



NewsLine

The Federation for Children with Special Needs

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The Switch to FAPE— One Year Later

by Robert K. Crabtree
Kotin, Crabtree & Strong, LLP

Robert K. Crabtree is a founding partner of the Boston law firm of Kotin, Crabtree & Strong, LLP, a general practice firm. Among other areas, Mr. Crabtree concentrates in special education law with his partners, Lawrence Kotin, Richard Howard, and Eileen Hagerty. All frequently lecture and write on issues in education law.

On January 1, 2002, Massachusetts changed the standard governing IEPs from “maximum possible development” to “free appropriate public education” (“FAPE”)—the standard under IDEA. How has FAPE been interpreted and what difference, if any, has the change made to students in Massachusetts?

A very thoughtful BSEA (Bureau of Special Education Appeals) decision, issued in July 2002, has helped clarify how FAPE will be understood and applied by the BSEA. In *Re: Arlington Public Schools*, 8 MSER 187 (2002). In *Arlington P. S.* the hearing officer examined the new standard and, in so doing, provided a concise primer on special education law.

According to this decision, FAPE “requires the opportunity for meaningful educational benefit or meaningful educational progress” leading to “demonstrable improvement” in the “various educational and personal skills identified as special needs.” *Arlington P. S.* Progress “should not be evaluated in a vacuum, but rather in the context of the potential of the par-

ticular student to benefit from the educational services.” The hearing officer notes that “the identified purpose of the special education regulations is ‘to ensure that eligible Massachusetts students receive special education services designed to develop the student’s individual educational potential.’” He also notes that “progress may be determined through measurable goals in an IEP.”

Further elaborating, the hearing officer reminds the reader that FAPE requires a school district to provide “an educational program that is designed to meet the student’s *unique* individual needs . . . and that addresses *all of a child’s special education and related services needs*, whether they be academic, physical, emotional or social.”

Finally, he states that FAPE requires that services be provided, to the maximum extent possible, with non-disabled peers, and that a student with an IEP participate as fully as possible in the general education curriculum. Thus, he says, FAPE requires that “the educational standards applicable to students with special needs in Massachusetts include the

Annual Conference a Great Success!



Stephanie Lee, Director of the Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education spoke about the No Child Left Behind Act and Reauthorization of IDEA to over 700 participants at the Federation’s March 1 Conference.

learning standards established through the state curriculum frameworks.”

In *Arlington P.S.* the parent contested an IEP placing her child mostly in a substantially separate classroom. Despite the student’s learning disability, the parent believed that she could succeed in the mainstream with supports. The BSEA found for the district, saying: “On balance . . . the benefits of a more restrictive environment (with the specialized, self contained language arts and math) . . . far outweigh the benefits of a fully-mainstreamed curriculum [for this student].”

Whatever readers may feel about the outcome for this student, the discussion in this decision

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Bulletin

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IDEA & the No Child Left Behind Act

IDEA, or the Individual with Disabilities Education Act, is up for reauthorization (renewal) this year. This Federal legislation, first enacted in 1975, ensures the rights of children with disabilities to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment. As part of reauthorizing IDEA, the President wants to change IDEA so that it is consistent with his No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). He is also recommending that Congress approve significant changes to IDEA.

There are advantages to bringing IDEA and NCLB into alignment. For example, children with disabilities would be considered general education students first and there would be a single accountability system for all children. However, the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF), an alliance of adults with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities, has raised concerns that current

proposals to amend IDEA may weaken or compromise the civil rights of students with disabilities. These concerns include proposed changes in the following areas:

DISCIPLINE: DREDF is concerned that proposed changes to the language in IDEA governing school discipline for students with disabilities will damage procedural safeguards now provided by IDEA. Currently, students' behavioral issues are to be addressed as educational issues when the student's behavior interferes with his or her ability to learn or with other students' learning. Additionally, IDEA discipline provisions already allow school officials to discipline students whose behaviors cause problems. As currently written, the discipline provisions in IDEA do not adversely affect school safety and climate.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 2002: This Act proposes to reduce the

paperwork burden associated with special education services by simplifying IEP (Individualized Education Program) documents, procedural safeguards notices, and the reporting requirements for prior written notice. It also proposes that IEPs be reviewed on a 3-year cycle instead of the current annual review. These proposed changes mean that parents of students on IEPs may not receive progress reports at the same intervals as other student. They would eliminate safeguards that ensure that children on IEPs are making measurable progress towards their goals. The proposed Act also fails to address how parents would be informed of their rights to additional meetings.

VOUCHERS: Vouchers are being considered as a way to ensure that families whose children are not making educational progress could choose another school for their child. However, the IDEA already states that when a public school district is unable to meet a child's educational needs, public funds will be used to send a student with disabilities to a private school.

FUNDING: In addition to the concerns cited above, laudable efforts are being made to increase funding for IDEA. Currently, funding for IDEA is discretionary, which means that Congress can increase or decrease appropriations each year. The original IDEA statute proposed that the federal government pay 40% of the costs associated with IDEA; this level of funding (often referred to as "full funding") has never been met at the federal level. Full government funding would mean a real commitment to education and would help school districts meet the costs of education all children so that "no child [would be] left behind."

Are You Interested in Diversity and Special Education?

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From the ILIAD IDEA Partnership: two guides for principals and administrators that address issues related to diversity and special education



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Both guides can be downloaded for FREE at www.idealpractices.org. To purchase a copy, contact the Council for Exceptional Children at 888-CEC-SPED (toll free) or 866-915-5000 (TTY toll free)

News & Notes

Congratulations!

State representative Marie St. Fleur of Boston has been appointed Chair of the Education, Arts and Humanities Committee of the legislature.

Governor Romney has re-appointed Harry Spence as the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services as well as Assistant Secretary, Children, Youth, and Families at the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS).

Commissioner Gerry Morrissey will continue at the Massachusetts' Department of Mental Health and has been newly appointed as Assistant Secretary, Disability and Community Services at EOHHS.

We welcome Christie Ferguson as the new Commissioner of the Massachusetts' Department of Public Health and Assistant Secretary, Health.



Richard Robison

From the Executive Director The Proof Is in the Pudding!

The Proof is in the Pudding. At least that is what my grandmother used to tell me. Perhaps she was smart enough to know

that someday that would be the way the government measures success. It seems that everything we do at the Federation these days requires us to report our successes in terms of outcomes. In other words, the process itself is not enough—concrete benefits must be the result. When it comes to students with disabilities, the outcomes that result from a high quality education, access to health care, and full participation in their own communities are what count.

In recent weeks, two examples of successful outcomes have come to my attention. The first involved a caller to the Federation. She was a community college student who was doing research on disability issues. She called the Federation seeking more information on Bipolar disorder for a paper she was preparing for class. The call seemed a bit unusual, so the staff member who received it asked for some clarification. The caller herself has a disability and she knew to call the Federation because she knows the Federation can help, and her father works there! Indeed, while I was out of town on business, my own daughter, who has Down syndrome, was doing research for a class report. Since I wasn't around, she sought the assistance of the Federation staff to meet her deadline. I am pleased that the Federation was able to assist this new kind of caller, and that the paper was submitted on time. You see, the proof is in the pudding!

A second example was reported in the *Boston Globe* in December 2002. The story identified another young woman with Down syndrome who passed the state's MCAS exam on the first try. This, of course, is a tremendous accomplishment on her part and speaks to the power of a successful partnership between home and school. It should not be misinterpreted that this accomplishment is anything more than a tremendous accomplishment by one student. However, it speaks to the possibilities. With the advent of high standards,

many people these standards could never work for students with disabilities. But now, though in limited examples, we can see that progress is being made. Across the nation, similar experiences are occurring. Students with disabilities are demonstrating some of the biggest gains of all students since the beginning of the education reform efforts of the early 90's. The proof is in the pudding.

Yet, even with phenomenal successes, we know there are many more students with disabilities, from other language groups, or of minority status who have yet to realize these promises. While we applaud early successes, the job has only just begun. In these days of economic stress it will be tempting to give up too soon or to claim too much money is being spent unnecessarily on special education instead of general education. In this era of No Child Left Behind, we cannot give up or give in until the job is complete. You see, the proof is in the pudding!

Richard J. Robison

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Empowerment Through Information

by Mary Loughlin
Federation Information Specialist

“My child’s IEP is not working. What should I do?”

There are two ways in which an Individualized Education Program (IEP) may be considered to be “not working:” Either (1) the supports or services are not being delivered as written, or (2) the supports or services are not appropriate to meet the child’s needs.

Many parents voice concerns about their child’s IEP at some point during the school year. This is not surprising when one considers that many Team meetings are held in the spring to plan and develop a child’s IEP that will be implemented in the fall. There is no crystal ball to guide the process. Team members rely on information gathered from a variety of sources to pinpoint the child’s needs, such as parent/student input, the child’s educational history, present level of performance, evaluation and test results and potential. All relevant information must be considered to decide what supports and services will best meet the unique needs of the child to provide a free, appropriate public education (FAPE). It is the Team’s job to use these findings to develop an IEP with clear, measurable, observable goals that will help the child make effective progress in the general curriculum. That is, to learn what other students of the

same age are learning. An accepted IEP serves as a contract between the parents and the school. It does not guarantee that the child will meet the identifiable goals but represents the expected outcomes, based on the information available at the time of the meeting.

Think about what “not working” means to you so you can clearly explain the problem. Review your child’s current IEP. This is a useful tool to help you decide whether all the supports and services written into the IEP are in place and being delivered as agreed.

What action should a parent take when the IEP is not working? Begin by contacting the school and voicing your concern to the appropriate person. Usually this is the child’s teacher, but it might be a service provider, principal or the special education director depending on the issue and your relationship with school personnel. Sometimes issues can be quickly resolved in this way.

Think about what “not working” means to you so you can clearly explain the problem. Review your child’s current IEP. This is a useful tool to help you decide whether all the supports and services written into the IEP are in place and being delivered as agreed. It will help you track your child’s progress by monitoring the measurable goals, objectives, and benchmarks. If you think changes should be made, what facts do you have to support your view? Facts may include crucial information about the child that was overlooked, downplayed, or simply not available to the Team at the last meeting. Your observations of your child are also important evidence.

If your concerns cannot be resolved informally, ask the IEP Team to reconvene. Put this request in writing and keep a copy for your records. Parents have a right to request a Team meeting any time they feel change is needed and the Team will meet as many times as necessary to ensure that the child receives FAPE. The meeting to review the child’s IEP and address the concerns must be held within a reasonable time. The Team may decide added supports, strategies or interventions are needed, and an addendum reflecting the changes will be written and attached to the current IEP. No changes can be made without parent consent.

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Lawrence Kotin, Esq., Robert K. Crabtree, Esq., Richard F. Howard, Esq., & Eileen M. Haggerty, Esq.

Welcome to their practice

Daniel T.S. Heffernan, Esq.

Providing representation to children and adults with disabilities, and their families.

Mr. Heffernan was most recently a partner with Weisman & Associates. He currently serves as President of the Board of Trustees of the Federation of Children with Special Needs. In addition to education law, Mr. Heffernan will continue his practice of representing individuals in personal injury, professional malpractice, product liability and civil rights litigation.

KOTIN, CRABTREE & STRONG, LLP

Providing representation to children and adults with disabilities, their families, and non-profit service providers.

Kotin, Crabtree & Strong is a general practice law firm one of whose specialties is in law relating to children, including education and child care issues. Other areas of practice include disability issues, civil and criminal litigation, personal injury law, estate planning and administration, intellectual property, corporations, representation of child care and other organizations, real estate, taxation and mediation.

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INCLUSION— Civil Right or Practical Matter?

by Bill Henderson, Public School Principal & Federation Board Member

A year ago, I participated on a panel on inclusion organized

for journalists who work in the New England area. A parent advocate on the panel made the point that the inclusion of children with disabilities was, for parents, a civil-rights issue. A representative from a teacher's union, also on the panel, remarked that talking about civil rights was not helpful because inclusion is a practical matter. I spoke up and mentioned how I found it interesting that a leader from that same union had argued eloquently on my behalf for my "civil rights for inclusion" as an employee with a disability.

20 years before that panel presentation, I had gone to the union to ask for advice. I had been a fairly successful teacher in the Boston Public Schools, but because of retinitis pigmentosa, I started having problems seeing. An eye specialist had already advised me to "get out of education," and an education administrator had suggested that I "look into disability retirement." The union leader was very adamant and supportive. He told me that I had a right to a job in Boston. Together with school department officials, we met and discussed a range of options with possible accommodations.

The union had clearly treated my inclusion as a civil right first and foremost. The primary consideration was that I had a right to a job in education in the Boston Public Schools. Then came the practical matters. I had to make some adjustments; I had to learn some new techniques. The School Department had to provide some accommodations. I still had to perform the essential responsibilities of my job, but my right to continue as an educator was definitely the first consideration.

Why is it that so many school professionals don't give children that same kind of consideration? There are still far too many parents who are being told by some teachers, some principals, some psychologists, and some special education administrators that their children cannot be included in classrooms with their nondisabled peers, but rather that they have to attend some special program or some special school where their needs can supposedly be better met. Furthermore, these exclusionary comments are often used referring to very young children who have yet to attend school or to children who are in regular education classrooms without any supports other than the regular education teacher.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 97) does guarantee appropriate supports to students with disabilities regardless of setting. The law also presumes that the first placement option considered for each disabled student should be the school/classroom the child would have attended if not disabled; and that appropriate supplementary aids and services should be provided to support such placement.

Educators who recommend a child's placement in a substantially separate classroom without first considering the general education classroom and the provision of services in that classroom are not following IDEA 97. Now, many will argue, and rightfully so, that not every child is successfully included. Some children with disabilities have not made progress in general education classrooms even with supports and some have significantly disrupted the learning of others. Such problems occur due to many factors, which may or may not be caused by the child. IDEA 97 clearly recognizes the right and process for sending students with disabilities to more restrictive placements. However, such placements should always be the second consideration, not the first. Too many children who have disabilities are never given a fair opportunity.

Including students with disabilities is a civil right first and foremost. Practical matters are important but should be explored only after recognizing and honoring this right.



Board Profile— Daniel Heffernan, Federation Board President

Dan Heffernan joined the Federation's board of directors in 1994 and has served as its board president since

1995. Dan received his law degree from Harvard Law School in 1987 and has worked as a trial attorney since then. Early in his career, he represented patients at Worcester State Hospital in civil rights and other cases. When his son Brian was born in 1990, the little something extra Brian has, an additional chromosome resulting in Down syndrome, was Dan's admission ticket to the community of families with members with special needs.

Dan represents plaintiffs in personal injury, professional malpractice, product liability and civil rights cases. An increasing portion of his legal work includes representing children and

adults with disabilities in professional malpractice and civil-rights cases. In 2000, he tried and settled a civil-rights lawsuit against the City of Worcester on behalf of several families. That case, *Laramee, et al. v. City of Worcester*, emanated from years of abuse visited upon essentially non-speaking grade school students in separate classrooms by a teacher. The teacher was prosecuted, convicted, and imprisoned. During the criminal investigation, aides and a head teacher stated that they had seen the teacher hit students years earlier and reported it to the principal and others, but the teacher was not even disciplined about it.

Dan's current caseload includes cases involving medical malpractice on adults and adolescents with disabilities and civil-rights cases involving excessive restraints for children with disabilities. He also represents students

with disabilities in special education cases. In March 2003, Dan joined the Boston law firm Kotin, Crabtree & Strong, and continues practicing in the area of personal injury, professional malpractice, civil rights and special education.

In March 2002, Dan and his wife Julie received the Dr. Allen C. Crocker Award of Excellence from the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress, in recognition of their commitment to advocacy and public awareness of the strengths and abilities of people with Down syndrome. Brian, and his sisters Magdalene and Evelyn, accepted the award on their behalf and addressed the MDSC's annual conference.

Throughout his time on the board of the Federation, Dan has been extremely impressed with the skill and commitment of the Federation staff and would like to take this opportunity to express his gratitude to them for their work.



LA INCLUSIÓN— ¿Es un derecho civil o es un asunto práctico?

by Bill Henderson, Director de una escuela pública y miembro de la Junta Directiva de la Federación

Hace un año participé en un panel sobre la inclusión, el cual fue organizado por periodistas que trabajan en el área de Nueva Inglaterra. Un padre de familia que integraba el panel dijo que la inclusión de niños con discapacidades era para los padres de familia un asunto de derechos civiles. El representante de la unión de profesores en el panel dijo que hablar de derechos civiles no era de gran ayuda, porque la inclusión era un asunto práctico. Yo hablé y dije que me parecía muy interesante que un líder del mismo gremio de profesores, años atrás había defendido elocuentemente “mis derechos civiles por la inclusión” como empleado con discapacidades.

Veinte años antes de la presentación en el panel, fui a la unión de profesores a pedir consejo. Hasta ese momento había sido un exitoso profesor en las escuelas públicas de Boston, pero por causa de una “retinitis pigmentosa” empecé a tener problemas para ver. Un especialista de los ojos me había aconsejado “sálgame de la profesión de enseñar” y un administrador de la educación me sugirió que “tomara la jubilación por incapacidad física”. El líder de la unión de profesores fue bastante amable y colaborador conmigo. El me dijo que yo tenía el derecho a trabajar en Boston. Juntos con los oficiales del departamento de la escuela discutimos las diferentes opciones a seguir con las acomodaciones posibles.

La unión de profesores claramente trato mi inclusión como un derecho civil. Lo que primero que se tomo en cuenta fue mi derecho a trabajar en la educación en las escuelas públicas de Boston, después se trataron los asuntos prácticos. Tuve que hacer algunos ajustes y aprender nuevas técnicas. El departamento de escuelas tuvo que darme algunas acomodaciones. Hasta hoy continuo realizando las responsabilidades esenciales de mi trabajo, pero mi derecho a continuar como educador fue definitivamente la primera consideración que se tomo en cuenta.

¿Porque es que tantos profesionales en las escuelas no dan estas mismas consideraciones a los niños? Algunos profesores, directores, sicólogos y administradores de educación especial les han dicho a padres de familia que sus hijos no pueden ser incluidos en los salones con sus compañeros sin discapacidades, en cambio, ellos tienen que asistir a un programa o escuela especial donde sus necesidades seran, supuestamente, mejor atendidas. Además este tipo de comentarios de exclusión son usados frecuentemente para referirse a niños pequeños que están por ir a la escuela o a niños que se encuentran en un salón de educación regular sin ningún apoyo excepto el del profesor de educación regular.

El Acta de Educación para Individuos con Discapacidades (IDEA 97) garantiza apoyos apropiados para todos los estudiantes con discapacidades sin importar la ubicación. La ley también presume que el primer lugar donde cada estudiante con discapacidades debe ser ubicado es la escuela/salón de clases, donde el niño iría sino tuviera una discapacidad. Además el estudiante debe de recibir las ayudas adicionales apropiadas y los servicios que apoyen esta ubicación.

Los educadores que recomiendan que la ubicación de un niño debe ser en un salón de clase separado sin considerar primero el salón de clases regular y la provisión de los servicios apropiados en este, no están siguiendo la ley IDEA 97. Muchos discutirán, y con razón, que no todo niño es exitosamente incluido. Algunos niños con discapacidades no han tenido progreso en el salón regular de clases a pesar de los apoyos y servicios, algunos de ellos han interrumpido significativamente el aprendizaje de otros. Estos problemas ocurren por muchas razones, las cuales pueden o no ser causadas por el niño. La ley IDEA 97 claramente reconoce el derecho y el proceso a seguir para enviar a los estudiantes con discapacidades a lugares más restrictivos. Pero tales lugares deben ser siempre la segunda opción, no la primera. A muchos niños con discapacidades nunca se les da una oportunidad justa de ser incluidos.

Incluir a los estudiantes con discapacidades es primero y más que nada un derecho civil. Las situaciones prácticas son importantes pero deben ser exploradas solamente después de reconocer y respetar este derecho.

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INCLUSÃO — Um Direito Civil ou um Assunto Prático?

por Bill Henderson, Diretor de Escola Pública e Membro do Conselho Federação para Crianças com Necessidades Especiais

Há um ano atrás, eu participei de uma mesa-redonda sobre inclusão, organizada por jornalistas que trabalham na área de New England. Um defensor de pais levantou a questão, na mesa-redonda, de que a inclusão de crianças portadoras de deficiência era, para os pais, uma questão de direitos civis. Um representante do sindicato dos professores, também na mesa-redonda, observou que falar em direitos civis não era muito útil, pois a inclusão é um assunto prático. Eu tomei a palavra e mencionei como achava interessante que um líder daquele mesmo sindicato havia argumentado eloqüentemente, em meu favor, pelos meus “direitos civis à inclusão”, como uma funcionária portadora de deficiência.

20 anos antes daquela mesa-redonda, eu tinha ido ao sindicato em busca de uma orientação. Tinha sido uma professora de sucesso razoável nas Escolas Públicas de Boston, mas, devido a uma retinite pigmentária, comecei a ter problemas de visão. Um oculista já havia me advertido a “cair fora da educação”, enquanto um administrador educacional sugeriu que eu procurasse uma “aposentadoria por deficiência.” O líder do sindicato foi de um apoio obstinado. Ele me disse que eu tinha direito a um trabalho em Boston. Em conjunto com os oficiais do departamento da escola, nos encontramos e discutimos uma variedade de opções com as adaptações possíveis.

O sindicato havia nitidamente tratado a minha inclusão, antes de mais nada, como um caso de direitos civis. A primeira consideração é de que eu tinha direito a um trabalho em educação nas Escolas Públicas de Boston. Aí vieram os assuntos práticos. Eu tinha de fazer alguns ajustes; tinha de aprender algumas técnicas novas. O Departamento Escolar tinha de providenciar algumas adaptações. Eu teria, ainda, de executar as responsabilidades essenciais de meu trabalho, mas o direito de continuar sendo uma educadora foi, definitivamente, a primeira consideração.

Por que será que tantos profissionais do ensino não dão às crianças o mesmo tipo de consideração? Ainda há muitos pais que são aconselhados por alguns professores, alguns diretores, alguns psicólogos e alguns administradores de educação especial que

os seus filhos não podem ser incluídos nas salas de aula com os seus amigos não-deficientes, mas, ao contrário, que eles têm de frequentar uma escola especial, ou ter um programa especial onde suas necessidades serão supostamente melhor atendidas. Ademais, estes comentários exclusivistas são geralmente usados com referência às crianças muito jovens, às quais ainda têm de ir para a escola, ou para crianças que estão na sala de aula de ensino regular sem nenhum tipo de suporte, exceto o do professor do ensino regular.

A Lei Educacional para Indivíduos Portadores de Deficiência (IDEA 97) garante, de fato, suportes apropriados para alunos portadores de deficiência não importando as condições. A lei também presume que a primeira opção de colocação para cada criança excepcional deve ser a escola/sala de aula que ela frequentaria se não fosse portadora de deficiência; e, ainda, que auxílios e serviços apropriados

suplementares devem ser fornecidos para facilitar esta colocação.

Os educadores que recomendam a colocação de uma criança numa sala de aula substancialmente separada sem, antes, considerar a sala de ensino regular e o fornecimento dos serviços nesta sala, não estão seguindo a lei IDEA 97. Agora, muitos argumentarão, e com razão, que nem todas as crianças são incluídas com sucesso. Algumas crianças excepcionais não têm feito progressos nas salas de ensino regular, mesmo com adaptações, sendo que algumas têm atrapalhado o aprendizado de outras. Estes problemas ocorrem devido a uma série de fatores, os quais podem ser, ou não, causados pela criança. A lei IDEA 97 claramente reconhece o direito e o processo de enviar alunos portadores de deficiência a colocações mais restritivas. Porém, tais colocações devem, sempre, ser a segunda consideração, não a primeira. São muitas as crianças portadoras de deficiência às quais nunca são dadas uma oportunidade justa.

A inclusão de crianças excepcionais é, antes de tudo, uma questão de direitos civis. Assuntos práticos são importantes, mas devem ser explorados apenas depois de se reconhecer e honrar este direito.

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The Switch to FAPE— One Year Later

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gives FAPE real meaning. It emphasizes the requirement to develop a student's potential and confirms that a student with disabilities should be taught, where possible, the same information and skills that non-disabled peers are taught. Also heartening is the BSEA's evident willingness in appropriate cases to allow the need for more intense services to outweigh the principle of mainstreaming. Finally, it is excellent to see the hearing officer emphasize that FAPE requires attention to the full range of a student's needs, "whether they be academic, physical, emotional or social."

In this decision, the BSEA joins the Massachusetts DOE in confirming that FAPE does not mean a reduction of commitment or services.

In this decision, the BSEA joins the Massachusetts DOE in confirming that FAPE does not mean a reduction of commitment or services. In a memorandum issued before the change to FAPE (Administrative Advisory SPED 2002-1), DOE said that FAPE requires "meaningful educational progress" through IEPs that are "tailored to meet the unique needs of [each] student." DOE also highlighted "the Commonwealth's commitment to assist all students to reach their full educational potential" and pointed out that in states where FAPE has always been the standard, "courts have ordered school districts to provide an extensive array of special education services, including private day and residential placements as well as related services."

A year ago, we expected litigation over FAPE and hoped that the change would have little impact on the quality and quantity of services.

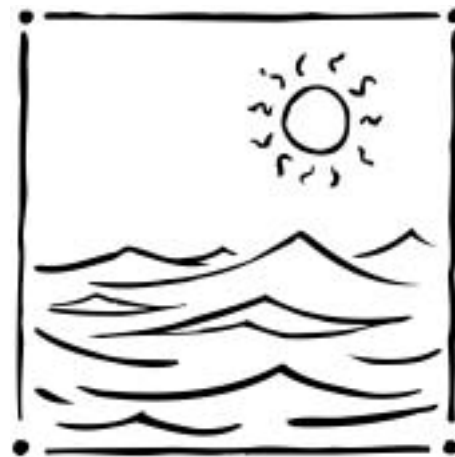
Litigation has increased somewhat over the past year, inspired to some degree by the hope that the BSEA would support a reduction of services under FAPE. As news of strong interpretations like that in *Arlington P.S.* spreads, however, the stream of such litigation should slow. If the BSEA continues to interpret FAPE as in *Arlington P.S.*, the change of standard should not, by itself, lead to any reduction in services.

We believe that recent litigation has been stimulated by other factors along with the change to FAPE, however, and that those other factors pose a far greater risk to students with disabilities. Those other factors include:

(1) The undermining of parents' ability to recover attorney's fees, triggered by the U. S. Supreme Court's decision in *Buckhannon Board & Home Care, Inc. v. West Virginia Dep't of Health and Human Resources*, 532 U.S. 598 (2001). That case held that parties are not entitled to recover attorney's fees under civil rights statutes until there is an order on the merits of a case. One local magistrate has held that *Buckhannon* applies to attorney's fees claims under IDEA. If so, districts can resist even the worthiest claims in litigation and provide what the parents want at the last minute without having to reimburse the parents' attorney's fees. (Note, however, that courts have split on the question whether *Buckhannon* applies to IDEA, and the issue remains yet to be conclusively resolved.)

(2) The economy and politics. Recently, the state Department of Education announced that it lacks funds to pay its full share for residential placements. This is just the most recent sign of how the economy can undermine special education. Government budgets have been decimated by a poor economy and repeated tax cuts. Worse is yet to come, as state aid to cities and towns will apparently suffer deep cuts this and next year. Special education is a tempting target for cuts, even though it is an entitlement under law. Ambiguous standards and professional disagreement about methods to address disabilities create an environment in which services can be reduced to save money, leaving parents to fight the reductions only if they have the ability to do so. Smaller budgets put parents of non-disabled students at odds with their neighbors over how to allocate funds between regular and special education programs and between education and other necessary services.

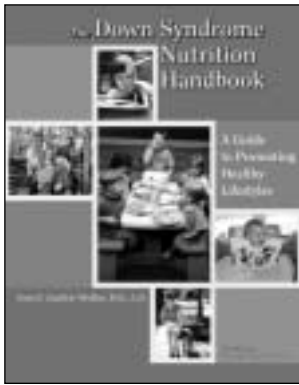
What then? Parents and advocates cannot give up but must pick their battles with an understanding of the forces arrayed against services. We need to be alert to the political, economic and attitudinal factors that jeopardize resources and programs, but we also need to acknowledge the occasional good news. As we see in *Arlington P.S.*, there are legal principles that, if used well, can improve students' programs. We need to fight, when appropriate, for services for individuals, but we also need to educate our neighbors and politicians rationally, calmly and persistently, about the long-term costs of not serving children with disabilities and the benefits of meeting their needs well—of providing, that is, FAPE in the best sense.



Send your child to camp!

Would your child like to go to summer camp this year? Check out some of the websites below for more information. Or, order the Federation's summer camp directory *Summer Fun 2003* for detailed information about camps for children with disabilities (page 8).

- **Association of Independent Camps:** Summer Camp Directory & Resource: www.independentcamps.com/intercamp
- **Camp Channel: Bringing Summer Camps to the Internet:** www.campchannel.com/docs/campsearch.html
- **The CampPage Guide to Summer Camps:** www.camppage.com
- **The Camp & Conference Homepage:** www.camping.org
- **Camps for Children with Diabetes:** www.childrenwithdiabetes.com/camps
- **Camp Search: The Search Engine for Camps:** www.campsearch.com
- **Children's Oncology Camping Association:** www.coca-intl.org
- **Diabetes Camping Association: Diabetes Camp Directory—U.S. Camps:** www.diabetescamps.org/uscamps.html
- **Grown-Up Camps:** www.grownupcamps.com
- **Kids' Camps:** www.kidscamps.com
- **Therapy/Respite Camps for Kids:** wizard.ucr.edu/~wm/therapy.html



Book Review

THE DOWN SYNDROME NUTRITION HANDBOOK

A Guide to Promoting Healthy Lifestyles
By Joan E. Guthrie Medlen, R.D., L.D.
Woodbine House; ISBN: 1-890627-23-2;
paperback, 352 pages; \$19.95

Book Review by Paula Rosenblum, Massachusetts Parent

Most of us would agree that good health plays an essential role in living a full and happy life. For those of us concerned about the health of our children with Down syndrome, as well as relatives and professionals who may also play a role in their well being, this is a must-have resource for your bookshelf. Joan E. Guthrie Medlen, a Registered, Licensed Dietitian is also the mother of a teenage son with Down syndrome. With a combination of professional expertise and deep respect for individuals with Down syndrome and their families, the author has written a comprehensive guide for understanding the importance of establishing healthy eating and lifestyle habits.

The book begins with a section about Building Healthy Attitudes, which not only provides specific information about the physical, sensory and developmental process of eating, but also discusses the importance of building a positive attitude towards eating and food. We are reminded that the feeding relationship is based on trust. Parents are responsible for providing “attractive, safely prepared, balanced and tasty foods at appropriate times,” and children are responsible for “how much” and “whether” the food is eaten. There are lots of tips about how to understand and work with your child.

Other sections in this book are: Nutrition-Related Concerns for People with Down Syndrome, Teaching Healthy Choices to Encourage Healthy Lifestyles, and Learning Activities. The first of these sections includes important information on nutrition, physiology and special concerns such as Celiac Disease and Diabetes. Since my own daughter was diagnosed with Celiac a year ago, I have learned that people with Down syndrome have a slightly higher risk for this disease than the general population, so I was pleased to see it discussed in detail. The sections on Teaching Healthy Choices and Learning Activities were full of good, practical ideas for promoting a wellness plan for individuals with Down syndrome.

One of the best features of the book is that it includes a wealth of hands-on worksheets to help individuals build the skills they need to be an active partner in managing their own health. Further good news from Joan Medlen is that it is never too early, or too late, to start building a healthy lifestyle!

***** Please make a contribution to the Federation today *****

YES! I will help the Federation continue its Mission! I want to support the Federation for Children with Special Needs. Enclosed is my gift.

\$30 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Home Telephone: _____ Business Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

I would like to make my gift by VISA Mastercard

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date _____ Signature _____

My company has a matching gift program.

Company name: _____

Address: _____

I would like to make my contribution in honor of: _____

I would like to make my contribution in memory of: _____

Please include this form with your check made payable to:
Federation for Children with Special Needs, 1135 Tremont Street, Suite 420, Boston, MA 02120
The Federation for Children with Special Needs, Inc. is a 501(c)3 organization.

Now you can donate on line! Visit us on the web at www.fcsn.org.



Disabilities Are No Laughing Matter

by Becky Rizoli, Federation Staff Member

I hear these kinds of remarks wherever I go:

A comedian mocks people who are in therapy.

A clergyman describes a prayer as "ADHD" during services.

A woman jokes to her friend who uses vulgar language, "I wonder if you have Tourette's Syndrome."

Jokes that ridicule any disability, disorder, or mental illness make me angry. I'm frustrated by the thoughtlessness of people who make these jokes. When appropriate, I speak up and say, "That's not funny," or, "Would you say that if I had that disorder?"

Sometimes people apologize. However, more often than not, they react defensively and respond, "I'm just kidding around. Can't you take a joke?"

No, I can't take these types of jokes. To the people who make these jokes, I am part of the joke because I have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), as well as some learning disabilities (LD). I have taken Ritalin since second grade, when I was first diagnosed.

MATCHING GIFTS Make Your Contributions Go Further!

1. Check with your company's personnel department to see if they have a matching gifts program.
2. Ask for matching gifts forms for all the members of your team.
3. Review the requirements of your matching gifts program carefully—each program has its own policies.

You can contribute to The Federation for Children with Special Needs online! Go to www.fcsn.org for details.

For many years, I was ashamed about having special needs and hid my 'secret' from my friends. I was afraid they would think less of me if they knew I was 'different.' One reason I was so ashamed about my disabilities was because of people's attitudes about ADHD. I would hear them say to others, "What's the matter with you? Do you have attention deficit disorder?" or "Look who forgot to take his Ritalin today!" If they knew about me, I imagined people would say, "You're one of those whacked-out hyper kids who needs medication in order to function?"

With mentoring and support, I eventually worked up the courage to tell my secret to my friends. Contrary to my expectations, my friends were glad I had told them and respected my honesty. I have learned to accept that I have ADHD and LD.

So this is why I'm bothered by jokes about people with mental health issues and other disabilities. It disturbs me that our culture tolerates this kind of humor because it is an indication that our society does not tolerate individuals with special needs. These jokes imply that people with disabilities are inferior.

I know most people are not trying to be offensive. They are just trying to be funny. Unfortunately, they don't realize that a joke, which gives one person ten seconds of laughter, can cause someone else ten years of pain. There's a world of difference between using comic relief to help you through difficult situations and making jokes that stigmatize certain individuals. How do you learn the difference? Ask yourself if you would make that same remark in front of someone who had a particular disability. If the answer is no, the comment is probably inappropriate.

Here are a few suggestions to help eliminate the stigmas surrounding disabilities and mental illness:

- Do not laugh at or make jokes about disabilities, disorders, or mental illness.
- If you catch yourself making an inappropriate joke, apologize and take back your words.
- If you have a disability or disorder, don't be afraid to tell your friends the truth. No one is going to think less of you, and you just might open someone's mind!

Note: An earlier version of this article appeared in Stonehill College's newspaper, *The Summit*, on March 23, 2000.

NewsLine

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The Federation for Children with Special Needs, Inc.

Our Mission:

To provide information, support, and assistance to parents of children with disabilities, their professional partners, and their communities. We are committed to listening to and learning from families, and encouraging full participation in community life by all people, especially those with disabilities.

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Federation Workshops March–June 2003

MARCH 2003

25th Worcester, 9am–3pm, *Train the Trainer—Transition 14–22 & Diversity*

25th Chatham, 7–9pm, *Basic Rights*, High School Library

26th Maynard, 7–9pm, *Access to the General Curriculum*, TBA

27th Somerville, 7–9pm, *Transition for Students 14–22, SSI/Employment*, JFKennedy Elementary School

27th Worcester, 7–9pm, *Basic Rights*, Seven Hills Charter School

APRIL 2003

10th Wakefield, 7–9pm, *Basic Rights*, Wakefield High School, Farm Street

10th Newburyport, 6:30–8:30pm, *Access to the General Curriculum*, Newburyport High School, High Street

14th Wayland, 7:30–9:30pm, *IEP*, Wayland Town Building, Senior Citizen's Center

17th Somerville, 7–9pm, *Basic Rights*, Kennedy Elementary

17th Southbridge, 7–9pm, *Access to the General Curriculum*, Southbridge HS Library/Media Ctr

APRIL 2003, continued

30th Oxford, 7–9pm, *Turning 3*, Oxford Library

MAY 2003

1st Sudbury, 7–9pm, *MCAS*, Fairbanks Community Center

5th Wachusett, 7–9pm, *Transition*, TBA

15th Arlington, 7–9pm, *Basic Rights*, Brackett Elementary

21st Southbridge, 7–9pm, *Basic Rights*, TBA

29th Newton, 7:30–9:30pm, *Basic Rights*, Education Center

JUNE 2003

5th Southbridge, 7–9pm, *Basic Rights*, TBA

10th Andover, 7–9pm, *IEP*, Professional Center for Child Development

***Visit our web site for up-to-the-minute information (www.fcsn.org)**

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

Access to the General Curriculum offers parent-friendly information on diverse learning styles and access to the general curriculum for all students. The workshop includes discussion and examples of modifications to content, delivery of instruction, and performance that will allow students with disabilities to more fully participate in the general curriculum.

Basic Rights covers basic information about state and federal special education laws to assist parents in the planning, decision-making and monitoring of their child's IEP. (Materials available in Spanish and Portuguese.)

Effective Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in the MCAS Testing System

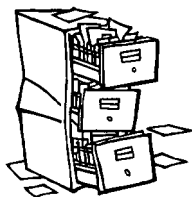
includes information on the IEP Team's determination of the appropriate method for an individual student to participate in the MCAS testing system. The workshop covers accommodations available to students with disabilities who take the standard paper-and-pencil version of MCAS as well as information on the MCAS Alternate Assessment.

IEP includes a walk-through of the new IEP with emphasis on IDEA '97 and the latest Massachusetts special education regulations, access to the general curriculum and writing curriculum-based, measurable annual goals.

Transition provides basic information on the state and federal laws that require the IEP to address goals such as competitive employment and independent living to assist students, 14 and older, with planning transition to adult living.

Turning Three is an interactive workshop that helps professionals and parents understand parents' basic rights as their children approach the transition from Early Intervention into preschool at age three.

Family TIES Presents: Let's get Organized!



*Is this what
your files look like??*

*Feeling a little unorganized?
Looking for some ideas to
get you back on track?*

**Family TIES Invites you to join us for...
"LET'S GET ORGANIZED!"**

A workshop especially designed for families of children with special needs to learn how to get more organized. Tired of filing school and medical reports on top of the refrigerator? Looking for ways to keep track of all your child's important papers? We offer creative, fun, family-tested, tried-and-true ways to pull it all together.

Call your Family TIES Coordinator at 1-800-905-TIES for more information on this and other workshops we offer through our "NEXT STEPS" series.



Spring 2003 Parent Consultant Training Program

The Federation is pleased to announce its next Parent Consultant Training Programs:

BOSTON	CENTRAL MA	WESTERN MA
Tuesdays, 4/29 – 6/3	Thursdays, 4/3 – 5/22	Mondays, 3/3 – 4/7
9:00 am – 4:00 pm	9:30 am – 3:30 pm	9:30 am – 4:00 pm
at the Federation	at Seven Hills Foundation	currently in progress
1135 Tremont St.	81 Hope Avenue, Worcester	Community Resources
Suite 420	Except 5/8 at: Clark University	Easthampton, MA
Boston, MA 02120	Higgins University Center	Contact: Julie Sinclair
Contact: Phyllis Sneirson	950 Main St., Worcester	413-323-0681
617-236-7210 ext, 115	Contact: Mary Loughlin	
	508-798-0531	

The purpose of these trainings is to produce a knowledgeable and skilled group of parent consultants able to make a sustained commitment to represent parents of children with special needs and persons with disabilities in matters relating to special education. The programs consist of six day-long sessions and a 50-hour internship. Topics covered include

special education laws, negotiation, mediation, inclusion, transition, communication skills and more. Class size is limited to 35.

- Completion of a Basic Rights workshop is a prerequisite.
- Fee: \$300.00 for tuition and materials. Scholarships are available.

All About

PAL

Parent/Professional Advocacy League

The Parent/Professional Advocacy League (PAL), a project of the Federation, is the Massachusetts State Organization of the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. PAL provides education, advocacy and support to over 4,500 families through a network of support groups facilitated by 41 Parent Coordinators across the state. Families can connect at one of over 50 support groups as they seek mental health information and services for their children.

The Parent Coordinators receive training from the statewide PAL office to support their work with families. These trainings focus on various areas where families dealing with mental health issues need information and support and include:

- **Educational Advocacy** as it pertains to children's mental health diagnoses.
- **Behavioral Management Techniques**— An ABA (Applied Behavioral Analysis) specialist demonstrates how ABA has broader application than just for children with autism and can be applied to children with mental health diagnoses.
- **Adoption**— Parent Coordinators are trained to deal with the special considerations of parents of children who adopt from both within the U.S. and overseas. They learn to address the concerns of the families, as well as the concerns of any community service providers.
- **Public and Private Insurance Issues** are one of the biggest sources of frustration for our families. Parent Coordinators receive training so they can assist families in negotiating the health care service system.
- **Overview of State Agencies**— in this time of state reorganization, it is even more important to know about services provided by and points of entry into the system.
- **Therapeutic Treatment Choices**— Parent Coordinators are knowledgeable about the treatment choices for the different types of mental health disorders and can help families learn about the options for their child.
- **Parents with Mental Illness**— Parent Coordinators learn to support parents with mental health issues so they can dialogue with professionals and continue to parent their own children.
- **Attending Meetings with Parents**— This training instructs Parent Coordinators in how to represent parents and children's needs.
- **Developing and Running Support Groups**— provides training about establishing new support groups and facilitating groups.

Anyone interested in contacting the PAL Parent Coordinator nearest to where they live can find the information on the web at www.ppal.net or by leaving your name and phone number at 1-800-537-0446.

PAL is working with the Federation to assist the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership in recruiting parents of children and adolescents with mental health needs into positions similar to Parent Coordinators for a newly forming Medicaid program entitled Coordinated Family Focused Care. Interested parents can call Carol Gramm at 617-542-7860, ext. 202.

Easter Seals: Empowering students to achieve incredible results

Assistive Technology

Use Computer Technology to bridge the gaps between educational goals and disabilities

- Help students experience success in the classroom
- Improve access to MCAS participation and success
- Engage more students across the curriculum
- Remove language/learning barriers to classroom participation

We will come to your school – anywhere in the state. Assistive Technology Specialists come to you for training, assessments and consultations.

Customized in-service topics include:

- Advanced Use of Intellitools Products
- Speaking Dynamically as a Classroom Tool
- Using AT Software to Create Accessible Storybooks
- Assistive Technology Overview
- Reading and Writing Tools for the Classroom

Contact Cindy Aiken,
Director of AT at 800-922-8290 x344 or
cindya@eastersealsma.org



Job Training and Employment

School-to-Work services are self-paced and emphasize social and work related skills critical to getting and keeping a job.

Vocational Evaluations

Standardized and Interest Testing
Situational Assessments
Vocational / IEP Recommendations

Computer Skills Training

Individualized instruction; school-year and special Summer Sessions available

Job Readiness Training

Learn job searching skills

Job Placement / Job Coaching/ Job Shadowing

Visit various work sites and secure competitive employment

Contact Ruth Antonucci,
Director of JTE at 800-922-8290 x406 or
rutha@eastersealsma.org



Bulletin

Parents Learning About Children's Education

A service for all parents of kids in Massachusetts' public schools



Success in school starts with reading!

When children become good readers in the early grades, they are more likely to become better learners throughout their school years and beyond.

Learning to read is hard work for children. Fortunately, research is now available that suggests how to give each child a good start in reading.

Becoming a reader involves the development of important skills, including learning to:

- **use** language in conversation
- **listen** and respond to stories read aloud
- **recognize** and name the letters of the alphabet

Make reading a part of every day...

Share conversations with your child over meal times and other times you are together. Children learn words more easily when they hear them spoken often. Introduce new and interesting words at every opportunity.

Read together every day. Spend time talking about stories, pictures, and words.

- **listen** to the sounds of spoken language
- **connect** sounds to letters to figure out the "code" of reading
- **read** often so that recognizing words becomes easy and automatic
- **learn** and **use** new words
- **understand** what is read

Preschool and kindergarten teachers set the stage for your child to learn to read with some critical early skills. First, second, and third grade teachers then take up the task of building the skills that children will use every day for the rest of their lives. As a parent, you can help by understanding what teachers are teaching and by asking questions about your child's progress and the classroom reading program.

You can also help your children become readers. Learning to read takes practice, more practice than during the school day.

From *Put Reading First: Helping Your Child Learn to Read*. For more information about how to support your child's reading program at home, call ED Pubs at 1-800-228-8813 and ask to be sent free copies of *Put Reading First: Helping Your Child Learn to Read*, *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*, and *A Child Becomes a Reader*.

Be your child's best advocate. Keep informed about your child's progress in reading and ask the teacher about ways you can help.

Be a reader and a writer. Children learn habits from the people around them.

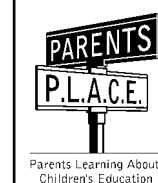
Visit the library often. Story times, computers, homework help, and other exciting activities await the entire family.

How to Read to Children of All Ages

Children learn through repetition. Telling the same stories and singing the same songs over and over may seem boring to you, but not to children. When you repeat a story, children are learning about the meaning of words and how words tell a story. The way you read to children makes a difference. Read stories in a way that encourages children to participate. Follow these tips to make reading more enjoyable.

- Select books that reflect a child's own experiences, such as books about daily life, family members, or animals.
- Expose children to books they can touch.
- Encourage children to choose the book(s) you read.
- Read books that have rhyme, rhythm, or repetition, because the sound of language is especially important to infants who cannot yet focus on pictures.
- Use different voices for different characters or emotions.
- Ask questions about pictures or characters in the book. Have children describe what they see.
- Have children tell you what they think will happen next in the story.

From *Read to Children: Open Young Minds*, a publication of the National Governor's Association



Parents' PLACE

is a Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) funded by the U.S. Department of Education to help parents and educators advance children's success in school. For more information, call toll-free 877-471-0980.

No Child Left Behind: Measuring Adequate Yearly Progress

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* requires “adequate yearly progress,” the minimum level of improvement school districts and schools must achieve every year. In technical terms, adequate yearly progress (AYP) refers to the growth rate in the percentage of students who achieve the state’s definition of academic proficiency. Each state will set the AYP gains every school must meet to reach 100 percent proficiency at the end of 12 years.

Under *No Child Left Behind*, “adequate yearly progress” measures are steps toward our nation’s bipartisan goal of closing the achievement gap and ensuring that every child is proficient in math and reading by the school year 2013–14.

By testing every child, parents and teachers will know the academic achievement of each group of students and can work together to ensure that no child will be left behind. This is why test scores will be broken out into the following sub-groups: **economic background, race and ethnicity, English proficiency and disability.**

Defining adequate yearly progress ensures that every school improves every year so that every child—regardless of race, parent’s income or family background—learns and excels. Tracking this progress yearly will help recognize great schools making great strides in teaching all children. And by following AYP gains at schools where children are not learning, parents and education officials will know which schools need to improve.

In order to publicize this information, parents will receive annual report cards on the following:

- comparison of students at basic, proficient and advanced levels of academic achievement,
- graduation rates,
- professional qualifications of teachers,
- percentages of students not tested,
- and identification of schools in need of improvement.

The information that comes from measuring the yearly progress of schools is also the basis to give parents new options and choices for helping their children when they fall behind.

From *The Achiever*, Nov. 11, 2002, Vol. 1, No. 4. *The Achiever* is published by the Office of Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs, U.S. Department of Education.



Parents' PLACE Workshops

WORKSHOPS FOR FAMILIES

(Available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese)

Parents Are Powerful: A workshop to promote family involvement in education

A workshop for families and community members interested in getting more involved, but unsure where or how to begin. This workshop discusses:

- Research on the importance of family involvement and its benefits for kids and schools
- Brief overview of standards-based education reform, including MCAS
- How to determine whether or not your child is getting a quality education
- Strategies for supporting your children’s success and advocating for quality education

How to Help Your Child Learn in 500 Words or Less: “Parents are Powerful in American Schools” for English Language Learners

This workshop for beginning English language learners covers the information in Parents are Powerful in American Schools using an English vocabulary of 500 words or less. The workshop covers the information in Parents are Powerful (described above) as well as information on the American school system (enrollment, the grading system, report cards, standards-based education) and the rights of students with limited English proficiency.

Families and Schools Together: How families can partner with schools to ensure that children receive a high quality education

This workshop is for parents and community members who are already involved in their schools and are looking for additional ways to impact their children’s learning and achievement. This workshop explains:

- Standards-based education, including curriculum frameworks, instructional strategies, and learning styles
- Standardized tests, including MCAS
- Your role as partner with the school in ensuring your child’s success.

MCAS: High stakes and high standards for students and schools

This workshop explains MCAS, the statewide testing system, and what lies ahead in the immediate future. Parents who want to supplement the school’s efforts to help their children reach the state standards would benefit from this workshop. Specifically, this workshop covers:

- Brief history and purpose of MCAS
- Explanation of the MCAS test and its implementation
- MCAS sample questions and responses
- Supports and resources available for helping students improve their performance.

What Families and Schools Can Do to Prevent Violence

This workshop is for parents, school professionals, and community members who want to learn the principles of safe schools and effective violence prevention. This workshop covers:

- Current research on school violence and school safety

- Characteristics of safe and responsive schools
- Warning signs of bullying and violence
- Strategies for what parents, teachers, and students can do to prevent violence.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SCHOOLS (Available in English)

Creating Family-Friendly Schools

This workshop for teachers, administrators, and staff discusses ways to increase effective interactions between schools and families. Key elements of the workshop include:

- Identifying characteristics of family-friendly schools
- Developing strategies to support family involvement
- Developing a school profile on family-friendly practices
- Achieving better understanding of diverse cultures.

Opening the Door to Family-Friendly Schools: Building Partnerships with Families through the Front Office

This workshop emphasizes the influential role front office school personnel play in interactions with parents, administration, teachers, and other school staff. This workshop helps them:

- Recognize they are an important link to greater parent involvement
- Understand the need for a “customer service” approach in schools
- Identify effective communication styles and skills
- Define family-friendly practices.

Outreach to Families from Diverse Communities

This workshop provides information about the values, cultures, and languages of families from diverse backgrounds and how these impact outreach efforts. Assessment tools and strategies will be shared that will help participants develop an outreach plan for their communities. Topics covered include:

- Elements of culture
- Cross-cultural communication
- Nonverbal communication
- Working with speakers of English as a second language
- The needs of immigrant families

Informing Parents in 500 Words or Less: Using Basic English to Adapt Your Materials for Families Who Are English Language Learners

This workshop presents a new strategy for reaching and informing parents who have limited English proficiency about their role in the educational process. It shows how to convey educational information using a vocabulary of 500 essential words, typical of those used in a basic English as a Second Language (ESL) course. The workshop uses Parents’ PLACE’s workshop “Parents are Powerful in American Schools” as an example of how materials can be modified without compromising the message. Participants have an opportunity to convert an educational concept into language accessible to limited English families.

What Families and Schools Can Do to Prevent School Violence

(see description under Workshops for Families).

**To schedule a workshop, please call
Rosie Hunter at Parents’ PLACE at
877-471-0980, Ext. 142.**



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Making a difference for kids



In December 2002, actor Tim Robbins teamed up with staff from Parents for Residential Reform, the Federation, and Massachusetts Families Organizing for Change to present an \$11,000 check to DSS Commissioner Harry Spence for holiday gifts for young people residing in state care.



Summer Fun 2003: A Listing of Day and Residential Summer Camp Programs

Published annually by the Federation, this booklet provides information on day and residential summer camps, plus a listing of local community resources.

See order form on page 8!

SAVE THE DATE!

dare to dream



Gala 2003

Celebrate with the Federation for
 Children with Special Needs

Friday, May 9th, 2003 at 6 pm
 Royal Sonesta Hotel, Cambridge, MA

The Federation will honor

Deborah Klein Walker

Associate Commissioner for Programs and Prevention,
 Department of Public Health