first; she happened to have down syndrome. It has been tremendous to see the whole continuum of abilities. Some kids with down syndrome need more support, but others are very independent. Most importantly, PEATC helped raise my expectations. You also taught me how important parent-to-parent connections are. Now I’ll meet other parents, we immediately make contact. I hope that I can be a resource for them, the same way that PEATC and other parents have been a resource for me.

When I first contacted you twenty years ago, my 13-year-old son was suffering with a severe case of school phobia. He couldn’t attend regular schools, we had exhausted schools for emotionally disturbed children, and he was then being home tutored. You told me that if my son’s IEP could justify the need for a private school, the public school would cover the cost and transportation.

That was just what my son needed, and he spent two years there growing in self-esteem and self-confidence, and building social skills and gaining sufficient educational training to remain at grade level. At fifteen, he transitioned to a regular school, and then went on to college.

But that wasn’t all…

He is now 33, and has completed all necessary training to serve as a psychiatrist to children, adolescents, and adults. Part of his practice is serving as a psychiatrist at a school very much like the one he attended when he was in high school.

I learned to be a strong advocate for my son, thanks to you, and now he will be in a position to help other children and their families address their disabilities.”

MS

The accompanying photo is of my son receiving an award upon graduation from school as the student who showed the greatest growth.

Faces of PEATC

Kerry O’Brien
Phenomenal PEATC Partners

We couldn't do it without you!

I first heard about PEATC from the Alexandria Parent Resource Center when Kyle was two and I was looking for a day care center that would care for children with disabilities. With information and encouragement from PEATC, I was able to walk into the center and say, “You can’t just dismiss me.” I felt empowered to be able help the center to understand that it was not going to be that difficult to take Kyle. They listened to me!

Later, I attended a workshop. It was a very good opportunity to be with other parents. You encouraged me not to be scared, to keep asking, and to find what is out there. A couple of weeks ago, I was looking through a paper from a PEATC workshop when Kyle was entering kindergarten. The exercise allowed me to let go of my fears and dream about anything I wanted. I brought it to Kyle’s 1st IEP meeting. It said Kyle is going to get straight A’s and be valedictorian. He’s well on his way!  

Stephanie Stevenson

We Thank PEATC Supporters

Peregrine Computer Consulting Corporation, for in-kind computer technical assistance  
The Arc of Northern Virginia, for continued partnership with PEATC as we work together to serve Virginia’s families  
WRIR LP 97.3 FM, for running PSA’s in English and Spanish  
Nuevas Raíces Hispanic Newspaper, for printing PEATC’s bimonthly ‘Esquina Escolar’ (Education Corner) to its circulation of 14,000 readers  
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Margarita Baquero and Michael Smith for volunteer office assistance in the PEATC office  
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Franceda Dunn, Tinesha Jackson, Leslie McKeever, Kim Messick, David Mills, Helen Robertson, Tina Smith, Monica Timberlake, Laurie Westbrook, Keisha White, and Linda Wright for volunteering at the Virginia State Fair  
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Anne Henderson for reviewing V-PIRC publicity materials  
Virginia Department of Education for continuing to fund the Latino Outreach Initiative at PEATC  
John Molumphy, Esq., for conducting a PEATC workshop  
Kim Laraway, Waynesboro Public Schools Parent Resource Center, for hosting a PEATC workshop  
Terri Braxton, PEATC Board President, for hosting a fundraiser  
Principal Ricky Skeens, of George Wythe High School, for training space  
PEATC wishes to thank the Board of Directors for their unwavering support and for their work on the 2008 Virginia Icon: Terri Braxton, Florence Long Bey, Maggie Bishop, Suzette Blackwell, Michael J. Carrasco, Susan Chen, Cassandra Coleman, Michael Heaney, Betsy McGuire, Kerry Cassetta, Milton Giles, Jr, Barbara Curtis, LaVoyce Reid, Tony Trott and Suzanne Hill

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I’m in 9th grade and just won second place for literature in the Reflections Contest. The contest asked how I can make a difference. I wrote about how I can speak out when people use the “N word.” I want to be an example as an advocate. I can empower others so that they understand that just because they are different, doesn’t mean that they can’t have self respect and get respect from others.

At school I advocate for myself. I get extra time. I also ask the teacher to explain the assignments to me so I can ask questions and get clarification. This works better for me. I do all of my writing on a computer and save my work on a flash drive. I’m going to college. After I get my degree I’m going to teach African American literature and history at the high school or college level.

Kyle Stevenson

www.peatc.org

The PEATC Press - December 2007
How it Adds Up

National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs

Here are some of the data available from the most recent National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs available online at http://cshcndata.org.

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>CSCN Prevalence</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSCN who face financial burden due to medical expenses</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSCN w/o insurance</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSCN w/o adequate insurance</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-99% of Poverty</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
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<td>100-199% of Poverty</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400% of Poverty or more</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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SPECIAL EDUCATION THEN AND NOW

**Numbers of Children in Special Education in Virginia in 1977: 74,048**

**Numbers of Children in Special Education in Virginia in 2005: 172,788**

Virginia’s Response to Intervention

**Implementation in School Divisions**

The reauthorization of IDEA 2004 focused national attention on Response to Intervention (RtI), a growing successful practice in the general education classroom.

RtI is a school wide process to identify the most effective teaching strategies for struggling learners. It involves universal screening, high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, frequent progress monitoring, and the use data on individual learners to make educational decisions.

This isn’t a “wait and see” model where educators must wait for students to fail over a period of several years before they can intervene. RtI is proactive. General educators have used RtI strategies, such as small group or individualized instruction for years. With RtI, evidence-based practices are implemented and data is collected on how the students are learning in order for educators to find the most appropriate method for ensuring early learner’s acquisition of baseline skills.

The Virginia Department of Education has developed a guidance document titled Responsive Instruction: Refining Our Work of Teaching All Children – Virginia’s “Response to Intervention” Initiative. This document is designed to facilitate and assist school divisions across the Commonwealth as they implement RtI. The guidance document provides a conceptual framework and valuable information on developing, designing and implementing a successful RtI program in each division.

1) What is a School Report Card?  
The School Report Card gives parents and the public a snap-shot of student performance and teacher quality in their local schools. It also gives information about how students performed on the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) tests.

2) Why do schools need report cards?  
The Federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires states and school districts to collect information about how well their students are doing and to share this information with the public. In order to qualify for federal NCLB funding, schools must report on how their student test scores are improving. The federal government calls this accountability requirement Adequate Yearly Progress or (AYP).

3) What is in the School Report Card?  
Reports on each school are a part of the annual district report card, also known as local report cards. Each school district must prepare and share annual local report cards that include information on how students in the district performed on the SOL tests. The report cards must state student performance in terms of three levels: basic, proficient and advanced. Achievement data is listed by different subgroups: race, ethnicity, gender, English language proficiency, migrant status, disability status and low-income status. The report cards must also tell which schools have been identified as needing improvement, corrective action or restructuring.

4) How can I find the report card for my local school district and my child’s school?  
Local districts must make these local report cards available to the parents of students quickly (by no later than the beginning of the school year.) The law requires that the information is in an “understandable and uniform format, and to the extent practicable, in a language that the parents can understand.” States and districts may also pass out this information to the media for publicizing; post it on the Internet; or provide it to other public agencies for distribution. The Commonwealth of Virginia has all school report cards available for view or for download online at: https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/reportcard/

5) What is “adequate yearly progress” (AYP)?  
NCLB requires each local district and Title I school to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward a goal of leaving no child behind by the year 2014. Each year, the percent-age of students that need to pass the SOL tests is set at a higher level. To make AYP, each subgroup must pass the required SOL tests at the minimum level of improvement set by the state.

6) Is AYP only based on academic performance?  
No. In addition to meeting academic goals in reading and mathematics, schools and districts also must meet two other requirements each year if they are to make AYP. At least 95% of all students must participate in SOL tests each year. Low rates of test participation can result in a school or district not making AYP. Schools and districts can also be designated as not making AYP if their students’ attendance rates are less than 92%, or if too few high school students graduate.

7) What does it mean if my school has been “identified for improvement”?  
In accordance with NCLB, all public schools in the United States are required to ensure that all students are proficient in reading and mathematics by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. AYP determinations are issued yearly to monitor the interim progress of all students toward attainment of those performance goals. School and district AYP determinations are based on the performance of students in the entire school and for student sub-groups for both English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Schools identified for improvement are those that have not made AYP for two or three years in a row in either mathematics or reading for all students, or for any student subgroup.

8) What if a school does not improve?  
NCLB lays out an action plan and timetable for steps to be taken when a Title I school fails to improve as follows:

• Second Year- A Title I school that has failed to meet AYP for two consecutive school years will be identified as needing improvement. School officials will develop a two-year plan to turn around the school. The School must offer parents the option of transferring their child to another school that has made AYP.

• Third Year- If the school fails to meet AYP on the third year the school remains in needing improvement status. In addition to offering school choice the school must provide supplemental educational services (SES), such as tutoring or remedial classes, to low-income families.

• Fourth Year- If the school fails to meet AYP for four years, the district must implement certain corrective actions to improve the school, such as replacing certain staff or fully implementing a new curriculum.

• Fifth Year- If the school fails to meet AYP for a fifth year, the school district must initiate plans for restructuring the school. This may include reopening the school as a charter school, replacing all or most of the school staff or turning over school operations either to the state or to a private company with a demonstrated record of effectiveness.

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9) What can I do if my school has been “identified for improvement”?  
Find out more about the specifics of why your child’s school did not meet AYP. The weakness may be for a subgroup your child is in. Consider the quality of your child’s school and the teachers. Find out what your child’s school is doing to turn the school around. Finally, you may also want to look into the school choice option or supplemental educational services option in the third year. You can contact your school officials to find out what programs are available to your child.

10) What can I do to help my child’s school succeed and meet the accountability requirements?  
NCLB supports parent involvement because research demonstrates the positive effect that parent involvement has on their children’s education. In the event a school is identified as needing improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, the law requires the local education agency to notify parents accordingly and to explain to them how they can become involved in school improvement efforts. Parents may help their child’s school in a number of ways, including: Attending parent-teacher meetings to address academic problems at the school; volunteering to serve as needed and encouraging other parents to become involved. NCLB laws give parents the flexibility to talk with their school board members, principals and other state and local education leaders about which programs they think will help their students the most.
Please support PEATC because.....
• Families are children’s first and best teachers.
• Information and training enrich and empower families and professionals to build strong partnerships.
• All children deserve opportunities to live, learn and participate fully in their communities.
• Children with disabilities can achieve independence and make valuable contributions to society.

Please Remember PEATC in your end-of-the-year giving.

Wishing you a Wonderful Holiday Season!

The PEATC Press
Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center
100 N. Washington St., Suite 234
Falls Church, VA 22046

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