On Wednesday, September 19, 2012, the Recruitment, Training and Support Center (RTSC) held its first annual conference for Special Education Surrogate Parents at the Westborough Doubletree by Hilton. Over 120 people from all over Massachusetts attended the full day affair to increase their trauma sensitivity by learning the latest research based information presented by experts from the Trauma Center at JRI, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, and the University of Massachusetts Boston. After welcoming remarks from Rich Robison, Executive Director of the Federation for Children with Special Needs and Marty Mittnacht, State Director of Special Education, Dr. Margaret Blaustein from the Trauma Center at JRI presented the Keynote Address, Complex Childhood Trauma and Its Implications for School Performance and Functioning. She received effusive praise for the broad depth of her knowledge as well as her personal and professional expertise. The above-titled book, written by the Massachusetts Advocates for Children in collaboration with Harvard Law School and the Task Force on Children Affected by Domestic Violence, is both critically acclaimed and nationally recognized as a much needed resource for educators, service providers, and parents (including Special Education Surrogate Parents). This is the first in a series of articles on the four opportunities to advocate for trauma-sensitive individual supports for a child: sharing information; trauma-sensitive evaluations; trauma-sensitive team meetings; and the IEP.

**SHARING INFORMATION**

It is important that professionals working with children and families get a thorough history of traumatic events that may have occurred to the child over the course of his or her life. A comprehensive history helps caregivers and others have an appreciation of the seriousness of the child’s experience. It also provides clues to gaps in a child’s development of skills and can help caretakers and others be more supportive of the child’s recovery. Schools are not likely to gather information on a child’s trauma history as part of their standardized protocol.

The above-titled book, written by the Massachusetts Advocates for Children in collaboration with Harvard Law School and the Task Force on Children Affected by Domestic Violence, is both critically acclaimed and nationally recognized as

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**Helping Traumatized Children Learn**

The above-titled book, written by the Massachusetts Advocates for Children in collaboration with Harvard Law School and the Task Force on Children Affected by Domestic Violence, is both critically acclaimed and nationally recognized as

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**Impact of Childhood Trauma on Academic Performance**

By Jane Crecco, Training & Support Specialist
Recruitment, Training & Support Center for Special Education Surrogate Parents (RTSC)
Helping Traumatized Children Learn (continued from page 1)

They generally obtain information on trauma events only when offered, yet children can spend 6-8 hours of their day with school providers. That is almost 50% of their waking day.

Schools often do not have sufficient information about a child’s trauma history to assist appropriately with recovery efforts. Without a more thorough social history of the child, including information about a child’s trauma triggers, cues, and anniversary dates, school staff may not recognize the reasons behind challenging behavior. They may spend time addressing the behavioral consequences of trauma rather than their root causes. As a result, building social coping skills, essential to the continued neurodevelopment of traumatized children, is not addressed. Teachers and others in schools need to gain a better understanding of child trauma and work collaboratively with other organizations in order to facilitate better academic and non-academic services.1

Professionals working with students in the custody of the state need to tread carefully down this path: confidentiality is paramount, and social workers do not readily share this type of information. Sharing this type of information can make children feel vulnerable and stigmatized. Also, the “trauma story”, if not recounted with skilled clinicians, can cause retraumatization for some children. So what can be done? Department of Children and Families (DCF) social workers should share enough information with the IEP Team to indicate that trauma may be a contributing cause of learning or behavioral difficulties while avoiding unnecessary details, and always discuss the issue with the student, if it is age appropriate to do so.2

Balancing accountability with compassion is an underlying theme for teaching children with trauma histories. When disciplinary approaches that are adequate responses for typical transgressions don’t work time after time for certain students, schools should look at a trauma-sensitive evaluation tool to determine whether trauma may be a factor. According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, one of the most common measures is the Child Behavior Checklist for Children. No advanced training is necessary to administer this measure, making it practical in most trauma-related service settings, including schools.

In the next Newsline, we will discuss the use of trauma-sensitive evaluations to help IEP Teams assess the impact of complex trauma on students’ academic and non-academic performance.

There is a new word in our vocabulary: *Sequestration*

Do you remember “**Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious**”? I remember when I was a kid that it appeared as a new word in the Disney version of the musical Mary Poppins. It was hard to spell or pronounce yet became very popular.

According to Richard M. Sherman, co-writer of the song with his brother, Robert, the word was created by them in two weeks, mostly out of double-talk. The roots of the word have been defined as follows: super- “above”, cali- “beauty”, fragilistic- “delicate”, expiali- “to atone”, and docious- “educable”, with the sum of these parts signifying roughly “Atoning for educability through delicate beauty.” Although the word contains recognizable English morphemes, it does not follow the rules of English morphology as a whole. The morpheme -istic is a suffix in English, whereas the morpheme ex- is typically a prefix; so following normal English morphological rules, it would represent two words: supercalifragilistic and expialidocious. The pronunciation also leans towards it being two words since the letter c doesn’t normally sound like a k when followed by an e, an i or a y. According to the film, it is defined as “something to say when you have nothing to say”. (see Wikipedia).

Now comes another new word. This time from the US Congress and it is known as Sequestration. It is hard to spell and pronounce and most of us don’t understand what it means. Miriam Webster’s dictionary states: “the act of sequestering : the state of being sequestered as in a jury in sequestration. Or a legal writ authorizing a sheriff or commissioner to take into custody the property of a defendant who is in contempt until the orders of a court are complied with, or a deposit whereby a neutral depository agrees to hold property in litigation and to restore it to the party to whom it is adjudged to belong.”

The 2012-13 meaning of this word is completely new as it has emerged out of the federal “Budget Control Act of 2011” which seeks to limit our national spending and our national debt. The BCA calls for $900 million in cuts to federal ‘discretionary’ programs, including education. A Joint Select Committee of Congress attempted but failed to negotiate these savings and avoid the automatic cuts, known as Sequestration, which are slated to begin on January 1, 2013.

The Congressional Budget Office, a non-partisan office that advises Congress on the implications of its proposals, has estimated that sequestration will mean a cut of approximately 8% to all education programs. This means that the US Department of Education’s budget will be reduced by $3.5 billion. These are real cuts that will be felt by every school in the nation and will have a dramatic impact on educator’s abilities to serve students with disabilities. Special Education funding to States could be cut by nearly $1 billion, Early Intervention by $35 million, Early Childhood programs by $29 million and the IDEA programs that help to support special education services, including parents by $19 million.

If applying Webster’s definition is correct, it seems that the future of special education may be sequestered! It is being held hostage by an automated budget process and will remain at risk until someone can determine to whom our children and youth with disabilities truly belong, and funding is fully restored. It seems to me that the only way out of this problem is to ask the Congress to avoid a sequester, by passing a thoughtful and balanced deficit reduction measure before the end of this year’s session. And to ensure that our most vulnerable students are protected!

I don’t know what else to say! The only other word that comes to mind is “Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious”, the word you say when you have nothing else to say!

Staying hopeful,

Rich Robison
What are Accessible Learning Materials?

Information from the National Center on AIM at CAST, Inc.

Accessible learning materials are educational materials that are fully usable by all students. To ensure this is possible, both the content and the technology used to deliver and interact with the content need to be accessible, so both must be considered. For example, both an e-book (content) and an e-book reader (delivery system) need to be accessible. The same applies to e-learning systems. A computer used to access the information and the content within an e-learning system needs to be accessible. If only one component is accessible, then the materials will not be accessible to all learners.

The following “short list” of accessibility features has been developed to assist all involved in the consideration, selection, and purchase of digital instructional materials. Note that the list is not comprehensive but provides a starting point for exploring accessibility issues.

**Indicators of Accessibility**

- Device-agnostic file formats (e.g., accessible HTML, Microsoft Word, PDF, EPUB, etc.)
- Content represented in multiple ways (e.g., video captions, alt text, live text for audio, digital braille, etc.)
- Compatibility with screenreader, refreshable braille, text-to-speech, and human-voice reading software
- Compatibility with assistive technology (AT)
- Text image descriptions that can be voiced
- Navigation alternatives (e.g., keyboard shortcuts/mapping or screen gestures, etc.)
- Location supports such as page numbers and/or progress bars
- Mathematical, scientific, and music symbols, formulas, and notations represented in multiple ways (e.g., explained with text alternatives, MathML)
- If writing is required, keyboard entry is supported by alternatives (e.g., word prediction, on-screen keyboards, voice input, etc.)
- Digital rights management (DRM) must not prevent access to built-in accessibility features or necessary assistive technologies
- e-book content can be voiced and navigated with appropriate delivery systems (e.g., iBooks, EPUB, etc.)

**Resources for Checking for Accessibility**

- [http://aim.cast.org/learn/e-resources/accessibility_resources](http://aim.cast.org/learn/e-resources/accessibility_resources)
- [www.wac.osu.edu/ebook-access-overview/#funct](http://www.wac.osu.edu/ebook-access-overview/#funct)
- [www.web2access.org.uk](http://www.web2access.org.uk)
- [www.diagramcenter.org/index.php](http://www.diagramcenter.org/index.php)
- [www.webaim.org](http://www.webaim.org)

Meet Our New Director of Business and Finance: Tom Hamel

The Federation for Children with Special Needs is pleased to announce that Tom Hamel of Medford, MA has been appointed as its new Director of Business and Finance. Mr. Hamel is a graduate of Villanova University in Pennsylvania with a major in accounting. He has 14 years of experience in financial administration for three non-profit organizations in the Boston area. He has expertise in evaluating, redesigning and implementing effective financial systems for non profit organizations.

Hamel is a former Board member of Outdoor Explorations, a program to make the outdoors accessible to individuals with disabilities, a Co-Founder of a support network, the Treacher Collins Connection, and currently a member of the Vestry and Finance Committee of the Grace Episcopal Church in Medford. Tom holds the 2004 Americorps Alums National Spirit of Service Award and has presented at the National Conference on Disability Inclusion and National Service. Tom is married and has three young children.

Tom has stated, “the mission of the Federation resonates deeply with me. When I was a child, my parents faced many difficult decisions about surgeries and school placement for me. Hearing their stories of feeling alone inspired me to co-found an annual retreat for parents and children with Treachers Collins Syndrome. I admire the Federation’s emphasis on resourcing parents to make them strong advocates for people with disabilities.”

Tom replaces Mary Thompson who has retired to Florida after 14 years of dedicated service. The Federation is excited to have Tom join its leadership team.
When Julia was born with Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS), we knew the time would come when we would need to find the right words to share her diagnosis with all three of our children.

During the early years, we provided family and friends with literature about PWS, a rare genetic disorder (1:15,000) causing individuals to always feel hungry and have low tone, developmental delays and other health-related complications. The typical response was “Prader-what? I’ve never heard of that....” Labeling Julia with PWS wasn’t helpful in explaining her condition. It felt like trying to teach adults another language that we hadn’t learned ourselves yet! We decided to let everyone get to know Julia first, rather than explaining PWS.

Time has a way of slipping by. When Julia was not quite 2 years old, we learned she had hip dysplasia and needed surgery, the first of several. Julia spent a year in a full body cast. Hospital stays, medical equipment, hours of therapy, a new baby – it never seemed to be the right time talk to our children about PWS.

Julia attended an integrated preschool, where she was one of many students with a range of abilities. No need to talk about PWS, just yet. However, when the team decided to place Julia in mainstream kindergarten, even with supports, differences in her behavior became more noticeable. We reached out to other families we knew through Prader-Willi Association of New England, a network for families facing similar challenges, seeking advice and strategies. As kindergarten ended, Julia had pelvic reconstruction surgery so she would continue to be able to walk. Six months later, Julia was back on her feet, much to her siblings’ relief. One night, tucking my son into bed, he asked, “So Julia is going to be okay now, right?” Hmm... time was ticking; gentle explanations were needed, but it didn’t feel fair to add anxiety to our children who had already weathered so much.

As Julia entered second grade and was exhibiting anxiety and isolation, school staff pressured us to talk to the class about her diagnosis. We decided to talk to our children first about PWS and allow them time to process it, since it would be part of their life-long experience.

Early one Sunday evening last February, Julia’s siblings were teasing her about something that had upset her. The time had come.
More than Carrots and Sticks

Leslie M. Leslie, Coordinator - MassPAC

Angry words quickly derailed your meeting - conflict wasn’t even on the agenda. Plans for the year fell victim to in-fighting and resentment and people were threatening to quit. While everyone wanted to start a SEPAC and realized its benefits, diverse opinions got in the way.

Conflict is a natural part of working in groups. Even good leaders must practice effective strategies for managing conflict in order to keep a group moving forward successfully.

Conflict sometimes occurs when individuals or groups are not obtaining what they need or want and are seeking their own self-interest. If conflict is not handled effectively, the results can be damaging. Conflict takes away attention from other important activities; it can undermine morale and polarize people, thereby reducing cooperation. Once teamwork breaks down, talent is wasted and it is easy to end up with a dispirited group.

Poor communication is often a cause of conflict. The lack of openness leads to resentment and dissatisfaction. People can jump to the wrong conclusions without open dialogue about issues. Remember, conflict on some points is inevitable, but conflict should be minimized, diverted or best, resolved.

What can a SEPAC chair do to manage a diverse group of thinkers? Good communication and strong leadership can help a group move past or negotiate through conflict. Conflict is not necessarily a bad thing: as long as it is resolved effectively, it can lead to personal and professional growth. Effective conflict resolution can bring about a positive result for both individuals and an organization.

Some of the benefits of conflict resolution include:

- Your group will have an increased understanding of an issue allowing insight into how they can achieve their own goals without undermining those of other people.
- When conflict is resolved effectively, your group will see increased group cohesion as team members develop stronger mutual respect and a renewed faith in their ability to work together.

- Conflict pushes individuals to examine their goals in close detail, helping them understand the things that are most important to them, sharpening their focus, and thereby improving their self-knowledge.

If handled effectively, conflict can lead to the clarification of problems and issues, creative solutions and even help build cooperation among people as they learn more about each other. Authentic communication helps release emotion and anxiety to reduce the conflict. In the future, individuals will have better skills to resolve new issues.

What can a leadership team do when faced with conflict?

- Start with open communication and good listening.
- Provide data so everyone has all of the information.
- Be open to new ideas.
- Keep the focus on issues.
- Set a positive tone for meetings.
- Don’t be afraid to bring conflict out into the open.

By keeping an attitude that holding different views is both natural and healthy to a group, you can remain calm, steer your members to a better outcome and develop respect among the parties – a win-win situation.

To learn more about MassPAC, call Leslie at 617-399-8307, e-mail leslie@fcsn.org, or visit www.fcsn.org.
Disability Status Report Update on the Cornell Website

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), which is an annual national campaign led by the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy to raise awareness about disability employment issues and to celebrate the many and varied contributions of America’s workers with disabilities (see www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/).

As part of NDEAM, Cornell University released updated statistics on the national employment status of people with disabilities, through their online disability status report.

According to Cornell University’s Disability Status Report:

• One in ten (10.3%) working age persons (21-64) have a disability (18.3 million).
• Only a third (33.9%) of working-age people with disabilities were employed, compared with the three quarters (75.4%) of people without disabilities.
• Over a quarter (27.0 percent) of working-age Americans with disabilities lived in poverty, compared to 11.9 percent of those without disabilities.
• $36,800: the median income of a household with a working age person with a disability -- nearly 40% less than the household income without a working age person with a disability ($59,400).
• Nearly one in five (18.4%) civilian veterans ages 21-64 have a VA service connected disability.

These and many more state and national statistics are available in the Disability Status Reports. Download them for free at www.DisabilityStatistics.org. DisabilityStatistics.org provides an easy to use one-stop center to access state and national level disability statistics including many topics and breakdowns not available elsewhere.

Upcoming Federation Events...

Visions of Community 2013
A Conference for Families of Children with Special Needs and the Professionals Who Serve Them
Saturday, March 9\textsuperscript{th}\ 17:30 am - 5:00 pm
Seaport World Trade Center | Boston, MA

Our annual Visions of Community conference provides an opportunity to:

• Choose from more than 30 topical workshops for all ages and interests
• Meet Federation staff and learn about all of the projects at the Federation
• Visit our exhibit hall with parent organizations, vendors, and lots of FREE resources
• Network, network, network!

Keynote Speakers:

Professor Thomas Hehir, Ed.D.
Harvard Graduate School of Education Scholar, advocate and author of Effective Inclusive Schools

Mr. Brian Heffernan
self-advocate, student at MassBay Community College

Planning a Life: Making the Most out of High School

The transition process can be overwhelming for families because resources and information on transition planning are often difficult to find. This two-day conference is packed with Transition planning information and resources for and about students in special education ages 14-22.

January 11 & 12, 2013 - Boston
March 15 & 16, 2013 - Springfield
April 12 & 13, 2013 - Berkshires
May 10 & 11, 2013 - South of Boston (TBA)

For more information visit fcsn.org
We provide the tools for students to succeed

Tools we use:
- iPad and iTouch
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We accept students who are/have:
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VP: 866-320-3233 www.thechildrenscenterforcommunication.org
Our Annual Appeal: Success for Every Child Challenge

We are more than excited to announce this year’s Annual Appeal, the “Success for Every Child Challenge”! A wonderful friend to the Federation has generously pledged $50,000 in matching funds for this year’s Annual Appeal. This means that your gift to this year’s Annual Appeal, through the “Success for Every Child Challenge” will double in value, as the “Success for Every Child Challenge” funds will be used to match your gift dollar-for-dollar! Your gift of $50….NOW WORTH $100!! Your gift of $500….NOW WORTH $1,000!!

Please rise to the Challenge. Make your gift work twice as hard for the Federation, so we can continue to rise to the challenge of meeting the critical needs of families. Your support will ensure “Success for Every Child” in the coming year!

You can support our “Success for Every Child Challenge” by check, or online at https://fcsn.org/donations/donate.html

The Power of Words

By Maureen Jerz, Director of Development

Sometimes we find ourselves wondering if we are really using all of the right words when we try to explain to people what it is we do at the Federation, and why it is so important to families. Do our messages really speak to who we are as an organization? Are we accurately reflecting our values to the public?

This past week, I had the enjoyment of heading out to a number of federal agencies to talk to employees there about the work we do. You see, fall is the time for the Combined Federal Campaign. The Combined Federal Campaign is the Employee Charitable Giving program for federal employees. Organizations like ours can apply to be participants in the Combined Federal Campaign, and federal employees can then chose to designate a payroll deduction to go to a particular charity, for example, the Federation (our CFC # is 20226). During the Combined Federal Campaign, nonprofits are invited to come and speak with employees about their organizations, providing a great opportunity to “get our message out.”

I talked to many, many wonderful people, handed out our organizational materials, answered questions about our programs, how we are funded, and how many people we serve annually. I was pleased to have the opportunity on two occasions to play our absolutely beautiful public service announcement. It was a great week of really letting folks know about the excellent work we do.

As I finished up my last presentation, I had a few extra minutes, and asked if there were any questions I could answer. A woman raised her hand, and stood up. “I don’t have a question,” she said. “I just wanted to say that I have a child with special needs, and I have called the Federation for help. I want all of you here to know that they are a wonderful organization.”

And it hit me. Those simple words, spoken from the heart, are the core of our message. Yes, we need to continue to do all of the other kinds of communication pieces we do, but this moment served as a reminder that the experiences of the families we serve are the most powerful messages of all. What do we do at the Federation for Children with Special Needs? We help families whose children have special needs, and we do it well.

Your support of the Federation encourages us to continue serving families each and every day. Thank you for helping us help you! Please be sure to donate to the Federation’s “Success for Every Child Challenge” before the end of this year.

Other Ways to Support FCSN This Year

• Commonwealth of Massachusetts Employee Charitable Campaign (COMECC): FCSN’s designation number is 111233.

• City of Boston Employee Campaign (COBEC): FCSN’s designation number is 2594.

• United Way: All you need is the Federation’s Tax ID number (04-2557572) and address (The Schrafft Center, 529 Main Street, Suite 1102, Boston, MA 02129).

• Your workplace: Check with your employer to see if your company has a Charitable Giving Program

• Amazon: Go to fcsn.org and click on the Amazon link when you do your holiday shopping.
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Transition Advisory

On September 17, 2012 the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) posted a Technical Assistance Advisory - Postsecondary Goals and Annual IEP Goals in the Transition Planning Process on their website www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/13_1ta.html. The stated purpose of this advisory is to: a.) highlight the central role of appropriate measurable postsecondary goals and annual IEP goals in the transition planning process for students with IEPs, ages 14-22 and b.) provide guidance to school districts concerning the inclusion of postsecondary goals in the Transition Planning Form (TPF) (28M/9) and the inclusion of postsecondary goals and annual goals in the IEP.

The advisory is important because Transition goals and services are an essential part of every student’s education as they move from school to adult life. One of the purposes of IDEA is to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free and appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. These big three areas of learning are the foundation for all transition related discussions, assessment, goals and services.

The advisory states, “The ultimate goal of all professional endeavors in special education is to prepare students with disabilities for adult life.”

Self-determination, education, employment and independent living goals need to be developed in collaboration with families and school partners in guidance, general education, special education and others. These school teams encourage individualized post school planning that support both academic and employability skill attainment.

The advisory notes the importance and appropriate use of the Transition Planning Form (TPF) including the relationship of the TPF to the development of postsecondary goals, an expression of the student’s vision and their desired future outcomes.

The TPF discussion is the foundation for the development of annual IEP goals which are based upon age-appropriate transition assessment, defined as “an ongoing process of collecting data on the individual’s needs, preferences, and interests as they relate to the demands of current and future working, educational, living, and personal and social environments.” Additionally, input from the student, his/her family, and others who know the student well; student transcripts; MCAS results; teacher notes; previous IEPs; achievement tests; functional behavioral assessments; life skills and/or interest inventories, etc. are important to goal development.

In the final step, the team completes the IEP form, detailing any required transition services and supports which flow from the postsecondary goals and the annual IEP goals, as well as any other necessary information.

According to IDEA, transition services are a “coordinated set of activities... within a results-oriented process,” so as to facilitate a student’s “movement from school to post-school activities.” This means that for every student, the transition planning process needs to be done in a purposeful, scheduled and organized way to ensure an individualized meaningful learning experience. This Technical Assistance Advisory from DESE helps to clarify this for everyone involved in the transition process.

Impact of Childhood Trauma on Academic Performance (continued from page 1)

There were many opportunities to connect with other SESPs throughout Massachusetts during the session break while coffee and sumptuous desserts were served. Several exhibitors were also offering information and support during the conference breaks: Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE), Children’s Law Center of Massachusetts, and MassPAC. All of the handouts and PowerPoint presentation notes are on our Website (www.fcsn.org/rtsc) for “read only” purposes.

All of us at RTSC wish to thank everyone involved in our first Annual Conference. Next year, we hope to see you all again for another informative and fun meeting where even more SESPs can meet and greet, and enjoy a meal together. Thank you for a wonderful first year at RTSC!
The Recruitment, Training and Support Center (RTSC) for Special Education Surrogate Parents Celebrates Its First Year

Over 120 people from all over Massachusetts attended the full day affair to increase their trauma sensitivity.

RTSC Project Director Margaret (Peggie) O’Hare (l) and Former SESPP Program Director Michelle Poulin (r)

RTSC staff Jane Crecco (l) and Sarah Stevenson (r) cheerfully display resources offered at the conference.

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lexington, ma www.cotting.org 781-863-7323

Quality of Family Supports

The Family Support Centers (FSCs) of Seven Hills Family Services of central MA make a measurable difference in the quality of life for individuals with disabilities and their families including:
- Family Support Specialists
- Comprehensive Education
- Information & Referral
- Training Library
- Trainings in English & Spanish
- Respite Care

The FSCs are located in Worcester, Fitchburg, and Sturbridge. To learn more, contact 508.796.1850 or visit www.sevenhills.org.
Cómo apoyar el aprendizaje de los niños traumatizados

El libro del mismo título (“Helping Traumatized Children Learn”, en inglés), escrito por la organización de defensores de los niños “Massachusetts Advocates for Children”, en colaboración con la Facultad de Derecho de Harvard y el Grupo de tareas sobre niños afectados por la violencia doméstica (“Task Force on Children Affected by Domestic Violence”), ha sido aclamado por la crítica y reconocido a nivel nacional como un recurso muy necesario para educadores, proveedores de servicios y padres (incluso los padres sustitutos en la educación especial ). Este es el primero de una serie de artículos acerca de las cuatro oportunidades para abogar a favor de soportes individuales para los niños: intercambio de información, evaluaciones y reuniones de equipo sensibles al trauma y planes educativos individualizados.

INTERCAMBIO DE INFORMACIÓN

Es importante que los profesionales que trabajan con niños y familias conozcan a fondo los antecedentes de trauma que puedan haber ocurrido en la vida de un joven. Estar bien informados de esta historia ayuda a las personas que atienden al niño a apreciar la gravedad de la experiencia. También les ofrece pistas sobre las brechas en el desarrollo de habilidades y puede ayudarles a apoyar más efectivamente la recuperación. Las escuelas generalmente no reúnen información sobre los antecedentes de trauma de un alumno como parte de su protocolo estandarizado. Suelen obtener esta información sólo cuando se ofrece, a pesar de que los niños pasan entre seis y ocho horas diarias con el personal escolar, es decir, casi la mitad del tiempo que están despiertos.

Las escuelas a menudo no tienen suficiente información sobre los antecedentes de trauma como para apoyar adecuadamente los esfuerzos de recuperación. Sin una historia social más completa que incluya información sobre los factores desencadenantes, las señales y las fechas de aniversario de los sucesos traumáticos, el personal escolar tal vez no reconozca los motivos de la conducta desafiante. Pueden pasar tiempo tratando las consecuencias conductuales del trauma en lugar de las causas de éste. Como resultado, el desarrollo de las habilidades sociales de este niño no avanza. El personal escolar debe considerar el uso de una herramienta de evaluación sensible al trauma repetidamente para algunos estudiantes, las escuelas deberían valorar el uso de una herramienta de evaluación sensible al trauma para determinar si éste puede ser un factor. Según la Red Nacional para el 2

El estrés traumático infantil, uno de los instrumentos más comunes es la Lista de Comprobación de la Conducción Infantil (“Child Behavior Checklist for Children”, en inglés). Como el uso de esta herramienta no requiere capacitación avanzada, es práctica en la mayoría de las situaciones de trauma, incluidas las escuelas.

En el siguiente número de este boletín, hablaremos del uso de evaluaciones sensibles al trauma para ayudar a los equipos a cargo de los planes educativos individualizados a evaluar el impacto del trauma complejo en el rendimiento académico y no académico de los estudiantes.

Las escuelas a menudo no tienen suficiente información sobre los antecedentes de trauma como para apoyar adecuadamente el desarrollo de habilidades sociales de este niño. El personal escolar debe considerar el uso de una herramienta de evaluación sensible al trauma repetidamente para algunos estudiantes, las escuelas deberían valorar el uso de una herramienta de evaluación sensible al trauma para determinar si éste puede ser un factor. Según la Red Nacional para el 2

El equilibrio entre la responsabilidad y la compasión es algo fundamental para enseñarles a los niños con antecedentes de trauma. Cuando los enfoques disciplinarios que representan responden a los eventos traumáticos no se aborden, los maestros y el resto del personal escolar tal vez no reconozcan los motivos de la conducta desafiante. Pueden pasar tiempo tratando las consecuencias conductuales del trauma en lugar de las causas de éste. Como resultado, el desarrollo de las habilidades sociales de este niño no avanza. El personal escolar debe considerar el uso de una herramienta de evaluación sensible al trauma repetidamente para algunos estudiantes, las escuelas deberían valorar el uso de una herramienta de evaluación sensible al trauma para determinar si éste puede ser un factor. Según la Red Nacional para el 2

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Los profesionales que trabajan con estudiantes que están bajo la custodia del estado deben proceder con cautela: la confidencialidad es fundamental, y los trabajadores sociales no suelen compartir fácilmente este tipo de información, ya que esto puede hacer que los niños se sientan vulnerables y estigmatizados. Además, si los eventos traumáticos no se relatan ante profesionales clínicos capacitados, algunos niños pueden traumatizarse todavía más. Entonces, ¿qué se puede hacer? Los trabajadores sociales del Departamento de Niños y Familias deberían compartir suficiente información con el equipo a cargo del plan educativo individualizado como para indicar que un suceso traumático puede estar contribuyendo a las dificultades de aprendizaje o conducta, pero evitando dar detalles innecesarios. Y siempre deben hablar del tema con el estudiante, si es apropiado para su edad.


A.P.P.L.E Institute
Free Leadership Training for PACs and Administrators of Special Education
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The A.P.P.L.E Institute is a 3-day training program for up to 6 school district teams. District teams should consist of a minimum of three parents and a district special education administrator or designee. The teams will learn and apply collaborative leadership skills and develop team action plans for increasing parent involvement in the district. For more information visit www.fcsn.org/apple
Sharing A Diagnosis With Your Children (continued from page 5)

After dinner, I shared a children’s book called “Michael and Marie: Children with Prader–Willi Syndrome,” written by Valerie Rush Sexton and Debbie Fortin. As I read the story, my son said, “That sounds just like Julia!” I gently explained that a diagnosis doesn’t change who we are inside; it helps explain why some things are harder for some. We discussed disabilities in general, as well as a few friends they have met who have PWS, and this helped them. I encouraged them to ask any questions. Our five-year old daughter wanted to know “Do I have PWS?”

Julia continued to process all of this, asking, “Isn’t this my private business?” I explained it is helpful for her brother and sister to know, so they can understand her and be supportive. Over the next few weeks, there were occasional questions.

Since February, Julia has come to understand PWS is only a part of her. Once we framed the diagnosis in terms of what makes Julia special – she is so caring, has beautiful curly hair, hazel eyes, and loves puzzles, reading, swimming, computer games, Girl Scouts, biking, swimming and animals – and she also happens to have PWS!

The process of sharing Julia’s diagnosis has ultimately strengthened our family. Now Julia shares her diagnosis with those she knows and trusts, and we are all extremely proud of her!

Family TIES of Massachusetts is a statewide network, providing emotional support and information and referral services to families and professionals who support children and youth with special needs.

Often, parents talk with our staff and our volunteer Support Parents, through the Parent-to-Parent Program, about heartfelt topics, such as this. This is one family’s story. We hope you found it inspiring, and will reach out to our program if you, too, are considering how to share a diagnosis with your child, no matter what the special need or age.

To contact Family TIES of Massachusetts: call our toll-free line, 800-905-TIES (8437) or visit our website, www.massfamilyties.org.

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Ajudando o Aprendizado de Crianças Traumatizadas

O livro acima intitulado, escrito pelos Defensores das Crianças de Massachusetts em colaboração com a Universidade de Direito de Harvard e a Força Tarefa sobre Crianças Afetadas pela Violência Doméstica, são ambos criticamente aclamados e nacionalmente reconhecidos como um recurso bastante necessário para os educadores, provedores de serviço e pais (inclusive Pais Substitutos em Educação Especial). Este é o primeiro de uma série de artigos sobre as quatro oportunidades para defender o apoio individual para uma criança sensível ao trauma: compartilhando informação; avaliações sobre sensibilidade ao trauma, reunião de equipes sobre sensibilidade ao trauma; e o IEP.

COMPARTILHANDO INFORMAÇÃO

É importante que os profissionais que trabalham com as crianças e as famílias recebam uma história completa sobre os eventos traumáticos que possam ter ocorrido à criança durante o curso da sua vida. Uma história abrangente ajuda àqueles que oferecem serviços e a outros, a terem um entendimento da seriedade da experiência sofrida pela criança. Também fornece dicas às lacunas no desenvolvimento da criança relacionadas a capacidades e pode ajudar àqueles que prestam serviços a proporcionar maior apoio na recuperação da criança. Não é provável que as escolas recolham informações sobre a história traumática da criança como parte de seu protocolo padrão. Elas geralmente obtêm informação sobre os acontecimentos traumáticos somente quando oferecidos, entretanto as crianças podem passar de 6-8 horas de seus dias com os provedores escolares. Isto é quase 50% do tempo que passam acordados.

As escolas geralmente não têm informação suficiente sobre a história traumática da criança para ajudar apropriadamente nos esforços de recuperação. Sem uma investigação mais aprofundada da história social da criança, incluindo as informações sobre o que aciona, as dicas, as datas do aniversário do trauma da criança, as equipes escolares poderão não reconhecer as razões que se encontram por trás do comportamento desafiador. Elas poderão gastar tempo abordando as consequências comportamentais do trauma em vez de suas causas originárias. Como resultado, a construção de capacidades para lidar com o social, essencial para dar continuidade ao desenvolvimento neurológico das crianças traumatizadas, não é abordada. Professores e outros nas escolas necessitam adquirir um melhor conhecimento do trauma infantil e trabalhar em colaboração com outras organizações a fim de facilitate melhores serviços acadêmicos e não acadêmicos.

Profissionais que trabalham com alunos que se encontram sob a custódia do estado precisam de cuidadosa cautela neste caminho: confidencialidade é fundamental, e assistentes sociais não compartilham prontamente com este tipo de informação. Compartilhar este tipo de informação pode fazer com que as crianças se sintam vulneráveis e estigmatizadas. Além disso, a “história do trauma”, se não discutida com médicos qualificados, pode ser traumatizante para algumas crianças. Então, o que pode ser feito? Assistentes sociais do DCF deveriam compartilhar suficiente informação com a Equipe IEP para indicar que o trauma pode estar sendo a causa contribuidora das dificuldades de aprendizagem e de comportamento, no entanto, evitar detalhes desnecessários, e sempre discutir o assunto com o aluno, se a idade apropriada permitir fazê-lo.

Equilibrar responsabilidade com compaixão é um tema adjacente para ensinar crianças com histórias de trauma. Quando abordagens disciplinares que são respostas adequadas para transgressões típicas não funcionam ao longo do tempo para certos alunos, as escolas deveriam considerar uma ferramenta de avaliação sobre a sensibilidade traumática para determinar se o trauma pode ser um fator. De acordo com a Rede Nacional do Estresse do Trauma Infantil, uma das medidas mais comum é a Lista de Verificação do Comportamento Infantil para as crianças.

Nenhum treinamento adiantado é necessário para administrar esta medida, tornando-a prática na maioria dos serviços de configuração relacionados ao trauma, incluindo as escolas.

No próximo Boletim-Informativo, nós discutiremos o uso de avaliações sobre a sensibilidade ao trauma para ajudar as Equipes do IEP a medir o impacto da complexidade traumática no desempenho acadêmico e não acadêmico dos alunos.


Pediatrician Louis Pellegrino provides useful information in this new version of the bestseller *When Your Child Has a Disability*. Parents new to special needs or a diagnosis will find this book helpful.

Developmental milestones are described in detail. Each milestone notes possible delays with advice on when to observe and when to be concerned. It breaks down different issues, challenges and ultimately, disabilities. The drawings and “FYI” visuals are very helpful. Another important message is that just because “Uncle Joe” showed the same symptoms as your child, it does not mean it should be ignored. Uncle Joe’s struggles may be omitted from the story.

The best advice comes when the author encourages parents to “trust their instincts.” This is important as families consider the input of multiple specialists.

It was disappointing in chapter 10 when medication was discussed. Two families were presented. The married parents of a child researched and hesitated to medicate, while the overwhelmed single mother sought a “quick fix” to her son’s behavioral challenges. The single mother does not represent most parents and added to the stereotype of children from single parent homes experiencing additional struggles.

Overall the book was enjoyable, visual and helpful to parents and professionals alike.
Visions of Community 2013

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For more information see page 7 or visit www.fcsn.org