**Focus on PEATC**

As Virginia’s Parent Training and Information center since 1978, the Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) has seen the powerful results when families and professionals work in partnership to build better futures for children with disabilities. Over the past year, many hopes and dreams for children with disabilities have turned distant possibilities into meaningful realities.

Over the past year, PEATC has been building our internal capacity to respond to the needs of families and professionals. Our workloads reported in a recent report to the US Department of Education speak for themselves.

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**Middle School Transition Matters**

By Cathy Healy

I will never forget how as a seventh grader, my older sister a junior in high school sat me down one day to tell me all the things I needed to know about high school. Even though our town’s high school was a few short blocks down the road from my middle school— to me—it felt like I was preparing for a different universe. My sister’s words of advice were comforting as she explained the school geography, the social scene, and every what day of the week to plan to bring a brown bag lunch. She clued me in about the class work and what teachers would expect from me. With this information I spent most of 8th grade relaxed and confident, practicing for the day I would enter high school. I felt sorry for my friends who didn’t have older siblings to help guide them.

The move to high school from middle school is an anxious time for students and parents. For students with disabilities there is added worry as high school, for some, marks the end of formal studies; while for other students it represents the beginning of career training or preparation for higher education. Because the stakes are so high, students and families are advised to make the most of high school— to me—it felt like I was preparing for a different universe. My sister’s words of advice were comforting as she explained the school geography, the social scene, and every what day of the week to plan to bring a brown bag lunch. She clued me in about the class work and what teachers would expect from me. With this information I spent most of 8th grade relaxed and confident, practicing for the day I would enter high school. I felt sorry for my friends who didn’t have older siblings to help guide them.

The PEATC Press is currently distributed to 14,000 individuals and organizations, primarily in Virginia. However, subscribers reside in almost every state in the US. We receive a number of requests to reprint articles in this regular periodical. The last four issues have included “Special Edition” inserts, highlighting changes to IDEA. An IEP Checklist in the December 2006 edition was presented in English and Spanish. This tool has been used by many of our families and, with permission, by professional organizations, national publications, advocacy groups, and Parent Resource Centers.

In an effort to serve the rising population of Virginia Department of Education, PEATC has developed a transition guide for middle school students.

**CSI: Transition (Clues for a Self-Investigation)** which is composed of a facilitator guide and student workbook.

The primary goal of the publication is to help families and students begin planning a high school academic program and to learn about the diploma options available to Virginia’s students. Currently in draft form, the guide is slated for completion in Fall 2007.

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**What’s Inside**

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Cherie’s Corner

Learned Helplessness? No! It’s Time for Self Advocacy and Self Determination

By Cherie Takemoto, Executive Director

Recent query from a DSA-NV listserv: If you were told that your child tended toward “learned helplessness” how would that look? What exactly is it and how can we address it? Thanks.

When children are taught that they have no control over their lives... When their day is spent being told when it is time to start something and stop something... When they are told exactly what they can and can’t do... They learn that what they want doesn’t matter.

When they are told they cannot grow up to be what they want to be... When they are taught that they can’t play with the other kids... When they are taught that they can’t learn... When they are taught that they will never grow up and lead an independent life... When they are taught that they will never... Then why should they try?

What’s the antidote for learned helplessness? The first thought might be to withdraw support. The idea to this strategy is that the child needs to learn how to do things on his own. No one should “enable” a child’s helpless behavior. However, a more effective strategy involves a more direct and supportive approach. The antidote for learned helplessness is self-advocacy and self-determination.

Parents and teachers need to support children with disabilities as they learn that what they want, what they need and what they dream matters. They need a life full of choices, so they can make good decisions. They need to understand their strengths so that they understand that they have power. They need to understand their disabilities and need for accommodations so that they understand that despite a disability, they have a right to reasonable accommodations and modifications.

Children with disabilities already know that they have it harder in life than most of their peers. They need to know that this doesn’t mean that they can’t. It only means that they may have to work harder. They need to know that what they learn matters. And what they dream is possible.

They need to learn how to ask for what they want. Just like parents of children with disabilities, they need to learn how to ask in a way that people will hear what they have to say. Just like many of us parents, they need to find allies who support them as they dream...Support them when they are worried that they will never….Celebrate with them as they succeed.

Real life is not a protective bubble. Parents will not be around forever to make sure that the bad things that happen in life, never happen. Children need to learn that mistakes happen, and to learn from those mistakes. But they will become stronger and more resilient as they learn that there is much in life that they can overcome.

We all feel helpless sometimes. When things don’t go as planned...When we see our children suffer from an illness... When we see our children with feelings that have been so wounded, that right now, kisses and hugs seem like a woefully ineffective antidote... Sure, sometimes it can actually be perversely comforting to wallow in self pity. However, in order to help our kids, we need to dust our own selves off and move on to doing what we can.

Even if we lean on our own friends and loved ones for support, the support we need is to learn that we are not helpless. We may rely on the support of others, but together, we can be less helpless. We may not have the power to change everything, but we need to use what little power we have to make things better.

Hablamos Español
PEATC Calendar of Events

PEATC Training Workshops

NEW!

CSI: Transition
(Clues for a Self Investigation for Middle School Students with Disabilities) and

Teaming Up for Student Success: A Playbook for Parents and Schools

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.

Other Available Workshops:

- Understanding Special Education (in English and Spanish)
- How to Use IDEA 2004 to Improve Results for your Child
- Positive Behavioral Interventions & IDEA 2004
- How To Talk So Schools Will Listen (and Listen So Schools Will Talk)
- The ABCs of Behavior
- Measurable Annual IEP Goals
- NEXT STEPS Transition Series: Planning the Next Steps to Adult Life for Students with Disabilities
- Building Program Capacity to Serve Youth with Disabilities
- Friendship Building Strategies
- Is Your Child a Target of Bullying?
- No Child Left Behind and Students with Disabilities
- Self Advocacy: Nothing About Me Without Me
- Managing Health in the Managed Care Maze
- Fostering Health in the Foster Care Maze
- Solving the Employment Puzzle
- Infusing Cultural Competence in Education - NEW!
- How Parents Can Make a Difference (in English and Spanish) - NEW!

PEATC SUMMER SERIES:

“The ABC’s of IEP’s”
Are you curious about the contents of your child’s IEP? Do you have questions about the special education process? If so, come meet with one of our Information Specialists to go over your child’s IEP or have your questions answered. Reservations required, please call 800-689-6782 to schedule your appointment now.
All sessions are from 10 AM to 12 Noon in 30 minute blocks

Richmond Regional Office
Wednesday, July 25; Wednesday, August 8; Wednesday, August 22.

Main PEATC Office - Falls Church
Monday, June 25; Friday, July 6; Monday, July 9; Friday, July 20; Monday, July 23; Friday, August 3; Monday, August 6; Friday, August 17.

Monthly Education Roundtable
Co-sponsored with the Arc of Northern Virginia
Check PEATC website for specific dates and locations
To register: tmarsili@thearcofnova.org

Join us for the State Fair!!
September 27 - October 7
We are looking for volunteers (PEATC has limited space to share with other organizations.)

Virginia Ability Alliance Family Picnic
Saturday, July 14
3:00 – 7:00 pm
Fairfax Government Center Ellipse
Kids Zone, Safety Zone, Fun for Families
Call the Arc of NOVA for details
703-532-3214

PEATC is continually scheduling workshops and trainings and offers workshops in Spanish. Please contact Judy Dunbar at 800-869-6782 or dunbar@peatc.org if you are interested in having a workshop in your area.
Para Nuestra Comunidad

La siguiente es una lista de organizaciones que ofrecen recursos en Español para las familias y profesionales en temas relacionados con la educación especial.

The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities
NICHCY-www.nichcy.com
1-800 695-0285
NICHCY serves the nation as a central source of information on disabilities for infants, toddlers, children, and youth. The site includes, IDEA, updates, No Child Left Behind (as it relates to children with disabilities), research-based information on effective educational practices and YOJULE ! a website for learning, connecting, growing, coping and fun for young people with disabilities and their peers.

Centro Nacional de Diseminación de Información para Niños con Discapacidades. Por sus siglas en Ingles (NICHCY)
www.nichy.com
1-800 695-0285
Sirven al país como fuente central de información sobre las discapacidades que pueden tener los infantes, niños pre-escolares, estudiantes, y jóvenes adultos; IDEA (el Acta para la Educación de los Individuos con Discapacidades), la ley nacional de educación especial; No Child Left Behind (Que Ningún Niño se Quede Atrás), por la relación que esta ley tiene con las discapacidades; Información basada en la investigación sobre las prácticas educativas efectivas, tambien esta la pagina en Internet YOJULE ! que les permite a los jóvenes con discapacidades aprender a conectarse, divertirse con otros adolescentes.

Los derechos de la familia con respecto a la educación especial
Ud. puede encontrar los requisitos de garantías procesales en educación especial de Virginia en español en
http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/Sped/proc_safe_spanish.pdf

Your Family's Special Education Rights in Virginia
You can find the procedural safeguards for special education in Virginia in English at
http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/Sped/proc_safe.pdf

Your Family's Special Education Rights in Virginia
You can find the procedural safeguards for special education in Virginia in Español en
http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/Sped/proc_safe_spanish.pdf

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The following is a list of organizations with resources in Spanish that families and professionals can use to find information in different areas of special education.

**LA SEGUINTE ES UNA LISTA DE ORGANIZACIONES QUE OFREcen RECURSOS EN ESPAÑOL PARA LAS FAMILIAS Y PROFESIONALES EN TEMAS RELACIONADOS CON LA EDUCACIÓN ESPECIAL.**

**CADRE - Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education** encourages the use of mediation and other collaborative strategies to resolve disagreements about special education and early intervention programs.
There are resources in Spanish on mediation and **Steps to Success: Communicating with Your Child’s School**. This brochure offers specific communication skills that may be helpful to parents as they develop and maintain partnerships with their child’s school.
http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/success.cfm

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**ED.Gov**

**U.S. Department of Education**

**Promoting educational excellence for all Americans**

**Ed.Gov - Recursos en Español** - US Department of Education’s portal links to information in Spanish about IDEA, No Child Left Behind, and the guide to the **Tool Kit for Hispanic Families**. This tool kit was developed with guidance from over 1,800 Hispanic parents at Parent Information and Resource Centers across the country.

**Ed.Gov - Recurso en Español** - Es la pagina de internet del Departamento Federal de Educación que conecta a los padres para obtener información en Español sobre la ley de educación especial (IDEA), Que Ningun Nino se Quede Atras (No Child Left Behind), y a la **Guía de Recursos para las Familias Hispanas**. Esta guía fue elaborada con el asesoramiento de más de 1,800 padres hispanos en diferentes Centros de Información y Recursos para los Padres en todo el país.

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**Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers** addresses special needs for all stages of childhood and all disabilities. Its website links to a guide of multicultural and/or translated resources in Spanish on Early Intervention, IDEA, Juvenile Justice, Mediation, Parental Involvement, Positive Behavioral Intervention and ADHD.
http://www.pacer.org/publications/multicultural.htm

**Centro de la Alianza para Asistencia Tecnica para los Padres** ofrece una variedad de opciones de información en Español y material multicultural como apoyo que necesitan para alcanzar sus metas. Su sitio de Internet ofrece información en Español sobre intervención temprana, tecnología, justicia juvenil, participación de los padres en la educación de sus hijos, mediacion, desordenes en la conducta y atención.
http://www.pacer.org/publications/multicultural.htm

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“I feel so appreciative for the information I received from PEATC; now that I have learned to communicate with the school, my child and my family are going to have a better life.”

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www.peatc.org
Hope for Children Needing Intensive Services

It appears that parents will no longer have to relinquish custody in order to obtain needed residential care. On May 15, 2007, the State Executive Council for Comprehensive Services for At Risk Youth and Families issued proposed interagency guidelines on specific foster care services for children in need of services funded through the Comprehensive Services Act (CSA). Children in need of services (CHINS) is a mandated CSA service for families when the children:

• Remain in their homes and have been identified as needing services to prevent or eliminate the need for foster care placements; and

• Have been placed outside of their homes through an agreement between the parents or guardians and the local department of social services while legal custody remains with the parents or guardians.

Parents no longer have to relinquish custody to get necessary services for their children. In the past, parents have had to make difficult decisions to get care for their children with significant care needs. Such choices involved:

• Shouldering the financial burden of needed residential care beyond the time their insurance (if they have insurance) ran out

• Watching helplessly while their child went without needed care or treatment

• Relinquishing custody in order for their child to receive services. OCS convened a Stakeholder Group to provide input during the development of proposed interagency guidelines. During this process, the Virginia Office of the Attorney General provided additional legal clarifications. The three agencies distributed a subsequent memo on May 18, 2007 entitled “Specific Foster Care Services Funded through CSA”. The memo provides clarification on state and federal laws related to the provision of specific foster care services. More on these proposed guidelines can be found at http://www.csa.state.va.us/html/training_technical/ssa_memo_May_21_2007.cfm

PEATC Guide to the Comprehensive Services Act

PEATC has an online guide with information on CSA that can be accessed from our home page:

www.PEATC.org
The Virginia Department of Education submitted its 2005 – 2006 special education State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) to the US Department of Education on February 1, 2007. In the SPP/APR, the Department reports baseline data, sets state targets and identifies improvement activities for twenty indicators.

The purpose of the SPP/APR is to help states improve results for students with disabilities and to help measure these results. Some of the indicators are specific to graduation rates, drop out rates, state assessment results, placement data and post secondary outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>Disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduation/Diploma Rate</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop out Rate</td>
<td>1.85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information about state level performance and individual school division performance measured against state targets will be made public in late June 2007. This information will be widely disseminated, through various media, including the Virginia Department of Education website.

Virginia’s State Performance Report/Annual Performance Report can be found at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/sess/annual-performance-plan05-06.pdf. Please contact Mr. Paul J. Raskopf at 804-225-2080 or at paul.raskopf@doe.virginia.gov for information related to Virginia’s State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report.

Change the format, change the outcome! By Art Stewart

IEP Teams meet to try to establish consensus on what services a child needs and should receive. If they can’t reach an agreement, they tend to schedule another meeting for the same room, with the same participants and the same agenda. How can they expect the outcome to be different?

It is a creative act for parents and school administrators to decide to change the outcome of a discussion which has not reached closure by changing the format. By changing the format and bringing in a skilled mediator, several things may result. One is that, simply by bringing a new person into the negotiation process, people will speak and inform themselves differently. By bringing a mediator to the table, participants’ expectations change. This is likely to change outcomes. IEP Team members usually bring new ideas and new material. This change in format leads to a change in expectations. I’ve heard mediators called “laser listeners” because they can elicit, underline, bring to light and develop the best thinking of people sitting at the table.

Mediators make sure that each person at the table has a full voice. They pay attention to the comfort level of the participants, providing what is needed for people to be at their best as negotiators. They pay attention to issue identification, issue framing, issue management, and timing. They provide a methodical process for people to move from voicing and revisiting their needs to working on and evaluating possible outcomes. Mediators do not act as advocates, they are neutrals. They do not direct the outcome, they direct the process. Any agreement reached will be self-determined by the participants.

Read more about the process on the Virginia Department of Education website: www.doe.virginia.gov/vdoe dueproc. Under the mediation tab, there are articles and a mediation services request form. Remember, after you download and fill in your information, a school administrator needs to sign also, indicating that the request is joint. I am happy to talk with people about the process, so that they may make an informed choice.

The process is a highly successful one. In the last year, 75% of special education mediations in Virginia resulted in a working agreement. Mediation is available at any time and for any issue regarding the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a child or the provision of a free, appropriate public education.

For more information, please contact: Art Stewart, Coordinator of Mediation at the Office of Dispute Resolution and Administrative Services - Email: Arthur.Stewart@doe.virginia.gov or by phone at 804-786-0711.

Resolution Meetings: A Guide for Parents

is a new resource jointly developed by the Technical Assistance ALLIANCE National Technical Assistance Center, PACER Center and the Consortium for Appropriate Dispute in Special Education (CADRE). This guide will help readers to have a better understanding of resolution meetings, one of the ways in which special education disputes can be resolved.

The fantastic PEATC Board of Directors staged the 2nd annual Virginia Icon Competition for talented Virginia middle and high school students on May 5th, at the Alden Theatre in McLean.

The $1,000 Virginia Icon prize was awarded to Chelsea Lee, a sophomore at Langley High School. Miss Lee’s musical achievements include writing her own songs and singing at Northern Virginia venues such as the Jammin Java, the State Theatre and the Arlington Cinema & Draft House. Miss Lee has begun recording her debut CD planned for release in September. **First Runner Up** was awarded to the talented songstress, Stacey Marie Fernandes, a sophomore at Potomac Falls High School. **Second Runner Up** was presented to Risa Kaneko, a talented pianist, who attends McLean High School as a freshman.

Governor Timothy Kaine and Senator Webb sent their best wishes to the contestants and to PEATC. The Mistress of Ceremonies was Tania Hewitt from Cox Communications. Vaughn Mason Productions donated time and talent to producing a DVD that the finalists can use to showcase their work. Music and performance professional coaching for the finalists was donated by Felicia Kessel-Crawley. Studio 8121 also donated studio recording time to the winner. Gilded Pear Gift Baskets supplied beautiful baskets for raffle and Gardenmasters supplied the flowers for the event. The Freddie Mac Foundation and IKON Office Solutions were also major sponsors.

Virginia Icon is a year-long effort by the PEATC Board and volunteers who see the competition as a way to raise public awareness about PEATC and recognize talented youth in Virginia. The Board has moved right into the planning of next year’s Virginia Icon competition to be held April 13, 2008.

The Board of Directors would like to thank volunteers, donors, and supporters including Chad, Cameron, and Caira Blackwell, Rosalia Fajardo, Judy Dunbar, Michael Dunbar, Lynda Siatry, Austin Wolfe, Lynsey Wolfe, Melissa Hallaj, Lauren McCready, Betsy McGuire, Ritzya Mitchell, Kerry Casseta, Sophia Armstrong, Paul S. Woods, Director of the Mott Community Center, Rodwell Fernandes, Director of the Huntington Community Center, Paul Westray, Minister of Music at Bethany United Methodist Church, Felicia Kessel-Crawley, Minister of Music at Oak Grove Baptist Church, Dr. Mac Lambert, Director of Choral Activities at Langley, and John Chung, Senior Program Director at the Reston YMCA.

**Virginia Icon Judges**, who are professionals in the music industry, included Lee Betton, Willie Coates, Joe Gems, Billy Hickey, Vaughan Mason, Dumi Right and Gracie Terzian, the 2006 Virginia Icon winner. The Immortal Souls, Dumi Right and Gracie Terzian also performed.

LaVoyce Reid, donated time to producing the program and sent us a note that summed up her experience, “Through this process, I learned that one can do just about anything with limited resources and capabilities, even the very children and families we serve--and parents and families can do even grander things with support networks such as PEATC. You all did an awesome job as a team as you do in every other endeavor you undertake. I would not have expected anything less.”

Folks who are interested in finding out more about Virginia Icon can visit the website, hosted by Peregrine Computer Consultants Corporation, at [www.virginiaicon.com](http://www.virginiaicon.com).
Phenomenal PEATC Partners

We couldn’t do it without you!

Bill and Vanessa Browneley, for presenting a workshop on “Advocate Roles” in the main PEATC office
Fiesta Radio 1480, for hosting Rosalia Fajardo to share information about PEATC
Marco Cornicello, for helping move the Richmond office
Scott Campbell, Tim Moore, Lynda Sielaty, Paul Sternfels, Pete Scampavia, James Scampavia and Chris Bowers, for helping build furniture and set up the new office space in Falls Church, VA
Kim Wood, for presenting a workshop on “Teaching Children with Learning Disabilities” in Falls Church, VA
Tom Gavin, PEATC office volunteer in Falls Church
Louis Whitney, Building Engineer for Robertson Properties, for helping us mount shelves, install outlets and provide continued support for our move to our new office
Peregrine Computer Consulting Corporation, for inkind computer technical assistance
The Arc of Northern Virginia, for their continued partnership with PEATC as we work together to serve Virginia’s families
Ana Bauserman & Maggie Capell, Fairfax and Lanier schools’ Latino parent’s liaisons for helping Rosalia Fajardo to present PIRC workshop
Aida Ekonomo, Universal Radio for hosting Rosalia Fajardo’s presentation about PEATC
Maria Demarest, Latino parent liaison at Bailey’s Elementary School Community Trailer, Falls Church for partnering with PEATC to present USE in Spanish
Carmen Fernandez, Executive Director of Hispanic Against Child Abuse and Neglect, friend of PEATC and host of PEATC /PIRC workshops
Roxana Echalar, Esmeralda Galeas, Cecilia Bonifaz and Cecilia Cuadra Bilingual Resource Assistants of Arlington Public Schools, for help with PIRC workshops
WRIR LP 97.3 FM, for running PSA’s in English and Spanish and to John Richmond of WRIR’s “Richmond Education Today” for inviting Barbara Cornicello to share information about PEATC
Susan Foster, Partners in Policymaking 2007, for facilitating IEP workshops in Spanish with Barbara Cornicello and for manning the PEATC resource table at the Ivy Walk Spring Carnival
Creciendo Juntos (‘Growing Together’) coalition, Linda Hemby and

Peter Loach, for disseminating information about PEATC to the Shenandoah regions’ agencies and Latino families
Nuevas Raices Hispanic Newspaper, for printing PEATC’s bimonthly ‘Esquina Escolar’ (Education Corner) to it's circulation of 14,000 readers
Arthur Stewart, Mediation Coordinator at the Virginia Department of Education for submitting an article for the PEATC E-News & PEATC Press on mediation
Steve Waldron, vaACCSES, for a demonstration of how disability benefit planning and assistance services for individuals receiving SSI and SSA benefits works
Paul Raskopf, and Melissa Smith at the Virginia Department of Education, for reviewing PEATC materials.
Marco Cornicello, for support of PEATC’s Latino outreach and PR effort
Michael Zeunterhorst, graduating senior from Yorktown High School, who spent his senior experience helping PEATC update publications
The National Massage Therapy Institute for donated services of stress relieving massage therapy for the PEATC staff

PEATC wishes to thank the Board of Directors for their unwavering support for PEATC and for their work in making the Virginia Icon a success; Terri Braxton, Florence Long Bey, Maggie Bishop, Suzette Blackwell, Michael J. Carrasco, Susan Chen, Cassandra Coleman, Michael Heaney, Paul Sternfels, and Karen Willis

We Thank PEATC Supporters

Amelia J. Hunt Jeffrey J.S. Pan, M.D. & Susan Chen
Andrew Claster John & V. Kris Lee
Anita Lasansky Kathleen Partoyan
Beverly L. Mattson Kristiann Farenholtz
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The PEATC Press - June 2007

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Often the parents of children with disabilities are cautioned to take life a step at a time and not look too far into the future. This narrow view may serve as a good coping mechanism in the short term to get through difficult periods. In reality, planning for, and with a child, can prove to be the most positive and empowering activity a family can undertake for the long term. What do families and their middle school aged children need to think about in preparation for high school and the transition beyond? What skills will best prepare students for the future?

IDEA 2004 has strengthened provisions that make planning for the future a priority. By the student’s 16th birthday the IEP must include measurable goals for transition that are based upon the individual student’s needs taking into account the child’s strengths, preferences, and interests.

“The plan is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child’s movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.”

from IDEA 2004

A chief component of transition planning is the need to actively involve students in their own planning. Middle school is a perfect time to begin involving students in their IEP planning. During this developmental stage, middle school aged students naturally begin pulling away from parents desiring independence and to be recognized as individuals. Parents can leverage this inclination by encouraging their students to take an active role in the IEP process. To help students with disabilities and their families prepare for transition PEATC with support from the Virginia Department of Education has developed an interactive web based planning guide; CSI: Transition- (Clues for a Self-Investigation). As a tool to help engage and motivate middle school students CSI: Transition asks the student to play the role of a forensic investigator, investigating his or her own strengths, uncovering information about interests, and piecing together clues about how to get ready for the future. These self-identified goals will help a student to be an active participant in their own IEP/transition planning development.

Middle School Checklist

Can your child….

- describe his or her disability?
- identify the accommodations or modifications needed to be successful in school and other activities?
- make a plan and follow through?

Does your child….

- have the skills necessary for making choices?
- take responsibility for the choices made?
- know when help is needed and how to ask for help?
- understand the range of high school diploma options?
- have the study skills and time management skills necessary to complete rigorous course work?
- wish to pursue higher education?
- have opportunities to explore different types of interests and occupations?
- have interests, hobbies, and a social network for leisure time when not in school?
- attend IEP meetings and have the confidence to speak up?
**Focus on PEATC**

**PEATC Welcomes….**

- **Jocelyn Brown** - is the *Administrative Coordinator* and recently came to PEATC from a similar position in a busy alcohol & drug treatment program where she managed contract compliance, budget management and overall facility operations. She is keeping track of the busy PEATC staff both on site and in the field. Jocelyn is also a nursing student and the mother of Jaylyn, a preschooler.

- **Judy A. Dunbar, M.Ed.** – is an *Information Specialist* for PEATC. Judy brings to PEATC experience as both a parent and a professional. Judy has been an effective advocate for her son, Michael, who is 20 years old. Judy has a Masters in Early Childhood Special Education and has taught special education preschool in Central Virginia and Northern Virginia. Judy is a founder and Assistant Scoutmaster of her son’s special needs Boy Scout troop and co-coaches his Challenger Little League baseball team with her husband.

- **Rosalia Fajardo, J.D.**, returns as PEATC’s *Latino Outreach Coordinator*. She has spent the last ten years working in the Latino community on issues of empowerment through advocacy, prevention of child abuse and equal housing opportunities. She also was the first bilingual professional covering monitoring and compliance at the Office of Special Education at U.S. Department of Education. Margarita is her teenager daughter.

- **Nichole Thomas**, has found a new calling as PEATC’s *Parent Involvement Resource Center Specialist*. Formerly PEATC’s administrative coordinator, she became the “go to” person for parents seeking information about how schools work. Her broad background of experiences includes 12 years of office administration work and 5 years working with children. She studied early childhood education at Charles County Community College and Salisbury State University. Nichole has two young daughters, Eden and Nevaeh.

**Family Feedback**

- “Thank you very much for this powerful information that will help me understand a little bit more. Thank you for your quick and professional response to my phone call and for your time to listen to me. I appreciate it very much.”
- “PEATC has been an integral part of my daughter’s success. This letter is brief, yet filled with admiration for the information and professionalism of your staff.”
- “The information empowered me to advocate for my child.”
- “The information I received from PEATC was more helpful to me and my son than I could possibly express.”
- “Due to PEATC’s help, the situation at the school never escalated to a “disagreeable” point. We were able to work it out as a team.”
- “PEATC is a wonderful resource. It’s good to have someone who can educate parents about what the steps are in the process of seeking help for your child”
- “I feel it really made a difference in my life to have a place like PEATC to call.”
- “Great workshop! PEATC brought a personal touch to it because the people from PEATC are parents themselves and can relate to what they’re talking about.”

**PEATC**

**Best Wishes To…**

Shannon McGrail is the mother of 3 children, a 7 year old and 6 year old twins. One of her children has autism and has made fabulous strides through ABA/VB. She is a graduate of Partners in Policymaking through the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities. Shannon lectures at George Mason University on Autism and ABA/VB. She also is on the Board of Directors for POAC-NoVA, where she is pushing for legislative changes and training for new ABA/VB therapists to help with the overwhelming demand. Shannon has come to know and love her co-workers at PEATC and will miss the parents tremendously. Previous to working in advocacy Shannon was a fire fighter/EMT for 10 years.

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Join the PEATC E-News to find out:

- what is happening in the advocacy/educational world
- new resources and info on topics ranging from early childhood through transition
- PEATC Training Calendar

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100 N. Washington St., Suite 234
Falls Church, VA 22046

PEATC
Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center

can help

Since 1978, PEATC has been Virginia’s parent training and information center serving families of children with disabilities

Now..PEATC is Virginia’s State Parent Involvement Resource Center serving all families

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.

“When schools build partnerships with families that respond to their concerns and honor their contributions, they are successful in sustaining connections that are aimed at improving school achievement.”