THE T/TAC TELEGRAM

Transition Top 10: Ideas Families, Professionals and Self-Advocates Need to Know

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Life is full of transitions. Families who have children with disabilities are sometimes advised early on to take life one day at a time and not look too far into the future. Though this is a good short-term coping mechanism, the lack of long-term planning may create unneeded additional stress. How do we prepare for the unknown?

When professionals closest to the student rightfully focus attention around the immediate needs of academic achievement in keeping with school wide accountability, what role do they play in long-term planning and transitioning students?

The following is a list compiled by PEATC, along with a panel of experts, to encourage families, youth with disabilities, and professionals to begin an understanding of, and collaboration towards, successful transition for youth with disabilities.

1 Start Early

As soon as individuals are identified as having a need for service, the discussion on transition should begin! As young children, how many times were we asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" The dreaming begins early. "But wait!" you say, "My child doesn't talk, sit or move on his own…what dreams can he have?" At the moment, he may have none on his own; this is where our dreams, as families and caregivers, begin until our children can begin to dream on their own. Establishing good relationships with caring adults early on may aid in more effective transitions down the road.

To accomplish great things we must not only act but also dream, not only plan but also believe. Anatole

2 Use a Common Language

In a job interview, an employer asked a young adult about his diploma. The young adult replied, "Yes, I received a diploma." Not convinced, the employer asked to see the "diploma." Upon review, the document inside the leather diploma cover was a "certificate of completion" and not a true diploma. So what is a diploma? What is an assessment? For different agencies, these mean different things. When looking at the maze of transition possibilities, it is confusing enough without the "language barrier." Building a foundation of common language will help to ease understanding of roles, reviews and responsibilities.

Two monologues do not make a dialogue. Jeff Daly

3 Ask questions and then ask them again! (Continual Self Assessments)

While the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires a formal organized approach to transition be in place by age 16, it is important to remember there are a range of diploma options available to students in Virginia. Decisions about diplomas are usually made before a student reaches the age of 16. A discussion about where a student is headed is not a one time deal and though students may not know where they want to go in the future, the adults in their world need to help direct them to the most effective and appropriate academic outcomes possible. On an ongoing basis, students need to be supported to conduct their own reality checks about their futures. As the student is able to take the lead on this discussion…let them! These continual assessments empower the students to build self determination skills, enabling them to move forward with confidence.

Great things are only possible with outrageous requests. Thea Alexander, author

4 Be clear on Entitlement vs. Eligibility

The lines between *Entitlement and Eligibility* can be confusing. Students who are found eligible for services under IDEA are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). This is the most profound entitlement afforded to children in our nation. However, once students leave the safety net of IDEA funded services, the ability to access publicly funded **adult** services may be illusive. Though young adults may be found eligible for services under the requirements of adult serving agencies there is no entitlement provision mandating services be provided. "Eligibility" does not equate actual "availability" of service. Many services have waiting lists and limited funding streams.

5 Find out what exists and what doesn't exist

Parents need to be savvy about what help will be there when IDEA services end. When we look honestly at services to help facilitate a smooth transition into life for our youth with disabilities, there may be gaps. There is not much we can do individually to ensure community services are funded, so while a student is still in school be sure the student will be acquiring skills that carry over into adulthood.

If you don't ask, you don't get. Mahatma Gandhi

6 Is transition a time of crisis or opportunity?

Transitioning from high school is a time of great opportunity for a young person. It is a time to explore strengths and interests and begin to piece together a life that enhances personal fulfillment, while contributing to the greater good of society. Transition is a time of terrific change and unknown growth for the whole family. Fear of the unknown may make parents reluctant participants in the process, but transitioning youth with disabilities need encouragement to seek post secondary education, or apply for a job, or even dream of a future independent of their family. It can be a period where old dreams are retooled and new dreams are envisioned.

If we are not ashamed to think it, we should not be ashamed to say it. Cicero

When written in Chinese, the word "crisis" is composed of two characters -- one represents danger, and the other represents opportunity. John F. Kennedy

7 Take a look at what has worked (and what hasn't)

Met with the obstacle of providing positive experiences for their children in transition, many parents and educators have created incredible opportunities for skill acquisition and life preparation. Looking into examples of what has worked in your own child's school career and what has worked for adults with disabilities currently living in your community may be the key to opening doors for successful transitions to life. What is the recipe for success? Thomas Edison once said; "Success is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration." What makes our student tick? What successes has he or she accomplished in school and life? How can we blend those successes with practical experiences to create a foundation of knowledge and skill development to move them into adult life?

The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think -- rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with the thoughts of other men. John Dewey 1859-1952, American Philosopher, Educator

8 Redefine the concept of seamless transitions

The idea of being able to translate experience and information from one place to another without any "hitches" seems unattainable. There always seems to be a snag or force of nature that throws a wrench in the plan. But is there such a thing as seamless transitioning? Is it possible? We can stack the deck in favor of a seamless transition by ensuring that students possess self-advocacy skills, each member of the transition team understands his/her role, and that there is effective communication among the team members. Working to ensure that learning environments are based on state standards, with continual and measurable assessments, personalized instruction, and taking into account post school outcomes will promote seamless transitions.

Great thoughts reduced to action become great acts. William Hazlitt, 1778-1830, British Essayist

9 View families as assets

Families are valuable members of the team having the most foundational information about their youth with disabilities. Families motivate and encourage their youth with disabilities to become self-advocates and directors of their own futures. They tap into their own personal and professional networks, expanding the opportunities for learning and employment. Families are **THE** experts on their youth with disabilities.

The family is the nucleus of civilization. William J. Durant

10 Youth with disabilities are not the only ones who are in transition

As I stood at my oldest son's high school graduation, a film reel of flash backs ran rampant through my mind. Didn't I just enroll him in preschool? Where did the time go and who was this young man standing where my little boy should be? My role changed that day and it is an adjustment. He is taking the reigns and I am learning how to let go. As children grow, parents face changing roles and shifting resources. Recognize that transitions happen to a family and not just an individual.

Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced. James Baldwin

From Early Intervention to Preschool – Quality Transition from Part C to Part B: It is Really about Children and Families

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Transition is defined as the process of change from one form, state, style or place to another (Wiktionary, 2008). We all experience transitions throughout our lives and even throughout daily routines. Rous & Hallam (2006) describe two types of transitions; horizontal transitions involve movement or change within a common timeframe and vertical transitions involve movement or change across time. For example, Sally encounters several horizontal transitions throughout her daily routines. She leaves home in the morning and spends most of her day at Head Start. At the end of her school day, she spends time with her Gramma until her mom finishes the day at work, and then, Sally returns home. Tommy and his family are preparing for a vertical transition as they will soon leave the early intervention program. Tommy will enter the preschool special education program on the first day of school in the fall.

With both types of transitions, as with any change, families and young children may experience uncertainty, anxiety, or fear. The question remains. How can all Part C staff (service coordinators, local system managers, therapists, etc.) and all Part B staff (teachers, child find specialists, administrators, etc.) collaborate to support families in ensuring "a smooth transition for children receiving early intervention services under this part to preschool"(IDEA 2004, Sec. 303.148)?

In order to begin this process, research has shown that transition must occur in a communitywide system to ensure successful implementation. (Rous & Hallam, 2006; Edelman, 2005; Hale, Brown, & Amwake, 2004). Rous and Hallam (2006) identify four elements that must be in place for successful transition to occur:

① **There must be a consistent transition vision.**
This vision must be developed with input from all stakeholders and must be able to drive decisions related to transition practices and activities.

② **The transition process must integrate with current systems and structures.**
All transition activities must be considered within the context of other support programs and services. It is not a "stand alone program."

③ **Keep it simple.**
More complex processes are often difficult to implement and maintain.

④ **Know that resolving old barriers may create new challenges.**
Any system change may have a "ripple effect." Be prepared to make changes in agency policies, procedures and processes, new forms, staff training, etc.

As early intervention staff, early childhood special education staff, and family members begin the process of developing a sense of community, Rous and Hallam (2006) identify four additional elements that must be considered:

① **Stakeholder involvement is critical.**
If the transition plan for each locality and each child is going to be successful, stakeholders must be fully informed and active.

② **Interagency collaboration is essential.**
Stakeholders will determine key issues and barriers. Also, they will develop activity plans and strategies.

③ **Time and Commitment are important.**
All involved must commit to some level of the transition plan.

④ **Variety of Approaches should be considered.**
The team agrees there is no one right way, and all discussions will be considered.

In 2005, Edelman wrote an article on supporting successful transition and posed the question, "Do We Have the Commitment?" If the stakeholder community begins to form, and members are committed, what would this look like? How do activities differ for interagency transition activities versus transition for individual families? A few activities are listed below.

Interagency Transition Activities

- Form a Transition Team that includes personnel from the early intervention program, Early Childhood Special Education program, and family members. Be sure to include administrators.

- Discuss what is currently going well. What would you like to see happening differently? Would a survey be beneficial?

- Develop a written plan of goals, methods to work together, update interagency agreement, etc.

- Schedule a set meeting time-monthly, every six weeks etc.

(Hale, Brown, & Amwake , 2004)

Individual Transition Activities

- Start early and help families prepare for all meetings.

- Encourage families to develop a packet or portfolio about their child. Include a photo, things the child likes and dislikes, the child's favorite activities, toys, and foods. Include concerns. Be sure that each member of the receiving team sees the packet/portfolio.

- Visit a preschool classroom.

- Allow the child to visit a preschool classroom, visit the playground, and visit the library. If there are concerns about confidentiality, ask the school administrator if family members might visit immediately after the school day ends.
(Kaleidoscope, 2007; Hale, Brown, & Amwake, 2004)

These are just a few of the activities recommended to assist with a smooth transition between programs. The transition topic webpages of the National Early Childhood Transition Center at *www.ihdi.uky.edu/nectc/* and the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) at *www.nectac.org* offer additional resources. Beth Rous of NECTC has just recently published Recommended Practices for Young Children. This report describes the top practices and gives examples of how they can be used across programs. It can be downloaded from *www.ihdi.uky.edu/nectc/Documents/technicalreport/Validation_Survey_Final.pdf*.

Although the federal legislation mandates that transition begin from the time a child enters early intervention services, there is a tendency to focus on a particular meeting, such as the transition planning conference or Child Study. This practice minimizes the actual process of transition which allows for planning, sharing of information, collaborating with all stakeholders, and making important decisions (Edelman, 2005). If the community supports are in place through a shared vision via the transition team, individual transitions for children and families truly will be smooth and seamless.

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COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING FRAMEWORK ENHANCES SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

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Successful transition planning and positive student outcomes have remained an on-going challenge for professionals involved in the education of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Not only do students with ASD often display more rigidity in their behavior making transition and change difficult, consistent implementation of evidence-based practices (EBP) yields conflicting results. What is characteristic of one student with ASD does not necessarily apply to another, and similarly, an EBP that has significant positive outcomes for one student may result in little to no progress for another. It is for this reason that autism has been labeled a spectrum disorder. While there are common identifying characteristics across the spectrum, there is tremendous variability and difference in how autism is displayed from one individual to another (Richard, 2007). Only recently have researchers and practitioners focused on developing comprehensive programming models, a means to match appropriate EBP interventions with an individual's particular display of autism.

One example of a comprehensive framework is the Ziggurat Model developed by Ruth Aspy, Ph.D. and Barry Grossman, Ph.D. (Aspy & Grossman, 2007). This comprehensive planning model is designed to identify, and then address, the underlying characteristics of autism displayed by a particular individual. The model begins with the completion of an assessment, the Underlying Characteristics Checklist (UCC). The UCC provides a snapshot of the autism within a particular individual. There are two forms of this assessment: the UCC-HF for individuals with Asperger Syndrome and High-Functioning Autism, and the UCC-CL for individuals with a more classic presentation of autism. Both UCC assessments address research validated characteristics of ASD including: social, restricted behaviors/interests, communication, sensory differences, cognitive differences, motor differences, emotional vulnerability, and medical and/or other biological factors. In addition to the completion of the UCC, the model also includes completion of the Individual Student Strengths Inventory (ISSI). The combination of UCC and ISSI provide the transition and/or educational planning team with a comprehensive view of both the student's unique display of autism and his/her individual strengths.

This information then serves as a catalyst to comprehensive intervention and planning, which is the hallmark of the Ziggurat Model. The Intervention Ziggurat contains five intervention levels derived from research on ASD (Aspy & Grossman, 2007). Starting with the foundation level, sensory differences and biological needs, each level represents an underlying characteristics area that must be addressed in order for a comprehensive intervention plan to be generated. The table that follows briefly outlines each of the Ziggurat levels. A particular strength of the model is the interaction of the five levels. Interventions are not planned or delivered in isolation, but instead, each level contributes to the effectiveness of the others.

The positive implication for use of this framework in transition planning is the final component, the Ziggurat Intervention Worksheet (Aspy & Grossman, 2007). The Worksheet, listing specific interventions to address specific characteristics, can serve as a vital guidance document to navigate the transition process, and as a means to monitor progress and achieve increased student outcomes across all settings, individuals and tasks.

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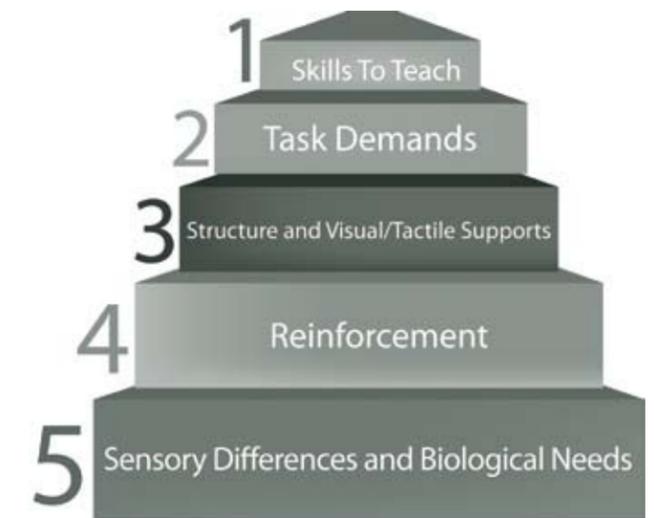
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The Ziggurat Model

COMPONENTS OF THE INTERVENTION ZIGGURAT

Component	Brief Overview
Sensory Differences and Biological Needs	The impact of each of the seven sensory systems on the individual with ASD is considered in this section of the Ziggurat. In addition, biological considerations, such as medication, allergies, and sleep needs, are factored into this model.
Reinforcement	Reinforcement, an essential component of student learning, is integrated into the Ziggurat framework. Student preferences, including special interests, support the acquisition and maintenance of skills.
Structure and Visual/ Tactile Support	These supports are integral to creating a learning environment that is predictable and rich in language. This Ziggurat level includes addresses classroom layout, home base, visual schedules, choice boards, boundary markers, communication systems, learning style, modes of expressing and receiving language and academic/ pre-academic modifications.
Task Demands	An often overlooked instructional component, task demand interventions are designed to ensure that students are not required to participate in activities or to complete assignments that exceed their abilities. A reduction of demands and the addition of supports are required to facilitate success.
Skills to Teach	This area includes the skills, tasks, and/or behaviors within which the student requires direct instruction in order to experience success.

Aspy & Grossman (October 2007)

Family Focus

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> ### Welcome to this new section of the T/TAC Telegram.
>
> Articles, resources, and information that are family-related will be included in this section. If you have any questions, please contact Nancy Anderson (*nanders7@gmu.edu*) or Bonne Bell Carter (*bcarter6@gmu.edu*).

Resources and Information

The Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) is the parent information and training center serving families and professionals of children with disabilities in the Commonwealth of Virginia. PEATC promotes respectful, collaborative partnerships between parents, schools, professionals, and the community that increase the possibilities of success for children with disabilities.

Contact Info: 100 N Washington St. Suite 234 | Falls Church, VA 22046-4523

703-923-0010 (Voice/TTY) | Toll Free at 1-800-869-6782 and Fax Toll-Free at 1-800-693-3514

Webinars

Webinars are an informative way of understanding how to navigate the transition process. Parents, students with disabilities, and professionals are encouraged to view these webinars. If you are interested in CEU/CRC credits or Parent Certificates, please contact Catherine Burzio at burzio@peatc.org or call her at 703-923-0010.

To view the webinars coming up, or how to sign up for a webinar, please visit: *http://www.worksupport.com/training/archivedWebcasts.cfm*

New! Available Online:

2008 Parents' Guide to Special Education
Dispute Resolution
Virginia Department of Education, Division of Special Education and Student Services, Office of Dispute Resolution and Administrative Services - *http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/dueproc/parents_dispute_resolution_guide.pdf*

For questions, or for more information on this document, please contact: *The Office of Dispute Resolution and Administrative Services*
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/dueproc/
804-225-2013

Parent Materials from OSEP

The U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)has produced a webpage specifically for parents: Tool Kit on Teaching and Assessing Students with Disabilities: Parent Materials. It is a collection of resources that supplements the original release of the Tool Kit, but these documents were written especially for parents. The materials are designed to help parents become informed participants in the decision making processes and meetings that support students with disabilities.

This new Tool Kit can be found on the OSEP Ideas that Work page located at: *http://www.osepideasthatwork.org/*

SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY UPDATES

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President Signs Legislation Leaving Education Funding at 2008 Level

CEC Policy Insider (October 3, 2008)
http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&CONTENTID=10873&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) has expressed disappointment that President Bush recently signed legislation passed by Congress to delay funding of most federal programs until March 2009. For more information, visit: *CEC Policy Insider (October 3, 2008)*
http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&CONTENTID=10873&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm

Both candidates for president, Senator John McCain and Senator Barack Obama, have indicated that they will fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). To learn more about each candidate's educational positions, visit CEC's Resources for the 2008 Election at *http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=10831* .

President Bush recently signed into law legislation passed by Congress to postpone addressing funding for most federal programs until March 2009, a full five months into the new federal fiscal year, leaving programs to remain level funded at fiscal year 2008 levels. Therefore, funding considerations for programs such as special and gifted education - even to account for inflation and program growth - will not be addressed until Congress revisits the issue in 2009.

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is disappointed that Congress did not abide by the appropriations process which would have addressed funding for education by the end of the federal fiscal year, September 30th, rather than asking children, families and schools to wait until March 2009. CEC and its members will continue to work with Congress to stress the critical need to increase funding for special and gifted education programs. Please look in future editions of the Policy Insider for ways in which you can participate in the process.

As the nation prepares for a new president, the Republican nominee - Sen. John McCain (via the Republican Platform) and the Democratic nominee - Sen. Barack Obama, have pledged to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for school aged children. To read more about the presidential candidates' position on education, visit CEC's Resources for the 2008 Election at *http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=10831*

Virginia Special Education Regulations

The Virginia Proposed Special Education Regulations have been approved, but they will not become effective until after the completion of the process required by Virginia's Administrative Process Act.

The final regulations were approved on September 25, 2008 with one change of the age of eligibility for Developmental Delay to be ages 2-6, rather than ages 2-5. The final regulations are posted on The Virginia Regulations Revision web site at *http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/dueproc/regulationsCWD.html*. The regulations will soon be forwarded for Executive Branch review. There is no timeline for that portion of the review process; however, it is hoped that it could be completed by January 2009.

VA Special Ed Regulations
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/dueproc/final_sped_regs.pdf

Timeline
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/dueproc/RevisionTimeline.pdf

President Bush Signs the ADA Amendments Act of 2008

This new law, which was passed overwhelmingly by the Senate and the House, expands civil rights to Americans with disabilities in the workplace and overturns several Supreme Court decisions that have reduced protections for certain people who were originally intended to be covered by the ADA. The new law will be effective January 1, 2009.

For more information visit: *http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/09/images/20080925-1_p092508jb-0238-515h.html*

Major Step Forward in Improving College Opportunities for Students with Disabilities

Press release from the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD): (Silver Spring, MD; August 18, 2008)

President Bush signed into law the *Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008*. The law is the first reauthorization of the nation's primary higher education laws in a decade. The Association of University Centers on Disability is reporting that, while the bi-partisan legislation will improve access and affordability of higher education for all Americans, a major step forward is taken in improving postsecondary opportunities and supports for students with disabilities.

The Higher Education Opportunity Act will address multiple barriers students with disabilities face in accessing and completing higher education. The legislation builds upon previous demonstration projects to provide assistance to faculty, staff, and administrators in educating students with disabilities. The creation of an advisory commission and new programs will help improve access to printed college course materials for students with disabilities. Moreover, the establishment of a new technical assistance center within the Department of Education will take existing knowledge and what is learned from new demonstration projects to a national scale. As a result of this legislation, institutions across the country will be better able to provide high quality disability support services to current and prospective students with disabilities.

Read the rest of the AUCD press release here
http://tinyurl.com/6o7lwk

"I'm Outta' Here"-Transitioning Successfully From Elementary to Middle School

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What is it like to feel both excited and worried at the same time? Ask any student about to transition to middle school. While there is a certain amount of excitement for students entering middle school, it can be a time of fear and uncertainty as well. Researchers note that the simultaneous emotions of excitement, apprehension, curiosity, and concern accompany this important milestone. To complicate matters, the transition to middle school occurs when students are experiencing other rapid changes including physical, emotional, cognitive, and social development (Carter, Clark, Cushing, & Kennedy, 2005; Akos, 2002; Mullins & Irvin, 2000).

As a result, students and parents have many questions about the move to middle school:

Students often ask:
- Will I get to class on time?
- How will I find my locker?
- Where is the bathroom and cafeteria?
- What if I get on the wrong bus to go home?
- How will I remember which class to go to next and how will I find it?
- Who will help me keep up with my stuff?
- What about my friends? Will the other kids like me? (Schumacher, 1998)

Parents frequently share these concerns about their children:
- How will they deal with social pressure?
- Will they be able to keep up academically?
- Will they make friends?
- How will they feel about going to middle school each day?

In addition to these concerns by students and parents, there are other institutional changes that must be faced. Typically, the elementary school is a smaller, close-knit community; whereas, the middle school setting is much larger and less personal (Irvin, 1997). Also, the elementary school students spend much of their instructional day with one or two educators and a familiar group of peers. In contrast, middle school students rotate classes with different teachers and classmates. Likewise, the rules, routines, and academic expectations vary. In addition,

instructional demands increase in middle school. The course content expands which means a faster pace in the classroom and increased homework. Moreover, individual expectations change. Teachers expect students to assume more responsibility for both their academic and behavioral performance (Carter, Clark, Cushing, & Kennedy, 2005).

It is easy to see why middle school can be an exciting, yet scary, place, especially for students with disabilities.

How then can special educators help in the transition process for middle school students?

Students with disabilities are at risk for experiencing difficulties transitioning to middle school (Weldy, 1995). Addressing the transition to middle school must be deliberate and comprehensive (Repetto & Correa, 1996), and plans to support students with disabilities and their parents in this process must be thoughtfully designed (National Middle School Association and National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2002).

1. Planning early by collaborating across schools helps to ensure a smooth transition. Middle school teachers and administrators can meet with elementary school teachers, administrators, students, and parents to share information about new environments and experiences that students will encounter when entering middle school. Having middle school students participate in these meetings can be very helpful.

2. Peer support programs can support the social and academic needs of students with disabilities (Kennedy, 2004). These programs allow current middle schoolers to share their own personal experiences with future students and to function as mentors to their schoolmates.

3. The organizational and logistical issues associated with a new school present the most anxiety for many students. Tasks such as learning to open a locker, finding classrooms, locating restrooms, and keeping track of assignments and books can be a challenge for

4. students. Allowing rising students to spend time in their new middle school, sitting in on a class, meeting students and adults, touring the school, eating in the cafeteria, and learning how to open a locker may help ease the uncertainty of the entire middle school transition process. Teaching students to to use self-management strategies (e.g., manage time with a picture calendar, monitor academic progress using checklists, practice advocating for accommodations, etc.) will foster needed independence (Carter, Clark, Cushing, & Kennedy, 2005).

5. Establish multiple school-family communication methods. Offer orientation and open house activities to provide information and demonstrations of the curricular and extracurricular opportunities in middle school. Examples include festivals, a joint spaghetti dinner, a basketball game, a school tour, etc. These activities can close with a question-and-answer session. Start sending the school newsletter to the incoming families. Encourage families to talk with their children about what to expect when they begin middle school (Carter, Clark, Cushing, & Kennedy, 2005) and to determine resources to help solve any problems or to answer new questions. Develop and distribute parent and student handbooks that help orient families to the middle school, including transition activities and school contacts.

6. Involve future middle school students in planning for their transitions. They can help determine the supports and instructional strategies have been the most effective and identify their instructional needs that will need to be addressed in middle school (Carter, Clark, Cushing, & Kennedy, 2005).

7. Elementary school and middle school staff can develop a plan to help students transition smoothly:

   • Survey parents and students regarding their areas of greatest concern and solicit recommendations for addressing these concerns.

   • Ask teachers to brainstorm practical steps that they might take to be responsive to students' transition needs.

   • Become familiar with effective transition practices for middle school students.

   • Outline a series of steps that school staff could take to support effective transitions for students.

• Organize the steps into a timeline so that it will be easier for teachers, parents, and other members of the students' planning team to follow (Carter, Clark, Cushing, & Kennedy, 2005).

Good transition planning, across school environments, will help ensure that students meet success as they enter middle school and as they continue their future school experiences. Also, it will help students overcome their fears and help make middle school a fun, exciting place to be. By talking about these events ahead of time, designing meaningful accommodations, and role-playing their use, educators may help ease these areas of worry for students. Finally, encouraging families to be a part of the transition process can help lessen fears of their young students.

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RESILIENCE: SOME CONSIDERATIONS FOR DROPOUT PREVENTION

Nikki Miller, Ed.D., VDOE T/TAC at George Mason University

The transition of adolescents into healthy, functioning men and women cannot be taken for granted. Parents and professionals who work with young teens have hopes for positive outcomes for them but life's circumstances and personal risk factors often converge and contribute to significant periods of dysfunction and adversity for many. Each year more than half a million young people drop out of high school (National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, 2008). Students at risk for dropping out often face challenges or adversity and may have significant personal, family, and social barriers that interfere with their ability to "do school". Some fall into dangerous activities involving drugs or alcohol, display rage, violence, and self-destructive behaviors, and/or become socially isolated or demonstrate serious psychiatric illness (Hauser, Allen & Golden, 2006).

What allows some wounded teens to transform these negative past experiences and become reasonably well-functioning adults while others remain locked in a downward spiral? Hauser, Allen, and Golden (2006) in their book, "Out of the Woods: Tales of Resilient Teens," provide some important clues from their twelve year longitudinal research study of troubled teens and the recovery of nine out of sixty-seven, all of whom presented such out of control behavior that they were considered a danger to themselves or others and subsequently confined to locked wards of a large psychiatric hospital in the Northeast .

Resilience refers to a positive adaptation or functioning in the context of risk or adversity. A person can show resilience in some times in their lives and not in others. Studies in resilience have associated a small set of conditions that are associated with recovery from adversity (Hauser, Allen & Golden, 2006):
1. Connections to competent and caring adults in family and community
2. Cognitive and self-regulation skills
3. Positive views of self
4. Motivation to be effective in the environment

The researchers examined personal written narratives and interviews of all the young teens during treatment and in a follow-up study as young adults in their twenties to identify any factors or themes that could account for the resilience and recovery from severe psychiatric illness demonstrated by the nine. In these narratives, teens were asked to tell their stories about their lives, their current situations, their relationships, how they handled stress, conflicts, powerful feelings about adversity they had faced, and their hopes for the future. Researchers were interested in how the stories reflected change in the way they talked about their ideas, their relationships, and their insights about themselves. In the early stories, all the teens talked about loneliness, inferiority, despair, helplessness, rage, and some had memories of abuse.

As young adults, the nine recovered teens, the resilient group: talked openly and liked their lives, were engaged in work and training, had developed some lasting relationships, and some were even parenting with pleasure. Also, they were interested in their own and others' psychological experiences and were optimistic about their future. By contrast, the others in the comparison group: were still preoccupied with the past, protesting the unfairness of their confinement, guarded and mistrustful, dissatisfied with their present, and apathetic about the future. They continued to describe feelings of isolation; barren, mean or dangerous relationships; losing jobs; some drug use; and prison.

Three themes emerged from the narratives as enablers of change for the resilient teens but were absent in the narratives of the others (Hauser, Allen & Golden, 2006):

Relatedness
   • Engagement and interaction with others was highly valued
   • Ability to use supportive connections with adults and others

Agency
   • Belief that one can influence his/her environment,
   • Gathering ideas and trying them despite objections and obstacles from significant others
   • Engaging in dynamic, purposeful actions
   • Learning from mistakes

Reflectiveness
   • Curiosity about one's thoughts, feelings, and motivations and willingness to try to make sense of them and handle them
   • Capacity to reflect but not necessarily with adult judgment

These themes seemed to be indicators of the developing process of resilience even though they were embedded in excesses of out-of-control or inappropriate behavior during the early teens. Resilience can coexist with bad behavior. These recurrent themes in the narratives documented changes in the stories over time, new constructive perspectives after failures, ability to develop new ideas, and insights of themselves. The themes of the comparison group, remained frozen, evolved less, and did not reflect self-reflection of themselves or their relationships. Viewpoints remained the same.

How does this relate to student dropouts? Hauser, Allen & Golden (2006) suggest that their troubled teens had learned to count on the anonymity in large public schools to slip through the cracks to avoid people, rules, and homework. Schools and parents usually respond with containment, restrictions and seclusion to control the extremes of these students. These decisions do not promote engagement with school and others. The Institution of Education Sciences (IES) report on dropout prevention (2008) recommends on-going relationships with adult mentors along with academic support to improve student classroom behavior and social skills. It suggests that schools need to focus on improving school engagement by discussing problem solving strategies, personal challenges, and how to avoid risky behavior.

In addition, teachers and mentors might consider the use of narratives and discussions to explore the themes of resilience examined by the Hauser group (2006). Narratives are the stories that teens are telling themselves at a particular moment in time about what matters to them, the truth as they see it. One excellent curriculum resource for teachers who wish to include some of these ideas and strategies in their curriculum is Harvey & Chickie-Wolfe's "Fostering Independent Learning" (2007). Trying to explain him or herself, to practice self-reflection and to try to make sense of their feelings, may provide opportunities for students to develop hopes for the future and begin the process of engagement and change.

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Effective Schoolwide Discipline Makes a Hero of Every Student

IN spring 2005, the Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) Office of Special Education Instructional Services introduced Effective Schoolwide Discipline (ESD), a statewide initiative to support positive academic and behavioral outcomes for all students. Virginia's ESD Project provides a data-driven, multi-tiered framework based on accumulated research on positive behavioral interventions. To date, 103 Virginia schools are actively learning to implement the results-oriented ESD framework. Prince William County Public Schools' positive discipline efforts have produced substantial results using the multi-tiered framework of the ESD initiative.

The following are a few examples, compiled by Carolyn Lamm, M.A., Administrative Coordinator, Positive Behavior Support, Prince William County Public Schools and Kay Klein, M.Ed., Assistant Director, VDOE T/TAC at George Mason University.

- **Bull Run Middle School** began participation in ESD in school year (SY) 2005–06 by analyzing their data and setting a priority goal to reduce bus violations. By instituting a variety of creative strategies, they reduced bus discipline referrals by 35 percent during that first year. Principal **Bill Bixby**, **Jodi Puhlick**, sixth-grade social studies teacher, and **Heather Wiskeman**, eighth-grade special education teacher, presented at the National Middle School Association Annual conference held during November 2007 in Houston, TX. Never content, and hoping to reduce referrals by an additional 10 percent, more strategies were implemented and the school saw a decrease of 133 total bus referrals in the 2007–08 school year, a 66.5 percent reduction, far exceeding their original goal.

- **King Elementary School** just completed their first year using ESD Tier One universal strategies. Principal **Laura Pumphrey** reports a 68 percent reduction in discipline referrals.

- **Penn Elementary School** Principal **Jane Wheeless** reports that "analyzing data has become the way we do business at Penn." Data indicated that infractions were highest in the spring, so Penn's ESD Team launched a 2008 Spring Zero Hero Program recognizing positive behavior. Data now shows a 54 percent reduction in office referrals from March thru May of 2008 when compared to these same months last year. Penn's tiered interventions include Early Alert sessions to develop supports tailored for students at risk.

- **Graham Park Middle School** saw a 20 percent decrease, nearly 500 less incidents, from the previous year when they began implementing ESD's Tier One strategies in SY 2005–06. By implementing additional layers of strategies based on a tiered system, Graham Park finished 2007–08, its third year in ESD, with an ever-growing percentage of the student body gaining "Zero Hero" status by completing the year with zero referrals. Principal **Gary Anderson** and Assistant Principal **Judy Mears** have presented inservices outlining their strategies for other schools, at ESD events, and at VDOE.

- **Saunders Middle School** continues to reduce referrals each year, after achieving a 35 percent reduction in discipline referrals in the first year of implementing UPLIFT, a Tier Two Behavior Education Program coordinated by Assistant Principal **Malcolm Foust**. A video made by students has helped to promote positive behavior in the hallways.

For information about Effective Schoolwide Discipline, contact your regional T/TAC. In VDOE Region 4, contact Kay Klein at *mklei1@gmu.edu*. In VDOE Region 5, contact Teresa Cogar at *cogartl@jmu.edu* .

Self-Determination for Students with Disabilities

Diane Loomis, Ph.D., VDOE, T/TAC at George Mason University

Success after high school can be elusive for students with disabilities. One of the reasons may be that they are less prepared than non-disabled students throughout their school careers to take charge of their own futures. Martin et al. (Wehmeyer, 2001) ask, "If students floated in life jackets for 12 years, would they be expected to swim if the jackets were suddenly jerked away? Probably not. The situation is similar for students receiving special education services. All too often these students are not taught how to self-manage their own lives before they are thrust into the cold water of post-school reality."

Martin and Marshall (as cited in althealth.com) describe self-determined people as individuals who "know how to choose—they know what they want and how to get it. From an awareness of personal needs, self-determined individuals choose goals, then doggedly pursue them (p. 147)." Additionally, Field et al. (as cited in althealth.com) define self-determination as "a combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal-directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior. When acting on the basis of these skills and attitudes, individuals have a greater ability to take control of their lives and assume the role of successful adults in our society (p. 2)."

Federal special education language and regulations explicitly support self-determination. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 2004 requires that secondary-aged transition students be invited to meetings to write their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). IEP goals must be based on *student* strengths, needs, interests, and preferences. The implication is that students must have a lead role in determining their own adult lives.

It seems intuitively correct that a person would be more focused and would work harder to achieve goals that they, themselves, have set. By analogy, adults might consider how they would like it if others put them in a job chosen by others, or decided how they would spend their leisure time. It is easy to conclude that most adults would suffer lack of motivation under these conditions.

In addition to making common sense, the value of self-determination is borne out by research. Wehmeyer and Schwartz (as cited in Wehmeyer, 2001) measured the self-determination of youth with cognitive disabilities (mild mental retardation or learning disability) and then contacted them and their families one year after the

students left high school. They were asked about their status in several areas, including living arrangements, employment, post-secondary education status, and community integration outcomes. Controlled for level of intelligence and type of disability, the data showed consistently that self-determined youth were doing better than their peers one year after school. In a second study, Wehmeyer and Schwartz (as cited in Wehmeyer, 2001) examined the relationship between self-determination and quality of life of 50 adults with mental retardation living in group homes. Again, a person's level of self-determination was a strong predictor of that person's quality of life.

So, how can educators support self-determination for disabled students?

Schools can encourage students at the secondary level to take an active role in their transition planning. Schools can listen when students convey their own dreams for the future. They can help students explore expressed preferences for certain career path during their middle and secondary school years. Students can actively participate in choosing functional or career assessments to help guide them.

Students can build their own school schedules, in consultation with adults. They can share responsibility for setting IEP goals, make plans to accomplish those goals, and evaluate progress toward meeting the goals. Students can not only show up for IEP meetings; they can take an active part in leading the meetings, talking about their own interests and skills and reporting on progress in meeting the previous year's goals. Students can take a hand in assembling their own Summary of Performance as graduation nears. The Summary of Performance is a final document that includes information about the student's academic and functional performance and offers suggestions to support realization of post-secondary goals. The student takes a copy upon leaving high school.

Self-determination is not just for students about to graduate from secondary school programs. Self-determination skills start developing in the early years. For example, elementary classrooms teachers can encourage greater student choice. They can introduce children's literature that builds positive images and increases awareness about disability. High school

students can mentor students with disabilities at the elementary school level. Middle schools can emphasize the relationship between goals and daily decisions and choices (althealth.com).

Virginia educators are making a difference in the lives of students by helping them gain self-determination skills. The Virginia Department of Education supports a project for school sites that actively support self-determination for their students. Located at Radford University, the project maintains a website at *www.imdetermined. org*. Contact VDOE or your regional T/TAC for further information about how to become more involved. In VDOE Region 4, contact Diane Loomis at *dloomis@gmu. edu* . In VDOE Region 5, contact John McNaught at *mcnaugjt@jmu.edu* .

References and Resources

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Secondary Transition Outcomes: What are the State Indicators?

Diane Loomis, Ph.D., VDOE T/TAC at George Mason University

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004 requires states to report on the performance of students with disabilities. The Commonwealth of Virginia also sets its own targets for performance and reports on these through the state's special education State Performance Plan (SPP). Of particular interest to transition are SPP Indicators #1, #2, #13 and #14. They are often referred to as the Secondary Indicators. These Indicators relate to the quality of transition planning for students with disabilities and the outcomes of their transition from high school.

Indicator #1 is the "percent of youth with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) graduating from high school with a regular diploma." Indicator #2 is the "percent of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school." Indicator #13 represents the "percent of youth aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet the postsecondary goals." Indicator #14 shows the "percent of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school, and who have been competitively employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary school, or both within one year of leaving high school."

The U.S. Department of Education gave Virginia high marks for implementing Part B of the IDEA. Virginia received the "Meets Requirements" rating for FY 2006, the federal government's highest rating for general implementation of Part B of the IDEA. However, Virginia continues to strive to meet its own standards for transition planning and other areas. FY 2006-07 state indicator data showed that 70% of IEPs of students with disabilities met expectations for transition planning. Marianne Moore, Instructional Specialist for Middle/Secondary Transition for the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), says that "solid, comprehensive planning that includes student and parent(s) or guardian(s) should result in positive outcomes for your youth. Indicator #13 gives some Local Education Agencies (LEAs) some very specific things to include and consider when writing the transition IEP. Indicator #14, a performance indicator, helps LEAs to make the connection between good planning, the right coursework, appropriate services, and positive outcomes."

For Indicator #13, VDOE recommends that IEPs reflect best practices in transition planning. IEPs showing best transition planning include appropriate, measurable goals for employment, education or training, and where appropriate, independent living. Best transition plans will clearly reflect the student's own decisions and input. Age-appropriate transition assessments help students form their post-secondary goals. Good transition plans have annual goals to help the student move toward realization of post secondary goals. Quality transition IEPs include a coordinated set of transition services. These transition services focus on improving both academic and functional achievement. Among transition services are plans for courses of study in school that support the student's movement toward achievement of their postsecondary goals. To the extent appropriate and with appropriate consent, LEAs also invite to the IEP meeting representatives of participating agencies that are likely to provide transition services.

Data from Indicator #14 is a gauge of how students with disabilities have successfully navigated life one year after high school. To gather Indicator 14 data, school districts contact students with disabilities who graduated the previous year and ask them a series of questions. Of her experience contacting former students for Indicator #14 information, Karen Sherman, M.S., M.Ed., Transition Services Coordinator from Arlington County Public Schools, says,

> "I worked on Indicator 14, and it was nice to hear that so many students were successful. It was also beneficial for some of the students who needed a little more support. After contacting them, I was able to give them assistance on college planning and employment. In addition, it was a pleasure touching base with parents who had positive thoughts because of their students' successful transition. Of course, there were a few students who didn't want to answer any questions, but the majority were happy to share their successes."

References and Resources

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VIRGINIA COLLEGE QUEST

A Guide to College Success for Students with disAbilities

Virginia College Quest, www.VACollegeQuest.org, is a web site that offers middle and high school students, their families, and school personnel a wealth of information on planning for the college experience, particularly as it pertains to students with disabilities. Similar in focus to Future Quest, a college fair designed for students with disabilities and held every other year on the campus of George Mason University, Virginia College Quest is an online resource that offers individuals specific guidance on issues involved in transitioning to the higher education environment.

Specifically, Virginia College Quest includes:

✓ News on events and opportunities around Virginia

✓ NEW! Webinars on current issues such as one on self-advocacy in college by Dr. Henry Reiff, a professor at McDaniel College in Maryland and a leading expert on students with learning disabilities.

✓ NEW! Podcasts on topics such as planning for a successful college experience.

✓ Personal stories of struggle and success from students with disabilities

✓ Information on IEP and Transition Planning

✓ Information on a student's legal rights and eligibility requirements in college

✓ Checklists to help determine college services

✓ Skills inventory and self-assessment tools to determine a student's readiness for moving to college

✓ Timeline for planning the move to college

✓ Listing of Disability Support Services personnel at colleges and universities throughout Virginia

✓ Information for parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and post secondary faculty and support staff

✓ Resources to help students locate additional information

✓ Free email newsletter to keep a student up to date

VACollegeQuest.org is a collaborative effort of the Virginia Department of Education Training and Technical Assistance Center at GMU and The Advocacy Institute.

Conferences & Trainings:

November

13th-14th TechKnowledgy 2008: Topics in Assistive Technology (Richmond)
TechKnowledgy 2008 will feature national speakers, practitioner workshops, vendor workshops, interactive sessions, software exploration, and many opportunities to discover innovative applications of assistive technology teams, and instructional technologies.

This Conference is designed for general and special educators, related service personnel, assistive technology teams, instructional technology specialists, administrators, family members, and others interested in helping students with disabilities achieve success.

This conference is sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education's Training and Technical Assistance Centers and the Hospital Education Program at Children's Hospital, Richmond.
Location: Greater Richmond Convention Center (Richmond, VA)
Contact Name: Sarah Wright
Contact Phone: 434.292.3723
Contact Email: sswright@vcu.edu
Web: www.vcu.edu/ttac/professional_development/techknowledgy/2008.shtml

13th-14th Functional Analysis & Treatment of Severe Behavior Disorders
Functional Analysis & Treatment of Severe Behavior Disorders: Methods for Clinicians and Educators is a two-day workshop for individuals involved in the education, training, and treatment of persons with mental retardation, autism, and other developmental disabilities. Presented by Dr. Brian Iwata who is the field's foremost researcher on functional analysis methodology. In this workshop, he will provide a comprehensive review of all the currently used techniques and will illustrate the assessment-treatment continuum with extensive use of handouts and case examples. The emphasis will be on translating research findings into practical application. Workshop takes place at the Crowne Plaza, Downtown Richmond, VA.
Contact Name: Dr. Walt Antonow
Contact Phone: 662.234.1640
Web: www.bisoxford.com/brian_res3.html

15th Pathways to the Future
How Comfortable Is Your Couch? What's the Reality of Transition? A free informational conference addressing the issues of moving from school to adult life presented by the The Fredericksburg Area Transition Coalition. To learn more, contact: Peggy Dougherty, 540-582-3616, Voice & TTY or pdougher@scs.k12.va.us
Contact Name: Peggy Dougherty
Contact Phone: 540.582.3616
Contact Email: pdougher@scs.k12.va.us

14th-15th Fall Symposium: Getting Started with Differentiation
Fall Symposium (held at University of VA in Charlottesville) is a two-day workshop that provides participants with the underlying philosophy of differentiation and practical strategies for implementing differentiation in classrooms, schools, and districts. Dr. Carol Ann Tomlinson, of the University of Virginia, leads the list of prominent researchers, administrators, and teachers in the field of differentiation. Educators who want foundational information and practical help with the first steps and stages of differentiation, or those who wish to help colleagues with the first steps and stages, will find Fall Symposium an invaluable resource.
Contact Name: Institutes of Academic Diversity
Contact Phone: 434.924.6137
Web: curry.edschool.virginia.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1610&Itemid=3

14th FBA Part 1 - Region 4
Part 1 of 3 Parts November 14, December 12, 2008 and January 28, 2009 (Snow Date: February 3, 2009) GMU Verizon Auditorium Manassas, VA. To register access the calendar at http://www.ttac.odu.edu/esd
Web: www.ttac.odu.edu/esd

17th-19th Autism Workshop: Shaping the Future
This workshop entitled, "Shaping the Future: An Introduction to the Principles and Applications of Applied Behavior Analysis," is presented by the Virginia Institute of Autism, Charlottesville, VA. The three-day workshop is designed for professionals and parents working with students with autism. Topics covered include an introduction to reinforcement, behavior shaping, prompting methods, teaching strategies, and data collection. The workshop also includes extensive opportunities for direct observation and discussion.
Contact Phone: 434.923.8252
Web: www.viaschool.org/workshops.htm

December

3rd-5th 2008 Workshop on Blindness and Visual Impairment
This event will take place at the Holiday Inn Select Koger South Conference Center, Richmond VA. Who should attend: Parents; Teachers of the Visually Impaired; Orientation & Mobility Specialists; Early Intervention Service Providers; Public School Administrators, Medical Personnel and any others interested in the education of infants, children and youth who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind.
Contact Name: Glen Slonneger
Contact Phone: 804.371.3113
Contact Email: Glen.Slonneger@DBVI.virginia.gov
Web: www.vdbvi.org/downloads/2008WorkshopBlindnessVI.doc

3rd-5th Educating and Engaging the Whole Child for 21st Century Learning
The Virginia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (VASCD) 2008 Annual Conference will take place in Williamsburg, VA. December 3 Preconference provides leadership strategies for all educators which includes: staff development design, aligning technology to core curriculum, building professional and global communities, and engaging students in web based ethics.
Contact Phone: 540.832.7666
Contact Email: vascd1@verizon.net
Web: www.vaascd.org

11th-13th College 4 U
College 4 U is a free college preview event for college-bound students with disabilities, parents, and professionals. You can learn about: Preparing for college, Student experiences and Perspectives, Technology, Supports, and Resources at various Virginia colleges, and the Accommodations process.
Contact Name: Katherine Wittig
Contact Phone: 804.827.1403
Contact Email: kmwittig@vcu.edu
Web: www.vacollegequest.org

8th-10th 2008 OSEP National Early Childhood Conference The 2008 Office of Special Education Program's (OSEP) National Early Childhood Conference will be held at the Renaissance Washington Hotel, Washington, DC. On Saturday, December 6, there will be two pre-conference workshops: Analyzing and Using Early Childhood Outcomes Data; Using Valid and Reliable Data to Identify and Correct Non-Compliance. There will be an afternoon meeting to provide Orientation for New Part C Coordinators. Additional pre-conference meetings will occur on Sunday, December 7, for State ICC chairs, parents and staff; Section 619 Coordinators, and Part C Coordinators, and staff. On Wednesday afternoon, December 10, there will be two post-conference workshops: Early Childhood Transition and Identifying Permanent Hearing Loss in Children served by Part C and Section 619 Programs. Also, there will be a technical assistance meeting for Pacific Basin Early Childhood Representatives. The 2008 OSEP Conference is intended for a variety of audiences involved in planning and delivering services to young children with special needs (birth through age 8) and their families.
Contact Name: Randy Bickford
Contact Phone: 919.962.2001
Contact Email: randy_bickford@unc.edu
Web: www.nectac.org/~meetings/national2008/mtghomepage.asp

12th FBA Part 2 - Region 4
Part 2 of 3 Parts December 12, 2008 and January 28, 2009 (Snow Date: February 3, 2009) GMU Verizon Auditorium Manassas, VA. To register access the calendar at http://www.ttac.odu.edu/esd.
Web: www.ttac.odu.edu/esd

January CONTINUED

26th-3/29/09 Online K-3 Teacher Reading Academy
Reading First in Virginia ONLINE Academy See website for more information.
Contact Name: Susan Thacker-Gwaltney
Contact Phone: 877.827.3237
Contact Email: sft2s@cms.mail.virginia.edu
Web: www.readingfirst.virginia.edu

28th FBA Part 3 - Region 4
Part 3 of 3 Parts January 28, 2009 (Snow Date: February 3, 2009) GMU Verizon Auditorium Manassas, VA. To register access the calendar at http://www.ttac.odu.edu/esd.
Web: www.ttac.odu.edu/esd

Phonological Awareness and Literacy Work Stations Workshop
Reading First in Virginia Workshop in Richmond. LIMITED TO THOSE WHO HAVE A CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE FROM A VIRGINIA READING FIRST TEACHER READING ACADEMY
Contact Name: Susan Thacker-Gwaltney
Contact Phone: 877.827.3237
Contact Email: sft2s@cms.mail.virginia.edu
Web: www.readingfirst.virginia.edu

February

7th Comprehension Institute:Teaching Content with Multiple Levels of Text
Reading First in Virginia professional development in Newport News NO ATTENDANCE PREREQUISITE TO ENROLL IN INSTITUTES.
Contact Name: Susan Thacker-Gwaltney
Contact Phone: 877.827.3237
Contact Email: sft2s@cms.mail.virginia.edu
Web: www.readingfirst.virginia.edu

22nd-24th Virginia Society for Technology in Education (VSTE)
VSTE's 23rd Annual State Technology Conference (February 22-24, 2009) & the 1st Annual Educational Technology Leadership Institute (February 22, 2009), will be held in Virginia Beach. The conference theme this year is "i on the Future." *** Submit your presentation proposal on a topic related to assistive technology-- presentation proposals are due by October 1, 2008!!
Contact Name: Fran Smith
Contact Phone: 804.827.1406
Contact Email: fgsmith@vcu.edu
Web: www.vste.org/vste/presenters/

26th-28th Virginia SHAV Conference - Speech-Language and Hearing Conference
The annual state SLP conference with speakers in areas of interest to speech-language patholgists will be held at the Holiday Inn Kroger Center in Richmond, VA.
Contact Name: Robert Cravens
Contact Phone: 888.729.7428
Contact Email: shavoffice@shav.org
Web: www.shav.org

March

11th-13th Autism: Making a Difference Together (8th Annual Autism Conference)
Keynote Presentations: Tony Gentry, Ph.D. "PDA's to Improve Daily Quality of Life for Individuals on the Autism Spectrum, Kristi Sakai "Creating a Supportive Home and Community for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Their Families" and a Panel of Individuals with Autism "In Their Own Words." This conference will be held at the Crown Plaza Richmond West.
Contact Name: Commonwealth Autism Service
Contact Phone: 1.800.649.8481
Web: www.autismva.org/cas_annual_conference.php

16th-18th Virginia Transition Forum 2009
The Virginia Transition Forum 2009's theme is Transition: We're All In It Together! The 2009 Forum will be held at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott. Hotel reservations will be accepted after August 15, 2008. Keep checking the website for information.
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Improving the lives and productivity of persons with disabilities

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