What is a PIRC?

The US Department of Education funds Parent Involvement Resource Centers in every state to improve children’s school success by:

- Supporting effective parental involvement policies, programs, and activities.
- Developing and strengthening partnerships among parents, teachers, principals, administrators, and other school personnel.
- Coordinating their PIRC activities with other parental involvement initiatives under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Teaching parents of young children as their first teachers.

Who Does the PIRC Serve?
Culturally, linguistically, educationally, economically and geographically diverse families and the schools, programs and communities who serve them.

Why PEATC?
Since 1978, PEATC has promoted active partnerships between parents and professionals that continue to lead to positive results for children. PEATC was one of the first parent training and information centers in the nation, funded by the federal government to serve the families of children with disabilities. Building on our successful history of creating positive futures for children with disabilities, today PEATC serves families, schools and communities who are interested in investing in children with and without disabilities.

Why Parent Involvement?
There is no debate. Over 30 years of research demonstrate the powerful relationship between parent involvement and student performance. Students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and test scores
- Enroll in higher level programs
- Attend school regularly
- Have better social skills

What Services Are Provided?

- Show improved behavior and adapt well to school
- Graduate and go on to postsecondary education.

PEATC is Moving

Great changes are in the works at PEATC.
The main office, currently in Springfield, and the Richmond Regional Office will begin the new year on January 2, 2007 in new homes.

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

Richmond Regional Office
2922 W. Marshall St.
Richmond, VA 23230

All phone numbers will stay the same.
PEATC is moving into space being vacated when the Arc of Northern Virginia moves downstairs. Our new space will offer more reasons to come visit. Computers4Students and the Kellar Institute for Human Disabilities at George Mason University will be setting up computer workstations for the families of students with disabilities to use to try educational programs, adaptive equipment, or conduct an internet search. A mid-sized conference room will be available for disability organizations to use for support groups or meetings. Being in the same building as the Arc of Northern Virginia will allow for more active partnerships and collaboration between our organizations and others who wish to work with us to better the prospects for children with disabilities.

The Richmond Regional Office will be moving next to the CHIP of Greater Richmond where we will be able to collaborate on the new Parent Information Resource Center and offer Parents As Teachers training and train new parent educators around Virginia.

Both locations have great training space (and parking!) to conduct our own workshops, host meetings or support the efforts of other organizations.

For your New Year’s Resolution, please plan to visit us at our Richmond and Falls Church location. The Falls Church Open House will be on Thursday, February 22nd from 1:00 – 4:00. The Richmond Open House will be on Tuesday, March 6 from 1:00 – 4:00. We would love to see you then, or come visit us soon!
By Cherie Takemoto, Executive Director

S id, a magician friend of ours, taught us the “Houdini” trick and swore us to secrecy. The night of the talent show, it looked so easy. My son, Pete, asked his friend, Colin, to get into a big green bag with heavy rope. The school principal tied up the bag with several knots. They put a blanket over the bag. With a wave of his wand and a few magic words, Pete removed the blanket and Colin emerged – untied…out of the bag…like MAGIC! Pete and Colin, bowed to thunderous applause!

Magic is like that. The audience is amazed and impressed when the unexpected happens. Sometimes it is amazing, even to me, what Pete has been able to accomplish in his 18 years. He has a rich social life at school and with his church groups. He has a weekend job at Safeway. Last summer he was chosen to participate in Virginia’s Youth Leadership Forum and received a Voluntary Service Award from President Bush for his work in starting a Friendship Club at his high school.

Like magic, few see the practice, studying and hard work it takes, behind the scenes, for a child like Pete to succeed. What was once considered an impossible feat for people with disabilities is becoming a part of our expectations for success and a quality of life. This success doesn’t come easy. It takes much planning, tenacity and hard work by parents, teachers, advocates, researchers and people with disabilities. However, the tricks to this trade are not under the veil of a magician’s secrets.

As with magic tricks, parents and professionals sometimes find that what looks impossible, can be amazingly simple. However, sometimes, even the most well-thought-out plans can flop. At PEATC, we work hard so that parents and professionals can use research, wisdom and strategies to put into practice, what it will take for children with disabilities to reach their potential. What are some of these tricks to the trade?

Learn from others – find out from successful role models. The disability movement has enough role models of people who have traveled a similar road. Too many times we feel alone, like we are the only ones who have ever faced our particular challenge. Not true. The disability movement was built upon the success of people with disabilities and the families, professionals and advocates who believed in them. There is still so much more to do, but we have a strong foundation.

Friends and Allies – make them, keep them, and cherish them. We sometimes laugh at how Pete calls so many people his “best friend” or “favorite teacher.” He is sincere about how he feels. He tries to be a good friend to his friends and a good learner to his many teachers.

Dream – even when others don’t share your dream. Pete has ideas about what he wants in life. We have learned that it’s not our role to shoot down those dreams. We need to listen, support and help him shape his dreams early on. Then lament when things don’t turn out and celebrate when he soars!

Tally up abilities and disabilities - Understanding, accepting and communicating about disabilities in a factual and informative way will help others understand what your child is going through. But also think through your child’s special gifts, strengths, and things your child CAN do. Sometimes it may take a bit of work for your child’s abilities to shine through.

Listen – even when it is hard. It may be a self-advocate who is telling a story, experience or dream that is hard to follow or hard to accept. Or, someone is telling you why your request or vision is unreasonable. It may even be someone telling you about their problems that have nothing to do with your child. Listen anyway. You may learn something, understand, or connect in ways that would never have been possible, if you didn’t take the time to learn.

Give, share - Unlike magic, the more we share about what works, the better the system will work. The more we and our children give to others, the more balanced and reciprocal our lives will become. There is a certain power that comes with giving. We need to be able to harness our own power for the benefit of better lives for people with disabilities.

Ask – because you never know who might be able to say “yes.” The old saying, “It doesn’t hurt to ask” isn’t always true. Many times, people may not have the power or the will to give you what you are asking. But if you never ask, you will never receive.

Picture this - The curtain is rising. Your child is center-stage and doing what many might consider to be impossible. It has taken much work behind-the-scenes to make this moment possible. But your child has succeeded and the roar of the audience’s thunderous applause is magnificent. While your child is taking a bow and getting ready for an encore, you can smile and take a quiet backstage bow for all you have done to make this moment possible.
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.
The 2007 Session of the General Assembly begins January 10th

The General Assembly runs for 30 days with the option to extend for another 30 days. This year is the short session. Planning is already in the works for bills related to regular and special education, school choice, services for persons with disabilities and Medicaid.

In Virginia, citizens can make a difference. Next year will also be an election year so your members are especially interested in meeting their constituents as they decide what issues they plan to champion in this Session and in their upcoming elections.

The Virginia General Assembly has made it easy for citizens to get involved. At their website http://legis.state.va.us/ you can find out who your Delegate and Senator are and how you can contact them. A Citizen’s Guide can help you understand the workings of the General Assembly, how to contact government liaisons to the committees and how to track what is going on.

The “Lobbyist-in-a-Box” helps individuals receive email updates (hourly or daily) of legislation of interest to them. Registration for up to 5 bills is free.

Drop Out Prevention Resources

Drop Out Prevention Resources

For students with disabilities, the national school drop-out rate is a staggering 37.6 percent - more than twice that of their peers without disabilities. For some minority students with disabilities, the drop-out rate goes as high as 50 percent. For students with emotional or behavioral disabilities it soars to 61 percent. Such statistics have made school completion one of the nation’s most highly profiled issues in special education.

The PACER Center has developed an ACTion Information Sheet that offers information and advice for what parents can do to make sure their children with disabilities stay in school and graduate. One of the most essential strategies for promoting school completion and achievement is family involvement.

When families remain involved in their children’s middle school and high school education, students are more likely to attend school regularly, have a positive attitude about school, earn higher grades, score higher on standardized tests, graduate from high school, and enroll in post-secondary programs. Those successes matter in the long run. High school graduates typically earn twice as much as people who don’t have a diploma or equivalency diploma.

You can get a copy of this ACTion Brief: Drop-out Prevention: Parents Play a Key Role from the PACER center http://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c114.pdf.

A slightly more detailed version, by Deborah Leuchovius from the PACER Center for the National Center for Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) can be accessed at http://www.ncset.org/publications/parent/NCSETParent_Jul06.pdf

2-1-1
Virginia Information and Referral

Doctor Profiles Now Available

2-1-1 VIRGINIA is an easy to remember phone number connecting people with free information on available community services. When you dial 2-1-1, you will be connected to a trained professional who can provide free and easy access to health and human services, including:

- Basic human needs – food banks, shelters, rent or utility assistance
- Physical and mental health resources – Medicaid, Medicare, pre-natal care, children’s health insurance programs, crisis intervention, support groups, counseling, alcohol and drug rehabilitation
- Work initiatives – educational and vocational training programs, English as a second language classes, job training, General Educational Development (GED) preparation, financial and transportation assistance
- Support for people with disabilities and seniors – Agencies on Aging, Centers for Independent Living, adult day care, meals at home, respite care, home health care, transportation and recreation
- Support for children, youth and families – After-school programs, tutoring, mentorship programs, family resource centers, protective services, counseling, early childhood learning programs, child care referral centers, and recreation
- Volunteering in your community – Volunteer centers, mentorship opportunities, locations to donate food, clothing, furniture, computers and other items
- Disaster Recovery – planning for emergencies and information during emergencies

Virginia Department of Health Professions (VDHP) has activated an information line available through 2-1-1 VIRGINIA for patients to locate a health professional for themselves, a child, or an aging parent

- Status of a healthcare provider’s license;
- Actions taken on an individual’s license by any of the 13 health regulatory boards;
- Doctors’ office hours and locations, languages spoken, hospital affiliation, and more.

For more information visit www.211virginia.org/
Did You Know?
By Cherie Takemoto

“Special Education should focus on high expectations for students with disabilities and help them to achieve their maximum potential”

Re-evaluation - While schools no longer have to evaluate every three years (with parental consent), they MUST evaluate if the parent or teacher requests...as long as it has been over one year since the last evaluation.

IEP Team Meeting Attendance is not necessary at all or part of the meeting if the parent and school representative agree that attendance is not necessary. The member must submit, in writing, input before the meeting if it involves modification to or discussion of the member’s area of the curriculum or related service. Parent agreement must be in writing.

Present Level of Performance – IEPs must consider the academic, developmental and functional needs and what the student needs to make academic and functional progress.

Short term objectives or benchmarks – are no longer necessary for students unless they are taking alternate assessments aligned to alternate standards.

Secondary Transition must be considered for the IEP in place when the student turns 16. This means that most students need to take part in their IEP planning by age 15. The previous law required transition to begin at age 14 for purposes of deciding upon course of study. Since this is routinely done for students without disabilities in middle school, course of study (what classes a student needs to take to reach transition goals, what diploma option the student will pursue, etc.) needs to occur for students with disabilities at the same time as their peers.

Research-based – To the extent feasible, the IEP should be based on practices supported by research. The US Department of Education has funded numerous projects and programs to get this information into the hands of parents and practitioners.

Prior Written Notice is a somewhat confusing term, but a powerful tool for clarifying the rationale for school decision-making that can lead to a resolution of a disagreement between the family and school.

The Spanish edition includes a translated version of the IEP checklist and a sample “Prior Written Notice” letter (in English and Spanish) geared to writers most comfortable in Spanish.

General Education Curriculum – to the extent possible, children with disabilities should be learning what other students are learning. Academic goals should be based on what it will take for the student to advance and to meet grade-level standards.

Each PEATC Press and Special Edition is available on the PEATC website: www.peatc.org. Click on the Graphic of the PEATC Press to subscribe or view previous issues.

PEATC Guide to IDEA Special Editions in Four Parts

Tables of Contents

Special Edition - Part 1
Spring 2005
Alignment with No Child Left Behind – 1
Highlights from IDEA 2004 – 2
Evaluation, Eligibility and IEP – 5
New Definitions and Key Changes – 8

Special Edition – Part 2
December 2005
Purposes of IDEA 2004 – 1
How to Make IEPs Work – 2
Secondary Transition – 4

Special Edition – Part 3
September 2006
Where’s the Research – 1
Tool Kit for Teaching and Assessing Students with Disabilities – 3
Selected Technical Assistance and Dissemination Centers – 4

Special Edition - Part 4 (This Edition)
Did You Know? – 1
IEP Checklist (English) – 2
IEP Checklist (Spanish) – 4
Prior Written Notice (Spanish) – 6
Accessible Instructional Materials – 8
IEP Checklist

The following is a checklist for parents and teachers to consider as they develop the IEP. Not every item on the checklist is required by special education regulations. For more information, consult the Federal regulations and other information that can be found at http://idea.ed.gov/ or call PEATC at 800-869-6782.

IEP team members include:

**Required**
- Parent(s)
- Student (as appropriate and invited at age 15 when discussing transition)
- Special education teacher(s)
- Regular education teacher(s)
- Professional(s) who can interpret the instructional implications of assessments
- School division representative (qualified to provide/supervise special education services)
(Members can serve more than one role. Written agreement of parent required to excuse attendance of required member. If area being discussed, written information must be provided to parent in advance of meeting.)

**Optional**
- Family members/Friends
- Peers/Advocates
- Specialists
- Other Professionals including Representatives from Early Intervention or Adult Service Agencies (optional members are at the discretion of the school and parent and may require parental consent)

IEP team members notified and the meeting scheduled:
- In time for parents to arrange to attend
- Mutually agreeable time, place & purpose
- Notice includes date, time, location, purpose and attendees

**Present Level of Performance:**
- Student described in positive way
- Reflects parent concerns
- Includes strengths and needs
- Results of most recent evaluations
- States academic & functional performance in objective terms
- Results of assessments including statewide or districtwide assessments
- Describes how the disability affects involvement and progress in general education (for preschool students – in appropriate activities)
- Describes academic, developmental and functional needs

**Annual Goals:**
- Includes academic and functional goals based on needs from assessments and described in Present Level section
- Meaningful and attainable within one school year
- Student’s involvement and progress in the general education curriculum
- Measurable - clear about what, how, where & when
- Includes academic and functional goals
- Positive Behavioral Supports, if needed
- How progress will be measured and how often parents will be informed of progress
- High expectations, including how student will keep up with or catch up to nondisabled peers
- Based on validated research
- Measurable objectives or benchmarks (required for students taking alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards)
- Prioritized in terms of the student’s age and time left for schooling
- Skills to help the student live as independently as possible

**Related Services, Supplementary Aids and Supports:**
- Help child advance toward attaining annual goals
- Help child be involved in and make progress in the general curriculum
- Help child participate with other students with and without disabilities
- Include specifics: start/finish dates: frequency: duration: location: who will deliver, delivery method (individual or group in class)
Special Edition Part 4

IEP Checklist (continued)

- Assistive Technology devices or services
- Help to access nonacademic and extracurricular activities
- Needed accommodations/modifications for educational program and assessments.
- Teacher/staff training if needed to implement program

Special Factors (when needed):
- Communication
- Assistive Technology
- Behavior
- Language (English Language Learners)
- Braille (for blindness/visual impairment)
- Communication needs (for deafness/hearing impairment)

Placement:
- In the least restrictive environment (first option considered is school where child would attend if there was no disability)
- Includes interaction with non-disabled peers to maximum extent appropriate
- Justification, if student not participating in general education curriculum
- Coordinated with general education classroom, schedules,

YOUR CHILD’S EDUCATION

activities and programs

State-wide and District-wide Assessments
- Lists assessments student will take
- Specifies needed accommodations and modifications
- If participating in an alternate assessment, aligned with challenging standards

Instruction and Adaptations:
- Assignment of a case manager or primary contact
- Person(s) responsible clearly listed i.e. special education teacher, general education teacher, specialist, aide, parents, students, other
- Extended school year recommendation (if needed)

Transition Plan (if necessary)
- Plans for a smooth transition to a new setting, i.e. early intervention to preschool, or moving to kindergarten, elementary, middle school or high school (suggested a year before change)
- Includes input from service providers in current setting and future setting

Secondary Transition
- By age 15, or before as appropriate, student takes active role in planning and attending IEP
- Types of classes needed and type of diploma planned for student (this may need to begin in middle school)
- Includes postsecondary goals based on student needs, strengths, preferences and interests
- Specific transition services, related services needs and other agencies to be included
- Activities needed to assist student in reaching postsecondary goals
- At least 1 year before age 18, information about what rights will transfer to student at age 18
- Summary of Performance for students who are graduating or who will exceed the age of eligibility for special education.

Prior Written Notice (If a revision of service or change in placement or refusal of parent request)
- Description of action proposed or refused
- The reason for the proposed change
- The date of proposed change
- Description of evaluations and other information used to make the decision
- Other options or choices described
- Other relevant factors
- What steps to take if parent disagrees (Availability of procedural safeguards and where to get more information)

Review (at least annually)
- Whether annual goals being achieved
- Lack of expected progress in annual goals and general education curriculum
- Results of any reevaluation
- Information about child provided to or by parents related to reevaluations
- Child’s anticipated needs
- Other matters
- Revisions as appropriate

PEATC offers workshops in English and Spanish that help families be more informed partners in their children’s education. Call Suzanne at 1-800-869-7826 for information about scheduling a training in your community.
Special Edition Part 4

IEP Lista

La siguiente es una lista a considerar por los padres y maestro para desarrollar el IEP. No todos los temas en la lista son requeridos por las regulaciones de la educación especial. Para mayor información consulte las regulaciones Federales; más información puede ser encontrada en http://idea.ed.gov/ o llama a PEATC, 800-869-6782

El equipo del IEP incluye:

Requiere
- Padre(s)
- Estudiante (según lo apropiado de acuerdo a el nivel y facultad que el niño tenga a sus 15 años para discutir transiciones)
- El maestro(s) de educación especial
- El maestro(s) de educación regular
- Profesionales que puedan interpretar las implicaciones de instrucción de las evaluaciones
- El Representante de la División Escolar (Calificado para proveer/supervisar servicios de educación especial)

(Os miembros pueden servir más de un rol. La aceptación por escrito del padre es necesaria para excusar la falta de un miembro. Si alguna área será discutida, se debe proveer con anterioridad al padre con información.)

Opcional
- Miembros de la familia/Amigos
- Compañeros/Defensores
- Especialistas
- Otros Profesionales incluyendo los Representantes de Intervención Temprana ó Agencias de Servicios para Adultos

(Miembros optionales son a discreción de la escuela y los padres deben requerir consentimiento por escrito)

Los miembros del equipo de IEP deben ser notificados y/o del horario de la conferencia:

- En un tiempo que los padres puedan arreglar y atender
- En un espacio, tiempo y propósito de mutuo acuerdo
- La notificación debe incluir tiempo, lugar, propósito y personas que atenderán

Nivel Actual de Funcionamiento:
- El estudiante es descrito en forma positiva
- Refleja las preocupaciones de los padres
- Incluye las fortalezas y necesidades
- Resultados de las evaluaciones más recientes
- Describe el funcionamiento académico y funcional en términos objetivos
- Resultado de las evaluaciones incluyendo las del Estado y del Distrito
- Describe cómo la incapacidad afecta la participación y progreso en la educación general (Para los estudiantes de preescolar-en actividades apropiadas)
- Describe necesidades académicas, de desarrollo y funcionales

Logros Anuales:
- Incluye las metas académicas basadas en las necesidades descritas en las evaluaciones y descritas en la sección Nivel Actual
- Significativas y alcanzables durante el año escolar
- Participación del estudiante en y progreso en el currículo de educación especial
- Medible-claro en cuanto a qué, cómo, cuándo y dónde
- Incluye metas académicas y funcionales
- Apoyo Positivo del Comportamiento, de ser necesario
- Cómo va a ser medido el progreso y cómo; así como de que tan seguido serán los padres informados del progreso
- Altas Expectativas, incluyendo cómo el estudiante va a alcanzar o seguir con sus compañeros sin discapacidad
- Información basada en investigación validada
- Objetivos medibles y puntos de referencia (requeridos por los estudiantes que están tomando evaluaciones alternativas alineadas a los logros alternativos estandarizados)
- Establecer en orden de prioridades los objetivos teniendo en cuenta la edad del estudiante y el tiempo restante en la escuela
- Habilidades que le ayuden al estudiante a vivir lo más independientemente posible

Servicios relacionados, ayudas suplementarias y soportes:
- Que le ayuden al estudiante a avanzar hacia el logro anual
- Que le ayuden al niño a participar y progresar en el currículo general
- Que le ayuden al niño a participar con otros estudiante con o sin discapacidad.
Incluir términos específicos: Inicio/días finales, frecuencia, duración, lugar, quién lo va a enviar, el método de envío (individual o para la clase)
Ayudas técnicas o servicios de educación, especialistas, ayudantes, padres, estudiantes y otros
Ayuda para participar en las actividades no académicas o extracurriculares
Necesidad de acomodación/modificaciones en el programa educativo y las calificaciones
Entrenar al maestro(s)/así como al personal necesario para implementar el programa

Factores Especiales (De ser necesarios)
Comunicación
Ayudas técnicas
Comportamiento
Lenguaje (estudiantes aprendiendo inglés como un segundo idioma)
Braille para ceguera/impedimento visual
Asistencia de comunicación para sordera/impedimento auditivo

Colocación:
En el ambiente menos restrictivo (primera opción considerada en la escuela de no ser por la discapacidad)
Incluir interacción con niños sin discapacidades en la mayor extensión apropiada
Justificación, si el estudiante no participa en el currículo general
Coordinar con educación general sobre salones, horarios, actividades y programas

Evaluaciones Estatales y Distritales
Lista de las evaluaciones que el estudiante tomará

Especificar las acomodaciones y modificaciones necesarias
Si se encuentra participando en evaluación alternativa, alinearla con los estandares difíciles

Instrucciones y Adaptaciones:
Asignar una persona encargada de manejar el caso
Recomendación para el Año Escolar

Transición:
Un plan de transición de ser necesario
Planes para una transición suave al ambiente nuevo, ej. Intervención temprana al prescolar, o a kindergarten, elementaria, escuela media o escuela superior (sugeridas un año antes del cambio)
Incluir el aporte de los proveedores del servicio en el sitio actual y el futuro.
Recomendación de un período escolar extendido (si es necesario)

Transición secundaria
Tipos de clases necesarias y tipo de diploma planeado para el estudiante (esto debe empezar en la escuela media)
Para los 15 años, antes de ser apropiado, los estudiantes deben tomar un rol activo en la planeación de su IEP
Incluye metas pos-secundarias basadas en las necesidades del estudiante, fortalezas, preferencias e intereses
Transiciones específicas, servicios relacionados y otras agencias a ser incluidas
Actividades necesarias para asistir al estudiante a alcanzar sus metas
Al menos un año antes de cumplir 18 años, proveer información de los derechos que se le transfieren a un estudiante al cumplir los 18 años
Resumen de funcionamiento para los estudiantes que se están graduando o que excedan la edad elegible para la educación especial

Notificación Previa por Escrito (En caso de una revisión s o cambio de lugar, o al rechazo de solicitud o pregunta por el padre)
Descripción de las acciones propuestas o rechazadas
La razón para el cambio propuesto
El día de la propuesta del cambio
Descripción de las evaluaciones y otra información usada para tomar la decisión
Otras opciones descritas
Otros factores relevantes
Qué pasos tomar si el padre no está de acuerdo (Disponibilidad de los procedimientos de garantía y dónde obtener información)

Revisión (Por lo menos anual)
Si las metas anuales fueron alcanzadas.
Ausencia de progreso esperado en las metas anuales y en el currículo general
Resultados de las re-evaluaciones
Información sobre el niño previa para o por los padres relacionadas a las re-evaluaciones
Necesidades anticipadas del niño
Otros asuntos
Revisiones apropiadas

The Virginia Procedural Safeguards are now available in Spanish. You can ask for a copy at your child’s school or view it at http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instructions/Sped/proc_safe_spanish.pdf
Communicación escrita con su escuela

La Ley de Educación para Individuos Discapacitados, con las siglas en inglés IDEA, otorga derechos a los niños discapacitados y requiere que la escuela provea toda la información y acceso concerniente a Educación Especial a los niños discapacitados. La ley IDEA también enfatiza en la importancia de la participación activa de los padres en tomar decisiones sobre la educación especial de sus niños. Antes de que el distrito escolar o escuela proponga o rechace una acción relacionada con el plan de educación para su niño(a), deberán proveerle a usted de una “Notificación Previa por Escrito” (Prior Written Notice), acerca del programa individualizado que se propone para su niño(a) este recibiendo (IEP), de acuerdo a los derechos que se le otorgan a usted como padre y a su niño(a). Además la información deberá proveérsela en el idioma que mejor entienda, en este caso el español. Los padres y el personal de la escuela necesitan trabajar juntos para así desarrollar con eficacia el IEP de los niños. Esto establecerá claramente los servicios que los niños requieren para alcanzar sus necesidades únicas.

La “Notificación Previa por Escrito” (Prior Written Notice) es confusa para mucha gente, porque suena legal, algo así como que la escuela debe proporcionarle esta información ANTES de que tengan la reunión, la cual debe ser así. Muchas escuelas proporcionan esta notificación antes de una elegibilidad o de una reunión de IEP. Sin embargo esta notificación debe ser otorgada también DESPUÉS de la reunión, puesto que puede ser que usted no esté de acuerdo con algo que la escuela está proponiendo o si la escuela no desea hacer lo que usted solicita. Su consentimiento es muy importante y usted no debe firmar ningún acuerdo en una reunión de la escuela hasta que usted este seguro que entendió lo que se esta conviniendo. Si usted tiene preguntas, usted puede llamar PEATC al 800-869-6782 y alguien le ayudara en español. En PEATC, no podemos escribir cartas por usted. Sin embargo intentamos hacer lo menos intimidante para usted para que así usted pida cualquier información en español.

Además a este documento usted encontrara una forma que le ayudara a mantener la comunicación clara con la escuela de su niño(a), con respecto a las preguntas o preocupaciones que usted tiene y lo que usted quisiera ver en el IEP de su niño(a). Esta forma le ayudara a solicitar oficialmente servicios de la escuela o rechazar los que usted no dese que le sean proporcionados para su niño(a). Así como también les hará saber que es lo que quiere que hagan o no hagan para con su niño(a). Cuando la escuela le proveye a usted el “Notificación Previa por Escrito” (Prior Written Notice), este le ayuda a entender el porque la escuela ha tomado decisiones, con las cuales talvez usted no esté de acuerdo. También le mostraran pruebas y observaciones para que hayan tomado tales decisiones, así como las opciones que consideraron. La ley IDEA, es muy específica en el tipo de información que deben proporcionarle. Solicite a la escuela por escrito le aclaren el porque tomaron o rechazaron una acción en algo que usted considere que no esta apropiado con el desarrollo funcional y académico para con su niño(a).
Señores,

Es mi compromiso como padre el abogar por el éxito de mi niño en la escuela. Confiamos como padre, que el trabajo que estamos realizando en conjunto por el desarrollo de mi niño(a) y para el logro de sus expectativas, sean favorables. Escribo a ustedes para que me sean aclaradas ciertas dudas para yo así entender ciertas decisiones que deben llevar mi consentimiento o tal vez rechazar con mi consentimiento. También escribo esta carta en mi idioma puesto que es en el cual me siento cómodo, por lo tanto, solicito a ustedes que cualquier respuesta que me comuniquen por parte de la escuela me sea hecha en mi mismo idioma (español).

Notificación Previa por Escrito en la ley, IDEA requiere que todas o cada acción que tomen y la información que le sea proporcionada se la hagan en su idioma solicitado (español):

1. Proponga comenzar o cambiar la identificación, la evaluación o la colocación educacional de su niño(a), o la disposición de una educación pública apropiada libre (FAPE) para mi niño(a); o
2. Rechace comenzar o cambiar la identificación, la evaluación o la colocación educacional de su niño(a), o la disposición de FAPE.

El contenido requerido bajo el título 34 CFR sección 300.503 (b) se enumera abajo. Entiendo que mi solicitud será hecha en mi idioma, el cual es el español. La escuela me proporcionará detalladamente, de acuerdo a lo estipulado por la ley.

1. Que acción la escuela propone o rechaza a ser tomada.
2. Por qué el distrito escolar propone o rechaza la acción tomada.
3. Describa cada uno de los procedimientos evaluativos, valoraciones, record o reportes de la escuela usados para decidir tomar o rechazar la acción anterior.
4. Describa todas las opciones que el Equipo del IEP consideró y las razones por las cuales esas opciones fueron rechazadas.
5. Describa otras razones por las cuales la escuela propone o rechaza para tomar la acción.

A continuación, usted encontrará la acción que yo estoy solicitando a la escuela que me proporcionen detalladamente, de acuerdo a lo estipulado por la ley.

Gracias por su atención,

(Su firma/ Your Signature)
On July 19, 2006, the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) was published in the Federal Register as part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA). The purpose of the NIMAS is to help increase the availability and timely delivery of printed instructional materials in accessible formats to blind or other persons with print disabilities in elementary schools and secondary schools.

Effective August 19, 2006, publishers and other producers of print-based educational materials were required to provide those materials in alternate formats, if necessary, to meet the needs of individual students. Publishers, for example, will create files of their educational content that meet the NIMAS requirements.

The Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) has two centers to make sure that students who are blind or have a print disability have access to materials. Founded in 1984, CAST has earned international recognition for its development of innovative, technology-based educational resources and strategies based on the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). More information on accessible technology (CAST) – www.cast.org/

According to IDEA 2004, students with disabilities are to be provided access to the general curriculum with modifications, accommodations, supplementary aids, and supports in order to make satisfactory educational progress. The term “supplementary aids and services” means aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate. The NIMAS Center recommends that IEP forms include a question such as the following:

Does the student require accessible, alternate format versions of printed textbooks and printed core materials that are written and published primarily for use in elementary and secondary school instruction and are required by a SEA or LEA for use by students in the classroom? This will prompt the IEP team to consider each ‘print disabled’ student’s need for accessible, alternate format versions of print instructional materials.

If a student with a print disability does need a specialized format, the IEP should specify the following:

- the specific format(s) to be provided (Braille, audio, e-text, large print, etc.)
- the services and/or assistive technology the student needs to use the specialized format
- the individual or individuals responsible for providing the specialized format, and
- whether or not the format is required to be used in the student’s home or in another setting in order for the student to receive a free appropriate public education.

This article from: http://nimas.cast.org/about/resources/accessible_iep.html.

Help is on the way for students who are blind or have print disabilities.

Quick Places to Find Out about IDEA

Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) - www.peatc.org (you can also call us at 1-800-869-6782)


National Association of State Directors of Special Education – www.nasdse.org


National Dissemination Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) - links to state contacts, IDEA updates, research, information in Spanish and more. http://nichcy.org/ (You can also call them at 800-695-0285)

Virginia-Specific Information - Call 1-800-422-2083 with questions or for further information

Office of Dispute Resolution and Administrative Services - http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/dueproc

Check here to get involved as Virginia makes changes to Special Education Regulations and to view guidance documents for state/local implementation of the Federal IDEA statute and regulations


IEP Information including “Standards-Driven IEP Training” and Sample IEP Form - http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/sped/iep.shtml
Phenomenal PEATC Partners
We couldn’t do it without you!

A Big Thanks
To PEATC Board members and friends who made PEATC’s Golf Tournament a success!

Dave Kern, Kern Inc., Chris Werner, Will Kern, William (Butch) Kern (Fed Ex), Allen Conrad, Ed Hartman(Fed Ex), Darryl Dukate(Fed Ex), J. Samuel Clarke (VA Farm Bureau), Michael Crane, Mark Smith, Jeremiah Ledbetter, Les Tinsley, Jason Cooper(Corporate Jet Sales), Gary Lofdhall (Versaer Neumann), Gary Brikes, Don Woodhuff (The Hill School), Dominic Vicari, Tony Prisco, Ronnie Braxton, Derrick Griffin, Richard Thomas, Jason Cooper (Corporate Jet Sales), Mark Buchanan, James Weatherholz (Fed Ex), James Jackson, Charles Wauhop Jr.(T/A Nature Settings), Scott Stine

Special Thanks to organizations and volunteers at the PEATC Virginia State Fair 2006 Exhibit

HELP WANTED
Do you want to help PEATC build better futures for children with disabilities?

Current openings:
Information Specialist – Parent Information Resource Center promoting parental engagement and success for Virginia’s culturally, socioeconomically, geographically and ability diverse students (Falls Church and Richmond Offices)
Information Specialist – Parent Training and Information helping families of students with disabilities (Falls Church and Richmond Offices)
Latino Outreach Information Specialist – fluent in Spanish and English - outreach, information and assistance to Latino families who have children with disabilities (Falls Church and Richmond Offices)
Partnership Facilitator – promoting positive parental involvement in schools for Virginia’s culturally, socioeconomically, geographically and ability diverse children (Richmond, SE Virginia and SW Virginia)
Administrative Coordinator – providing operations, technology and administrative support (Falls Church Office)
Volunteer, Trainers and Interns – You can help us to help others with your time and talent. Positions can be tailored for individual talents and interests.

The PEATC Board seeks help with the Virginia Icon fundraiser scheduled for May 5, 2007. Virginia Icon is a Talent Competition for middle and high schoolers. The Board is also looking for new Board members. For more information, please contact Suzanne Wolfe, Director of Programs and Operations, wolfe@peatc.org

We Thank PEATC Supporters
Nancy Diehl, for conducting a training on “Autism from a Parent’s Point of View” and “How to Use the New IDEA to Improve Results for your Child” in Pulaski County
Lana Hurt, Wall Residences, LLC, for conducting a training on “Using MedicaidWaiver Supports to Direct a Person-Centered Plan” in Winchester, VA
Bill and Vanessa Brownley, for presenting a workshop on “How to Advocate for Your Child under the new IDEA regulations” in Springfield, VA
James Hardcastle, Brownley Law Group, co-facilitator for the Brownley workshop in Springfield, VA
Jo-Ann Smith Skinner, Brownley Law Group, co-facilitator for the Brownley workshop in Springfield, VA
Volunteer Trainers on IDEA 2004-Peg Johnson, Eleanor Voldish, Tia Marsili, Rosalia Fajardo
Cassandra and Sam Coleman, Friends of PEATC, hosted a Golf Tournament in October
Cassandra Coleman, Lynda Sielaty, Lynsey Wolfe, and Austin Wolfe helped with the display booth at the Buddy Walk for the Down Syndrome Association of Northern Virginia
Justin Ryder and Jacob Davis, Tim Moore, PEATC Office Volunteers
Paola Marcela Quijano, Latina Outreach Intern, PEATC Press article, translation services
Chris Bowers, for donating his time and truck for cleaning out Uncle Bob’s Storage
Nueves Raices Newspaper, for printing articles about PEATC and services to Spanish-speaking families to it’s circulation of 14,000 readers
US Chamber of Commerce, donation of new IBM laptop to be used for PEATC training initiatives
Jackie Myal, for representing PEATC at the “Educating Students in the Autism Spectrum for Life in the 21st Century” conference.
Pete Scampavia, working table at “Life Planning Tools” workshop
Rosalia Fajardo, Spanish translation services and Latino Outreach
Alexandre Ames, CD and DVD reproduction for NEXT STEPS Transition Training for Trainers
How it Adds Up

Special Education Data from National Assessments

The US Department of Education recently released a synthesis of findings from a number of national assessment studies, authorized by the Congress to gauge the status of special education and students with disabilities. Below are some key data released from those reports. The full summary report can be found at http://abt.sliidea.org/

Grades, passage through the grades, and postsecondary enrollment have improved. However, significant gaps in academic performance between students with disabilities and non-disabled students still remain.

Approximate Percentage of Students with Disabilities Who Graduated from and Dropped Out of School 1996 to 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% Graduated</th>
<th>% Dropped Out of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: State Reported data to OSEP (DANS)

Teachers reported using a variety of classroom practices to support students with disabilities in their schools, and 4 out of 5 special education teachers reported that the practices they used to support inclusion were implemented throughout their school districts.

Although fewer than ¾ of all beginning special education teachers were certified for their main assignment, general and special education teachers overall felt prepared to educate students with disabilities.

Cost of Services and Health for Students with Disabilities by Disability Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability Category</th>
<th>Cost Average per pupil expenditures by disability, 1999-2000</th>
<th>Health Percent of youth with disabilities in poor/fair health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning disability</td>
<td>$10,558</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech/Language</td>
<td>$10,958</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Retardition</td>
<td>$15,040</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Disturbance</td>
<td>$14,147</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Impairment</td>
<td>$15,992</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Impairment</td>
<td>$18,811</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedic Impairment</td>
<td>$18,811</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>$18,229</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Disabilities</td>
<td>$18,790</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Health status is a primary concern for students with disabilities, particularly because poor health can adversely affect a child’s ability to participate in daily activities at school, at home and in the community. Compared with the general population, students with disabilities are somewhat less healthy overall. They also are more likely to weigh less at birth—often a precursor to poor health in the future.

Focus on PEATC

PEATC at Work

In 2006, PEATC was busy! Our phones have been ringing off the hook and we have been running hard to keep up with the demand:

- Providing information and support through telephone, email and visits to 5,878 families and professionals – an increase of 46% over last year, and
- Reaching 11,752 individuals through training and presentations - an increase of 78% over last year.

So what?

In our annual evaluation survey...

- 92% of respondents found telephone assistance very useful
- 96% reported that the trainings were useful
- 80% were able to get more appropriate services for their child
- 80% are sharing the information with other families.

What are families saying?

“I really feel it made a difference in my life to have a place like PEATC to call.”

“It is nice to know there is someone (PEATC) out there to ‘watch my back’ when it comes to helping my child.”

“I was having problems with my child’s IEP and having it followed. The workshop helped me know what my power is.”

“I have a feeling that knowledge is power; however having the attitude that you have power will be what makes a difference.”

“PEATC brought a personal touch because the people at PEATC are parents themselves and can related to what they are talking about.”

“My son, in May 2006 was failing all seven subjects, even Basic Skills. With the information I received from Bonnie, I was able to get a homebound teacher for my son, immediately. By June 2006 he had passed all seven of his classes and he passed all three of his SOLs. Also, he had never received an ‘A’ on one of his interims since sixth grade (not one from 7th through 9th grade), but this year he came home with all A’s and B’s on his interims!”

Welcome to PEATC

Cathy Healy will return to PEATC as the Director of Training, a newly-created position to develop quality-driven, competitive training and curriculum that is consistent with evidence-based practices and relevant to diverse families and professionals. From 1997-2001, Cathy worked for PEATC and developed model trainings for IDEA, foster care, literacy and the Comprehensive Services Act. She left to become a Kennedy Policy Fellow assigned to the Office of Disability Employment Policy at the US Department of Labor. At the US Chamber of Commerce since 2003, Cathy served as the US Chamber liaison to the newly established US Business Leadership Network and as a Director of Workforce and Education Programs in the Center for Workforce Preparation. Her work focused in developing outreach strategies for the inclusion of diverse workers and in formulating the business case for the recruitment of individuals with disabilities. Cathy is the proud mother of four children. Her youngest, Michael, has down syndrome and is currently a successful member of the labor force.

Happy Trails to Bonnie Davis and Gail Byrd Ryder!

Bonnie, our Senior Information Specialist has moved to Florida and Gail, our Adminstartive Assistant, has taken on other pursuits. PEATC appreciates their hard work and dedication to families throughout Virginia. Bonnie and Gayle - your efforts were invaluable and you will be missed. Good luck in all your endeavors!

Please visit our OPEN HOUSE events in Falls Church on Thursday, February 22nd from 1:00pm - 4:00pm and in Richmond on Tuesday, March 6 from 1:00pm - 4:00pm.

HELP WANTED!!
SEE PAGE 5.
FOR MORE INFO VISIT WWW.PEATC.ORG
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.

Wishing you a Wonderful Holiday Season

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

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

CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL - Call 1-800-869-6782 if your mailing label is incorrect.