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Virginia's Governor McAuliffe proclaims April 2016 as the "Month of the Military Child" and "Autism Awareness Month"

Governor McAuliffe has issued a certificate of recognition proclaiming April 2016 as the Month of the Military Child, a special time to celebrate and honor our military-connected children and their families. Additionally, the Virginia Board of Education issued a resolution commemorating April 2016 at the Month of the Military Child at its meeting March 17, 2016.

Frequent moves, family separations through deployments, and reintegration following deployments can make school-, home-, and community-life challenging for military children. Yet, even in such circumstances, these students continually demonstrate resilience and courage. Their contributions to our schools and communities also include unique and valuable perspectives on learning, friendship, growing up, and service to others.

Throughout the nation and commonwealth educators and communities will take time in April to recognize the contributions of children whose parents serve in the military. To assist schools in planning Month of the Military Child celebrations, the Virginia Department of Education has developed the following resources. VDOE encourages schools to use these materials and ideas in planning Month of the Military Child activities throughout April.
Early Childhood Corner by Lakeshia Yancey - "Learning to Navigate Social Situations"

Early childhood focuses on how children develop naturally and uses tools to help them learn how to navigate in different social situations and how to react to different personalities. This is an important skill for all children to learn. Children with special needs are able to get additional professional supports in this area when they attend early childhood programs, but more importantly they are interacting with typically developing peers. Starting the process of developing positive social skills will help to ensure a smooth transition into mainstream school.

PEATC’s Early Childhood program is here to assist families with transitioning during the early childhood stage. We currently offer workshops and fact sheets that provide families with overviews of Early Intervention and the transition to Special Education.

Our newest workshop is a recreation of one of PEATC’s originals. The ABCs of Behavior has been formatted to focus on behavior in the early stages. We can assist you with understanding what early childhood will look like for your child with special needs, how to make sure the program recognizes your child as an individual, and how to build positive relationships with your child’s team members. We can even provide you with information on what to look for when choosing a quality early childhood program. Feel free to contact us or visit our website for additional information.

Early Childhood Workshops

- **The Big Step: Transitioning Into Preschool**  This workshop is to give insight on the importance of successful transitions from Early Intervention services to preschool. It touches on the importance of the roles of the parents, service coordinators, and educators. Participants will learn the positive and negative effects of transitions. We will also focus on what to look for in a preschool program.

- **The ABC’s of Behavior: Early Childhood**  As a result of this workshop, participants will be able to look at how behavior influences our lives and understanding how it is addressed in IDEA 2004. You will become familiar with the ABC’s (Antecedent, Behavior & Consequence) of all behavior supports and behavior management. Functional Behavioral Assessments will be covered and you will have an opportunity to practice using a FBA tool to assess behavior. *This workshop is offered in both English and Spanish.*
PEATC Supports Our Service Members by Lisa Wakeman - "The Month of the Military Child"

Each April, we take pause to celebrate our military children. Regardless the size of the community; be it a small, rural community with one command present, or multiple cities, with multiple commands, the military families impact those around them. Often times, research on the effects of deployment, separation, frequent moves focus on the negative impacts. Very little is actually written about the positive impacts that the military lifestyle has on children. Positive impacts include independence, flexibility, resilience, stronger family bonds, maturity, a deeper understanding of the world (let’s face it, they travel all over) and they gain skills that better equip them to say good-bye and build new friendships over again.

That being said, military children need more than just unstructured play time to master social skills. Social skills are not only important in school, but also later for adjustment. Research shows that children that do not have adequate social skills are at increased risk of rejection, behavior problems, and poor academic achievement.

Additionally, more resent research has demonstrated disturbing rates of expulsion in preschool and kindergarten, which has brought to the forefront the importance for teaching these skills (Gilliam & Shahar, 2006).

Some important social skills include:
- Following the rules
- Controlling anger/impulses
- Problem solving
- Sharing toys
- Taking turns
- Helping others
- Understanding how and when to apologize
- Showing empathy

Teaching Social Skills:

- Playdates: Playdates teach the rules of having a friend over and teach children how to be polite to their guests. Activities and games can also be used to reinforce social skills. Games reinforce ideas such as empathy, personal space, how to get someone’s attention, to start a conversation and the importance of taking turns.
- Puppets: Use puppets to model social skills. Puppets can teach how to appropriately engage a conversation, how to deal with emotions like anger, frustration, sadness and excitement.
- Games: Problem solving games, games that teach about emotions, friendship, etc.
- Encouragement: Always remember to provide feedback and encouragement.

Reference:
A mountain has no need for people, but people do need mountains. We go to them for their beauty; for the exhilaration of standing closer to mysterious skies, for the feeling of triumph that comes from having labored to reach a summit.

Earl Hamner Jr.

Rural Perspectives by Summer Sage - "Problems of Rural Life"

About one-fourth of the US population and more than 40 percent of the world population live in rural areas...a dual view of cities exists: they have many advantages, but they also have many disadvantages. This dual view also applies to rural areas, but it does so in a sort of mirror image: The advantages of cities are often disadvantages for rural areas, and the disadvantages of cities are often advantages for rural areas.

On the positive side, and focusing on the United States, rural areas feature much more open space and less crowding. Their violent and property crime rates are much lower than those in large cities, as we have seen. The air is cleaner because there is less traffic and fewer factories and other facilities that emit pollution. Life in rural areas is thought to be slower paced, resulting in lower levels of anxiety and a greater sense of relaxation. For these and other reasons, rural residents exhibit better mental health on the average than do urban residents.

On the negative side, rural areas are often poor and lack the services, employment opportunities, and leisure activities that cities have. Teens often complain of boredom, and drug and alcohol use can be high (Johnson et al., 2008). [1] Public transportation is often lacking, making it difficult for people without motor vehicles, who tend to have low incomes, to get to workplaces, stores, and other venues (Brown, 2008). [2] Rural residents with motor vehicles often must still travel long distances to shop, to visit a doctor, to go to work, and to do any number of other activities. Many rural areas in the United States lack high-speed broadband, a necessity in today’s economy. As a result, their economic development is impaired (Whitacre, 2010). [3] All these challenges contribute to special problems in rural areas...

Finding opportunities for our children to not only experience community but to be an active participant in their community is not easy. In rural areas it can appear to be an even greater challenge. However in my experience it has been easier to find social opportunities for my family in our rural towns than in their urban counterparts. Like the above article states things move at a slower pace, life and people are in less of a hurry and have the time and patience our kids need to learn how to interact socially. My son learned the value of sharing and following directions working in the garden with his Nana, he learned how to take things apart and ask questions about how to problem solve working with the neighborhood farmers as they taught him to water plants, feed chickens, and the biggest excitement of all horseback riding! The local store knew us on a first name basis and always took the time to say hello to my son and help him sort his change to purchase a treat. If it weren’t for the people in the small town he started out in I don’t think I would be the confident parent I am today, taking my child out into the community was frightening, my rural community took us in and accepted us for our gifts and struggles.

In so many ways this is an example of how to create “natural supports” for our disability community members, taking the time to slow down and extend grace. I encourage you to reach out to your rural farms, businesses, stores, and community organizations and get to know the people and their stories and I believe you will find Mr. Hamner’s quote to be a universal theme amongst the community members and our families touched by disabilities; we “know the feeling of triumph from having labored to reach a summit”.

Site: Social Problems: Continuity and Change, v. 1.0, by Steven E. Barkan, 14.4 Problems of Rural Life
Importancia de las habilidades sociales en la primera infancia

Con el fin de construir relaciones humanas gratificantes, es vital que nuestros niños aprendan y tengan la oportunidad de practicar habilidades sociales desde muy temprana edad. Es importante enseñar a los niños que se comporten de una manera que les permita desarrollar amistades, aprender a comunicarse con los demás, tener éxito en la escuela, y más tarde en la vida para obtener y mantener un empleo. Sin embargo, la adquisición de habilidades sociales puede ser una tarea dificultosa para niños con problemas de atención y aprendizaje y no es fácilmente aprendida mediante la técnica de observación.

La adquisición de habilidades sociales lleva tiempo y no sucede durante la noche. Estas habilidades se desarrollan a través de la instrucción, práctica y refuerzo por parte de profesionales y los padres. Para los niños con necesidades especiales, puede ser difícil de entender algunos de los aspectos más importantes de la vida social, tales como tomar turnos al hablar, mantener el contacto visual, prestando atención, y distinguir las señales verbales y no verbales. Sin embargo, grupos de habilidades sociales pueden ayudar a los niños a aprender y practicar estas habilidades importantes de la vida.

Grupos de Habilidades Sociales

Los grupos de habilidades sociales se forman generalmente entre dos a ocho niños y son dirigidos por un adulto que enseña a los niños a interactuar apropiadamente con otros de su edad. Estos grupos sociales pueden ser muy útiles ya que ayudan a nuestros niños a desarrollar habilidades de conversación, aprenden acerca de la resolución de problemas, e incluso les enseñan cómo controlar sus emociones. Los niños tienen el beneficio de aprender de habilidades que van a utilizar el resto de sus vidas.

Grupos de habilidades sociales pueden ser una buena técnica para niños que no están desarrollando las habilidades sociales tan rápido como el resto. Estos grupos pueden incluir a niños con Trastorno por Déficit de Atención con Hiperaactividad (TDAH o ADHD), que pueden ser demasiado activos y agresivos en sus juegos. También incluyen a niños con discapacidades de aprendizaje no verbal y otras discapacidades, que puedan tener problemas para aprender de las señales sociales, como el lenguaje corporal, el tono de voz y expresiones faciales. Durante la búsqueda de un grupo de habilidades sociales para su hijo en su área, busque uno que esté orientado para cuestiones específicas de su hijo y rango de edad.

Importance of Social Skills in Early Childhood

In order to build gratifying human relationships, it is vital that children learn and have the opportunity to practice social skills at an early age. It is important to teach children to conduct themselves in ways that allow them to develop friendships, learn how to communicate with others, succeed in school, and later in life, getting and keeping a job. However, acquiring social skills might be a much more difficult task for kids with learning and attention issues and may not be easily picked up simply by observation.

Acquiring socialization skills takes time and does not happen overnight. These skills are developed through instruction, practice, and reinforcement from the professional and parent. For children with special needs, it may be difficult to grasp some of the most important aspects of socializing such as taking turns when talking, maintaining eye contact, paying attention, and distinguishing verbal and nonverbal cues. Nevertheless, social skills groups can help kids learn and practice these important life skills.

Social Skills Groups

Social skills groups are usually formed between two to eight kids and led by an adult who teaches the kids how to interact appropriately with others their age. These social groups can be extremely helpful as they help our kids develop conversational skills, learn about problem-solving, and even teach them how to control their emotions. Kids have the benefit of learning skills that they will use the rest of their lives.

Social skills groups are best for kids who aren’t developing social skills as quickly as their peers. This may include kids with ADHD, who can be too active and physical in their play. It may include kids with nonverbal learning disabilities and other disabilities, which may have trouble picking up on social cues, like body language, tone of voice and facial expressions. When searching for a social skills group for your child in your area, look for one that’s geared for your child’s specific issues and age range.
Mental Health Desk by Caroline Gendelman - "Early Social Skills: More than Child's Play"

Have you seen this child? Have you been this child? Has this been you as a grown-up? Or worse, have you ever been the one causing these feeling in another?

A child in our care needs so much. It is not just his physical self that must be sheltered and fed; a child must have his mind and soul guarded and nourished. If not, he will not grow to be a socially responsible person. A person’s social abilities can have as much to do with living a successful life as any other factor.

There are many things to do and many things to avoid to develop a child who will thrive socially. Generally, someone who is comfortable in social situations has an air of confidence. Confidence comes from within. Humans are complex beings and a fortunate few come into the world with a large serving in place. For most of us confidence is something to be awakened and is grown or reduced by experiences. Either way, helping a child to find what is special and unique about him is a gratifying journey.

This could be obvious, like a skill or interest. One of my sons, at 15 months of age, showed a focused fascination with insects. Over the years it never waned. His sisters screeched sometimes but they accepted it. His brother got him a Madagascar Hissing Cockroach, which reproduced. Other moms couldn’t understand why I let him carry bugs around and bought him books about bugs. Now at 25 he works outside and has an unusual knowledge of the insect world and appreciation of nature. How would it have affected him had he been discouraged? This young man is socially comfortable and often functions as the peacemaker in the family.

A “what not to do” may ruffle feathers but does make sense: No false or excessive compliments! This can diminish the true value of his talents or skills. People love to be genuinely complimented. Children quickly come to recognize and appreciate sincerity from you. A child receiving sincere, appropriate praise will learn to extend the same sincerity. That will open the door to understanding the feelings of others.

All of us people have a weak spot and “challenges” to overcome. Confidence from feeling the worth of their unique talents or trait will give our children fuel to move past what might be limiting. Helping a child peacefully and positively interact in this social world is a duty of those caring for him. This duty becomes a reward as he grows to be a benefit to those around him. Thankfully, it can be done without a tank of hissing cockroaches.

Please read further: http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=525
Fatherhood Corner by Derek Flake - "Strategies for Social Development"

Separation or Divorce can negatively impact children socially. How individual children process things can depend on their age and gender.

Boys oftentimes lack the skills to communicate their emotions and feelings appropriately. This can result in negative behaviors especially during teenage years.

In general, we all tend to have difficulties adjusting to change. Our personality, world views, education, and life experiences all merge to create positive bridges to cope with change in our families or they can produce challenges that impact our adjustment to change.

Children go through cycles of attachment between each parent. Whenever those cycles are disrupted by separation then children feel as though they are the reason and become uncomfortable spending time with the parent who they no longer live with most of the time.

Strategies to help your child develop emotionally and socially if they experience the hardships of separation or divorce involve:

1. Always communicate respectfully with and about your child’s mother

2. Always spend consistent and quality time with the child

3. Invest financially and be involved in your child’s academic and extra-curricular activities

4. Never use the child as a spy or messenger between you and the child’s mother
Family Engagement Corner by Tina Norris - "PEATC's 'Families Engaging Families' Monthly Networking Calls"

PEATC has created an interactive platform for parents to engage, disseminate information, and share resources.

Every month, PEATC invites families throughout Virginia join the "Families Engaging Families" Networking call.

During these calls, families will have the opportunity to learn new techniques designed to strengthen their collaborative relationships with their child's school.

**Save the date, April 28th at 12:30 pm (EST)!**

Our Military Outreach Coordinator, Lisa Wakeman, will share information on preparing for transition or PCS.

She will talk about the frequency of military moves and the effects it has on our military kiddos. She will explore ways to help your family prepare for the next move.

Resources will be shared to help your kids stay connected.

**Click here to register** [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PHXB2VK](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PHXB2VK)

~Mark your calendars! You don’t want to miss these calls~
PEATC On Demand & In the Spotlight by Kristin Kane - "Social Skills"

This month PEATC focuses on social skills and we hope you will join us live for a webinar on this very topic entitled "Promoting Pro-Social Skills in Young Children - Setting Up for Success".

There are countless ways that learning disabilities can make it difficult for children to navigate the social world successfully. Those struggles exist at home as well as at school. This 60-minute webinar will provide parents of young children with practical strategies to use at home for encouraging on-task and pro-social behavior. Parents will learn about ways to facilitate social learning and to foster their child’s independence and cooperation, reducing frustration for parents and kids.

Our presenter on April 12, 2016 at 11 am is Meredith Jaeckel, LCSW. She is an educational counselor who has worked first hand with children since 1999. Meredith graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a Bachelor’s degree in Child and Family Studies and from the University of Chicago with a Master’s degree in Social Work with a specialization in School Social Work. Meredith has presented at annual conferences of the Learning Disabilities Association of America on topics relating to behavior, classroom management, and social skills development for children with special needs.

Register here: https://cc.readytalk.com/cc/s/registrations/new?cid=6oufdswsxfc

PEATC Workshops - April 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Campaign Name</th>
<th>Campaign Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Next Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4/2/2016</td>
<td>Colours/Multicultural Day</td>
<td>PEATC exhibit table for Colours Multicultural Day - outreach event</td>
<td>Woodrow Wilson Library 6101 Knollwood Dr Falls Church, VA 22041</td>
<td>Fairfax County Park Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/5/2016</td>
<td>PEATC Dads Organized and Engaged &quot;How to Listen&quot;</td>
<td>Capital Ale House 13831 Village Place Dr, Falls Church, VA 22041 TIME: 6:30pm</td>
<td>Capital Ale House 13831 Village Place Dr Falls Church, VA 22041</td>
<td>Dads Appreciating Down Syndrome (D.A.O.D.S)</td>
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<td>4/9/2016</td>
<td>11th FCPS SPED Conference</td>
<td>11th Annual Special Education Conference for FCPS on Saturday, April 9, 2016, at Hayfield Secondary School in Alexandria, Virginia from 8 a.m. 7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>7630 Telegraph Road Alexandria, VA 22315</td>
<td>Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/9/2016</td>
<td>Appropriate Start Beginnings Mini Conference</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grace Hills Early Learning Center 4120 Pumping Station Rd Appomattox, VA 24512</td>
<td>Appropriate Start Beginnings Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/9/2016</td>
<td>Transition Planning &amp; The IEP</td>
<td>Event organizer has requested the presentation in ENGLISH but has requested a bilingual presenter to be able to answer questions by E/S. Foster parents Presenter may use our laptop, projector, screen, and speakers. Podium is available too.</td>
<td>Ravensworth Baptist Church 5100 Ravensworth Rd Annandale, VA 22003</td>
<td>First Home Care Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/11/2016</td>
<td>Bullying Prevention Workshop</td>
<td>Bullying Prevention - Parents - 6:30 pm</td>
<td>Potomac Middle School 2130 Fountain Drive Dam Neck, VA 22210</td>
<td>Prince William County Public Schools</td>
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<td>4/12/2016</td>
<td>Pre-School Behavior - Setting Up for Success</td>
<td>Presented by: Meredith Jaeckel, LCSW 11:00 am to 12:00 pm</td>
<td>Register here: <a href="https://cc.readytalk.com/cc/s/registrations/new?cid=6oufdswsxfc/PEATC">https://cc.readytalk.com/cc/s/registrations/new?cid=6oufdswsxfc/PEATC</a></td>
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<td>4/12/2016</td>
<td>Early Childhood Leadership Conference</td>
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<td>PEATC</td>
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<td>4/13/2016</td>
<td>All Hands On Deck: Collaboration &amp; The IEP</td>
<td>Open to EFSP Families Day 1 (Am 2:30pm) Day 2 (Am 2:30pm)</td>
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<td>Prince William Community College Smart Beginnings Shenandoah Valley</td>
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<td>4/15/2016</td>
<td>2016 Accessibility Summit</td>
<td>FRIDAY, APRIL 15 FROM 9:30-11:30 PM SATURDAY, APRIL 16 FROM 7:45-8:45 PM</td>
<td>McLean Bible Church 3125 Lee Highway Vienna, VA 22182</td>
<td>First and Family Norfolk</td>
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<td>4/19/2016</td>
<td>Middle School Transition</td>
<td>Presented by: Bill Gallagher, Assistant Principal of Turner HS/MS ( Loudoun County, VA) 11:00 am to 12:00 pm</td>
<td>Register here: <a href="https://cc.readytalk.com/cc/s/registrations/new?cid=6oufdswsxfc/PEATC">https://cc.readytalk.com/cc/s/registrations/new?cid=6oufdswsxfc/PEATC</a></td>
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<td>4/23/2016</td>
<td>EFSP Conference &amp; Resource Fair: Joint Board &amp; Associa-Bulling</td>
<td>9:00 AM to 3:00 PM Joint Bay Area- Associa-Bulling Joint Bay Area Associa-Bulling Club (Blip, 50), Thirteenth Street Washington, DC 20032</td>
<td>Register here: <a href="https://cc.readytalk.com/cc/s/registrations/new?cid=6oufdswsxfc/PEATC">https://cc.readytalk.com/cc/s/registrations/new?cid=6oufdswsxfc/PEATC</a></td>
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<td>4/25/2016</td>
<td>Frederick County Pre-Determined Meal-</td>
<td>9:00 am - 12:00 pm 8100 Ewing Drive Winchester, Virginia 22603</td>
<td></td>
<td>Frederick County Public Schools Department of Special Instruction Services (SCD) - Melissa Sandy sэн大理@frederick.k12.va.us</td>
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<td>4/26/2016</td>
<td>It Takes a Village Workshop</td>
<td>The training is for the families served by the Child Development Center at Naval Weapons Station Yorktown</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nova-Weapon Station Yorktown Loretta Jones, Training &amp; Curriculum Specialist, WINSTA Yorktown Child &amp; Youth Programs Yorktown, VA 757-877-4773</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/26/2016</td>
<td>Assistive Technology for Literacy</td>
<td>Presented by: Andrew Dominick, M.Ed., ATSI 9:00 am to 12:00 pm</td>
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<td>PEATC</td>
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<td>4/26/2016</td>
<td>2016 School Health Fair</td>
<td>10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>James Lee Community Center 2195 Annadel Road Falls Church, VA 22042</td>
<td>Health and Nutrition Committee, Northern Virginia Health Section, National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) Inc.</td>
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