

ADAP

Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program



OCTOBER 2004



**From the desk of
Ellen B. Gillespie, Ph.D.**

ADAP Interim Director

In all areas of our busy lives today, change is a constant. We have to be ready for change, count on it, embrace it, be flexible and creative as it occurs. At ADAP, we have experienced quite a few changes in recent months, and we have worked together to ensure smooth transitions.

In June, Reuben Cook accepted a new position with the University as Director of Outreach for the College of Human Environmental Sciences. Reuben has been an important part of ADAP for 17 years, serving as Director for the past 15 years. Reuben engineered tremendous growth at ADAP in terms of staff and budget, and provided leadership as the agency handled major lawsuits, systemic change initiatives, and thousands of individual cases for Alabamians with disabilities. We are excited about Reuben's new opportunities, and we look forward to finding new ways to work with him to support people with disabilities.

With Reuben's new role, I am serving as Interim Director. Denise Smith is serving as Interim Associate Director. *(Continued on Page 2)*

IDEA Reauthorization Action Anticipated for Lame Duck Congress in November

Key issues: Maintaining benchmarks and annual IEPs, due process protections and parent advocacy funding

After months of waiting, it appears that work is finally getting underway on a House-Senate conference committee to address the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

In a conference, senators and representatives work out the differences between the Senate and House versions of a bill to come up with a compromise measure that can then pass both chambers. The desired outcome of this conference is to develop a compromise bill - or a conference report - that will be addressed during the lame-duck session in November.

Going into the conference, advocates realize that the Senate bill (S. 1248), while not perfect, is better than the House bill (H.R.1350). The House bill

represents an unprecedented erosion of children's and parents' rights under IDEA. In order for anything positive to come out of conference, advocates are working to ensure that - as much as possible - the final bill resembles S. 1248.

What are the big issues?

From the beginning of the IDEA reauthorization debate, members of the nationwide protection and advocacy (P&A) network - of which ADAP is a member - have focused on several key issues:

- maintaining short-term objectives in an annual IEP
- ensuring that children are not shut out of school because of changes to the IDEA's discipline provisions
- accountability and enforcement of the IDEA through improved federal monitoring
- providing families with technical assistance and representation regarding their special education rights by specifically funding P&As to do IDEA advocacy

Benchmarks or Short-term Objectives

Both the Senate and House bills seek to remove IEP benchmarks as a way to save school staff time and paperwork. The P&A network and other parent advocates want to retain benchmarks, believing that they are a critical part of a child's IEP.

Benchmarks are the "mini-goals"
(Continued on Page 6)

Upcoming Learning Opportunities

Imagine the Possibilities: Alabama Early Intervention and Preschool Conference

- November 15-17, 2004
- Riverview Plaza Hotel (formerly the Adams Mark Hotel) in Mobile, Alabama
- The cost for on-site registration is \$80 for professionals and \$35 for parents/students. Limited stipends are available for EI parents; contact your local district EI Coordinator for more information. For more information, go to <http://home.hiwaay.net/~seachsv/Brochure.pdf>

Annual Conference of the Alabama Association for Behavioral Analysis

- November 15-17, 2004
- Hilton Birmingham Perimeter Park in Birmingham, Alabama
- This conference will provide presentations on child and family services, autism, developmental disabilities, and educational resources. For more information, call 334-844-6659 or visit the ALABA website at <http://www.auburn.edu/alaba/>.

People First of Alabama Annual Conference 2004

(postponed due to Hurricane Ivan!)

- December 3-5, 2004
- The Lodge and Conference Center at Grand National in Opelika, Alabama
- For more information, contact Jeff Ridgeway at 251-414-5364 or Brenda Doss at 205-384-4953 or Lecell Lane at 205-333-7863.

4th Annual Alabama Autism Conference

- February 10-11, 2005
- Tuscaloosa, Alabama
- The conference, sponsored by The University of Alabama and the Autism Society of Alabama, will address the very latest research regarding the diagnosis and treatment of individuals with autism, Asperger's syndrome, and related pervasive developmental disorders. For information, call 205-348-9966. Visit <http://www.pmdp.ccs.ua.edu>.

From the desk of Ellen B. Gillespie, Ph.D. *(Continued from Page 1)*

In August, virtually all of ADAP's efforts were focused on a major event - the federal site visit for our PADD (Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Developmental Disabilities) program. The week-long MTARS (Monitoring and Technical Assistance Review System) visit resulted in praise for quality of ADAP advocacy services and for the skills and commitment of staff. The MTARS team also made several recommendations, which we are already implementing. I want to thank the many consumers, family members, Advisory Council members, and agency partners who participated in interviews and a successful public

hearing at four sites around Alabama. MTARS was a great example of a team effort!

October 1 brought another change for ADAP. On that date, we became part of Academic Affairs at the University. ADAP is now supervised by the Provost, Dr. Judy Bonner, who has a wonderful history of interest in and support for children and adults with disabilities. This transition went smoothly, and will allow ADAP to streamline administrative functions and do our advocacy work more quickly and efficiently.

In September, I attended my first CEO meeting for NAPAS, the P&A national organization. In introductions

**Attention Parents and Consumers!
Need financial help to attend
conferences or training events?**

**Check out the
Consumer Involvement Fund**

The Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities (ACDD) administers the Consumer Involvement Fund. The purpose of the program is to provide funds for individuals with developmental disabilities, their family members, or their guardians to participate in conferences, training events, public forums, focus groups, committees, task forces, hearings and other similar activities. The fund can help a consumer pay for registration fees, childcare or respite, personal assistance, hotel/lodging, meals or transportation. Funds are limited to \$500 per year per person for in-state events and \$1200 per year per person for out-of-state events.

**For more information, call the
ACDD at 1-800-232-2158 or email
them at addpc@mh.state.al.us.**

and updates from every state and territory, I was struck by the major changes all P&As experience. The best P&As roll up their sleeves, work through change creatively and find ways to ensure that services to consumers improve with any and every change. I am so proud of ADAP's staff as they have embraced change with enthusiasm and renewed commitment for our mission. We are determined to provide excellent services to Alabamians who need our help and to be known as one of the finest P&As in the country. If you have ideas about how we need to improve, please let me know.

ADAP Receives Strong Bill of Health From ADD

During the week of August 16-20, 2004, ADAP was monitored by the federal government agency that funds its work with persons with developmental disabilities. The result - overall, a strong bill of health with some suggestions for improvement.

Alabama's Developmental Disabilities (DD) Network

The Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD), housed within the Department of Health and Human Services, is the federal agency that funds the Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PADD) program, ADAP's largest and oldest advocacy program.

The PADD program makes up one part of the state's DD network. The other agencies that make up Alabama's DD network include the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities in Montgomery and the Sparks Clinic at the Civitan International Research Center at UAB.

Alabama's DD system is part of the nationwide system established through a mandate in the Developmental Disabilities Act of 1975. The purpose of the country's DD system is to advance the rights and well-being of persons with DD.

To ensure that the country's DD system works well, the ADD conducts regular monitoring visits to each of the states.

Alabama's Monitoring Visit

Each of Alabama's three DD agencies were reviewed by separate three-person teams during this summer's weeklong visit. The teams were made up of a team leader employed by the ADD, a peer reviewer

(in ADAP's case, the director of the North Dakota P&A sat on our monitoring team) and a consumer or a family member of a consumer.

At the start of the week, the network provided an orientation for the monitoring team. The orientation outlined the challenges facing Alabamians with disabilities and collaborations taken by the network to positively impact the lives of individuals with disabilities in Alabama.

A public forum was held at the UAB campus with satellite links in Tuscaloosa, Florence and Dothan. Approximately, 60 people attended from all four sites. During the forum, monitoring teams gained a broad understanding of the state's challenges and successes and learned first hand how the DD network functioned.

During the latter part of the week, each team focused on its assigned agency, meeting extensively with members of the agency's advisory council, employees, and clients.

ADAP's Strengths and Challenges

ADAP and its network partners are awaiting the final written monitoring report from the ADD. However, the monitoring team shared its preliminary conclusions with the network's management in an exit interview held at the end of the week.

ADAP's reviewers concluded that ADAP staff worked well as a team, using each other as resources and sharing a dedication and sensitivity to people with disabilities. The reviewers felt that ADAP staff and advisory council have a clear understanding of the agency's mission and that this mission is pursued with professional and high quality work practices and products. ADAP's case advocacy and outreach efforts were particularly applauded, as well as its work in system change through the *Wyatt* and *RC* litigation. The reviewers cited us for our effective use of computer technology for case management and reporting. Finally, the team noted that

a high percentage of our staff members are consumers or family members of consumers.

Where does the ADD think we could improve? The reviewers stated that they would like to see better collaboration within the DD network, wanting each network partner - ADAP, the Council and the Civitan — to maximize our strengths and make our resources go further by working together more. The reviewers suggested that we needed to emphasize outreach services and advocacy for young children, age birth to three. While ADAP does an effective job reaching out to the African-American community, the reviewers believed we could improve our outreach to other minority communities in Alabama. Finally, the reviewers suggested that we should make it easier for ADAP's PADD advisory council to provide meaningful input to the agency by providing it materials in alternative formats and by asking council members to take on specific advocacy and advisory tasks. They also encouraged us to increase council member attendance at meetings.

Next Steps

Not wanting to wait until we receive the ADD's written report, ADAP staff members have been addressing the constructive suggestions made by the reviewing team. In the next edition of this newsletter, look for a follow-up report that outlines how ADAP, in conjunction with the network partners, is going to be working harder and better for persons with DD in Alabama.



For Your Copy of ADAP's Special Education Poster contact ADAP at: 1-800-348-4928

ADAP Adopts Goals and Priorities for 2004-2005

On October 8, 2004, ADAP's three Advisory Councils met in Tuscaloosa and adopted the agency's goals and priorities for the 04-05 fiscal year.

To get feedback on our performance and to help us develop these goals, ADAP staff conducted extensive telephone interviews earlier in the fall with consumers and their family members and ADAP's Advisory Councils. We also spoke with service providers, state agency staff and other advocacy groups. The results of these discussions, along with input from ADAP staff, helped us prioritize our work so that we can focus our limited resources on areas of greatest need in the state.

Below are the belief statements that guide ADAP's work with persons with disabilities and the priorities that are going to be pursued during the coming year by each of ADAP's two work teams - the Community Access Team and Children's Advocacy Team.

Community Access Team

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can changethe world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

- Margaret Mead

What we do:

The ADAP Community Access Team is committed to providing legal advocacy services for adults with disabilities, supporting them in accessing the services needed to be fully participating citizens.

What we believe:

We believe that adults with disabilities in Alabama are capable, contributing citizens, and must be valued for their gifts.

We believe that adults with disabilities must be supported in a system that is inclusive, community-based, centered on individual needs and choices, and of the highest quality.

We believe that adults with disabilities, when provided access to information and resources, make highly effective advocates for themselves.

We believe that many of the legal advocacy obstacles and problems experienced by individuals with disabilities in Alabama could be resolved with creative problem solving and collaboration among the stakeholders.

We believe that the service system for Alabamians with disabilities must be:

- Safe
- Person-centered
- Flexible
- Integrated
- Based on self-determination

What we seek:

Goal 1: Ensure that individuals residing in state funded and community placements are safe and residents are free from abuse and neglect.

Goal 2: Advocate for appropriate treatment or habilitation for persons residing in state funded institutions or participating in state funded community programs.

Goal 3: Advocate for the reduction of seclusion and restraint practices for adults and adolescents residing in state funded institutions and community programs.

Goal 4: Assist and represent people with disabilities in their right to access services and programs free of discrimination by providing technical assistance, training, developing materials and/or assisting them with complaints.

Goal 5: Advocate for proper treatment of people with disabilities in the criminal system.

Goal 6: Collaborate for implementation of the work incentive programs to ensure that social security beneficiaries understand their rights and responsibilities.

Goal 7: Investigate and review any complaint of improper or inadequate services provided to a beneficiary with a service provider, employer or other entity involved in the person's return to work effort.

Goal 8: Work with people with disabilities to ensure they have full access to the voting process.

Goal 9: ADAP will increase its outreach and advocacy services to adults with disabilities and their families residing in Alabama's Black Belt.

Children's Advocacy Team

*"The test of the morality of a society is what it does for its children."
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

What we do:

The ADAP Children's Advocacy Team provides legal advocacy services for children with disabilities to enhance their quality of life, promote opportunities for their future, and foster their integration into their communities.

What we believe:

We believe that the family is central to the provision of care, health, education and welfare of all children and that it should be supported and its strengths and potential built upon.

We believe that children and their families should be able to choose among an array of supports that are effective, community-based, and culturally appropriate.

We believe that families are helped best through a system of care that minimizes service fragmentation across providers and the lifespan of the child and that enhances accountability among service providers.

We believe that schools should commit to meeting the academic and behavioral needs of all children and that this commitment is demonstrated when all children are:

- Accepted - Every child is unique.
- Valued - Every child is provided the learning experiences and interventions that meet their individualized needs.
- Supported - School personnel and parents are trained to use research-based teaching and intervention practices in integrated settings and are provided the needed time and resources to ensure their effective implementation.

What we seek:

Goal 1: Children with disabilities will be educated in their least restric-

tive environment (LRE) with appropriate support and services.

Goal 2: A state special education monitoring and complaint system that will ensure state and district compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) will be utilized by the State of Alabama.

Goal 3: Children with disabilities will receive needed behavioral and mental health services.

Goal 4: Appropriate practices, procedures and policies with respect to the discipline of children with disabilities will be utilized by Alabama school districts.

Goal 5: Transition programs utilized by Alabama school districts will ensure successful movement from school to secondary school/work and independent living for children with disabilities.

Goal 6: Children with emotional or behavioral disorders who are placed in or who are at imminent risk of being placed in foster care and/or DHR custody will receive appropriate treatment and services.

Goal 7: Effective behavior interventions will be used in schools and other settings to support children with disabilities to eliminate seclusion and restraint usage and to promote the safety of children.

Goal 8: ADAP will increase its outreach and advocacy services to children with disabilities and their families residing in Alabama's Black Belt.

New Regulations for upcoming elections



New regulations have been implemented for the upcoming elections on November 2, 2004 through the Help America Vote Act. These regulations and requirements can be viewed at the Alabama Secretary of State's Office website: www.sos.state.al.us. If you have any problems accessing the polls, or casting your vote at the polls you can call ADAP at 1-800-826-1675. A staff person will be available to help people experiencing any voting problems.

If poll accessibility is a concern, make sure you go to vote early in the day. For an interactive checklist for poll accessibility please visit the following website: www.vopa.state.va.us/Publications/Polling%20Places/ada.html.

To report complaints, or voting irregularities, you can also contact the following organizations:

The Alabama Secretary of State
1-800-274-8683

The U.S. Department of Justice
1-800-253-3931

The ACLU Voting Rights Project
1-877-523-2792

The Election Protection Hotline
1-866-687-8683

IDEA (Continued from Page 1)

that school personnel work towards to help a child improve in academics, behavior, and life skills throughout the school year. Benchmarks provide a work plan toward an annual IEP goal by breaking the goal into manageable, understandable and “track-able” steps.

Think about your own job: when tackling a big project at work, don’t you break down the project into smaller steps to help you stay on-task and make you more accountable for each step along the way? Let’s not sacrifice IEP accountability for schools and parents in the name of paperwork reduction.

Discipline

The P&A network and other parent advocates want to keep existing IDEA discipline protections to ensure that children get the help they need to learn and behave better.

We want children with disabilities to get the behavioral supports and services needed to be successful and remain in school - not dropouts or referrals to the juvenile justice system. Did you know that it’s estimated that upwards of 70% of children in the juvenile justice system have diagnosed or undiagnosed disabilities, most often learning disabilities or emotional disorders? How many of those placements could have been prevented with early, appropriate interventions?

It appears inevitable, however, that changes will be made to the statute’s disciplinary provisions.

The Senate bill basically retains a family’s right to have a hearing on whether the student’s conduct being questioned or punished was a “manifestation of” (caused by) the child’s disability.

The House bill removes the manifestation determination, allows even more flexibility to districts to suspend or expel students with disabilities than the Senate does, and does not ensure that students with behavior problems receive positive behavioral supports.

These changes would hurt students.

While not perfect, advocates are fighting to get the Senate provisions incorporated into the final bill.

Monitoring

A new congressional study confirms what parent advocates have known for a long time: the U.S. Department of Education’s monitoring and enforcement of IDEA compliance lacks teeth.

Families are tired of being IDEA enforcers. In addition to taking this enforcement burden off parents, better monitoring will make states and schools more accountable for how effectively tax dollars are spent.

The Senate bill strengthens monitoring requirements and should be included in the final bill.

IDEA Protection and Advocacy (P&A)

School districts have lawyers to help speak on their behalf — parents need advocates to help them.

The Senate bill has a provision to carve out a small funding stream to support IDEA advocacy for families by specifically funding an IDEA P&A in each state. Right now, IDEA advocacy is done under the increasingly limited P&A funding streams. This financial support will allow the P&A network to devote more resources to helping families both through individual representation, systems change efforts, and education and training.

Educate your representatives

You can play a role in educating House and Senate conferees on these issues. Here are some ideas:

Alabama Senator Jeff Sessions is serving on the conference committee. Let him hear from you about how you feel about the statute’s reauthorization.

Contact your congressperson, even if he is not a member of the committee, and ask him to carry your message to the conferees.

Education should be ongoing from

now right up until the conference report is headed for a vote. Parents and advocates need to be strong and persistent in their efforts to educate their representatives.

Too many members of Congress hear nothing but negative stories about special education - talk about issues that most affect families and children and use personal stories of IDEA successes!

Contacting your Representatives

Calling your legislators is very effective, particularly in the days just before they are scheduled to take action or vote on your issue.

Basic advocacy rules apply: advocate from a strong knowledge base and do so in an honest, brief and focused manner. It’s probably even more important to be to-the-point on the phone because time is often very short. To prepare for the conversation, jot down a few notes containing the key points you want to make, and refer to the notes during your call. Explain how their vote will affect your life or the life of your child or other family member.

When contacting your Congressperson or Senator, you will almost always speak with a staff person and not the legislator directly. Don’t feel put-off. In fact, when calling you may want to ask to speak to the legislative aide who specifically handles disability issues. This person serves as the eyes and ears of the legislator and is the person the legislator relies upon to learn how an issue affects her constituents. Over time, as you develop relationships with key staff members, you will be seen as an authoritative and valuable information resource. Hopefully, the next time an important disability-related issue is being considered, that staff person will look for your opinion, and will convey your views to the legislator directly.

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Alabama Federal Contacts

(as of Nov. 1, 2004)

White House

President George W. Bush

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500
Phone: 202-456-1414
FAX: 202-456-2461
president@whitehouse.gov

U.S. Senate

• The Hon. Jeff Sessions (R)

U.S. Senate
493 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
DC Phone: 202-224-4124
DC Fax: 202-224-3149
Local Phone: 334-265-9507
sessions.senate.gov
senator@sessions.senate.gov

• The Hon. Richard Shelby (R)

U.S. Senate
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
DC Phone: 202-224-5744
DC Fax: 202-224-3416
Local Phone: 334-223-7303
shelby.senate.gov
senator@shelby.senate.gov

U.S. House of Representatives

• District 1

Rep. Jo Bonner (R)

DC Phone: 202-225-4931
DC Fax: 202-225-0562

Local Phone: 800-288-8721
www.house.gov/bonner

• District 2

Rep. Terry Everett (R)

DC Phone: 202-225-2901
DC Fax: 202-225-8913
Local Phone: 334-277-9113
www.house.gov/everett

• District 3

Rep. Mike Rogers (R)

DC Phone: 202-225-3261
DC Fax: 202-226-8485
Local Phone: 256-236-5655
www.house.gov/mike-rogers

• District 4

Rep. Robert B. Alderholt (R)

DC Phone: 202-225-4876
DC Fax: 202-225-5587
Local Phone: 205-221-2310
www.house.gov/alderholt

• District 5

Rep. Robert E. (Bud) Cramer, Jr. (D)

DC Phone: 202-225-4801
DC Fax: 202-225-4392
Local Phone: 256-551-0190
www.house.gov/cramer
budmail@mail.house.gov

• District 6

Rep. Spencer Bachus (R)

DC Phone: 202-225-4921
DC Fax: 202-225-2082
Local Phone: 205-969-2296
www.house.gov/bachus

• District 7

Rep. Artur Davis (D)

DC Phone: 202-225-2665
DC Fax: 202-226-9567
Local Phone: 205-254-1960
www.house.gov/arturdavis

Employment Rights of People with Intellectual Disabilities

On October 20, 2004, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) released a new fact sheet regarding the rights of people with intellectual disabilities in the workplace. The term "intellectual disability" was adopted by the EEOC to improve the image of people with disabilities who have been or are referred to as having mental retardation. The EEOC determined there are an estimated 2.5 million people in the United States that have an intellectual disability, but only 31% of this population is employed, even though many more want to work. The EEOC released this fact sheet in an effort to break down the myths, fears and misperceptions that impede a person with an intellectual disability from obtaining work.

A person is considered to have an intellectual disability when (1) the person's IQ level is below 70-75; (2) the person has significant limitations in adaptive skill areas (basic skills including communication, self-care, home living, social skills, leisure, health and safety, self-direction, functional academics, and work); and (3) the disability began before the person reached age 18. Intellectual disabilities manifest themselves in many different ways, just as people without intellectual disabilities have different talents and capabilities. Employers should not make generalizations about the needs of employees with intellectual disabilities. The EEOC fact sheet sets out many different scenarios, as well as statistics to educate employers on the value of hiring a person with an intellectual disability.

In addition to the general informa-
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The ABCs
of IEPs



ADAP's New Publications

The ABCs of IEPs
Available Ship Date:
November 15

Make Transition Work
Available Ship Date:
November 29

Call 1-800-826-1675



Transition Training in the Black Belt Joint Effort between Full Life Ahead and ADAP

The historic St. James Hotel in Selma was the site of a joint training done by the Full Life Ahead Foundation (FLAF) and ADAP on September 10-11. The focus of the training was on transition - preparing adolescents with disabilities for life after school.

About three dozen young adults with disabilities, family members and service providers attended the workshop.

Katherine Carol, a nationally known trainer in life planning for persons with disabilities, was a surprise guest at the conference. Ms. Carol led the audience through a series of interactive exercises to get them thinking about life possibilities for students and to help them troubleshoot any obstacles they may encounter as they develop and implement transition plans. The title of her presentation? "How to Avoid Being Road Kill on the Road to Transition!"

Nancy Anderson, ADAP staff attorney, presented two programs. The first session on Friday afternoon addressed the transition requirements found in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The message she emphasized in her program was that no student should ever leave school wondering, "what next?" Effective transition planning helps ensure that students graduate school with life goals and the skills needed to achieve them.

On Saturday morning, Ms. Anderson presented a program on conflict resolution mechanisms used in special

education disputes.

Carol Braithwaite of the Civitan International Research Center and

Lydia Akin of ADAP spoke on how to improve voting access for persons with disabilities.

Henry Barclay, one of the co-founders of the FLAF, closed the program by introducing the group to

the benefits of "Group Action Planning" (GAP) for young adults with disabilities. As outlined in the FLA training materials, "GAP occurs when a group of family, friends and professionals create a 'reliable alliance' for the purpose of creatively, energetically, and joyfully translating great expectations into realities and promoting the preferences of the individual and family."

The Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities (ACDD) partly funded this training, one of three to be conducted by the agencies over the next three years.

Improving transition services for students with disabilities continues to be a priority area for ADAP. ADAP welcomes questions about transition services and requests for individual advocacy assistance. If you are interested in having an ADAP staff member present on the IDEA's transition requirements (or any other special education matter), contact our office.



Top: Katherine Carol, trainer led the audience through a series of interactive exercises to get attendees thinking about life possibilities. Below: Samuel Bearden has questions about transition services.



What does the IDEA hope to accomplish with its transition requirements?

- Every student, along with his family, will think about goals for life after high school and develop a long-range plan to get there.
- Families and schools will design the high school experience to ensure that the student gains the skills needed to achieve his desired post-school goals.
- The student's IEP team will identify and link the student and his family with any needed post-school services, supports or programs before he leaves school.

Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum



Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) is a program designed to assist high school juniors and seniors with disabilities in becoming leaders in their communities and in their own lives. Thirty to thirty-five students from around the state are invited to come to Troy University as a delegate. For one week delegates learn about self-advocacy, disability history, leadership, self-esteem, and career exploration. Community leaders with and without disabilities come speak about leadership, independent living, and serve as mentors to the delegates. Staff members are trained college students and YLF Alumni who strive to bring out the best in each delegate. YLF would not be possible without its

sponsors: Alabama Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Alabama Department of Education, Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities, and Troy University.

YLF 2004 was held June 6-10, and was attended by 22 students from around the state. During a visit to the state capitol this year, delegates and staff had their picture taken with Governor Bob Riley, and heard Lieutenant Governor Lucy Baxley speak on the meaning of leadership. At the annual Mentor's Luncheon, delegates were entertained by Full

Radius Dance, a dance group from Atlanta that incorporates able-bodied and wheelchair using dancers. Strong friendships were also made during activities such as a swim party, free night, talent show, and dance.

The next YLF is scheduled for June 12-16, 2005 at Troy University, Troy AL. For more information about YLF, or to have someone speak to your organization, group, or school please contact:

Matthew Haynes at 1-800-441-7607 (ext. 256), mhaynes@rehab.state.al.us, or Teresa Holmes 1-800-441-7607 (ext.215), tholmes@rehab.state.al.us. Information is also available online at <http://www.rehab.state.al.us/y lf>.

Employment Rights

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tion about intellectual disabilities, the new EEOC fact sheet addresses the following topics:

1. How and when the ADA protects people with intellectual disabilities in the workplace
2. How and when an employer can obtain and use medical information from a person with an intellectual disability.
3. An employer's responsibility to keep medical information confidential.
4. Accommodations for people with

intellectual disabilities.

5. Safety concerns in the workplace, and the myths surrounding extra safety risks of hiring people with intellectual disabilities.



6. How and when an employee with an intellectual disability may be disciplined for work misconduct.
7. Harassment of people with intellectual disabilities.
8. Legal enforcement of violations, and details on what the employee should do in that situation.

To view or download the 15 page fact sheet, go to www.eeoc.gov for further information. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact ADAP at 1-800-826-1675 to request a printed copy be sent to you.

Transition - More Important than Ever

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The Council for Exceptional Children

Transition for students graduating from high school faces new challenges. Innovative programs provide real-life experience, age appropriate education.

It is absolutely essential that transition planning and services stay in the forefront of special education services, say those who work in the field. Statistics show they are right. Though we are gaining steadily in educational progress for students with disabilities -- more than ever before (56 percent in 2000) graduate with a standard diploma, and the number of students with disabilities going to college has more than doubled -- the picture is not so bright for our students after high school. Only 30 percent of individuals with disabilities who graduated with a high school diploma and 45 percent of those with some post-secondary education are employed, according a report by the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition report. Of those students with disabilities who have gone to college, research shows that less than 25 percent graduate, according to Carol Kochhar-Bryant, professor at George Washington University and member of the Board of Directors of CEC's Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT).

Transition has taken on the challenge. Even in the midst of standards-focused education, transition experts are working to ensure students with disabilities receive transition services. Transition educators have also implemented a number of innovative programs. Some enable students with disabilities to gain real-life skills and job experiences while still in high

school, and others enable students with disabilities to gain age-appropriate education after graduating.

The Challenges

For reasons numerous and multifaceted, ensuring students receive good transition services can be an uphill battle. A new wrinkle is that transition is taking a back seat to standards-based reform. Too often students with mild/moderate disabilities who are placed in general education classes and expected to meet general education standards are being short-changed in transition planning. The challenge is to merge transition planning with the education reform efforts, says Debra Neubert, professor at the University of Maryland.

Transition planning is further weakened by lack of consistency and inadequate numbers of transition specialists. Some states have transition credentials, others courses on transition as part of certification, and some offer nothing on transition as part of certification, says Jane Williams, professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and DCDDT treasurer.

Even so, transition specialists require a vast array of skills. They should understand the services in the schools, general and vocational education, the adult service system, and links to colleges. They also need to be able to link families and students to transition services and be public relation specialists.

Even where transition specialists exist, they are often too few for the number of students they serve, adds Margo Izzo, program director at Nisonger Center of Ohio State University and past DCDDT president. Some also say transition planning for students with disabilities should no longer be the exclusive province of special education. In addition to guidance counselors, general education's vocational and career personnel should work with students with disabilities.

Ensuring transition planning truly

prepares students for their post-secondary goals continues to be somewhat elusive. Once students with disabilities set a goal, they must be given opportunities to "try out" the chosen professions or trades, transition experts say. They should take courses related to the field and obtain unpaid work or job tryouts in related fields. If a plan becomes inappropriate, the student's career goal should be revised so he or she leaves school with a workable plan for meaningful engagement, says Izzo.

Finally, we need improved inter-agency collaboration so students and families can be linked to the appropriate services.

"We're still struggling to implement a coordinated and effective transition process so kids don't transition to a waiting list and lose the skills we spent hundreds of dollars teaching them," says Izzo.

Living Independently

Most will agree: it's hard to teach independent living skills from a book. When Teri Lindner, special education teacher in State College, Pa., realized her students were unprepared for adult life, she, her colleagues, and the students came up with LifeLink. LifeLink lets high school students live independently while still in high school. The students (same sex) live in a four-bedroom apartment for up to two weeks and are allotted \$125 a week for food and cleaning supplies. Through LifeLink, students learn how to cook, shop, do laundry, budget, pick a roommate, plan social activities, and a host of other life skills.

The students run the program, says Lindner. They make up the rules and consequences for apartment living. And though there is a coach at the apartment to ease the rough spots, the students hire the coach.

Students also choose their own roommates for apartment life, and frequently lower and higher functioning students live in the apartment at
(Continued on Page 11)

Transition (Continued on Page 15) the same time, says Lindner. Occasionally a student will be unpopular. When this happens, the student is informed of the reasons others don't want to room with him or her and strategies to change behavior are discussed. At the same time, the class is encouraged to include the student, being reminded that the student is working on a particular skill, just as they had to improve other skills earlier.

These issues are raised in the required transition class. Other topics for discussion include budgeting, roommate disagreements, someone not doing chores, or problems with work, family or friends. If time allows, the teacher also presents a lesson on a topic that needs to be tackled.

Students participate in the program for two years, staying at the apartment for short times at the beginning and, as they learn additional skills, extending their stays.

"The aim is not for all students to live on their own," says Lindner. "The aim is for each student to leave with a much higher level of independence, wherever he or she chooses to live."

But many students leave the program able to live on their own. Two students with developmental delays went from renting an apartment to buying a condo. They haven't missed a mortgage payment yet!

Getting Experience

Many transition experts agree that work experience is essential, even if a student with moderate disabilities is going to college. In addition to after-school jobs, students with disabilities gain that experience through "Job Olympics," service teaming programs, and work experience programs.

To reinforce job skills, Jim Heidan, director of student services in Milwaukee County, Wis., and DCDT president, holds job skill "Olympics." Students compete on job interviews, resumes, and general employment skills such as typing and collating,

office work, alphabetizing, and setting and bussing tables. In the popular event, 15-20 high schools and about 150 students participate. He holds a similar "Olympics" for college-bound students, who compete on the application process.

In another program, students with disabilities get career exploration and work experience at a local mall. For some students it is their first work experience; others reinforce work skills. Depending on their ability level, some go to an individual placement while others go to a placement as a group.

The work experience is tied to the student's IEP, usually employability skills such as communication or social skills that can be applied in community settings, says Betty Joe Lill, transition coordinator for the Tuttle Mall Project in Dublin, Ohio. If the students receive support services, such as occupational therapy, they are conducted at the job site.

Service learning also provides opportunities for students to learn job skills. Some programs are done at the school site while others involve going to another setting. Programs range from recycling to tutoring children to helping senior citizens to assisting at animal shelters to building homes.

Robert Tadjiki, life skills teacher in Bend, Ore., places his students as volunteers in a variety of jobs: courtesy clerks, movie ushers, humane society helpers, and restaurant kitchen help. They also run their own kiosk at the mall and sell items on consignment. His students receive task analysis sheets in which they break down their jobs and rate their performance and knowledge. They also learn how to act on the job - make eye contact, stand erect, maintain a working image.

In another service learning project, Roy Sprinkle, assistant principal in Northport, Fla., teamed with Habitat for Humanity to help students with disabilities gain professional job skills. Students learn plumbing, electrician,

engineering, and other skills as they build houses for Habitat for Humanity.

Some transition programs go into effect after high school. At Project Plus, students with cross-categorical disabilities learn work skills at the Ohio State University Medical Center. The program focuses on work behaviors, and the students rotate through a variety of jobs. Initially a job coach works with the students, but supervision fades as the students become more competent.

In class, students discuss their day and learn job acquisition skills. They write their resumes and practice interviewing with the hospital's human resources personnel. The program also helps the students face general life challenges. Adults with disabilities share their experiences, establish links for best buddies, and talk about what it is like when one's parents pass away. In addition, the students establish ties to the community through service projects, such as working with adults in an osteoporosis study.

"It is amazing to see the kids grow and blossom as individuals," says Nancy Longman, Project Plus special education teacher, "To see them realize, 'I can do this myself.'"

Life after High School

After students with disabilities graduate, some school systems move their education to a college campus. In this situation, the school district pays for the special education teacher and materials, and the college offers free space. But the real gains are for the students—special education and college. While the students with disabilities learn academic and social skills, college students, often those majoring in education, psychology, and social work, serve as mentors and gain practical experience working with individuals with disabilities.

The students with disabilities who participate in these programs have busy, multifaceted lives. They participate in the class provided by the high (Continued on Page 15)

Crimson Tide Women's Wheelchair Basketball Schedule 2004-2005

November 6-7

Gulf South Conference Tournament
Jackson, MS

November 13-14

Southern Conference Tournament
Jackson, TN

December 4

Alabama Invitational Tournament
Tuscaloosa, AL

January 13

Alabama Classic
Tuscaloosa, AL

January 14-16

Pioneer Classic
Birmingham, AL

January 29-30

Gulf South Conference Tournament
Gulfport, MS

February 23-27

Women's Nationals
Slippery Rock, PA

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Partners in Policymaking of Alabama

Advocacy training for persons with DD

Partners in Policymaking of Alabama (PIPA) is accepting applications from persons with developmental disabilities (DD) or their family members for its 2005 training program.

PIPA's mission is to foster productive partnerships between policymakers and individuals with DD and their family members. Through these partnerships, PIPA seeks to create new opportunities and lifestyles for individuals with DD and develop healthy new attitudes and perceptions about persons with DD.

Trainings are held one weekend a month for eight months. During each of the sessions, state and national

experts present and interact with participants in small groups or one-on-one. Participants become educated about current local, state and federal disability issues and equipped with the knowledge of the policymaking process and important self-advocacy skills.

PIPA is administered by the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities.

For more information, contact contact Jayne Chase, PIPA Coordinator, at 800- 846 -3735 or at JChase1040@aol.com.

You can also check out the PIPA website at <http://www.acdd.org/About/PIPAapp.htm>

Applications are due by November 30, 2005.

Partners in Policymaking of Alabama Class of 2005 Application

Applications Due November 30, 2004

Application Information

Definition: The term developmental disability means a severe, chronic disability in an individual five years of age or older that:

- 1) Is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or a combination of mental and physical impairments
- 2) Is manifested before the person attains age 22
- 3) Is likely to continue indefinitely
- 4) Results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity: self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, or economic self-sufficiency and reflects the individual's need for

a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

PIPA Participants will be required to:

- Attend ALL scheduled sessions
- Complete ALL homework assignments
- Complete one major project

What are the PIPA program dates?

Partners training include eight two-day sessions that will be held once a month from January 2005 - August 2005. Sessions generally begin at 1:00 on Friday afternoon and conclude at 3:00 on Saturday afternoon. In April 2005, the two day session will be held on a Thursday and Friday. The exact dates for the 2005 training program will be announced shortly.

Where?

All PIPA training sessions will be held in Montgomery, Alabama.

Partners in Policymaking of Alabama Class of 2005 Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ County: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Email: _____

Optional: Male: _____ Female: _____ Optional: Race/Ethnic Background: _____

Optional: Age: _____

Your State Representative: _____ District: _____

Your State Senator: _____ District: _____

Your U.S. Representative: _____ District: _____

1. Are you an individual with a developmental disability (refer to definition)? Yes: _____ No: _____

Describe the disability and how it affects your daily living in at least three of the major life activities (refer to part 4 of the definition)

2. Are you a parent of a son/daughter with a developmental disability? (Please indicate if you have more than one child with a disability and refer to definition.) Yes: _____ No: _____ Ages: _____

Describe the disability and how it affects your child's daily living in at least three areas of major life activity (refer to part 4 of definition).

Describe your child's school placement: _____

Does your son or daughter live at home? Yes: _____ No: _____

Do you have other children? Yes: _____ No: _____ How many? _____ Ages? _____

3. What services are you or your child currently receiving (Early Intervention, School, Respite Care, Service Coordination, Employment, Attendant, etc.)?

4. Why are you interested in this program? Is there a specific issue, area of concern, or problem that encourages you to apply?

(Application continued on page 14)

5. If selected to participate in the Partners in Policymaking training program, I will:

- Travel to Montgomery to attend regularly scheduled meetings? Yes: ____ No: ____
- Make a commitment to attend eight two-day sessions held monthly from January through August? Yes: ____ No: ____
- Complete all homework assignments? Yes: ____ No: ____
- Complete one major project (i.e. a letter-writing campaign, organizing a town meeting. Details will be discussed during Session I)? Yes: ____ No: ____
- If you are employed, have you talked to your employer and arranged your work schedule so you can attend all weekend sessions? Yes: ____ No: ____

6. Are there any special accommodations necessary for you to participate in this program? Yes: ____ No: ____

If yes, describe accommodations needed (physical access, interpreters, respite care, attendant services, special diet, child care for siblings, etc.) _____

Learning materials in alternate format? Describe: _____

7. What types of experience and length of time have you had in advocating for people with developmental disabilities? (Membership in other organizations is NOT a requirement.) _____

8. Please tell us a little about yourself and your family and why you think you would be a good candidate for this program. What do you hope to gain from this experience? What will you bring to this experience?

9. Please list two references. Include names, addresses (including zip codes), and phone numbers (including area codes).

10. How did you learn about Partners in Policymaking?

11. Your hometown newspaper is (include name and city):

If you need assistance filling out this application, contact: Jayne Chase, Coordinator at 800- 846 -3735 or JChase1040@aol.com Applications are due by November 30, 2004

Completed applications should be sent to:
Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities
Partners in Policymaking of Alabama
P.O. Box 301410
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-1410

Transition - More Important Than Ever (Continued from Page 11)

school, take appropriate college classes, and may have a job. Classes range from the social to athletic to academic. At the Lifelink Plus Program at Penn State University, also run by Lindner, students take ballroom dancing, yoga, theater, basic writing, sign language, social problems, introduction to psychology, and criminal justice. The students' goals for each class, for which they receive high school credit, are developed by the student, parent, and professor. In some classes, the student completes all the assignments. In others, the student goes with his or her mentor, who takes notes. After class, the student and mentor talk about and highlight the important points the student should learn.

The gains for students with disabilities in these programs are astronomical says Lindner. She saw a huge improvement in social and verbal skills and confidence. The students think nothing of joining a campus dance on Friday night.

Lindner attributes the students' progress to peer interaction and caring. "There are people in the classroom who care and are part of your development," she said. "They are coming with you, helping you, and they are not a para or a teacher. It's your peer."

Another trend is to provide individual "coaches" for students with disabilities ages 18 and above. Here, a special educator acts as a case manager and helps students reach their goals, whether that means taking a college, technical, or recreational course; working as an apprentice; or being employed.

College

While many colleges now offer services for students with disabilities, success at the college level is still elusive. Unfortunately, often colleges only meet minimum ADA requirements, says Kochhar-Bryant. Even

those that do more are small and able to help only a third or so of the students who need their services, she continued. Also, professors receive little or no training in how to make accommodations for students with disabilities.

Second, college students with disabilities can have difficulty finding peers and mentors to support them, aren't prepared for the challenge and difficulty of college courses, and give up more easily than non-disabled peers.

Other problems exist at the high school level. Special educators need to work with guidance counselors to help them prepare our students for college. First, we need to identify the documentation students with disabilities need to obtain services in college, find out if they can get it ahead of time to submit as part of the admissions process, and decide who pays for it, Kochhar-Bryant says. The documents need to show the student has a disability that continues over a period of time and prove the disability requires an accommodation. Guidance counselors also should know which colleges have good programs for students with disabilities.

Finally, in high school, students must learn how to advocate for themselves, study strategically, and manage their time, transition experts say. Likewise, choosing the right college is essential. Students should visit colleges for extended tours recommends Heidan.

For your Information

The Wyatt v. Stickney series will be continued in the January 2005 issue of ADAP's newsletter.

*Series I - The first ten years
Series II - The second decade of Wyatt*

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