



The

PEAT *press*

www.peatc.org

December 2005

Building Better Futures for Children with Disabilities

“New IDEA 2004” Special Edition 2

Special Education in Virginia—How It Adds Up

By Pierre Ames

While other states are celebrating their 30th Anniversary of providing special education services to students with disabilities, Virginia is celebrating 33 years. We have guaranteed public education to students with disabilities in Virginia since 1972. We blazed the trail, while other states did not provide services until they were mandated to do so by PL 94-142, in 1975.

When you consider the services Virginia has provided to students with disabilities, the questions most often asked are:

- How many students have we served?
- Who are they?
- What were the benefits or outcomes?
- What difference has it all made?

What's inside

CHERIE'S CORNER	2
CALENDAR OF EVENTS.....	3
PHENOMENAL PEATC PARTNERS	4
PUBLIC POLICY	6
IDEA 2004 SPECIAL EDITION 2 GUIDE.....	1-4
FOCUS ON PEATC.....	7
PARA NUESTRA COMUNIDAD	8
LATINO CORNER	9
YOU OUGHT TO KNOW	10

Below is a sample of statistics on special education in Virginia and a summary from a national study. In future issues, the PEATC Press will include

other statistics. Please remember that sometimes the numbers do not reveal the entire story, and some numbers are rounded figures.

Virginia	
CENSUS	
Number of students in special education in 2004	175,000
Female students	55,404
Male students	118,478
Most frequently identified – Specific Learning Disabilities	70,142
Least frequently identified – Deaf Blind	21
Most number students in special education – Fairfax County	23,644
Least number students in special education – Highland County	61
LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT	
Students spending most of their day in a regular classroom	58%
DISPROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION	
Special education students who are African American	30%
Virginia population who are African American	27%
Students who are African American and are classified as ED or MR	60%
EXITED SPECIAL EDUCATION	
Transferred to regular education	1,213
Received a standard diploma	4,471
Received certificate	2,485
Dropped out	1,708

National Longitudinal Transition Survey 2	
STUDENTS WHO EXITED SPECIAL EDUCATION	
Graduated with a diploma	50%
Dropped out	30% to 50%
EMPLOYMENT	
Employed after leaving special education	33%
Unemployed after leaving special education	67%
EDUCATION	
Received post secondary schooling/vocational training	40%
LIVING SITUATION	
Living independently	4%
Living with a parent	77%
Living in an institution	5%
SOCIAL LIFE	
Reported to participate in community life	13%
Volunteer activities	36%

Dr. Paul Raskopf of the VA Department of Education compiled the data for Virginia. John Eisenberg of the VA Department of Education compiled the NLTSS summary. To read the full National Longitudinal Study, go to www.nlts2.org.

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Hablamos Español

Si usted o alguien que usted conoce necesita información en español, puede llamar a Lydia Mideros a PEATC al tefl: 703-923-0010, ext. 103; o al 1-800-869-6782, ext. 103.



Cherie's Corner

Agenda for Full Participation

By Cherie Takemoto

On September 23, 2005, my son and I were invited to participate in a Town Hall at the Alliance for Full Participation's 2005 Summit. Sponsored by 11 national organizations, the Summit brought together 2,400 Americans who live with lifelong disabilities, their family members, and the people who work with them. More can be found on their Web site, www.AllianceForFullParticipation.org. The following is the vision developed as a result of Summit:

■ *We are Americans, too! We want to be included in all communities in our great nation and to have all the rights and responsibilities of full citizenship. We need to be safe and free at the same time. We know how to do this. Few American communities are listening.*

■ *We belong in schools, neighborhoods, businesses, government, churches, synagogues and mosques.*

■ *We do not belong in segregated institutions, sheltered workshops, special schools or nursing homes. Those places must be replaced by houses, apartments and condos in regular neighborhoods, and neighborhood schools that have the tools they need to include us. We can all live, work and learn in the community. We invite our fellow citizens to support the Community Imperative with us. It says that no one should live in an institution because of disability. http://thechp.syr.edu/community_imperative.htm.*

■ *We can work in worthwhile jobs. We know how to help each other do this. It is being done in some places, just not all places. We hope to be welcomed to work for the American dream alongside other Americans.*

The Summit leadership went on to describe what is needed to make their vision a reality:

■ *Help for people with lifelong disabilities to live in communities.*

■ *Real jobs with real pay, real businesses and volunteer opportunities.*

■ *Support for families to have equal access to full and rich family lives. While some have support to lead decent lives, others do not and are isolated and feel abandoned.*

■ *People with disabilities must be part of all planning, governance, leadership and programs.*

■ *Calling people by their name instead of their label. The term mental retardation has become hurtful.*

■ *People who have chosen to work directly with people with developmental disabilities should be paid a decent wage with benefits. This is important work that must be respected.*

■ *Medicaid reform must protect access to this program, promote inclusion for people in their communities and empower citizens to control the funds spent on their behalf.*

■ *Inclusive communities support all people, and make limited public funds go farther, to help those in need.*

■ *Understanding and honoring of America's diversity, including all people in planning, governing and participating in communities.*

■ *People with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families working toward the same ends as people with other severe, chronic and lifelong disabilities.*

PEATC Calendar of Events

How to Use the New IDEA to Improve Results for Your Child

Cherie Takemoto

Executive Director, PEATC

Tuesday, April 4, 2006

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Northern Virginia Location tbd

Training for Trainers

PEATC will be offering a training for experienced trainers who are interested in training parents and educators on the new IDEA.

Call PEATC for details.

INTERESTED IN ATTENDING A WORKSHOP?

- Find out more about workshops in and around VA 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.

The Consumer and Family Participation Fund (CFPF)

allows families and people with disabilities to attend conferences and workshops related to topics on disabilities. For additional information call the Endependence Center at 866-625-2373 or visit the Web site at www.cfpf.net.

PEATC Training Workshops

In Springfield

PEATC COFFEES

We Don't Agree, Now What?

Art Stewart, Mediation Coordinator

VA Department of Education

Tuesday, February 7, 2006

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

PEATC Office

Understanding the IEP

Bill and Vanessa Brownley

Brownley Law Group

Saturday, March 11, 2006

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Richard Byrd Library

7250 Commerce Street

Springfield, VA 21250

Entendiendo Educación Especial (Understanding Special Education Workshop in Spanish)

Lydia Mideros, Latino Outreach

Information Specialist

Saturday, March 18, 2006

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

PEATC Office

What Every Parent Needs to Know About Transition and SSI Benefits

David J. Melton

Social Security Administration

Wednesday, March 22, 2006

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Richard Byrd Library

7250 Commerce Street

Springfield, VA 22150

Richmond Regional Office

BROWN BAG LUNCHES

How to Talk so Schools will Listen and Listen so Schools will Talk.

Pierre Ames

Thursday, January 19, 2006

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Involving Siblings: An Overview of SibShops

LaEunice Brown, Chesapeake PRC

Wednesday, February 1, 2006

11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

NEXT STEPS: THE TRANSITION SERIES Planning for the Future:

Pierre Ames, PEATC Coordinator, Strategic Partnerships

Workshop Seven—Effective Partnerships

Wednesday, March 22, 2006

11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Workshop Eight—Accessing Services

Thursday, March 23, 2006

1:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

The Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) is scheduling workshops for Spring 2005.

Please call or e-mail us if you are interested in bringing information to your community.

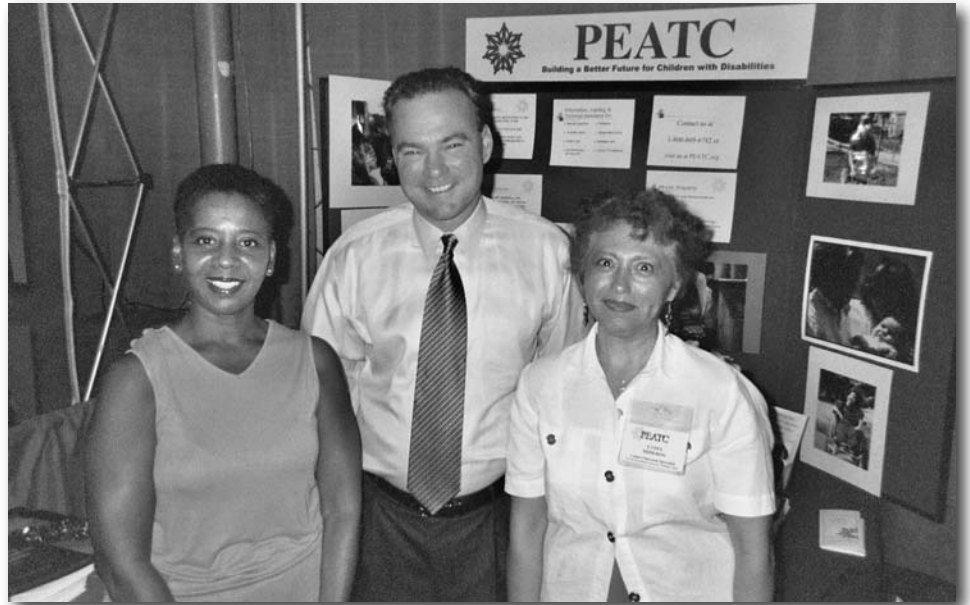
Phenomenal PEATC Partners

We couldn't do it without you!

Thank you for showing your support

We wish to thank the following contributors for enhancing our efforts to turn family hopes for their children with disabilities into real opportunities for success.

*James D. & Winifred G Anderson
Jean Galloway Ball, PLC
Kristopher & Sarah Baugh
Richard & Barbara Berger
Florence & George Bey
David & Andrea Bliss
Barbara Briston
Andrew & Lucia Claster
Emily Crandall
Patricia Mary & N. Thomas Connally
Yoshiko Dart
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John Ringler
Gerard Rugel
Ruth Constance Russell
Tom O. & Sharon H. Sachs
Paul & Gilda Sternfels
Shiro G. & Margaret Takemoto
Pamela K. Waaland*



Governor-Elect Timothy Kaine stops by the PEATC booth at the Virginia State Fair to discuss Latino outreach and the importance of special education with Lynda Vincent, PEATC Training Coordinator, and Lydia Mideros, PEATC Latino Outreach Information Specialist.

Special Thanks

TO OUR VOLUNTEERS FOR THE PEATC EXHIBIT AT THE VIRGINIA STATE FAIR 2005

*Alexandre Ames – TJ High School IB Program
Deborah Ames – Sibling Advocate
Stanley Ames, Jr. – Self Advocate
Addie Davis – CHIP of Richmond
Barbara Ettner – VA Board for People with Disabilities
Sheila Marble – PADDA
Kim Messick – Poquoson Parent Resource Center
David Mills – DMHMRSAS
Raven & Justin Ryder – Students
Paul Sternfels – PEATC Board
Anita Swan – Richmond City Parent Resource Center
The Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy – Handouts/Giveaways
Karen Willis – PEATC Board and Angeldeer Ministries
Olivia Ames & Elizabeth Brown – Albert Hill Middle School
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JoAnn Bush & Vivian Stith-Williams – VA Dept of Education
Michelle Roberts & Rhonda Perry – East District Family Resource Center*

Phenomenal PEATC Partners

We couldn't do it without you!

Many Thanks to:

Suzette Blackwell, PEATC Board member for chairing the Kids Coupons Book fundraiser for PEATC

Teri Braxton, PEATC Board member for hosting a Better Home and Garden Party to benefit PEATC

Maggie Bishop, PEATC Board member and sponsor of a workshop in Wytheville

Vanessa and Bill Brownley, PEATC Coffee on Introduction to Special Education

Octavia Caldwell, ROC Consultants for pro-bono capacity-building work for PEATC and Board

Cassandra Coleman, PEATC Vice President for Development, for representing PEATC at the Disability Expo and the Down Syndrome Buddy Walk

Kerry Edinger, Support Networks in the Counties of Northern Neck and PEATC Trainer, for hosting trainings in Northern Neck

Rosalia Fajardo, for consultation on IDEA rights for Latino families and Spanish translation services

Paul Sternfels, PEATC Treasurer, for representing PEATC at the Disability Expo

Jackie Myal, Pulaski Parent Resource Center & **Barbara Greenberg**, Montgomery County Parent Resource Center for hosting and sponsoring IDEA 2004 workshop and Training for Trainers workshop in SW Virginia

Beth Schumann, PEATC intern in the Springfield office.

Carmen Takemoto, WSI Internet Consulting & Education, for Spanish translation services

PEATC's First Golf Tournament

PEATC's first golf tournament was organized by Cassandra Coleman, PEATC Vice President for Development with her husband Sam Coleman.

They were assisted by Sam Clark, who promoted the tournament and Lynda Vincent from PEATC.

Trophies were donated by Dick Vargé owner of Vargé International.



Cassandra and Sam Coleman are all smiles after organizing PEATC's first golf tournament.

Special Thanks to Our Golf Tournament Donors

Wayne Bookstaver—Blue Ridge Finance Corp

Gary Bricker

Mark Buchannon

Jason Canody

J. Samuel & Helen Clarke

Tony Claytor

Donald Claytor

Allen Conrad

Samuel & Elizabeth Conrad

Jason Cooper

Michael Crane

W. Everett & Felicia Crawley

J. Bradley Davis—Ridge Capital Partners LLC

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Jim Jackson

Jeremiah Ledbetter

Dorothy Lee

Burk Lee

Tony Manilla

Mark Smith

Scott Stine

Les Tinsley

Charles Warhop

IN MEMORY OF MAUREEN WOODS

Maureen Woods, a disability advocate for educational rights residing in Roanoke, Virginia, passed away July 15, 2005. Mrs. Woods was an ardent advocate for the educational rights of persons with disabilities, providing necessary and timely leadership to those who had difficulty representing themselves. The family of Mrs. Woods requested that donations be sent to PEATC in lieu of flowers. We wish to thank the following donors for their generosity.

George & Claudia Malenich

Sara Polen

Teresa Carter

Anthony & Joyce Cavallaro

Thomas & Jean Fusco

Linda Hance

John & Kimberly Keller

Jean Mitola

Erin Mooney & Judith Herr

Robert & Marion Paluck

Keith Pillow & Eric Lee

James & Kathleen Ramich

M.A. & Douglas Rhodes

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Christine Szepesi

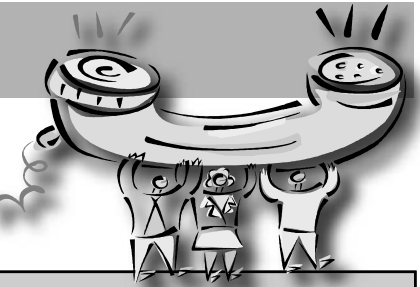
Charles & Tamara Watts

James & Gail Woods

Public Policy

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA

Make Your Voices Heard



The General Assembly is in session
JANUARY 11—MARCH 12, 2006

The Virginia Online Legislature (<http://legis.state.va.us>) provides contact information for legislators, membership on committees, and much more. If you are not sure who are your legislators, click on “Who’s My Legislator?” on the top right of the page and then type in your address. E-mail addresses for your legislators can also be found here.

The Legislative Information System can be accessed at <http://leg1.state.va.us>. This site provides status information on legislation with bill summaries and the text of the bills. Detailed information on all meetings is also available by clicking on “meetings” under “session tracking”.

The Constituent Viewpoint Opinion Line is 1-800-889-0229. By calling this number between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. each day, you can register opinions on legislation before the General Assembly and have that information communicated to your legislators. Opinions can also be submitted online by clicking on “Who’s My Legislator?” on the Virginia Online Legislature above.

Mail can be sent to legislators as follows:

House of Delegates, P.O. Box 406, Richmond, VA 23218
Senate of Virginia, P.O. Box 396, Richmond, VA 23218

Legislative information:.....804-698-1470 (General Assembly information)
804-698-1500 (House of Delegates)
804-698-7410 (Senate)

Legislators’ phone numbers may be obtained from the legislative information desk (804-698-1470) or may be determined if you know the district number for a particular legislator. For delegates, dial 804-698-10xx, replacing the xx with the delegate’s House District number. For senators, dial 804-698-75yy, replacing the yy with the Senate District number.

Clerks’ Offices:.....804-698-1619 (House of Delegates)
804-698-7400 (Senate)

Fax Numbers:.....804-786-6310 (House of Delegates)
804-698-7651 (Senate)

A Voice for GAP Kids

Self Advocate Tim Moore has started an Support and Advocacy Group for “GAP Kids”.

Who are GAP Kids?

According to Moore, they are:

- Students with disabilities who are not significantly cognitively disabled, but who may be severely learning disabled or mildly mentally retarded.
- Students who perform at a higher level than those with severe cognitive disabilities—too high to be assessed based on alternate achievement standards.
- Students learning well below grade level.
- Students who often function 3 to 5 years below grade level.
- Students who do not meet the criteria of the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP).

Moore is interested in working with other youth with disabilities who are interested in allowing greater access to high school diplomas. His Web site is <http://www.gapkids.cjb.net/>

www.PEATC.org

Features Special Education Tour, Fact Sheets and online disability resources

If you want a simple and easy introduction to the special education process, visit our Web site at www.peatc.org. Our new online Special Education Tour is a brief tutorial, PowerPoint style, that you can take at your own pace.

IDEA REAUTHORIZED

The new Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

(IDEA 2004) became effective on July 1, 2005. The law is intended to raise accountability for results while reducing paperwork. The federal regulations to implement the act will not be out until late winter or early spring. Virginia will begin its regulation process immediately after that.

The last edition of the PEATC Press contained the first Special Edition with IDEA highlights; a description of how it aligns with No Child Left Behind (NCLB); a focus on evaluation, eligibility and the IEP; and some key definitions. That publication is available on PEATC's Web site. This edition will cover the intent of IDEA; tips for successful IEPs; and transition.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (PL 108-446), the most recent reauthorization, referred to here as IDEA 2004, contains several significant changes that are intended to increase accountability for results while reducing paperwork.

In the reauthorization of IDEA, Congress found that special education has been ineffective because of low expectations and an insufficient focus on applying replicable research on proven methods of teaching and learning for children with disabilities.

Congress cited in the Findings:

*Almost 30 years of research and experience demonstrate that children with disabilities are more successful by having **high expectations** for such children and ensuring their access to the **general education curriculum in the regular classroom** to the maximum extent possible in order to meet developmental goals and, to the maximum extent possible, the challenging expectations that have been established for all children; and be prepared to lead **productive and independent adult lives** to the maximum extent possible.*

1. Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) — is the cornerstone of IDEA. *Free* means *at no cost to parents*. *Appropriate* is usually interpreted as what the parent and school agree to within the IEP. Though parents may decide to send a child to a non-public school, the public school system still has some basic responsibilities to make sure that all eligible children are assessed and offered public services. Services must meet the student's unique needs and prepare them for further education after they leave high school, employment and independent living.

2. Rights for Children and Parents — are meant to ensure that families have meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children. The new law also makes it the responsibility of parents to understand IDEA. For instance, parents may give permission to waive requirements for evaluation and IEP participation. They may also enter into legally binding agreements in dispute resolution proceedings.

3. Tools to Improve Educational Results — for educators and parents. These include *systemic-change activities, coordinated research and personnel preparation, coordinated technical assistance, dissemination and support, and technology development and media services*. The push for results and focus on peer-reviewed research will require a number of changes in the way special education is delivered. The US Department of Education will continue to fund national dissemination centers and technical assistance. All textbooks will be available in electronic format that meets the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) by December 2006.

4. Monitoring to Ensure Improved Educational Results — consistent with No Child Left Behind (NCLB). States and localities are to report on their performance on a number of Congressionally-mandated measures and will be held accountable for results. Required reporting includes free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, disproportional representation, graduation and drop out rates, performance on statewide assessments, and meaningful parental involvement.

No Objectives? How to Make IEPs Work

To reduce paperwork and focus on accountability for results, the Congress decided that objectives and benchmarks would be required only for students taking alternate assessments aligned to alternate standards. In Virginia, measurable objectives or benchmarks are only required in IEPs for students in the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP). This change in IDEA 2004 seems to be causing much angst and confusion among parents and many educators.

Virginia guidance is that schools are still ALLOWED to use short-term objectives and benchmarks. In fact, many schools, districts and states across the country will continue to use these measures because they help the team monitor progress. But what if an IEP Team does not agree to include objectives? How can parents understand the sequence of skills planned in the IEP? How will they know whether or not their child is progressing? Will there any accountability at all? What follows are some tips for increasing the chance that a child's IEP will lead to successful results.

Present Level of Performance

(PLOP)— PLOP is more than just scores on tests. A good description of the student will help the whole team understand the student's unique and individual needs. It is important to understand how the student's performance compares to same age peers, and at what age or grade level the student is functioning. This information can help the team consider the type, frequency and intensity of services needed to help a child "catch up" to his grade level and be more successful in school. The PLOP helps the team make decisions about what to prioritize and what might be de-emphasized in developing a workable and individualized plan.

The Present Level of Performance includes:

- *Level of academic achievement*
- *Level of functional performance, including how the disability affects involvement and progress in the general education curriculum*
- *Child's strengths*
- *Parental concerns*
- *Evaluation results*
- *Academic, developmental and functional needs of the child*
- *Scores on state-wide or district-wide tests*
- *Evaluation*
- *Other information*

• **Measurable Annual Goals** — IDEA 2004 makes it even more important that annual goals are measurable. If there is no objective and annualized measure for success, the school and parents will not know if the student is making progress along the way. Make sure that there are quantifiable or measurable results. Go back to the Present Level of Performance section of the IEP. Use the present levels of your child's academic achievement and functional performance as a baseline to establish an objective measure of progress to be achieved by the end of the next year.

• **Peer-reviewed Research** — Remember that one of the purposes of IDEA is to provide teachers with tools to be successful. The Congress wanted IEPs to be based on peer-reviewed research. This means that as the team looks at key academic and functional goals, they should consider research. For example, the research says that there are certain key skills to becoming a successful reader. The IEP might include individual goals related to key skill areas.

• **General Education Curriculum** — Includes classes such as reading, math, science, history/social studies, art and PE. To the extent possible, your child should be learning what other students are learning. Academic goals should be standards-based—that is, based on what it will take the student to advance and meet the standards in the general education curriculum. These might be improvements in foundational skills such as reading, writing or math. Goals, for areas such as organization, assistive technology proficiency and note-taking, might address skills your child needs to progress in the general education curriculum.

• **Functional Goals** — are now required to be included in the IEP. The Present Level of Performance should describe your child's functional performance including how your child's disability affects involvement and progress in the general education curriculum. Measurable annual functional goals may address improved skills in areas such as:

- *Communication*
- *Behavior*
- *Personal Management*
- *Independence*
- *Self-advocacy/Self-determination*
- *Mobility*
- *Gross and fine motor skills*
- *Assistive Technology*

Special Edition - Part 2

High Expectations — look to the future. It is important for the team to keep the overall goal of success in school and once a child leaves school in mind. Minimal progress from year-to-year will increase the gap between where a student is now and ultimate success after high school. To develop goals, the team may wish to rely on the research of successful practices.

Description of Progress — specifies how progress for each goal will be measured and when parents will receive progress reports. IDEA 2004 defers to the IEP Team to determine the frequency of the reports for parents. Schools no longer need to tell parents if progress is insufficient to meet a goal. These changes make it even more important for parents to have ways to monitor meaningful progress. Information in this section needs to be objective and sufficient enough for parents to understand if a student is making progress. Good measures of progress can help inform teachers and parents whether the IEP is working or if it needs to be adjusted.

Services & Supports — specify in the IEP what will help the student:

- *Advance appropriately toward attaining annual goals*
- *Be involved in and make progress with the general education curriculum*
- *Participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities*
- *Be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children*

Services and supports should be listed on a summary page so that everyone on the team can see the level of services and supports that will be provided. Specifics must detail when services will begin, how often, where, and how long they will be provided.

Accommodations and Modifications — should also be specific and understandable to the parents, the student (to the extent appropriate) and professionals who are implementing the IEP.

Prior Written Notice — Sometimes the parent or student may disagree with something the school or IEP team is proposing. Or, the parent or student may want something that the rest of the IEP Team does not think is necessary. This notice must contain written information about why the school disagrees with the parents including:

- *What options were considered*
- *Evaluations, assessments, observations upon which the decision was made*

- *Other relevant factors*
- *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*
- *Contacts for parents to understand their rights*

“Prior notice” or “written prior notice” means parents must have WRITTEN information BEFORE the school takes the action or refuses to take action. When there is a difference or dispute, prior written notice may help clarify issues and promote a resolution to a disagreement. Sometimes what is said by a team member may be interpreted in a way that is not intended. The written notice may help the parent and school obtain additional information that will help the team better understand each others perspectives. Remember to be clear and specific about what you disagree with or what you are requesting that you want the school to address.

Amendments or Modifications to the IEP — can be made to the IEP with permission of the parent and school representative authorized to make the change. The whole IEP does not have to be rewritten. Parents need to ask for a copy of the revised IEP and make sure that they fully understand and give permission for the school to make the changes.

Re-evaluation — can be requested by a parent or teacher as frequently as once-a-year. If a student is not making sufficient progress in his or her educational or related services, it may be time to evaluate what a child needs to be successful in school.

Self-Advocacy/Self-Determination — are skills that students use, to make sure that an IEP will work, by speaking up for what they want and think is important. Finding ways to promote an IEP as something that is done to support maximum self-sufficiency and self-determination may result in an IEP that is meaningful and workable for the student and school staff.

Proactive Communication — may lead to a successful IEP. Share your observations, thoughts and priorities with other relevant IEP members BEFORE the IEP meeting. Discuss what they think is important. Find agreement in as many areas as possible so that the meeting may be most productive and focus on the most important points.

Put it in Writing — To make sure that you are clearly communicating your concerns, priorities and what you want to be included in your child's IEP, organize the information in writing. Refer to PEATC publication *Put it in Writing* for pointers on this topic.

Special Edition – Part 2

Secondary Transition

Plan Early for Best Results

IDEA 2004 defines secondary transition as — a coordinated set of activities designed to be within a results-oriented process, focused on improving the academic and functional achievement to facilitate movement from school to post-school activities.

In order to plan effectively, begin no later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child is 16 and update annually. Diploma options and course of study discussions should begin during 8th or 9th grade.

NOTE: Age 16 is the DEADLINE not the starting point! When discussing diploma options, refer to the Graduation Requirements in *Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia (Standards of Accreditation)*.

The purpose of planning is to — improve academic and functional performance and facilitate movement from school to post-school activities such as:

- Postsecondary education
- Career and technical education
- Integrated employment
- Continuing and adult education
- Adult services
- Independent living
- Community participation

Planning is based upon — individual needs, strengths, preferences, and interests. Transition services include:

- Activities needed to assist the child in reaching postsecondary goals
- Course of study

Transition activities may include — instruction, related services, community experience, employment and other adult living objectives, daily living skills, functional vocational evaluation.

Requirements for postsecondary goals — A discussion must take place with the youth, family/guardian/surrogate, and others as needed, to determine the post-school vision for the student. Goals are measurable, but not necessarily annual. They must be based on age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and independent living skills, when necessary. Additionally, the goals are based on the child's needs, while considering the strengths, preferences and interests.

Transition assessments may include observations, interviews, inventories, situational assessments, formal & informal assessments, and academic assessments.

Age of majority — Students must be informed, beginning not later than 1 year before age 18, of the rights that will be transferred to them.

Summary of Performance (required for students who are graduating or who will exceed the age of eligibility for a free and appropriate education) **includes** —

■ **Accommodations, modifications, Assistive Technology, etc.**—utilized for success in secondary education and needed to be successful in postsecondary environments

■ **Academic achievement**—what the youth knows such as literacy, numeracy, consumer, and learning skills; reasoning, communication, processing, etc.

■ **Functional performance**—behavior across different environments such as how the youth interacts with peers at school, in the community, at work; self-care, mobility, self-determination, safety, etc.

■ **Recommendations for attaining postsecondary goals**—for example, attend college orientation, meet with Department of Rehabilitative Services, meet with Disability Services Counselor at community college, keep a file of current disability documentation, complete employment applications, etc.

IDEA 2004 Quick Recommendations & Resources: Secondary Transition is reprinted with permission from the VA Department of Education, Division of Special Education and Student Services. You will find Guidance Documents, IDEA 2004 Procedural Safeguards (also in Spanish) and other Quick Recommendations by visiting the VDOE site: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/duproc/>

CORRECTION: Page 5 of the “The Special Edition PEATC Guide to IDEA 2004” contained in the Spring 2005 *PEATC Press* should have read “Evaluation is required before termination EXCEPT when graduating with a regular diploma or exceeding age eligibility for special education.”

Focus on PEATC

PEATC Continues to Reach Out to Help

Throughout the year, PEATC was able to offer in-depth assistance to more than 5,025 individuals while another 6,691 were supported through collaborative conferences, trainings and workshops. Our *PEATC Press* newsletter reached more than 11,500 families, schools and organizations while thousands of others found vital linkages to resources for raising children with disabilities through our Web site.

“Wanted to thank you for the training and extra efforts you and your staff put into the Northern Neck last week. Positive outcomes have already been felt by parents who attended the training.”

“Without your research and help we could not have made it happen. So on behalf of my family I would very kindly like to say THANK YOU!!”

“PEATC is the best organization. I’ve learned so much about special education. It’s helped me be a better advocate for my son.”

“I felt lost, Pierre steered me in all the right directions.”

“Bonnie gave me thorough information with understanding—it’s nice to have resources.”

“Helped to resolve a disagreement with the school district.”

“Info is always great from PEATC! I wish more families knew about you.”

“I work with low income families and share PEATC information with them all the time.”

“All Special Ed parents should have this information.”



PEATC

Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center

Virginia’s Parent Training and Information Center is committed to building better futures for children with disabilities by working collaboratively with families, schools and professionals to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life.

We offer easy-to-understand, research-based disability information, education, advocacy training and support.

For further information call:
703-923-0010 or 1-800-869-6782
E-mail us at partners@peatc.org.

VISIT US AT WWW.PEATC.ORG

Lynda Vincent, PEATC’s Training Coordinator,

has a Master’s degree in Special Education from George Mason University. Her background includes teaching students with learning disabilities and emotional disabilities in high school transition, literacy and world history. She enjoyed team teaching in inclusion classrooms where all students benefited.



Felicia Kessel Crawley, Director of Programs & Operations,

is moving on after serving PEATC for close to four years. Felicia contributed her expertise in many areas, including Development, Strategic Planning, PR & Marketing, Training and Technology Development.



Para Nuestra Comunidad

“Ask PEATC”

“Pregúntale a PEATC”

Por Lydia Mideros, Especialista de Información y Colaboración Latina

Queridos Padres:

Es importante que las familias entiendan como la educación especial puede ayudar al niño o niña con alguna discapacidad. Sin embargo, la educación especial puede confundir o intimidar. Es importante que los padres tengan buena información y participación activa en la educación del niño o niña. En esta columna Latina, responderé algunas preguntas en áreas que deberá conocer para ayudarlo a saber como la educación especial debería trabajar para su niño(a).

Q ¿Debo aceptar que mi hijo sea evaluado para recibir educación especial y cuál es el plazo en que debe culminar la evaluación?

A Primeramente, una *evaluación* para educación especial significa que la escuela quiere determinar si el niño o niña tiene discapacidad en la naturaleza y el grado de educación especial y servicios relacionados que el niño o niña pueda necesitar. En los Estados Unidos, las escuelas reconocen discapacidades como atención limitada, incapacidad de aprender, condiciones de salud, incapacidad física, retraso mental, discapacidad emocional y otros. Los padres deben decidir cuidadosamente si dan o no dan permiso para evaluar. Ellos también tienen que considerar que si no dan permiso significará que su niño(a) no podrá recibir servicios de educación especial que puedan ser beneficiosos para su niño(a). Además, sólo porque una persona piense que un niño o niña tiene discapacidad, no significa que la tiene.

Un grupo de evaluadores examinarán a su niño(a) y coleccionarán información sobre el aprendizaje, aspecto psicológico, físico, y el desempeño y comportamiento de su niño(a). En Virginia, una evaluación puede tomar 65 días formales.

Q ¿Qué puedo hacer para que mi niño sea evaluado en nuestra lengua nativa?

A En este caso usted debería solicitar a la escuela un “Dual Assessment Test” que quiere decir que la evaluación debería ser tomada en el idioma del niño o niña, en lo que él o ella saben, o que les sea más familiar para responder a las preguntas ya sean académicas, de desarrollo y funcionalidad de tal manera que el lenguaje no sea un impedimento para el desarrollo de la evaluación.

Q ¿Será la evaluación en español?

A Antes de decidir en dar el permiso para la evaluación, comuníquese con la escuela, hable con la profesora de su niño(a) para informarse que piensan hacer ellos. La escuela debe considerar el lenguaje que usted habla en casa, sea éste inglés o español para tomar el examen en inglés, español o ambas lenguas. La decisión debe hacerse de tal manera que no discrimine a su niño(a) porque el primordial lenguaje de su niño(a) no sea inglés. Un estudiante no puede ser elegible para educación especial si la razón primordial es por causa del lenguaje nativo del estudiante. Esto significa que exámenes de aptitud, conocimiento y habilidades del niño(a) necesitan determinar si las dificultades académicas del niño(a) son por causa del aprendizaje de inglés o por otros problemas. Estos exámenes deben ser tomado por un profesional bilingüe o con la ayuda de un intérprete calificado. Los resultados de la

evaluación deben ser explicados a los padres en español.

Q ¿Qué puedo hacer si no estoy de acuerdo con los resultados de la evaluación?

A El padre o madre que no está de acuerdo con los resultados de la evaluación inicial tiene el derecho a pedir una evaluación educacional independiente (Independent Educational Evaluation o “IEE”) realizada por un examinador calificado que no esté empleado por el sistema escolar (Local Education Agency o “LEA”). La escuela debe pagar por la evaluación o llevarlo a un oficial para que escuche y analice el caso. Si usted no esta de acuerdo, llame a PEATC, hable conmigo y nosotros le diremos cuales son sus opciones.

Lydia Mideros es la especialista de información y colaboración Latina de PEATC. Ella ha trabajado con escuelas y familias en educación especial por más de 18 años.

Mas Información

More information (in Spanish)



NICHCY en Español
Centro Nacional de Diseminación

<http://www.nichcy.org/spanish.htm>
800-695-0285

Información en español sobre discapacidades específicas (Information in Spanish on Specific Disabilities):
<http://www.nichcy.org/resources/sp-spdisabcond.asp>

Latino Corner

“Ask PEATC”



By Lydia Mideros,
Latino Outreach
Information
Specialist

Dear Parents:

I know it is important that families understand how special education might help their children with disabilities. However, special education may be confusing or intimidating. What is most important is that families have good information and that they are active in their child's education. In this Latino Corner, I will respond to questions in areas that you know about so that you will better understand how to make special education work for your child.

Q Do I have to give permission for my child to be evaluated for special education? How long will the evaluation take?

A First of all, an evaluation for special education means that the school wants to determine whether a child has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the child might need. In the United States, schools recognize disabilities as limited attention, learning disability, health conditions, physical disability, mental retardation, emotional disability and others. Parents must give permission for the school to evaluate BEFORE the school can test children for a disability.

Parents must carefully decide whether to give permission to evaluate. They also must consider if not giving permission will mean that their child will not be able to receive special education services that might be of benefit to their child. Just because one person

thinks a child has a disability does not mean that it is true. A team of evaluators will test your child and collect information about your child's educational, psychological, physical and behavioral performance. In Virginia, an evaluation can take up to 65 business days.

Q What I can do so that my child's evaluation in our native language?

A In this case, you should ask the school for a Dual Assessment Test. It means that the evaluation will have to be given in the language that the child uses, or the one most familiar to him or her. That way the child can respond to questions that are academic, developmental or functional in such a way that language is not an impediment for the evaluation results.

Q Will the evaluation be in Spanish?

A Before you decide to give permission for evaluation, speak to your child's school to find out what they think should be done. The school must consider the language you speak at home to decide whether or not the tests should be in English, Spanish or in both languages. The decision should be made in a way that does not discriminate against your child because your child's primary language is not English. A student cannot be found to be eligible for special education if the primary reason is because of language barriers. This means that tests on aptitude, knowledge and abilities of the child need to determine if the academic difficulties of the child are due to the learning of English or by some learning problems. These tests should be given by a bilingual professional or with the aid of trained interpreter. The evaluation should be explained to you in Spanish.

Q What I can do if I am not in agreement with the results of the evaluation?

A A parent who does not agree with the results of the initial evaluation has the right to request an independent educational evaluation (IEE) by an examiner who is not employed by the school (LEA). The school must pay for that evaluation or take you to a hearing and have a hearing officer determine if it is necessary. If you do not agree, call PEATC and discuss it with me and we can advise you about what your options are.

Lydia Mideros is PEATC's Latino Outreach Information Specialist. She has worked with schools and families in special education for more than 18 years.

Mas Información

More information (in Spanish)



**Alliance for
Parent Centers**
Educación
Especial
Evaluación y
Reevaluación

(Evaluation and Re-Evaluation)
<http://www.taalliance.org/publications/ALL10s.pdf>

Evaluación: ¿Qué significa para su niño?
<http://www.taalliance.org/publications/ALL11s.pdf>

Entendiendo el Proceso de Educación Especial
(Understanding the Special Education Process)
<http://www.taalliance.org/publications/ALL17s.pdf>

You Ought to Know



Looking for Peer-reviewed Research?

The ERIC database at www.eric.ed.gov has added 5,400 new bibliographic journal records (320 journal articles are available in full-text), and an additional 1,100 free full-text documents from publishers and organizations that signed new authorization agreements with ERIC this year. More agreements are in progress with previous providers to ERIC and newly identified sources of high-quality education literature. The ERIC database is updated weekly with newly acquired materials. Most of the newly added articles are peer reviewed. Peer-reviewed materials can now be easily identified by checking the new "Peer Reviewed" field in the ERIC Search Results.

In addition to indexed journals, ERIC is recognized for its wealth of grey literature resources that are not included in other major databases. Grey literature originates from a wide variety of contributing organizations, including the U.S. Department of Education, federal, state, and private entities including: the Government Accounting Office, the Education Commission for the States, the Council of Chief State School Officers, Educational Testing Service, the Success for All Foundation, and the Southern Regional Education Board, among others. Submitted materials include research reports, conference papers, dissertations, literature reviews, and other documents in education.

Cornell University Disability Statistics: Online Resource for U.S. Disability Statistics

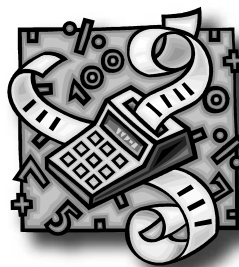
For several years, researchers at Cornell University, with funding from the National Institute on Disability Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), have generated and distributed a large volume of national statistics on the prevalence of disability and the employment, income, and poverty status of people with disabilities. These statistics were often calculated over many years, across states, by type of disability and/or across demographic characteristics. Numerous scientific research papers, policy briefs, academic journal articles, book chapters, and research summaries have drawn on these disability statistics.

Recently, the demand for additional demographic and statistical information has grown as a wider audience

becomes interested in disability statistics. To meet these needs, researchers at Cornell University designed a Web site to make

disability statistics and related demographic information available and accessible to a broad audience via the Internet. DisabilityStatistics.org condenses several data sources into a single, user-friendly, accessible, Internet resource. It also provides essential background information on key issues related to disability statistics.

<http://www.disabilitystatistics.org/>



The Long and Short of Customized Employment

Customized employment means individualizing the employment relationship between job seekers and employers to meet the needs of both. It is based on a personalized determination of the strengths, requirements, and interests of a person with a complex life. It is not a program, but rather a set of principles and strategies that result in employment. Customized employment builds on proven principles, services and strategies, such as supported employment and results in individually designed services, supports, and jobs negotiated to fit the needs of a specific job seeker or employee.

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) within the U.S. Department of Labor is committed to improving employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. To achieve this goal, ODEP has established a grant initiative to build the capacity of One-Stop systems to serve all customers, including those with disabilities. ODEP believes better outcomes can be accomplished through universal strategies and customized employment. The strategies developed through these grants apply to all One-Stop customers who have complex needs and may require more individual assistance to achieve their employment goals.

The National Center on Workforce and Disability/Adult (NCWD/A) and the U.S. Dept. of Labor/Office of Disability Employment Policy have developed a comprehensive resource on Customized Employment to guide workforce and disability professionals.

More on customized employment and the One-Stops can be found at <http://www.onestops.info/>

You Ought to Know

Resource on Family Resiliency

As the year comes to a close, it is important to reflect on what is important to us and make resolutions for the coming year.

A new publication from the National Center on Accessibility, *Becoming a Resilient Family: Child Disability and the Family System* examines the research and offers advice on building your family's resiliency. According to author C. Amber Havens, "Today's parents face a world of challenges with everything from keeping themselves healthy and happy to providing their children a safe environment that fosters the physical, emotional and social growth of their children in today's society. Sometimes the everyday demands of life seem too great to overcome and families will experience stress and/or crisis as they try to survive. Often families will fall apart or choose to split up the family unit in response to money struggles, addictions, abuse, health, or just plain unhappiness.

It is no surprise then to learn that hav-

ing a child with a disability can also drive families apart or into a state of chronic stress or crisis. This does not have to be the case. This article addresses not only how having a child with a disability can impact the family system, but also how families can use their circumstances to become a more resilient and healthy family."

For more information go to <http://www.ncaonline.org/monographs/17family.shtml>

The Standards of Learning: A Guide for Parents

Created by the Just Children Program of the Legal Aid Justice Center, this resource presents information to help parents understand the connection between a high school diploma and a standard of living. For more information go to <http://www.justice4all.org/foryou/> and click on The Standards of Learning: A Guide for Parents.

Free Hotline for Air Travelers with Disabilities

Transportation Department has a toll-free hotline for air travelers with disabilities who experience disability-related air travel problems and seek information and assistance. The office is open from 7 am to 11 pm, EST, seven days a week. Unfortunately, many members of the public are still not aware of the existence of the hotline and as a result the hotline is not being sufficiently used. The number is 1-800-778-4838 (voice) or 1-800-455-9880 (TTY). If you are traveling with a person with disabilities, it is a good idea to call the airline that you will be using and let them know what assistance will be needed. Call 48 hours in advance to confirm that assistance is available. When you reach the counter, they can send a message to cabin attendants (via computer).

IRS Deduction Guidance on Special Education Expenses

In March 2005, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued a new ruling that may help families with the costs which may be incurred for their child's special needs in education. The private-letter written determination clarifies areas when special education costs may qualify as medical expense deductions. Although the private-letter ruling applies only to the taxpayers who requested it and should not be cited as precedent, tax advisers say it is a useful illustration of the IRS's thinking. Available in PDF (3 pages, 18 KB). <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-wd/0521003.pdf>



Virginia Board for People with Disabilities Seeks Young Leaders

The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD) seeks candidates from across Virginia to serve as delegates to its 2006 Youth Leadership Forum (YLF). The 2006 forum will be hosted at Christopher Newport University in Newport News from July 10-14, 2006. Twenty-five Virginia high school

students with disabilities will be selected to receive full scholarships to participate in this exceptional leadership development program.

Sponsored by VBPD, the Youth Leadership Forum's goals are to educate students with disabilities about the principles of leadership, build their self-confidence and advocacy skills, and better prepare them for future career choices. Rising high school juniors and seniors who want to become leaders in their schools and communities are strongly encouraged to apply for the rewarding and privileged honor of serving as a 2006 YLF delegate. To be considered, applications must be received by February 25, 2006.

For more information or to obtain an application, contact Teri Barker-Morgan or Jennifer Peers at 1-800-846-4464 (toll-free, voice/TTY) or by e-mail at jennifer.peers@vbpd.virginia.gov. Information, applications, and the YLF 2006 Recruitment Flyer are available at the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities Web site at www.vaboard.org under Sponsored Programs.



Wishing you a
wonderful
holiday season.



Please remember PEATC
in your end-of-year giving.

PEATC is Virginia's parent education, support, training and information center committed to helping children with disabilities, their families and the professionals who serve them. Our Mission is to build better futures for children with disabilities by working collaboratively with families, schools and professionals to improve their opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life. We offer services and support for families and professionals, experienced-based program development and training curriculum, easy-to-understand, research-based disability education, and information, training and support.



The PEATC Press
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