From the Director's Desk - "Ah....dreaming of summertime!"
- by Suzanne Bowers

Aren’t we all dreaming of thawing out from this winter deep freeze and enjoying the warmth of summertime in Virginia?! Are you planning a beach trip for your family? Maybe going to visit relatives while the kids are out of school? Well don’t go into vacation mode yet because if you have a child receiving special education services, they may be eligible for Extended School Year (ESY) and the planning with your IEP team needs to start now!

The Virginia Department of Education Special Education Regulations describes ESY services in this way; “Extended school year services” for the purposes of this chapter means special education and related services that: (34 CFR 300.106(b))

1. Are provided to a child with a disability:
   a. Beyond the normal school year of the local educational agency;
   b. In accordance with the child’s individualized education program;
   c. At no cost to the parent(s) of the child; and

2. Meet the standards established by the Virginia Department of Education.

ESY is not a place…it is a service! The design and duration of the service can be varied as Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are but the intent is to ensure that students are not denied a free appropriate public education. There are six factors that are to be consider by the IEP team when determining the need for ESY services for the student:

-Regression/recoupment
-Degrees of progress
-Emerging skills/breakthrough opportunities
-Interfering behaviors
-The nature and/or severity of the disability
-Special circumstances or other factors

So keep planning for family time this summer but don’t forget to look at what your child might qualify for through the schools that can help keep them on track with their IEP goals!
Mental Health Corner by Caroline Gendelman - "Your Child & His Mental Health"

Parents and caregivers all want their children to be successful in their lives. What does it mean to have a “successful” child? After a bit of thought, most would agree that a child who is confident, friendly and living up to and beyond expectations is successful. Does that sound simple? What must be in place for a child to have a successful life? One might say, “It’s all in the mind”. Those caring for children must feed and nourish a child’s physical health and his mental health.

Winter is fading and spring is surfacing. It is time to shift thoughts from keeping spirits up and children amused during cold dark days to getting everyone moving and ready for outside work and appointments to know what can fit.

Children need structure and routine. Surprise changes in schedules do not often sit well, especially for children who have special needs. The sooner you know what new activities are on his plate, the calmer you will be and the better you can prepare him.

Here are some points to keep in mind as you organize your child’s schedule for the next few months.

• Do you want to find a camp closer to home, work or his medical/therapist appointments?
• What has worked in the past and what needed improving?
• Has your child mentioned a new interest (like cooking) that could open up a new type of camp?
• Has anything changed in your child’s abilities/needs which could shift the search?
• Have you or your child made new associations which could contribute to your options?
• Ask your child’s care providers and teachers for anything you should consider.

Physical and mental activity is necessary for a growing child. At PEATC we can help connect you with camps and activities to help you and your child have a successful Spring Break and keep an expectant eye on the upcoming summer season.

PEATC On Demand and In the Spotlight by Leslie Edwards - “Kids Enjoy Exercise Now (KEEN)"

With all of this snow on the ground it may be hard to believe that Spring and Summer are just around the corner. Throughout the school year Student’s schedules are planned out through their attendance in the School setting. When that structured setting is no longer around during the summertime, parent’s may find themselves asking “What now?!”. There are many excellent Summer Camps and activities in Virginia for students to participate in. One example is Kids Enjoy Exercise Now (KEEN). KEEN Greater DC (Kids Enjoy Exercise Now) is a volunteer-led nonprofit -- 501(c)(3) -- organization that provides one-to-one sports and recreational opportunities for children and young adults with developmental and physical disabilities at no cost to their families or caregivers. KEEN is a great organization for students to get involved in especially during a time when physical activity opportunities may be limited. To learn more about KEEN, please check out their PEATC hosted Webinar by pasting the following link into your internet browser: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05tBtoTyE_A
Early Intervention Corner by Lakeshia Yancey - "Summertime Transition Planning"

Summer marks the time for family vacations, barbecues, and beaches. Summer is also an important time for your child who will be transitioning from preschool to Kindergarten. This is the time to start preparing them and yourselves for the Big Step. “Research shows that children entering kindergarten experience a smoother transition if their parents give them two things over the summer months - confidence and practice. Parents, and preschool providers working with parents, can give their children confidence on the first day of school by becoming actively involved in the process of entering school.” (Haney, M. H., & Hill, J. (2004). Showing your child your excitement about the change will help ease their anxiety.

The summer is also a great time to increase Kindergarten-prep activities. There are many apps and free resources on the internet that you can allow your child to practice on. This will keep the preschool academic skills fresh in their minds and give them a head start on new skills.

Many summer camps are geared toward older children, but some do cater to the younger crowded. Get a jumpstart on locating one that fits best for your child, they do fill up quickly.

This will help them to increase their positive social skills by interacting with unfamiliar peers, thus preparing them to cope with leaving their preschool friends and making new ones in Kindergarten. Remember PEATC is here to help you through this exciting process!

Helpful Tips:

• Research and register for summer/day camps early
• Familiarize yourself with your child’s IEP team
• Visit the new school several times over the summer (make sure to point out the playground)
• Read books that focus on starting school
• Talk about how your child feels about moving to Kindergarten during dinner, playtime, or just riding in the car
• Find Kindergarten prep apps and online resources
• Make a preschool scrapbook for memories
• Enjoy the Summer!!!

PEATC Trainings and Events: March 2015

Saturday, March 7, 2015 - PEATC will be an exhibitor at the FCPS 10th Annual Special Education Conference, 8 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., Hayfield Secondary School, 7630 Telegraph Road, Alexandria, VA 22315. Contact Elaine McCall of the FCPS PRC at Elaine.McCall@fcps.edu or 703-204-3941 for additional information.

Wednesday, March 11, 2015 - PEATC will be an exhibitor at the Joint Services Exeptional Family Member Forum & Resource Fair for EFMP familes, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., at the Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC), 7928 14th Street, Norfolk, VA 23505. Please contact Kristin Greeson at 757-462-3624 or Kristin.greeson.ctr@navy.mil for registration information.

Wednesday - Thursday, March 11-12, 2015 - PEATC will be an exhibitor at the 2015 Commonwealth Autism Service Conference, held at The Westin Richmond, 6631 W Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23230. Please see the Commonwealth Autism Service website http://www.autismva.org/ for registration information.

Thursday, March 12, 2015 - "Who, What, and When of Early Intervention" workshop, at The Improvement Association, 1750 East Atlantic Avenue, Emporia, VA. Please contact LaWanda Fisher at Ifisher@impassoc.org or (434) 634-2490.

Thursday - Friday, March 12-13, 2015 - PEATC will be an exhibitor at the 2015 National Family Engagement Summit, held at the Holiday Inn Select Hotel & Conference Center, 601 Main Street, Lynchburg, VA 24504. Please go to www.si4all.com for registration information.

Saturday, March 14, 2015 - "Measurable IEP Goals" Workshop, 2015 Caroline County Family Fair, 8:00am - 1:30 pm, at Carline Middle School, 13325 Devils 3 Jump Road, Milford, VA 22514. Please contact Susan Gayle at 804-633-7083 or sgayle@ccps.us for more information.

Tuesday, March 17, 2015 - PEATC will be an exhibitor at the Disability Awareness & Transition Expo sponsored by Roanoke County Public Schools (RCP) at the RCP Administrative Building, 5937 Cove Road Roanoke, VA 24019. Please contact the RCP Parent Resource Center at 540-562-3900 for more information.

Thursday - Friday, March 19-20, 2015 - PEATC will be an exhibitor at the VAECE Annual Conference, at The Richmond Marriott, 500 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA. Please go to http://www.vaece.org/2015conference.html for registration information.

Saturday, March 21, 2015 - "Successful Transition Planning and the IEP" workshop, at the Life After High School Transition Conference and Resource Fair hosted by the Piedmont Regional Education Program (PREP), held at the Charlottesville Albemarle Technical Education Center, 1000 East Rio Road, Charlottesville, VA 22901. The conference is from 8:00 am-1:00 pm; the workshop is from 10:30 am - 11:30 am. To register and for more information, please contact Deborah Anama at danama@k12albemarle.org or 434-975-9400x68032.

Monday, March 23, 2015 - "The Big Step: Transitioning Into Preschool" workshop. 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm, at the Down Syndrome Association of Northern Virginia (DSANV), 2755 Hartland Road, Suite 200, Falls Church, VA 22043. To register and for more information, please contact Heather Trammell at heathert@dsanv.org or (703) 621-7129.