

SPECIAL NEEDS

LETS NETWORK

October 1, 2006

OCTOBER UPDATE

A Word from the Office of Special Services

With the federal government's reauthorization of IDEA the State of New Jersey also needed to adopt new code. I am pleased to report the State Board of Education in August 2006 passed new regulations for all school districts in New Jersey. State Department of Education staff will be presenting the new regulations to all Directors' of Student Services during the month of October. In the interest of continuity of program, the Department of Education will initiate many of the changes during the 07-08 school year.

In the coming months I hope to utilize this venue to highlight for you the significant changes to NJAC 6A:14 Special Education in order to keep you informed of your rights and responsibilities.

– Marie Luciano, Director of Special Services

In-House

Volunteers Needed

Both the PTO's Special Needs Committee and DREAMS for Special Education, Community Outreach Group, are looking for volunteers to assist with grant writing. If you would like to volunteer your time or know of any appropriate resources, please email PTO@dunellenschools.org or mmccabe@sns.com.

Volunteer Forms Past Due

Just a reminder, if you plan to volunteer for in-school events, programs or assistance please submit your

volunteer form immediately as they were due on September 29th.

Buddy Ball Soccer

Metuchen is getting ready to start another season of Buddy Ball Soccer and welcomes Dunellen's special needs children between the ages of 5 and 19 to join their program.

The next practice/game will be on Sunday, October 1st at 5:00 p.m. at the Level Playing Field complex at Roosevelt Park, located directly behind The Menlo Park Mall, only a 15 minute drive. Registration will continue throughout the season, so your child is welcome to join at any time. The soccer season runs through mid-November with games every Sunday at 5:00 p.m.

If you know of a child who might be interested in playing Buddy Ball or Volunteering to be a Buddy (min age 13) please don't hesitate to spread the word. Anyone who has questions can call Bob or Chris Donahue, Program Founders, at 732-494-7103 or you can just come to the park during any practice/game. We look forward to a great season and hope you can be a part of the fun.

October Awareness

National Physical Therapy Month
National Down Syndrome Awareness Month
October 1 – 7 is Hearing Aid Awareness Week
October 2 is National Child Health Day
October 5 is National Depression Screening Day
October 22 is International Stuttering Awareness Day

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Halloween Festival

West Brook Farms is having its annual Halloween festival for children with special needs on Saturday, October 14th from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Activities include pumpkin picking and painting, pony rides, petting zoo, amusement rides, fishing, games and a witch den. For more information contact the farm directly at 973-428-1098. West Brook Farms is located at 805 S. Beverwyck Road; Parsippany, NJ 07054.

Walk for Autism Research

NAAR and Autism Speaks are walking together to raise money for autism research. This event is the nation's largest Walk program dedicated to autism research. These events are put together by parents and families like us, raising money through walk-a-thons across the country. Eighty-three cents of every dollar donated goes directly to autism research.

Autism is a devastating neuro-developmental disorder affecting 1 in every 166 children and the numbers are rising. Autism occurs across all socioeconomic levels and affects not only the families of children with autism but their communities, schools, governments and society as a whole. They don't know what causes autism, how to treat it, and there are no diagnostic tests for it.

Lets take action and help raise money to fund autism research and promote autism awareness. The North/Central Jersey 2 mile walk is Sunday, October 15, 2006, 1pm check in and 2 pm start time, at Nomahegan Park, Cranford, NJ. For more information on the walk, to register on your own or to start your own team, please visit: www.autismwalk.org.

If you would like to be a sponsor, but don't want to make your donation on line, you can write a check payable to Autism Speaks and send it to: Autism

Speaks; 2 Park Avenue; 11th Floor; New York, NY 10016.

Study Buddies

Does your child have to memorize facts for a test? Does she study and study and still not retain a word? Or does he refuse to study because it's too hard, too useless, too frustrating? Maybe your child needs a study buddy. Try one of these techniques to help take those all-too-slippery facts and figures and keep them firmly in mind.

Flash Cards: Never underestimate the power of flash cards. They put facts at your fingertips in a compact format you can take anywhere and use anytime. Having your child write history or science vocabulary words on one side of an index card and the definition on the other gives some nice reinforcement right there. He or she can study the cards while watching TV, listening to music, waiting to be picked up or dropped off, and then you can be the quizmaster to check for maximum memorization. For hard concepts like math facts, set aside five or ten minutes after dinner each evening, set a timer, and do as many flash cards as possible during that time. At first, it will be slow-going, but as your child gets more familiar with the facts you can all be proud of how quickly the answers come.

Tape Recorder: Children who have problems reading may benefit from having stories read aloud to them. And children with auditory processing difficulties may benefit from having the story read to them again and again. How to make that happen on a cramped family schedule? Tape it! Read once, replay often. If it fits your timetable best to read in advance, ask your child's teacher what stories or chapters will be studied, have your child bring the textbook home, and create your own books-on-tape operation. Listening to the tape before sleep or while waking up in the morning may be particularly good strategies for reading retention. And don't reserve this only for language arts offerings. Science and social studies chapters may also be good read-aloud material.

Mnemonics: King Philip Climbs Over Five Giant Stones. That's how I learned the biological classifications of Kingdom Phylum Class Order Family Genus Species. Maybe you remember

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learning the color spectrum with Roy G. Biv, or the Great Lakes as HOMES. Mnemonic devices trick the brain into learning something important by distracting it with frivolity. Use your imagination to develop acrostics, rhymes, puns or punch lines that will plant those facts deep.

Songs: There's a reason you remember the lyrics of tunes you heard in high school better than anything you learned in class. Music acts as an adhesive to stick words in your memory. See if you can set something your child needs to learn to a familiar melody, or at least impose some sort of rhythm on it. If it's got a beat and you can dance to it, it'll be easier to remember.

Graphic Organizers: Pinning facts and concepts down on paper in a format that brings out their relationships and logic is a wonderful technique for kids who need to see it to believe it. Graphic organizers give you and your child both good ideas for categorizing, comparing, contrasting, ordering and linking information that has to be remembered. You can whip one up with just a bunch of circles on a piece of paper; you can go high-tech with a software program or you can print pages from websites that offer a variety of free graphic organizers.

Fun and Games

PPractice Agility With the Dot Drill . . . The Dot Drill is a game a friend shared with me and has become a favorite with my family. He is a football coach who uses the game to develop the agility of his players (and his son at home). Participants challenge each other to match step routines. Here's how to play: Set up the game using painters' tape to mark 4 dots on the floor in the shape of a square, about 2 feet across. Make a fifth dot in the center of the square. To start, have one person complete a 3-step routine, landing on any of the 5 dots with either foot (or with both feet, on separate dots). The next player must match the routine exactly. If he mis-steps, he earns a letter (d, o, or t) and his opponent creates another routine. But if he completes the original steps correctly, he gets to create a new routine that's one step longer than before. When a player spells *dot*, he's out. The winner is the last player in the game.

Quote of the Month

In place of the quote of the month is a short story that hits home . . .

WELCOME TO HOLLAND

Written by Emily Perl Kingsley

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability – to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this...

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip – to Italy. You buy a bunch of guidebooks and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum, the Michelangelo David, the gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland?!" you say. "What do you mean, Holland?" I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy.

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to some horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go out and buy a new guidebook. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around, and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills,

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Holland has tulips, Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy, and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life you will say, "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

The pain of that will never, ever, go away, because the loss of that dream is a very significant loss.

But if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things about Holland.

- Provided by Adrienne Fowler

Workshops & Events (November)

VSA/NJ presents "PARENT/CHILD WORKSHOPS IN MUSIC/MOVEMENT AND ART FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM". **Weekly** sessions are offered for children with autism and their families. Classes provide experiences in music, dance and art for young people, fostering the development and retention of an array of cognitive, communication, and social skills. For more information visit: www.vsanj.org

JCC, Edison sponsors "The Legal Implications of Bullying", featuring Jerry Tannenbaum, Esq. Presented by Aspen. **November 1** from 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. For more information call (732) 321-0880.

Family Support Center of NJ presents "2006 National Caregivers Conference" **November 2 & 3** at the Sheraton at Woodbridge. For more information visit www.nationalcaregiversconference.org or call (800) 372-6510.

Chinese Autism Resource Center presents "Fall Special Education Workshop", 2:00 p.m. **November 5** at 71 Cedar Grove Lane, Somerset, NJ 08873. Speaker: Renay Zamloot, Education Advocate. For more information call (732) 868-6736.

The Elizabeth Boggs Center at UMDNJ presents

"Preparing Youth with Disabilities to Successfully Transition to Postsecondary Education and Employment" **November 14** from 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. For more information contact Wendy Kuziemski 732-235-9325 or wendy.kuziemski@umdnj.edu

NJ State Library for the blind and handicapped presents "American Sign Language Children's Story Hour". **November 14** at 10 a.m., at NJLBH in Trenton. For more information visit www.njlbh.org

SPAN presents "Supporting & Strengthening Families Through Early Care & Education", Teacher/caregiver partnerships; engaging families in parenting education; including parents in classrooms; role of educators in prevention of abuse and neglect. **November 18** from 8:00 am – 12:00 noon at Montclair Community Pre-K, 49 Orange Road, Montclair. \$75 fee. For more information call 973-509-4500.

SPAN sponsors "Transition", **November 29** from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Presented by Approxia Network of Bergen County at Temple Sholom 385 Howland Avenue, River Edge, NJ. For more call (201) 741-4035 or visit www.spannj.org

SPAN presents "Positive Behavior Supports", **November 30** from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. at Somerset County Library, 1 Vogt Drive, Bridgewater, NJ. For more call Kristen Lakatos at (908) 725-2366 or visit www.spannj.org

Resource of the Month

Council for Exceptional Children's purpose is to improve educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities. The group is a non-profit membership organization for professionals and students that focuses on 17 different areas of Special Education. Learning disabilities, mental retardation, early childhood education, and communication disorders are just a few of the areas of focus. They offer several booklets on behavioral management in the classroom, including "Disruptive Behavior: Three Techniques to Use in Your Classroom" and "Non-Compliance: Four Strategies That Work". For more information visit: www.cec.sped.org

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Subscription Corner

Exceptional Parent, a glossy monthly magazine, is for parents of children and young adults with any disability. It offers articles on a wide range of issues of interest to parents, including education, laws and benefits, daily care, family life, resources, technology, and medical concerns. In a monthly column called "Search and Respond," readers can ask for help from other readers – whether it be information about their child's rare or undiagnosed condition, tips on coping with daily care or behavioral problems, or requests for networking. For more information or to order your subscription visit: www.eparent.com or call (877) 372-7368.

Note: This subscription is available at the Dunellen Library.

Book of the Month



Steps to Independence

Teaching Everyday Skills to Children with Special Needs

By: Bruce L. Baker & Alan J. Brightman

True to its title, this indispensable and practical guide explains, step-by-step, how to help children with disabilities master everyday skills. The authors explain strategies to use in teaching skills to children in general, and also discuss teaching specific skills, including toilet training, dressing, household chores, play skills, and more. A helpful section on managing behavior problems at home is included, as well as using technology to enhance children's learning.

Let's Get Cooking

Pancakes 101 (GF/CF) . . . These delicious pancakes can also be modified to make excellent crepes. To make crepes, decrease the flour to 1 cup.

Ingredients:

2	Eggs
¾ Cup	Dry milk substitute (DaruFree is recommended)
1 Tbl	Oil
¼ tsp	Salt
½ Cup	Arrowroot powder
¼ Cup	Sugar
1½ Cups	GF Flour (buckwheat is particularly good)
1 tsp	GF Baking powder

Blend all ingredients except baking powder. Add baking powder and stir just a few seconds to incorporate it into the batter.

Spoon on to a hot, oiled griddle and cook until bubbles form. Flip and cook on second side and serve with syrup or fruit.

- *Recipe compliments of Special Diets for Special Kids by Lisa Lewis, Ph.D.*

Just for Kids

Living with a Brother or Sister with Special Needs: A Book for Sibs, written by Donald Meyer and Patricia Vadasy, addresses the many questions and concerns that brothers and sisters of individuals with disabilities have any may never have expressed. It validates their feelings of jealousy, resentment, embarrassment, loneliness, and concern for the family and suggests positive strategies for coping with emotions. The book also provides information on the causes and effects of the most common disabilities and on laws, programs and services that can benefit people with disabilities and their families. This book wisely, realistically, and with great compassion reaches out to parents and children as it

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guides and supports all members of the family. Numerous illustrations and anecdotes about real families make this very kid-friendly book for children from about grade 3 on.

Save the Date

Mark your calendar with upcoming events. . .

- **Dunellen Parent Support Group** Media Center, Faber School, 7:00 - 9:00 pm. **October 5 & December 7.**
- **COSAC Support Group Middlesex County** Raritan Valley Academy, Piscataway, 7:00 - 9:00 pm. **Call for next meeting date.** Facilitator: Melissa DeWees, Psy.D. Parent Contact: Steve Sobel (732) 390-1796
- **COSAC Support Group Union County** Children's Specialized Hospital, Mountainside, 7:30 - 9:30pm. **Call for next meeting date.** Facilitator: Nancy Arvizzigno, MA, LPC. Parent Contact: Deb Ritter (908) 233-8510 (1-5pm only)
- **Education Development Center** sponsors "6th Annual National Inclusive Schools Week", **December 4 through 8**, Charting an Inclusive Journey through School, Work, and Life: Successful Transition Planning for All Students. For more information visit www.inclusiveschools.org.
- **SPAN** presents "Developing an IEP", **December 5** from 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. at Center Grove Elementary School, School Library, 25 Schoolhouse Road, Randolph, NJ. For more call Lucy Ortiz at (973) 442-2959 or visit www.spannj.org
- **NJ State Library for the blind and handicapped** presents "American Sign Language Children's Story Hour". **December 12** at 10 a.m., at NJLBH in Trenton. For more information visit www.njlhb.org
- **JCC, Edison & Aspen** sponsors "Parent Support/Information Sharing", facilitated by Dr. Thomas Boyle, clinical psychologist. **December 13** from 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. For more call (732) 321-0880
- **JCC, Edison & Aspen** sponsors

"Psychopharmacology: Understanding Medications", presented by psychiatrist Dr. Sherie Novotny, **January 3**. For more information visit www.aspennj.org or call (732) 321-0880

- **NJ State Library for the blind and handicapped** presents "American Sign Language Children's Story Hour". **January 16** at 10:30 a.m., at NJLBH in Trenton. For more information visit www.njlhb.org
- **Bancroft Neurohealth** presents "Workshop: Supporting Siblings of children with Developmental Disabilities". **January 31** from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the Bancroft School in Haddonfield, NJ. For more information visit: www.bancroftneurohealth.org
- **JCC, Edison & Aspen** sponsors "Parent Support/Information Sharing", facilitated by Dr. Thomas Boyle, clinical psychologist. **February 7** from 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. For more information call (732) 321-0880
- **NJ State Library for the blind and handicapped** presents "American Sign Language Children's Story Hour". **February 13** at 10:30 a.m., at NJLBH in Trenton. For more information visit www.njlhb.org

Next Issue

Voice Your Opinions! I'd love to hear from you with suggestions and ideas for November's issue. Let me know what topics you would like to read about. Advise of any events you have on your calendar. Share resources, stories, book reviews and research updates. If you would like to write your own articles, I'd be happy to include them in upcoming issues. Please note, all articles are subject to approval. Feedback on this month's issue is also appreciated. All submissions should be emailed to mmccabe@snc.com.