The Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) serves families of children with disabilities and the professionals who support them in the Commonwealth of Virginia. PEATC is a leader in education support, training, and advocacy in Virginia. We help parents understand the workings of early intervention and special education, providing clarity to a complex system. With increased knowledge, parents are better able to communicate the individual needs of their children to the professionals who work with them. As a result, parents are more likely to avoid disputes and succeed in advocating for needed services and support for their children.

PEATC began its proud history of building partnerships to create improved educational opportunities for children with disabilities in 1970 with one family, one child, and a courageous school administrator! In 1978, PEATC was established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; since that time, PEATC has helped thousands of Virginia families with the special education needs.

In 2007, PEATC was designated as Virginia’s Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) serving all families of children from birth through high school. As Virginia’s PIRC, we support parents and teachers who want to help children succeed in school and throughout life. As part of the PIRC program, the Parents as Teachers (PAT) research-based program certifies early childhood educators in providing home visiting for parents of young children from birth through age five. The early childhood program also helps families with reading and school readiness activities. We used the Solid Foundation curriculum, which sustains school-based teams with research-based activities in support of a strategic planning process intended to move a school culture from “random acts of parent involvement” to a deliberate and intentional culture of parents and educators as partners. PEATC closed this grant in full compliance at the end of 2012.

By listening to the needs and successes of thousands of parents and professionals, PEATC develops and disseminates products of national significance relevant to parents and professionals who support Virginia’s children.

**Tanya’s Story**

*Tanya was a 10-year-old girl with autism. Her mother, Preesha, called PEATC for assistance when Tanya’s school reevaluated her without notifying the family and did not provide them with a copy of the resulting IEP; Preesha also felt that the reevaluation report didn’t reflect her daughter’s strengths and needs. The PEATC Information Specialist helped Preesha to identify specific issues with the evaluation report and in laying the groundwork to participate as a partner in developing a new IEP for Tanya.*
PEATC—Facing the Future

Oh what a fun year 2012 has been at PEATC! It has been a year of transitions and change! Our long time Executive Director retired in 2010, followed by an enthusiastic interim director for one year, Cathy Healy, and in November 2011, I was hired as the Executive Director of PEATC after many years of serving as the Deputy Director. With all the transition and through challenging economic times in America the one thing that stayed the same was the staffs' dedication to PEATC’s mission of educating families and professionals to “provide positive futures for Virginia's children!"

The Board of Directors at PEATC has welcomed many new members and is re-energized in its mission to help support and promote PEATC! New professional and collaborative partnerships continue to increase which enables us to further grow our organization. We are very fortunate to continue to have the support of the Virginia Department of Education to help financially support our Virginia Latino Outreach initiative as well as our Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) grant from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

In the upcoming year, we are partnering with Taking Action for Special Kids (TASK) in Tazewell, Virginia to extend our outreach initiatives to families in southwest Virginia. PEATC and TASK will develop and conduct ongoing workshop presentations and webinars to provide families with practical strategies for advocating for their child in a typically underserved area of Virginia.

I encourage you to visit our website (www.peatc.org) often to see the new and exciting things happening at PEATC!
Grant year 2011-2012 Highlights

In grant year 2011-2012, PEATC responded to over 13,000 calls for assistance from families and professionals throughout the state. These calls reflected issues of current concern to families of students with disabilities, such as bullying, changes to FERPA that have caused communication difficulties between schools and parents, restraint and seclusion, supporting students in general education settings, and the Virginia Grade-Level Assessment (VGLA).

In grant year 2011-2012, PEATC regularly communicated with families and professionals via a listerv of over 1,000 addresses. In over 50 messages sent throughout the year, we alerted our listerv members to important information relating to the state’s “report cards,” proposed changes to DSM-5, VDOE’s Special Education Involvement Survey, VGLA, and U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) reports.

PEATC’s website was visited over 80,000 times by parents and professionals seeking information and support. Our webinars and online training programs provide a means of convenient and easily accessible education.

We continued our efforts in 2012 to reach out to families who are sometimes disenfranchised or overlooked, and to provide high-quality research-based information. All of our materials are available in both English and Spanish and our PEATC brochure is available in Arabic.

In 2012, PEATC conducted over 40 workshops, serving over 1,000 participants. Typically underserved and remote and rural communities in Southwest Virginia in particular responded to our established and traditional workshop offerings such as “How to Talk so Schools Will Listen and Listen So Schools Will Talk” and “Understanding Special Education.” This year, we have added three new workshops: “Age of Majority/Guardianship”; “Sexuality”; and “Promoting High School Graduation.”

PEATC presented information at over 30 other events, connecting with over 4,500 families. We continue to provide current information through our Facebook fan page and Twitter accounts. Using this additional social media outlet has allowed us to get new information and resources out to families more quickly.

We conducted two Parents As Collaborative Leaders (PACL) training sessions, in both Spanish and English. Our 40 new partners continue to support PEATC’s mission by helping other families, establishing support groups, and helping to reach underserved families throughout Virginia.

“Just knowing we are not alone, it sounds cliché, but...knowing there is support out there.” (Nora)
We are PEATC...

PEATC staff and board of directors are caring and responsive individuals who include parents of children with and without disabilities, professionals, self-advocates, and community leaders.

PEATC is committed to reaching all families, including traditionally underserved, rural and low-income populations and those families who do not know how their effective involvement can make a difference. Outreach efforts include program support for African-American and Latino populations across the Commonwealth. Se habla español.

Working with our collaborative partners...

Alexandria City Community Services Board
Army Community Services
ASPE Board of Directors
Bolivian Embassy
Chesterfield County Department of Mental Health
Colaborando Juntos
Communities of Practice on Transition
Culmore Neighborhood Partnership
Department for the Blind & Vision Impaired Advisory Council
Department of Correctional Education Advisory Council
Ecuadorean and Guatemalan Embassies
El Tiempo Latino
EL ZOL–CBS
Fairfax County Department of Family Services
Fairfax County Government Partnership Office
Fairfax County Systems of Care
Family Involvement Network (FIN)
FAVY (Family Alliance for Virginia Youth)
FCPS Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities
FCPS Family and Schools Partnership
Hispanics Against Child Abuse and Neglect
Hispanic Virginia Chamber of Commerce
Metropolitan Health Council
Mexican Embassy
National Coalition of Parent Involvement in Education

NBC Spanish TV Channel
Northern Neck Disabilities Awareness Program
NOVA Transition Coalition for Future Quest
Indicator 8 Parent Involvement Stakeholder Group
Partnership for People with Disabilities Consumer Council
Resurrection Children's Center
Salvadorian Embassy
School Readiness Community Collaborative Council
Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM)
Southwest Virginia ASD Support Group
Special Quest
State Rehabilitation Council
State Special Education Advisory Council
Stop Child Abuse Now (SCAN) of Northern Virginia
The Virginia Latino Advisory Board
VA SRC – Division for the Blind and Vision Impaired
Virginia Ability Alliance (VAA)
Virginia Collaborative for College
Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
Virginia Intercommunity on Transition Council (VITC)
Virginia State Parenting Education Coalition
Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)
Washington Hispanic
360 Family Network

Mary adopted Liza, a 4-year-old girl with Down syndrome. Mary turned to PEATC for advice on how to obtain therapy and delay Liza’s entry to kindergarten to give her time to mature. The Information Specialist provided Mary with information on Virginia regulations regarding attendance, waivers and exemptions, and attendance guidelines—empowering Mary to be able to negotiate an appropriate program for Liza at a private preschool.
Gabe’s Story

Chuck’s son Gabe—a 5-year old with ADHD, anxiety, and sensory integration issues—upset school administrators with a temper tantrum. Chuck was concerned that the school might not support his desire to continue to educate Gabe in an inclusive setting. The Information Specialist reminded Chuck that no change in placement could occur without his signature. They discussed incorporating a positive behavior improvement plan into Gabe’s IEP, and Chuck developed a list of strategies he and his wife used at home to respond to Gabe’s behaviors and help calm him that the school might also implement. Chuck also obtained information from Gabe’s psychiatrist that would help his IEP team understand him.
Thank you for supporting PEATC!

Anderson, James and Winifred
Berger, Richard and Barbara
Big Grips Frames for iPads
Brownley, William Esq.
Chitwood, Stephen and Janet
Commonwealth Community Trust
Connally, N. Thomas and Patricia
Dr. Sharmila Benerjee-Basu
Durgin, Richard and Jean
Eastern Shore News
Fagen, Lisa
Flores, Maria Nellie
Gailego, Andriana
Harris, Linda
Healy, Cathy
Heaton, Edward and Lynn
Heiting, Ruth
Henderson, Kelly
Kim, Grace
Landeros, Estela
Living Safely
McGrail, Kevin
Morgan, Lisa
Peregrine CCC
Proloquo2go
Richhardt, William Esq.
Ross, Jonathan
Sachs, Tom & Sharon
Schwab Charitable Fund
Sielaty, Lynda
Sternfels, Paul & Gilda
Visual Impact Pro
Washington Hispanic Newspaper
Wilson, Paul and Kathy

"It is truly a blessing to have been introduced to you and to have you so diligently and conscientiously respond to our discussions. Thank you for all you have done." (Malcolm)
What Families are saying about PEATC!

“You **ARE** good. I really like the advice you are giving me. It’s practical and makes a lot of sense. I’m not going to call the lawyer. You have saved me a lot of headaches and have saved my son’s junior year.”

“Now that we’ve talked, I’m going to focus on my daughter’s strengths so that the teachers don’t get an impression of her as a victim. You have totally changed my way of thinking about my child.”

“I hadn’t thought of attaching a note with MY perspectives to my daughter’s report card. Thank you listening.”

“Thank you! Now I know that a 504 Plan means more than a desk in the front row.”

“Five stars for PEATC!”

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*You have not only empowered me with your words, but with a wealth of information.* (Mimi)

*It is comforting to know that PEATC will be here for me and my family as we embark on the next phase of my son’s educational adventure.* (Heather)
There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in.

--Graham Greene

Live so that when your children think of fairness and integrity, they think of you. --H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

Children are the keys of paradise

--Eric Hoffer

It is vital that when educating our children's brains that we do not neglect to educate their hearts.

--Dalai Lama

There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in.

--Graham Greene