



Network News

Your Arizona Parent School Connection

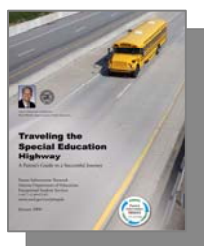


Spring 2008

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Hot Off the Press!

by Barb Ross



The Parent Information Network is delighted to announce the return of the very popular *Traveling the Special Education Highway—A Parent's Guide to a Successful Journey*. The Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004 (IDEA '04) requires schools to provide parents of a child with a disability a copy of the Procedural Safeguards Notice (PSN) to

learn about parental rights and special education procedures. *Traveling the Special Education Highway* is a guide and is not intended to replace the PSN. This guide provides valuable information to compliment the PSN to help parents fully understand their rights. The guide has been updated to include practical tips on Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings, following the chain of command and how to document your journey. For a copy of *Traveling the Special Education Highway*, contact the Parent Information Network by calling our new toll-free number 1-877-230-PINS (7467) or the PIN Specialist in your region listed on the back of the newsletter.

Scholarships and Financial Aid

by Teri Rademacher

Are you the proud parents of a Junior or Senior in High School? Is your head spinning with the mere thought of how much it costs for a college education? Is your son or daughter planning to attend a technical or vocational institute? Well take a deep breath and relax because assistance is just a mouse click away. Many scholarships are available specifically for students with disabilities. Log on and check these out . . .

The Organization for Autism Research is now accepting applications for the 2008 Schwallie Family Scholarship Competition. Applicants are limited to individuals with autism or Asperger Syndrome. They are awarding three scholarships for \$3000 in these categories: four-year undergraduate college or university, two-year undergraduate college, and trade, technical or vocational school. Check it out at www.researchautism.org/news/otherevents/scholarship.asp.



Collegescholarships.org provides students with a listing of scholarships that are available to individuals with specific disabilities. Their website also provides various "guides" for students to follow while developing all of the required documentation that generally accompanies scholarship applications. For example, they have a guide designed to assist applicants with the writing of the essay, which is often a required component of scholarship applications. You will find their website at www.collegescholarships.org/disabilities.htm.

Financial Aid and Scholarships for Students with Disabilities markets itself as "The Smart Student Guide to Financial Aid." Their website contains links to several clearinghouses and directories specifically targeting students with disabilities. This website also contains information about student loans and a six-page document about college funding strategies. Check them out at www.finaid.org/otheraid/disabled.phtml.



Colleges and universities typically have their own websites containing various resources for students with disabilities. Be sure to check with the school that your child is interested in attending to see what resources they have to offer. Temple University has a webpage that contains information about the services available to students with disabilities as well as link to scholarships and other types of financial aid. Their website is www.temple.edu/disability/scholarships.html.

Inquiring minds want to know, have you responded to the Arizona . . .

Parent Satisfaction Survey



Fostering family involvement in Special Education!

This is your opportunity, as a parent of a child with a disability, to respond to a 25-question survey regarding your district's efforts to foster parent participation. To find out more call the toll-free PIN hotline at 877-230-PINS (7467), or visit the survey website:

www.ade.az.gov/ess/parentsurvey

Extended School Year (ESY) Services

by Teri Rademacher



One of the many decisions that Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams make on an annual basis is whether or not a student qualifies for Extended School Year (ESY) services.

ESY refers to those special education and/or related services that are provided beyond the typical school year for the purpose of providing a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for a student with a disability, the focus being on the word “appropriate.” The word appropriate refers to whether the educational program is sufficient to provide meaningful educational benefit. This benefit is measured by the student’s progress towards meeting his/her goals.

The determination of whether or not a student qualifies for ESY services should not be limited to one criterion or factor. Typically, teams will begin their consideration by reviewing data collected over previous breaks in the school calendar to ascertain if a student has exhibited regression or loss of a previously learned skill(s). This regression by itself is not enough to qualify a student for ESY services. The regression must be significant enough to interfere with ongoing progress. For example, if a student returns after a school break and has difficulty performing the morning routine, which he/she had previously been able to do with minimal assistance (an IEP goal); this is identified as regression. However, it is not considered “significant” if after two or three weeks the student is once again able to perform or “recoup” those skills.

School personnel should be collecting data on regression-recoupment. IEP Teams review this data when considering ESY services. If the data is not presented during the consideration process, parents can ask to examine it.

Regression-recoupment is not the only factor that should be considered when determining eligibility for ESY services. IEP Teams should also look at “predictive data.” This can include past history, the type and severity of the disability, availability of alternate resources, and expert opinion. Reports from teachers, parents, caregivers, and related service personnel often provide valuable information that should be considered.

Depending on when the IEP Team meets to conduct the annual review of a child’s IEP, they may, or may not, be able to make a decision regarding ESY. If insufficient data is available to make that determination, IEP Teams should have the option to reconvene at a later date to consider ESY services. The date, on which the IEP Team will reconvene, should be noted in the IEP and needs to be no later than 45 days before the last day of school. Abiding by this timeline ensures that parents can exercise their due process rights should they disagree with the Team’s decision. A Prior Written Notice (PWN) should be provided to the parent(s) if it is determined by the IEP Team that the student does not qualify for ESY services.

Once it is agreed that a student is eligible for ESY services, the IEP Team must then identify which goals will be addressed and the type(s), amount(s), and duration of the special education and/or related services that will be provided. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) should be considered and the personnel responsible for the provision of services need to be identified. The parents should also be provided with a PWN as required by state and federal regulations.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 states that a child with a disability must receive FAPE no later than his/her third birthday. Children transitioning from early intervention services, who will be turning three during the summer break, need to have it noted in their IEP that ESY services were considered and whether or not services will be provided. If it is determined that ESY services are not necessary, then the start date for the provision of special education and related services noted on the IEP should be the start date of next school year.

Extended School Year services can be delivered in a variety of environments and structures. No matter the type or method of delivery of service(s), they will be provided at no cost to the parent(s). Services can take on many forms such as in the home with the parent teaching and staff providing consultative supports, school based, school based with community activities, and/or related services alone or along with other identified services. Students do not qualify for ESY services simply because they received services the previous year. Again, consideration must take place on an annual basis.

Parental input is a vital component when considering eligibility for ESY services. By answering the following questions, parents will provide the Team with important information that will assist them in determining eligibility.

- 1) How well did your child maintain skills over the summer break?
- 2) Did your child have a structured program last summer? Was it continuous? How many hours a day?
- 3) What skills has your child learned this year that you consider critical?

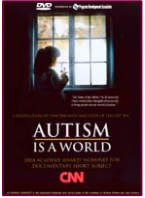
*Excerpted from “A Parent Guide to Understanding ESY Service’s”
by Elena M. Gallegoes, Esq.*

In an effort to provide parents with a brief overview of the process and components of ESY determination, the Parent Information Network (PIN) has developed a document titled *The Basics of Extended School Year Services (SE07)*. If you are looking for a more comprehensive document, you can review the Arizona Department of Education’s *AZ-TAS Guidelines for Extended School Year Service* found online at www.ade.state.az.us/ess/publications/ESYAzTAS.pdf. Whenever you have questions about your rights; you should review your *Procedural Safeguards Notice (GR10)* and/ or the new *Traveling the Special Education Highway (GR09)*. For more information or to receive a copy of SE07, GR10, or GR09, you can contact your PIN Specialist listed on page 4 of this newsletter or download them from our website at www.azed.gov/ess/pinspals.

What's New to Watch?

by Allison Meritt

The Parent Information Network (PIN) is pleased to announce the addition of five new videos to the Free Media Lending Library. Videos and/or DVDs can be checked out for up to two weeks and then returned in the postage paid mailer.



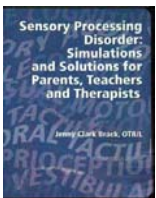
Autism Is A World gives a brief look into the life of a 24-year-old woman (Sue Rubin) who has been diagnosed with Autism. In Sue's own words, she takes us on her journey from a child who is thought to have mental retardation to a history major in college. Sue also speaks of the differences facilitated communication and good support staff have made in her life. This 40-minute video is appropriate for family members, school staff, service providers, and students.

Living the Autism Maze is a discussion with parents and families about their experiences in unfamiliar territory. Parents talk about trying to navigate through diagnoses, treatment, service programs, and school systems, to achieve the best outcomes for their children. It is a frank discussion of their joys, heartache, struggles, and successes. This 40-minute video is appropriate for family members.



Asperger Syndrome: Success in the Mainstream Classroom gives proven techniques to help make mainstreaming a child with Asperger Syndrome a positive learning experience for students, teachers, and classmates. This 44-minute video is appropriate for both school staff and family members.

Life Goes On: Inside the Lives of Families of Youths with Brain Injuries is about life after a traumatic brain injury, the focus on the healing process of families and how they accept the new challenges and move ahead. This 29-minute video is recommended for family members.



Sensory Processing Disorder: Simulation and Solutions for Parents, Teachers, and Therapists. This disability awareness video introduces basic sensory information with simulations and simple solutions. The simulations in this video will give viewers an understanding of what it is like to have a sensory processing disorder, increasing their disability awareness and sensitivity. This 25-minute video is appropriate for school staff, service providers, students, and family members.

To check out one of these videos or for a complete listing of all the videos available from the PIN, please contact your regional PIN Specialist listed on page 4 or visit us on the web at www.azed.gov/ess/pinpals.

One step behind everyone

by Ben Shill



It all started when I was a kid I went to school and got held back that was whack
People back then did not treat you right
Cause it was always a fight to be normal
But for me I never new how to be that way
You could tell me to curse and that would be

the verse

My brother would beat me up until I went to the nurse
I was not suppose to say those words at all
Things were so hard to comprehend it was like they end
Somebody would tell a joke it was funny
Then it got worse cause I laughed minutes later
I guess that is why I was a skater or a breaker no time to be a laker
Nothing was more fun then being myself
That really helped me to be able to have some friends
In my mind I wanted to fit in some how or some way.
There was always this path of resistance through out my life.
And sometimes you had trials that were like stock piles
Day in day out we ran lots of miles in cross county meets
Although my feet are flat it was all what I made of it
I tried to jump the fence and my hands started to hurt
That's not to say we had fun that day
My memories will always be a part of me

All I know is dreams come true whether you are
One step behind everyone one step behind everyone

Only the page has turned it just keeps going on and on
How do we now something if we keep living in the shadows?
There the things we hide behind to get away
How much does it take to excavate the weight of your sole?
Will the tole be too much to handle?
It's the progression through they unlearning
God gave me this unbreakable emotion from the very start
Never in my life did I want to give up
If we use what we were born with as a crutch
We will never be the hero in ourselves no mater what
Why do we cling to they edge only to let go?
All I know is that I must live to be they example to my people

(Ben Shill is a young adult who writes extensively about his experiences as an individual with Asperger Syndrome. Ben works for Rise, Inc. in Mesa, Arizona providing support for an agency that offers services to individuals with disabilities so they can reach their full potential—physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. We thank Ben for granting permission to the Network News to publish "One step behind everyone", which reflects on his experiences in school. This poem was typed exactly as written.)

Enhancing Arizona's Parent Networks

Remember to check Enhancing Arizona's Parent Networks (EAPN) website for disability related information, links, trainings, and events at www.azeapn.org.





NEWS FLASH...USDOE Says NO to Calculators!

The long awaited decision by the United States Department of Education (USDOE) regarding the use of calculators while taking Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) test has finally arrived. Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Horne, released a memorandum addressed to superintendents, charter holders, and charter operators on February 21, 2008 announcing the USDOE's decision.

Upon completing their review of the Arizona Department of Education's comprehensive, data supported appeal to change the use of calculators by students receiving special education services to a standard accommodation, they have decided to deny the State's request. Consequently, the use of a calculator will not be allowed as an accommodation on AIMS test of mathematics. In the memorandum, Mr. Horne reiterated his continued commitment to advocating for an assessment and accountability system that is fair to the students and schools in Arizona.

For more information regarding AIMS including the testing schedule and standard accommodations listing, visit the website at www.ade.state.az.us/AIMS/default.asp or call the AIMS Hotline at 866-688-AIMS.

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For more information contact the PIN/Child Find Coordinator: Becky Raabe, (928) 679-8106, or Becky.Raabe@azed.gov.

The contents of this publication were compiled by Barb Ross and Teri Rademacher with funds allocated by the U.S. Department of Education under IDEA 2004. The contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the agency nor should endorsement by the Federal government be assumed. The Arizona Department of Education of the State of Arizona does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs, activities or in its hiring and employment practices. If you have questions or grievances related to this policy, please contact the Administrative Services DAS at 602-542-3186. This document is in the public domain and may be freely reproduced in its current format. For more information, call the Parent Information Network at 928-679-8102 or 1-877-230-PINS.

Arizona Department of Education

Exceptional Student Services

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