Kindergarten is the first year of formal school for most children in the United States. In kindergarten, hands-on learning activities help prepare youngsters for the challenges that lie ahead. Parents can prepare themselves and their children in various ways for a smooth and positive transition to kindergarten.

**How can I help my child prepare?**

Babies are born ready to learn. Parents and families can help children make the most of these important early learning years. Up to age 5, children’s brains are growing at a dazzling pace! Contributions made to learning in those years will last a lifetime. The most important things continue on page 6

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**All children have a right to attend Kindergarten in Massachusetts.**

School districts in Massachusetts must provide kindergarten for all five year old children whose families want to send them. A child does not have to already possess specific developmental, behavioral, social or academic skills to be enrolled in kindergarten. Children with physical, mental or any other kind of disability, hospitalized children, and children who are learning English for the first time cannot be denied enrollment based on those conditions.
Welcome to the Team!

By The LiNK Center Team, FCSN – Jennifer Stewart, Becky Rizoli and Leslie M. Leslie

The LINK Center: Connecting to Your Future welcomes a new Transition Specialist to help lead our transition project. Jennifer Stewart joins the Federation for Children with Special Needs as a former Transition Specialist at EMARC and a 2015 LEND Fellow graduate from the Shriver Center. Jennifer has a Master’s in Public Policy from the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Colorado. She brings great experience from both a systems level policy perspective along with information and skills around supporting families through the transition planning process. Jennifer has worked with youth with disabilities over the past ten years in various capacities from providing vocational counseling, supporting families to access resources, developing programming, building system capacity, and researching and evaluating impact. She looks forward to working with many of the families and partners of the Federation for Children with Special Needs to enhance transition information and services in Massachusetts.

The LINK Center team also includes Becky Rizoli as Youth Outreach Specialist and Leslie Leslie as team coordinator. They will connect families and individuals with disabilities (ages 14-26) through individualized technical assistance to education and training, website and list serve resources, and active participation in community based events. The LINK Center will work with statewide agencies and organizations to support effective transition practices.

Make sure to check out the new LINK Center website in early fall (www.fcsn.org/linkcenter) to find new resources and information to better access information around transition. Feel free to connect with the LINK Center to offer feedback or comment on happenings in the field of transition. Information about transition will be offered in new ways to help you access statewide transition information - workshops, webinars, our two-day Planning a Life conferences, social media and the website. We look forward to making sure the LINK Center can connect all youth to their futures.

Jennifer Stewart

The Children’s Center for Communication
Beverly School for the Deaf Founded in 1876

We provide the tools for students to succeed

Tools we use:
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- Touchscreen Computers
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- Dynamic/Voice Output Systems
- ASL
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- Spoken/Printed English
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We accept students who are/have:
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- Developmental and Physical Challenges
- Medical Needs
- Moderate to Intensive Special Needs

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The Children’s Center for Communication/Beverly School for the Deaf uses cutting-edge technology in delivering the highest possible level of communication-based education. We invite you to visit our Beverly campus and see firsthand.

For more information on our programs contact President/Executive Director Mark Carlson at 978-927-7070 ext. 202 • markcarlson@cccbbsd.org
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The Federation for Children with Special Needs

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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From the Executive Director:
IDEA Changes Lives: Forty Years of Parent Training and Support

2015 marks the 40th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In the same year, the first center to help parents understand IDEA and how to advocate for their children with disabilities was born.

The first center received funding after Harvey Liebergott, then director of the Recruitment and Information Program, Bureau of Education for the Handicapped of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, met Martha Ziegler, director of the newly formed Federation for Children with Special Needs in Boston, Mass. Martha was a key parent leader who worked to pass the Massachusetts’ special education law, which in turn influenced the federal law. Martha had an idea for a walk-in parent information center.

In an April 4, 1975 letter to Martha providing funds for a pilot center, Harvey wrote, “Although we are not yet ready to commit ourselves to the funding on a long term basis, we would like to find a way to fund your proposal for the short term as a pilot for a period of six months to begin to implement a systemic method to do information and referral with follow-up... And in thinking of the long term, we do not anticipate funding projects for more than three years, establishing some basis for the centers to survive once federal support has ended. We estimate it will cost about ten million dollars to maintain comprehensive information and referral centers nationwide.” In an April 10, 1975 letter, Martha accepted the challenge of creating the pilot center, saying, “We expect to make some false starts...the essential point is to develop a working model.”

Forty years later, Martha’s commitment to providing parents with information and training has led to a large network of federally funded centers. Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) provide services to families in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Federal investments in parent training and information grew to include Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs) that serve parents in the most need of information and training in 30 communities as well as technical assistance centers that help parent centers provide the best information and support to families.

Harvey spoke at Martha’s memorial service in October 2014, saying, “She prodded and assisted everyone who could help. Martha saw the other organizations as allies, not competition. And she had lists of every relevant advocate and every constituency, with their needs and goals. Martha’s pitch was simple: all of the other groups included disproportionate numbers of children with special needs. She intended to support them and hoped that they would support her. They did. In Washington, Martha worked both sides of the aisle, and became a driving force in writing and passing and implementing virtually all of the important disability legislation of our time.”

The work that began in April 1975 continues every time parent centers develop the next generation of parent leaders and self-advocates. Martha’s legacy endures when families and professionals work tirelessly together to fulfill the promise of IDEA to improve “educational results for children with disabilities [as] an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities.”

Best wishes,

Rich Robison

This article was original written by Rich Robison as a U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Blog

Federation Executive Director Receives
MA Association of School Superintendents 2015 Distinguished Service Award

On Thursday May 21, 2015 Federation Executive Director Richard Robison received the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents’ (MASS) 2015 Distinguished Service Award for his outstanding leadership and service in public education. In recognizing Mr. Robison, MASS acknowledged Rich is a staunch advocate for children with special needs but also understands the challenges and issues faced by teachers and school leaders. Rich has been widely respected for his understanding approach to dealing with the advocacy of children and families as they progress through our school districts. He has been an exceptional advocate for the families of children with special needs by providing perspective and balance in dealing with complex issues.
Glittery chandeliers, strings of pearls and other jazzy decorations greeted guests at the Federation’s 1920s jazz-themed annual fundraising gala. Gala 2015 – Celebrating Every Child, was held on Friday, May 15th at the Westin Waterfront Hotel. In keeping with the theme, guests began the evening bidding on some wonderful items during the Jazz, Juice and Jewels Silent Auction preceding dinner and the evening’s program. Reception entertainment was provided by jazz guitarist Jackson Fitzgerald.

Guests entered the ballroom at 7:30pm, where they were welcomed by the Federation’s Executive Director Rich Robison and former WCVB news anchor Susan Wornick. Wornick served as Master of Ceremonies for the second year in a row. She spoke of her love for the work of the Federation and how thrilled she was to be the emcee once again.

Before dinner, guests were treated to a performance by Zachary Bennoui, a jazz pianist and student at Perkins School for the Blind. Zachary started playing piano at the age of 18 months, and began composing his own tunes as a child. The professional quality of music was reminiscent of Vince Guaraldi, the jazz pianist whose music was featured in the “Charlie Brown” TV specials. Zachary provided an additional performance of several more beautiful jazz numbers after dinner, and before the evening’s awards presentation.

Following dinner, Federation Board President Jim Whalen came forward to present the President’s Award to John Hancock. The award was given in recognition of the company’s commitment to supporting the Federation’s Visions of Community Conference over many years. Tom Crohan, Assistant Vice President & Counsel, Corporate Responsibility & Government Relations at John Hancock, accepted the award on behalf of John Hancock reaffirming the organization’s commitment to inclusion of people with disabilities noting that, “Disabled does not mean unable.”

The Martha Ziegler Award was introduced by Federation co-founder Betsy Anderson, who spoke briefly about Ziegler and her career. Anne Howard, a professor at Fitchburg State University, and a Federation Board member, was this year’s Martha Ziegler Founders Award recipient. Anne was honored for her passion for teaching both parents and professionals, providing them with the ability to become active participants in improving the quality of education for all children.

The final honorees were introduced by Gala Committee Chairperson Susan Arndt. The Patricia Blake Advocacy Award is given to honor and recognize the legacy of former Federation Associate Executive Director Pat Blake. Susan noted that this year was the first time that the award was presented to children, as the next generation of advocates. When Tim Keefe found out that his brother Danny, who has childhood apraxia of speech, was being bullied at school, he confided in his friend Tommy Cooney. Together, they decided to do something about it by starting “Danny Appreciation Day” at their school. Their stand against bullying, and their support and advocacy for Danny gained national attention and inspired many people, including all attending this event.
The Paralympic Experience 2015: Competition and Fun

By Joe Walsh, Founder and President, Adaptive Sports NE

On June 20th, the sounds of pick-up basketball, rowing ergs, and trash talking eight year-olds rose above the hum at Newton North High School. On the basketball court, prosthetic legs and day use wheelchairs sat idle while players wove up and down practicing a drill. Cheers erupted when a beginner rolled the ball up from the floor on his wheel. The tiny orange wheelchair of a second-grader kept a significant lead on one of the 6’6” Gentle Giant Moving volunteers. Shoe-horned into a sport wheelchair and laboring to control his laughter, the volunteer knew he wasn’t going to catch the more experienced competitor.

This was the Summer 2015 Paralympic Experience. Spaulding Adaptive Sports Centers, Community Rowing, South Boston and Dorchester Boys & Girls Clubs, and Youth Enrichment Services (YES) shared information on where, when and how to play locally. There were clinics in wheelchair track, basketball, and softball, running, soccer, beep baseball, rowing, boccia and golf. Medal winning swimmers from the London 2012 Paralympic Games signed autographs, took pictures, and promoted a Paralympic Sport Club (PSC) swimming initiative that will launch in September.

Paralympians Joe LeMar, Cheri Blauwet, and Joe Quintanilla introduced participants to running and wheelchair racing for the first time. They also managed workouts for athletes preparing for the International Wheelchair and Ambulatory Sports Junior World Games and the National Junior Disability Championships.

With its numerous co-hosts, Adaptive Sports New England coordinated the Summer 2015 Paralympic Experience. Adaptive Sports NE was formed in 2013 to promote participation in sports by youth and young adults who have visual or mobility impairments. Only 1250 Massachusetts students are on IEPs related to orthopedic impairments and only 550 are on IEPs related to vision impairments. School and community-based sports programs often have no experience with adaptations that can often make participation easy for students. The Paralympic Experience, PSC Boston, and Adaptive Sports New England can provide support so more kids can play more sports, more often, and closer to home.

Joe Walsh is founder and president of Adaptive Sports New England, which is based in Boston. An early beneficiary of Chapter 766, Joe is legally blind, a graduate of Dartmouth College and U. Mass Amherst, a two-time Paralympian in cross country skiing, and former Managing Director of Paralympics at the United States Olympic Committee. For more information go to www.adaptivesportsne.org, e-mail joe.walsh@adaptivesportsne.org or call 617-982-2763.

Got Questions? Call the Parent Information Center

At the Federation for Children with Special Needs we are focused on educating and empowering families to become the best advocates for their children. One of the services we offer is our Call Center, where families and professionals can ask questions about the special education process. The Call Center is staffed with Information Specialists trained in federal and state special education laws, as well as special education rights, processes, and procedures. We can walk you through issues such as determining your child’s eligibility for an IEP (Individualized Education Program), how to request and understand evaluations, how to develop and interpret an IEP that is specifically designed for your child and is effective and measureable. Additionally, we can help you understand your role as a member of the IEP team, identify the school’s responsibilities in the special education process, and resolve any differences you may have with your child’s school. Our staff is very knowledgeable about the availability of additional resources in your area that can support you in meeting your child’s needs.

Sometimes there is more work to be done than can be accomplished in a single telephone call. You may need someone to attend a meeting with you, review documentation, or personally walk you through the process of eligibility for an IEP. We can assist you by referring to a Parent Consultant who has attended our Parent Consultant Training Institute program. The Parent Consultant Training Institute is our special education advocacy course. We refer to Parent Consultants who have completed an internship with us in special education advocacy. If we feel that you would be best served by working with a Parent Consultant, we can provide you with a referral to Parent Consultant (or “advocate” as they are often called.) We will do our best to match you with a Parent Consultant who understands your child’s disability, works within your general area, and whose fee structure meets your financial abilities.

Our Call Center is open from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday (except holidays.) We can be reached by calling 617-236-7210 (toll-free at 1-800-331-0688) or emailing info@fcsn.org. We are here to listen and provide information and resources. Please do not hesitate to give us a call! We look forward to hearing from you!
families can do are to talk and read to their children from the day they are born. When reading or talking to your child, ask questions and explain things. Conversations and books can teach more than just how to recognize words. They can build important critical thinking skills.

Establish routines. At least a month before school starts, begin to set firm mealtime and bedtime schedules. Schedule daytime activities as well, like watching TV, playing, and doing chores. Get your child used to being on time and things happening on schedule. A good night’s sleep (10 - 12 hours) and a nutritious breakfast will help keep your child focused and learning. Place is also important. Set up a place where your child reads, paints, colors, and makes things. Put the backpack and school supplies in the same place to have them ready to go in the morning.

Talk about kindergarten. Weeks before school starts, talk about kindergarten with your child. Listen to how he or she is feeling. Be reassuring and upbeat. Your enthusiasm and excitement about learning will set a powerful and positive tone.

Encourage independence and responsibility. Create opportunities for your child to make choices. Let him or her choose what to wear, where to play, or what friends or relatives to call. Encourage your child to take a bigger role in dressing him or herself. Support good health habits, such as washing hands, and covering nose and mouth to sneeze or cough.

Make school familiar. Take a field trip to the school, visit a classroom, and introduce your child to the teachers. Walk by the school during recess and watch the children play. Take your child to play on the playground when school is not in session.

How can I prepare?

Get an early start. Before your child turns 4, you should contact your local school to learn how and when to register, and what documents are required. A year may seem like a long time, but it will go by fast, and there will be a lot to learn and do. You will want to have plenty of time to learn about all the options and make the choice that’s best for your child. Choose a kindergarten. Usually children go to kindergarten at a school in their home school district. If you live in a large district, there could be many choices. Not everyone gets their first choice, so it is important to learn how the selection process works. Massachusetts also has a “school choice” program that parents may wish to use to enroll their children in a different district’s kindergarten. To find a kindergarten in your area, call the superintendent of schools for your town.

Plan your schedule. Kindergarten can be half-day or full-day. Half-day kindergarten usually has both morning and afternoon sessions. Some districts only offer the required half-day of kindergarten. Some cities and towns offer a free full-day of kindergarten. Others offer an optional full-day program, but charge a fee for half of the day.

Gather the necessary documents.

The list below shows some commonly required documents. Different districts have different requirements, so be sure to contact your local district to learn exactly which documents you must bring to registration. If your family lacks these documents because of homelessness or recent immigration, the school is legally required to enroll your child without them.

- **Proof of your child’s age.** Most districts require a child’s birth certificate or a passport showing that he or she will be turning 5 before the school district’s cut off date.
- **Proof of guardianship** if the responsible adult is not the child’s parent.
- **Proof or residency** (where you actually live). Some possible examples are a copy of a deed or lease, a utility bill in your name, a valid photo ID card, recent W-2 form, payroll stub, and/or a bank or credit card statement.
- **Your child’s immunization record.** Contact your child’s doctor for a copy of this record.
- **Proof of physical examination.** If your child does not have a doctor, the school district will help you meet this requirement.

Sources/Resources for Getting Ready for Kindergarten:

Basic information about kindergarten in Massachusetts at a useful website about all type of resources in Massachusetts. [www.massresources.org/public-schools-kindergarten.html](http://www.massresources.org/public-schools-kindergarten.html)


Resources for developed for Boston families and students but helpful suggestions for all Also, in multiple languages [www.countdowntokindergarten.org](http://www.countdowntokindergarten.org)
Each year, The Federation for Children with Special Needs and MassPAC sponsor a three-day APPLE Institute for parents and school districts to help them build collaborative working relationships. The name “APPLE” stands for Advancing Parent Professional Leadership in Education. The training focuses on helping parents and professionals develop skills to become full and effective partners with their school to improve student outcomes. Sample workshop topics include: Understanding my personal Leadership Style through my “True Colors”, Respectful Conversations, Deep Listening, and Consensus Brainstorm.

APPLE has worked with dozens of special education parent advisory councils (SEPACs), and also welcomes district teams consisting of families of children with special needs and school professionals to the process. Building on shared goals, these district/parent teams create an action plan to develop family engagement in the district. Research has shown that when families are involved in schools, students do better.

We hear the same question every year – “How can I commit three days to a workshop?”

So this Fall, when apples are ripening on the trees, the APPLE Leadership team at the Federation will begin the process of answering that question – “How can I commit three days to a workshop?” – with our learned response of “How can you not?” APPLE is a unique opportunity to begin the dialogue, share information, raise and answer concerns. Experience has taught us when you build a connection to one or two parents and educators, they form a team, and the magic begins.

Now is the time to plan for your district team to attend our 2016 APPLE Institute which runs from April 14-16, 2016 in Framingham.

“Highly recommend this experience to other teams. Well worth the time.” –APPLE Participant.

The Institute is free of charge for school district teams, supported by a grant from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Check out our website - www.fcsn.org/apple for more information.
Cómo prepararse para el kindergarten

¿Cómo pueden preparar las familias a sus niños para el kindergarten?

El kindergarten es una oportunidad de aprendizaje importante. ¡Es el principio de la EDUCACIÓN REAL! Lo que se aprende en esta etapa sienta las bases para todo el aprendizaje que sigue.

En los Estados Unidos, el kindergarten es el primer año de educación formal para la mayoría de los niños. Las actividades prácticas de aprendizaje que realizan ayudan a prepararlos para los desafíos que les esperan. Los padres pueden prepararse a sí mismos y a sus hijos de diversas maneras para una transición fluida y positiva al kindergarten.

¿Cómo puedo ayudar a preparar a mi niño?

Los bebés nacen listos para aprender. Los padres y las familias pueden ayudar a sus hijos a aprovechar al máximo estos importantes años de aprendizaje temprano. Hasta los 5 años de edad, los cerebros de los niños se desarrollan con una rapidez increíble. Las contribuciones al aprendizaje en estos años duran para toda la vida. Lo más importante que las familias pueden hacer es hablarles y leerles a sus hijos desde el día en que nacen. Cuando lea o hable a su niño, hágale preguntas y ofrézcale explicaciones. Con las conversaciones y los libros aprenderá mucho más que si sólo le enseña a reconocer palabras. Podrá desarrollar importantes habilidades de pensamiento crítico.

Establezca rutinas. Por lo menos un mes antes de que empiecen las clases, empiece a fijar horarios firmes para comer y acostarse a dormir. Programe también actividades durante el día como ver televisión, jugar con los quehaceres domésticos. Acostrumbre a su niño a hacer las cosas puntualmente y en el horario previsto. Dormir bien por la noche (de 10 a 12 horas) y comer un desayuno nutritivo le ayudará a concentrarse y aprender. El lugar también es importante. Establezca un sitio para que su niño lea, pinte, coloree y haga cosas. Ponga la mochila y los suministros escolares en el mismo lugar para tenerlos listos por la mañana.

En Massachusetts, todos los niños tienen derecho a asistir a un kindergarten.

Los distritos escolares de Massachusetts tienen que ofrecerles kindergarten a todos los niños de cinco años de edad cuyas familias deseen enviarlos allí. El niño no necesita habilidades específicas de desarrollo, conducta, sociales o académicas para poder inscribirlo en un kindergarten. No se les puede negar la inscripción a un niño por tener discapacidades físicas, mentales o de otro tipo, ni por estar hospitalizado o estar aprendiendo inglés.

¿Cómo puedo prepararme?

Empiece temprano. Antes de que su niño cumpla cuatro años, llame a su escuela para saber cómo y cuándo registrarse y qué documentación necesitarán. Un año puede parecer mucho tiempo, pero se pasará rápido y habrá mucho para aprender y hacer. Deje suficiente tiempo para enterarse de las diferentes opciones y escoger las mejores para su niño.

Elija un kindergarten. Los niños generalmente van al kindergarten de una escuela de su distrito. Si ustedes viven en un distrito grande, tal vez tengan muchas opciones. Como no todos consiguen la primera elección de escuela, es importante aprender cómo es el proceso de selección. Massachusetts tiene un programa de “elección de escuela” que permite inscribir a los hijos en un kindergarten de un distrito diferente. Para encontrar uno en su zona, llame al superintendente escolar de su ciudad.

Promueva la independencia y la responsabilidad. Ofrezca oportunidades para que su niño pueda elegir. Deje que decida qué ponerse, dónde jugar o a qué amigos o familiares llamar. Anímelo a que asuma un papel mayor al vestirse. Promueva hábitos saludables, como lavarse las manos y taparse la nariz y la boca al estornudar o toser.

Familiarice a su niño con la escuela. Visiten la escuela y las aulas y presentéle a su niño a los maestros. Caminen por la escuela durante el recreo y observen cómo juegan los demás niños. Lleve a su hija o hijo a jugar al patio escolar fuera del horario de clases.

Planifique el horario. El kindergarten puede ser de medio día o de día completo. Los de medio día suelen tener sesiones de mañana y de tarde. Algunos distritos ofrecen sólo el medio día requerido mientras que otros ofrecen en forma gratuita programas de un día entero. Algunos tienen un programa opcional de día completo, pero cobran por la segunda mitad del día.

Continúa en la página 10
Life is complicated for families of children with special needs. Marital accord, time for siblings and extended family, and finding quiet time for reflection are all emotional stressors that parents face. Another area of concern is helping children develop a strong sense of self-confidence. Practical and financial worries are also common. Out-of-pocket expenditures for medical necessities or services, adaptive equipment, accessible housing, and an appropriate vehicle can impose deep strains on a family’s budget. Time demands and unpredictable schedules may limit work opportunities for parents. These costs are essential to the needs of a child, but how do we balance the checkbook? Is there anyone who can help? How does a parent make sense of life and find the resources to maintain their spirits?

As parents, we sometimes wonder where to turn with the hard questions in life. Parent support networks offer a unique blend of personal experiences, practical advice, and support. This community has unique experiences: understanding a child’s complicated medical and developmental concerns, finding therapeutic services, navigating educational and social considerations, and planning for a life of opportunity and independence.

These are just some of the conversations that parents can address with others on a similar parenting road. Support groups offer an informal place to receive emotional support, guidance, and information from others with the same experience. Another term for this is peer support.

Groups operate in a variety of ways for the benefit of families everywhere. Traditional support groups meet in person, on a set schedule, and provide a safe place to share joys and concerns, seek advice and support, and offer guidance and kind words. Practical advice, from the lived experience, is a great gift for parents to share. But not all support groups operate this way.

Massachusetts D.A.D.S. is a proud affiliate of the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress. D.A.D.S. brings together fathers of children who have Down syndrome. The network focuses on action. Members play together, strategize about IEPs, talk about difficult medical concerns, and celebrate their children’s successes. D.A.D.S. support each other at

Preparedness is a state of readiness. Emergency preparation is a way to empower your family and reduce the impact of emergencies of all kinds. Remember, emergencies may not always have to do with a family member’s special needs or disability.

Know-Plan-Prepare are three active steps we can take according to national, state, and local emergency planning agencies.

- KNOW what emergencies may occur to you: Severe weather (like last winter’s piling snow or tornadoes this spring), fire or power outages, or medical emergencies.
- PLAN the steps to keep your family safe. You may need to stay at home (“shelter in place”) or leave your home (“evacuate”). Learn how to make your home safe in the event that you cannot go out (long winter storms). Find out what your local community offers for public shelters. Consider other options, like family in another area or a medical facility, to care for complex health needs.
- PREPARE for both types of sheltering and create a small supply of food, battery-operated radio and lighting, warm clothing in case heat is out, and methods for recreation to keep spirits up. Gather medical kits, a collection of important papers, and a sense of being prepared. As a family, develop a plan and practice it periodically.

The Disability Indicator Registry in Massachusetts is a voluntary registry to alert local emergency planners that there is a family member with special needs. The Disability Indicator Form is easy to complete and available on the Family TIES website.

To learn more, contact Family TIES of Massachusetts (800-905-TIES) and review these informative sites:
www.fema.gov
www.mema.gov
www.ready.gov/kids
www.redcross.org
www.do1thing.com
Special Olympics events, family events like Fall apple-picking trips and fundraising walks, and over dinner at period-ic meetings in local restaurants. Friendships forged through Massachusetts D.A.D.S. ensure these fathers understand the breadth of needs for their child and families, and know they are not alone in their journey. Their families are aware of MassHealth benefits and resources to support their children’s needs, feel empowered to request needed services, and en-gage in meaningful conversation to improve school outcomes. New members are always welcome: www.dadsmass.org.

**Courageous Parents Network** provides online support and guidance to families of children with serious medical con-ditions. Founder Blyth Lord is a bereaved parent and pediatric palliative care advocate. Lord dreamed of providing families and service providers with a place to explore difficult life ques-tions with other families balancing the often exhausting roller coaster of emotions with memorable, poignant moments of love, courage, and joy. Its website offers a comprehensive video library with more than 20 themes, each with psychologists and parent interviews to address related issues and feelings. The Parents Blog offers a venue for personal reflections on any aspect of this parenting experience. A comprehensive list of resources guides parents to support services. With CPN, par rents are empowered to face their children’s difficult journey with knowledge, skills, and hope. Join this caring community at www.courageousparentsnetwork.org.

Two years ago, a small support group first met in Cambridge, Mass. Known as **Habesha**, its parent members immigrat-ed from the Horn of Africa, specifically Eritrea and Ethiopia. Most parents are caring for children with complex medical needs. They talked about their challenges in caring for the health, educational, and social needs of the whole family in the United States. Complicated schedules, winter’s cold, and medical situations forced the group to shift to monthly con-fERENCE calls, with quarterly in-person meetings in the Bos-ton area. Parents expanded their network with friends from out of state. Membership has grown to 40 families, including from Somalia and Kenya. Topics are chosen by members’ need. Topics include managing challenging behaviors among children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, compassionate care for children who have chronic pain, balancing life de-mands, emergency preparedness, and appreciating their children’s place in their lives and each other’s support. Learn more about Habesha from local group leader Sara Asmerom at Family TIES of Massachusetts: sasmerom@fcsn.org.

The Federation for Children with Special Needs hosts a **support group for Brazilian parents** in the Boston area led by Rhea Tavares Smith, Outreach and Training Specialist for Por-tuguese-speaking parents. Group members are committed to each other, the emotional support they share, and the practical skills that enhanced their lives. The group continues to grow. Their dedication was clear at the recent Visions of Community conference, when 40 members enjoyed a day of learning and togetherness. This success is a tribute to Rhea’s spirit and the importance of finding emotional support for parents of children with special needs. Contact the Federation’s PTI to learn more and join the group: 617-236-7210, Ext. 329.

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**Cómo prepararse para el kindergarten** (continuado de la página 8)

**Reúna los documentos necesarios.**

La siguiente lista muestra algunos de los documentos comúnmente requeridos. Cada distrito tiene requisitos diferentes, así que llame al suyo para saber exactamente qué documentos debe traer para inscribir a su niño. Si su familia no los tiene por falta de vivienda o por haber inmigrado recientemente, la escuela tiene la obligación legal de inscribir a su hijo o hija sin esta documentación.

- **Prueba de la edad del niño:** la mayoría de los dis-tritos requieren la partida de nacimiento o el pas-aporte del niño para comprobar que cumplirá 5 años para la fecha límite establecida.
- **Prueba de la custodia legal:** si el adulto responsa-ble no es el padre o la madre del niño, se requiere prueba de la custodia legal.
- **Prueba de domicilio:** Algunos comprobantes acepta-dos son: copia del título de propiedad o contrato de alquiler de la vivienda, factura de servicios públicos a su nombre, tarjeta de identificación válida con foto, formulario W-2 reciente, talón del cheque de pago o estado de cuenta bancario o de una tarjeta de crédito.
- **Registro de vacunación del niño:** llame al consulto-rio del médico de su niño para obtener una copia.
- **Prueba de examen físico:** si su niño no tiene médico, el distrito escolar le ayudará a cumplir con este requisito.

**Fuentes y recursos para prepararse para el kindergarten:**

Información básica sobre el kindergarten en Massachusetts en un sitio web útil con todo tipo de recursos: www.massresources.org/public-schools-kindergarten.html

Sugerencias útiles en un sitio web centrado en la colaboración de los padres y las escuelas para el éxito de los estudiantes: www.schoolfamily.com/school-family-articles/article/816-get-ready-for-kindergarten

Research shows the negative impact early childhood adversities have on healthy development. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study suggests that childhood adversities are major risk factors for illness and death in adulthood. Identifying children at risk as early as possible creates an opportunity for interventions to greatly improve outcomes for children, families, schools, and communities.

One opportunity is the series of ten “well child” visits with the pediatrician between the ages of 0 and 3. Approximately 88% of children attend these visits. These visits are a great place to identify children at risk and intervene during a critical stage of development. But how do providers appropriately identify who is at risk and provide help?

The NICHQ (National institute for Children’s Health Quality), the Einhorn Family Charitable Trust, and Ariadne Labs organized a forum to identify ways to promote social-emotional development for children ages 0 to 3. The “Promoting Optimal Child Development Expert Meeting” was held on June 16-17. The 75 participants, who included Bonnie Thompson and Renee Williams from the Federation for Children with Special Needs, were pediatricians, community leaders, advocates, public and private sector administrators, teachers, and parents.

The intention of the forum was to address the following questions: What is the current state of knowledge of the importance of social-emotional health? How can we promote social-emotional development in pediatric primary care? Which children are we most worried about and how can pediatricians identify them? What approaches could be used if a child at risk is identified?

Attendees discussed research, heard from providers, and listened to the stories of families. Working in small groups, attendees explored more deeply the questions above. The expertise and experiences of attendees led to engaging conversations during brainstorming sessions. Many suggestions and recommendations were generated. NICHQ plans to compile the information gathered and report back to participants on next steps. The forum was an important building block to future efforts to promote children’s healthy social-emotional development in primary care settings.

Children at Risk: How Can Primary Care Play a Bigger Role?

By Renee Williams, Recruitment and Outreach Specialist, Recruitment, Training and Support Center (RTSC) and Bonnie Thompson, CHIPRA Grant Family Leader - Massachusetts Family Voices, FCSN
Preparando-se para o Jardim de Infância

Como podem as famílias ajudar os seus filhos a se preparar para o Jardim de Infância?

O jardim de infância é um lugar onde muitas crianças passam as primeiras semanas de sua vida fora do lar. É um local onde as crianças aprendem a se adaptar a novas circunstâncias, a fazer novos amigos e a se divertir. Aqui estão algumas dicas sobre como as famílias podem ajudar os seus filhos a se preparar para o jardim de infância:

- **Como posso ajudar a preparar o meu filho?**

**Os bebês nascem prontos para aprender.** Os pais e as famílias podem ajudar as crianças a tirar o máximo proveito destes primeiros anos de aprendizado. Até a idade de 5 anos, o cérebro das crianças está crescendo em um ritmo estonteante! As contribuições feitas para o aprendizado nestes anos durarão por toda uma vida. A coisa mais importante que as famílias podem fazer é conversar e ler para as suas crianças desde o dia de seu nascimento. Quando estiver lendo ou conversando com a sua criança, faça perguntas e explique as coisas. Conversas e livros podem ensinar mais do que apenas a forma de reconhecer palavras. Podem construir importantes habilidades de pensamento crítico.

**Estabeleça rotinas.** Pelo menos um mês antes do início da escola, comece a programar os horários das refeições e de ir para a cama. Programe também as atividades do dia, como assistir a TV, brincar, e fazer as tarefas. Acostume o seu filho a estar sempre no horário e a coisas acontecendo dentro do programado. Uma boa noite de sono (10 - 12 horas) e um café da manhã nutritivo ajudarão a manter o seu filho concentrado no aprendizado. O local também é muito importante. Configure um local onde o seu filho possa ler, pintar, colorir, e fazer as coisas. Ponha a mochila e o material escolar no mesmo lugar para tê-los prontos quando ele for de manhã.

**Converse sobre o jardim de infância.** Semanas antes da escola começar, converse com seu filho sobre o jardim de infância. Ouça como ele ou ela está se sentindo. Seja reconfortante e otimista. O seu entusiasmo e emoção sobre o aprendizado irá definir um tom forte e positivo.

Encoraje independência e responsabilidade. Crie oportunidades para que o seu filho faça escolhas. Deixe que ele ou ela escolha o que vestir, onde brincar, ou que amigos ou parentes chamar. Encorage o seu filho a ter um papel importante.

**Junte os documentos necessários.**

A lista abaixo mostra alguns dos documentos normalmente exigidos. Distritos diferentes têm exigências diferentes, por isso assegure-se de entrar em contato com o seu distrito local para aprender exatamente quais os documentos você tem que trazer para fazer a matrícula. Se a sua família não tem estes documentos por causa da falta de moradia ou de imigração recente, a escola está obrigada legalmente a matricular o seu filho sem estes documentos.

- **Prova da idade do seu filho.** Muitos distritos exigem a certidão de nascimento ou um passaporte da criança mostrando que ele ou ela vai fazer 5 anos, antes da data limite do distrito escolar.
- **Prova de residência** (onde você mora atualmente). Alguns dos exemplos possíveis são uma cópia de escritura ou contrato de locação, uma conta de serviço de utilidade pública em seu nome, uma carteira de identificação válida com fotografia, formulário W-2 recente, topo de folha de pagamento, e/ou um extrato bancário ou cartão de crédito.
- **Prova de exame médico.** Se o seu filho não tiver um médico, o distrito escolar irá ajudá-lo a atender a esta exigência.
Challenging Behavior and the Impact on Learning, Ages 6-12

By Jane Crecco, MA, MSEd - Training and Support Specialist, Recruitment, Training and Support Center (RTSC), FCSN

When children enter first grade, perhaps the first time they have entered a structured classroom, it can be a scary event. More kids, more rules, and less time to move around and play. Try to imagine how a student feels if they are coming from a chaotic home, where food might be scarce and parents’ behaviors may be unpredictable or unsafe. These children are used to a dangerous environment where they need to be constantly ready to keep themselves safe.

It is also possible that this student does not have a stack of books by their bed and nobody to read to her/him. This child may spend more time in front of a computer or television with little practice in receptive and expressive speech. No one has provided an opportunity to develop the early skills to read body language and social cues, or develop the ability to feel empathy or remorse, because no trusting adult could teach him how these emotions look and feel. This “traumatized” student is “at-risk” and likely in jeopardy for school failure.

By first grade, typically developing children have already gained enough social and emotional skills to make their way through a school day and all its demands -- riding on a crowded school bus; lining up and keeping quiet; organizing personal possessions; eating snacks and lunch with other kids in a noisy lunchroom; going out to play; and finally, returning home and knowing what must be done to get ready for the next day.

However, for children with complex childhood trauma, a lack of stimulus in their early upbringing affects their ability to regulate reactions to these common situations, which instead often appear dangerous to them. In early education especially, children with trauma have not developed the ability to tell the difference between a dangerous environment and one that is noisy and crowded, but relatively safe. These children are always on high alert. Their hyper-aroused state does not allow their brain to process new situations or new learning because it is too busy keeping itself safe.

Social-emotional learning (SEL) in the classroom becomes critical for these children during ages 6-12. An over-reactive child can be disruptive and sometimes dangerous to themselves or others. After these events occur, the student often feels humiliated and stigmatized. SEL can help all students learn self-awareness and self-management skills as well as build self-esteem.

It is important for family members and school professionals to recognize and understand the unique needs of these children. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has published the Guidelines on Implementing Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Curricula (www.doe.mass.edu/bullying/SELtguide.pdf) A quick internet search will bring up many different types of evidence-based curricula currently being rolled out throughout the country. A good place to start your search is here: www.casel.org/guide.

Editor’s note: This is part two of a three part series on developmental behaviors resulting from complex trauma for different age groups. Part one, ages 0-5, appeared in the Spring edition of Newsline. The next issue of Newsline will look at ages 12-18.

Preparando-se para o Jardim de Infância (continuação da página anterior)

na hora de se vestir. Apoie bons hábitos de saúde, tais como lavar as mãos, e cobrir o nariz e a boca para espirrar ou tossir.

Faça da escola um local familiar. Faça um passeio até a escola, visite uma aula de aula, e apresse o seu filho para os professores. Caminhe pela escola durante o recreio e veja as crianças brincarem. Leve seu filho para brincar no parquinho, quando a escola não estiver em aula.

Como posso me preparar?

Comece logo. Antes do seu filho completar 4 anos, você deveria entrar em contato com a sua escola local para aprender como e quando fazer a inscrição, e quais são os documentos exigidos. Um ano pode parecer um longo tempo, mas passará depressa, e haverá muita coisa para aprender e fazer. Você vai querer ter tempo suficiente para aprender sobre todas as opções que são melhores para o seu filho.

Escolha um jardim de infância. Geralmente as crianças vão para um jardim de infância no seu distrito escolar. Se você vive em um grande distrito, poderão haver várias escolas.
The Guild Serves

- Students with Intellectual Disabilities (ID),
- Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders,
- Students with Down syndrome and other genetic disorders,
- Students with dual diagnosis (ID and mental health or behavioral challenges).

TRANSFORMING LIVES, REALIZING POTENTIAL.

The Guild for Human Services is a day and residential school for students with intellectual disabilities and behavioral challenges. Open 365 days a year, The Guild serves male and female students from age 6 until their 22nd birthday.

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), educational services, residential services, therapeutic services, vocational services and routine community experiences ensure consistent, effective progress and generalization of newly learned skills to students’ daily lives.

Residential students live in family-style homes in nearby neighborhoods.

The Guild for Human Services is able to continue assisting students after turning 22 within our new Adult Residential Program.

411 Waverley Oaks Road, Suite 104, Waltham, MA 02452  Tel 781.893.6000  Fax 781.893.1171  WWW.THEGUILDSCHOOL.ORG
Summer is a wonderful and relaxing time to enjoy friends and family, and we hope you are having lots of fun! It is also a good time to think about fall family activities, and we hope you will consider joining us for our third annual family fundraising event, “Walk, Roll, Shobble*, Stroll for Children with Special Needs!” This year’s event will be held on Sunday, September 27th, from noon – 3pm (rain or shine) at the Nature Trail on the grounds of the Massachusetts Hospital School, 3 Randolph Street, Canton, MA.

This is a fun and easy way to support the Federation and here is how you can participate! We ask each walker to commit to raising $100; that’s just 10 friends who will each “sponsor” you as a walker at $10 each! Or put together a team of walkers, with each team member committed to raising $100!

Plan now to put together a team of family, friends, and colleagues, and come join Federation staff and other families for a great day of networking, family activities, food, music, games and prizes (and of course the Walk!) all to support children with special needs and their families. There are two ways to register! Visit www.fcsn.org to register online. Or simply fill out the registration form below and mail it to us at the address provided! We hope to see you there!

*“When a shuffl meets a hobble” (Definition by Chelsey Kendig, self-advocate)

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**Walk, Roll, Shobble*, Stroll 2015 Registration Form**

Complete this form and fax or mail it to:
Federation for Children with Special Needs • The Schrafft Center • 529 Main Street, Ste. 1M3 • Boston, MA 02129 • Fax: 617-241-0330

Walker’s Name ________________________________________________________________
Address ________________________________________________________ City______________ State_______ Zip______________
Phone _______________________________________________________________________
Email _______________________________________________________________________

Check one: ☐ Adult       ☐ Teen       ☐ Child

Check one: ☐ Individual Walker       ☐ Team (family incl.)

Team Name ___________________________________________ Team Leader _______________________

Team Category: ☐ Family/Friends        ☐ Business/Corp.        ☐ Club/Org./School/Place of Worship

By signing this form, I hereby waive all claims against the Federation for any injury I or my child might suffer in this event. I grant full permission for the Federation to use photographs of me in legitimate accounts and promotions of this event.

Signature ___________________________ Parent/Guardian ___________________________
(if under 18 years old, parent/guardian must also sign)

How did you hear about Walk, Roll, Shobble*, Stroll? __________________________________________

☐ Please send me _______ extra brochures.
☐ Please contact me about volunteering before, during, or after Walk, Roll, Shobble*, Stroll
☐ Please send me information about the Federation
☐ I cannot attend Walk, Roll, Shobble*, Stroll but I’ve enclosed a donation of _______ to support families of children with special needs.
Join the Federation for its 3rd annual Walk, Roll, Shobble*, Stroll on Sunday, September 27, 2015!

Location: Massachusetts Hospital School’s Nature Trail
3 Randolph Street • Canton, MA 02021

Registration Now Open!
Visit www.fcsn.org/walk for details

**“When a shuffle meets a hobble”
(Definition by Chelsey Kendig, self-advocate)"