



PIC's Mission:

To improve outcomes for all children, especially children with disabilities, and their families, by providing information, education, and support.

PIC's Vision:

Is for all children to fulfill their potential to lead productive and independent lives in their communities.

Inside this Issue

Thinking Out Loud!

Parents as Agents for Change

Are You Using All The Resources PIC Has To Offer?

PIC's Community Impact 2010

Did You Know?

Proclamation Event

School Spotlight Save the Date

Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Children in Hispanic Families

The New Delaware State Assessment Test

Executive Board:

President: Verna Hensley
Treasurer: Julius Meisel
Secretary: Joan French



Thinking Out Loud!

By Marie-Anne Aghazadian, Executive Director

Every parent wants what is best for their child and wants their child to succeed in life. Just as parents are their child's first teacher, parents are also their child's first advocate. An advocate is someone who speaks on behalf of someone else, taking an active role in decisions that affect another person and someone who supports policy change.

Historically parents have been at the forefront of both individual and systemic advocacy. In 1951, thirteen parents in Topeka filed a successful class action suit against the

Kansas Board of Education to reverse its policy of racial segregation. As we celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, we have to thank the parents who in 1975 won landmark legislation that ensures that children, regardless of the severity of their condition, are given the opportunity to be educated in public schools across the nation. Although these two cases are the best known, there are many examples of parents who have made major contributions to changes in health and education systems within their own states.

Personally, I remember when my son Stefan, now 39 years old, was diagnosed with autism in the mid-seventies. At the time, few children were given that diagnosis and no services were available. Knowing that my child needed help was the impetus for me to seek out other parents with similar concerns. Together we learned about laws, systems, and politics and how to convey our children's needs for education and related services to the powers that be. This was before the Internet and email, so most interactions with policy makers was by phone, in person or through letters. It was hard work, but we learned so much and found that once people heard our story and plight, they wanted to help. In the end we were able to secure a program and many support services for our children right here in Delaware.

This illustrates the importance and enormous benefits of advocacy beyond the individual child. As you speak up for your own child, seek out other parents whose children are like yours. Being part of a larger group to bring about positive change for all children is not only very powerful, but also has the potential for beneficial long-lasting results. Social activist Sonia Johnson once said, "We must remember that one determined person can make a significant difference, and that a small group of determined people can change the course of history." So, why not make 2011 the year of Parent Advocates for Change?

Marie-Anne

Parents as Agents for Change

This six part series covers navigating the legislative system, learning how to be an advocate, and how to turn your personal story into policy.

1/12 Family Leadership Academy Internship & Project Meeting (6p-8p) PIC New Castle County Office

Come learn about our Family Leadership Internship program, what projects this year's graduates are working on in the community and projects that you can initiate or support.

2/5 "Yes We Can" (9a-3p) PIC Kent County Office

Parents can and will influence policy makers and help shape policies by gaining a thorough understanding of the political process and a particular set of skills to inform and persuade policy makers.

2/19 From A Wish To A Bill (9a-3p) PIC New Castle County Office

Participants will learn from an experienced legislative staffer how to move from a wish for change to actual legislation.

3/5 Creating a Win-Win (9a-3p) PIC Kent County Office

Hear from a member of the Delaware General Assembly how to best use the power of a personal story and other communication strategies for informing and persuading policy makers.

4/9 Harnessing the Power of Many (9a-3p) Location TBD

Making use of technology and social media to share your story and recruit supporters

2/15-3/31 Beyond The Dress Rehearsal

Broaden your knowledge and hone your new skills by meeting with your elected officials, attending school board meetings and legislative functions, or testifying at legislative hearing

To register, visit our website or call 302-999-7394.

The Link

A Publication of Parent Information Center of Delaware

The Parent Information Center of Delaware (PIC) is a (501)(c)(3) nonprofit organization incorporated in the State of Delaware.

PIC administers Delaware's only Parent Training and Information (PTI) project as mandated under section 1474 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and funded by the US Department of Education- Office of Special Education Programs CFDA 84.328M-H328M0900-09 .

PIC also administers the Parental Information Resource Center for the State of Delaware as mandated under section 5563 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and Funded by the US. Department of Education- Office of Parental Options and Innovations CFDA 84.310-U310A070006-09.

The programs and services that the PIC provides are statewide and focus on reaching families and children from birth to age 26 who are from racial, ethnic, or cultural minority backgrounds, economically disadvantaged, geographically or otherwise underserved.

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Website: www.picofdel.org

Additional funds for The Link provided by the DE Dept. of Education/Exceptional Children Resources

Are You Using All The Resources PIC Has To Offer?

You may think of Parent Information Center as the people who help parents navigate the special education maze, attend IEP meetings with parents, or give parents the skills and know-how to be effective advocates and leaders.

But you may not know about the less visible resources PIC has to offer such as:

A website where you can listen to archived audio conferences presented by experts at <http://www.picofdel.org/resources/audio-conferences/index.asp> on topics such as:

- Problemas del Habla en los Ninos Hispanos: Lo Que los Padres Deben Saber!
- Preparing for Graduation
- Facing Eviction & Foreclosure: A Family's Educational Rights
- SSI Benefits for Families of Children with Special Needs
- Guardianship
- A New Approach to Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Estate Planning for a Loved One with a Disability
- Bullying Prevention
- Parent Involvement in School Reform
- Understanding School Educational and Psychological Evaluations
- The New (IEP) Individualized Education Program
- Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of Students with Disabilities
- Charter Schools

- Print Disabilities – Access to alternate instructional materials for all students
- Student Success Plans - New tool for helping students envision their future
- Mediation - Options for conflict resolution for parents who disagree with their child's IEP team
- Response to Intervention
- Advocacy - Get tips & strategies from seasoned experts

You can also go to PIC's Online Resource Center that provides links to over 814 websites offering information about topics on schools from elementary to high school and beyond; Early Childhood; Special education and family support and engagement at:

<http://www.picofdel.org/resources/online-resource-center.asp?>

And if you rather read books or watch DVD's about ADD; Asperger Syndrome; Autism; Improving children's behavior and social skills, or parent engagement beyond the bake sale, do check our out lending library at:

<http://www.picofdel.org/resources/pic-library.asp> where over 600 books and videos are awaiting you.

Now you know why PIC is Delaware's Parental Information and Resource Center.

PIC's Community Impact 2010

With the continued support of our community partners, individual donors, and federal funding, PIC has helped:

- 5,537 parents and other caregivers become personally engaged in their children's education by giving them the information and skills they needed to be effective partners with their children's teachers.
- 13 schools set up family friendly Resource Centers where parents can find the information and training necessary to better understand what and how their children learn.
- 290 parents of preschool children prepare their children for Kindergarten through individual home visits and group activities offered by our partner the Parents As Teachers Program.
- 140 parents become valued leaders in their children's school after attending our Family Leadership Institutes.
- 2,751 parents and professionals participate in our learning opportunities on topics ranging from Bullying Prevention to understanding Individualized Education Programs.

Meet Our New Partners

 **INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS**
The Center for School Innovation

 **PRITCHETT ASSOCIATES**

 **DCM**
Delaware Children's Museum

PIC and PTA Come Together with Governor Jack Markell and Lt. Governor Matt Denn to Proclaim October as “Parent Involvement Month”

The proclamation was signed at the Delaware Children’s Museum on October 4th, 2010 by Governor Jack Markell and Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn. To honor “Parent Involvement Month,” PIC and PTA partnered to provide information and technical assistance to parents and schools to ensure parents are engaged and possess the skills and know-how to effectively support their children’s learning.



(L-R) Governor Markell, Lt. Governor Denn, and Marie-Anne Aghazadian



(L-R) Parent Robin Delaney, Executive Directors Marie-Anne Aghazadian (PIC) and Julie Van Blarcom (DCM) being interviewed by FOX News.



(L-R) PTA President Bud Mullin, Lt. Governor Denn, Governor Markell, and Executive Director of DCM Julie Van Blarcom

School Spotlight

Anna P. Mote Elementary School

For Anna P. Mote Elementary School, instruction and student success are the #1 focus but Mote also recognizes that most students who succeed also have parents who are involved. This year Mote has established a new program, Laugh and Learn, that has become quite popular. The focus of this program comes from parent feedback; they requested social time so they could get to know the other parents at Mote and also to acquire information on a wide variety of topics. Therefore, Mote has established Laugh and Learn for the purposes of socializing and engaging in meaningful topics such as conflict resolution, helping your child with reading at home, nutrition and health, financial planning, understanding data and others. Laugh and Learn is held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month. PIC Staffer, Lilia Meredith at Delaware PIC has been instrumental in the formation of the Laugh and Learn in that she has assisted in the establishment and has guided this group with important topics. Translators are provided for these meetings as well as yummy doughnuts and hot coffee and tea.

Bancroft, Stubbs, & Elbert-Palmer Elementary Schools

As part of the Eastside Community Schools initiative, Bancroft, Stubbs and Elbert-Palmer Elementary schools are offering a variety of programs and resources for families. Weekly activities include Zumba™ classes, Martial Arts training, Parent Support Groups, jewelry making, and a wide range of community forums for parents to join discussions with community leaders offering information, & solutions to community concerns. As part of the Spring 2011 workshop series, PIC will be offering a variety of workshops at the schools. Some of the scheduled workshops include:

- Understanding ADD/HD
- Raising Your Grandchild
- Homelessness & Educational Rights
- Parenting to Prevent Bullying
- An overview of the IEP

For more information about the events held at each school, please check our website www.picofdel.org or call Meedra Surratte, 302-999-7394 for more information.

Save the Date

Workshops

Raising Your Grandchild
Monday, February 7
10:30am - 12:00pm

Parenting is different the second time around. This workshop will help grandparents consider the emotional, educational, and legal needs involved with raising grandchildren and identify community supports.

IEP Overview
Palmer Elementary
Tuesday, February 10
8:30am-10:00am

Strategies shared at this seminar help parents become informed and participating members of the IEP team and to help them in the development of meaningful and measurable IEP goals that lead to significant learning that confer meaningful benefit.

Forum

Family Resource Center
W. Reily Brown Elementary
Tuesday, February 15
10am - 2:00pm

Join the Parent Information Center for guidance on building and sustaining your Family Resource Center.

Fun & Fundraiser

PICnic! (Coming this Spring)
Details to be announced at a later date

Keep an eye out for our Spring event, PICnic! It will be a day of food & fun. All proceeds will help PIC serve the community better!

Full listing of our events can be found at our website at www.picofdel.org/event

DID YOU KNOW...

Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) Offers Sample Tests Online

There is a Training Test site students can access to take sample tests online and become familiar with the DCAS. To find out more information visit: <http://de.portal.airast.org/>

Ever Wonder what the World is Like for Someone with a Learning Disability? Here's a Way to Find Out

Have you ever wondered what the world is like for someone with ADHD or learning differences? Is it hard to understand why some things are so hard for them to do? Now you can log on to the Misunderstood Minds website and find out!

At Misunderstood Minds, a companion site to the PBS documentary, you can choose from nine different simulations that allow you to experience a learning difference close up. Simulations include difficulties in attention, writing, math computation and reading.

Misunderstood Minds explains the skills necessary for each area, how children having difficulties are affected by their difference and suggestions on how to help them at home and at school. There are additional resources listed for each learning difference including books, websites and articles.

To learn more, go to www.pbs.org/wgbh/misunderstoodminds/

PIC Offers New Webinar on Accountability, Choice and Supplemental Education Services (SES)

There's been lots of talk lately about school accountability, Adequate Yearly Progress or AYP, and opportunities for parents. But what do these things

Don't miss PIC's upcoming webinar on school accountability, choice, and SES

actually mean and how does it impact schools & families? This webinar will feature a panel of guests from the Delaware Department of Education to discuss the differences between Accountability, Choice & SES, the roles and responsibilities of the Department of Education and



Simulations include attention, reading, writing, and mathematics

School Districts as well as the rights and responsibilities of parents seeking additional education resources for their children. This webinar is being held on January 20, 2011 from 12noon-1pm. Please Check the events page at www.picofdel.org or call 302-999-7394 for more information.

PIC Opens New Office in Dover!

Ray Taylor recently joined PIC to work with schools and families in Kent and Sussex Counties. His role is to help schools develop and sustain effective parent engagement principles and activities and to give parents the skills necessary to be active participants in their children's education.



Mila Wells & Ray Taylor at the Dover office

Long time PIC staffer Mila Wells is now working from our Dover office on Tuesday and Thursday and from our Georgetown office on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Mila is available to answer questions about special education by phone, email or in person, attend school meetings when possible, and deliver workshops on topics relating to special education and disabilities.

Mila is also the founder of the Sussex County Chapter of CHADD (Children & Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder).

Ray and Mila can be reached by phone and email: (302) 678-0300 (Dover Office)

Ray Taylor: rtaylor@picofdel.org
Mila Wells: mwells@picofdel.org

PIC by the Numbers 2010

- Attended 362 school & parent meetings
- Received over 33,000 web visitors
- Served 816 children with disabilities
- Had contact with 2,786 individuals
- Printed 13,277 newsletters
- Sent 16,800 e-newsletters

Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Children in Hispanic Families

Parishioners and educators often overlook mental health. This is particularly apparent with the rapidly growing Hispanic population in Delaware. To ensure that families acknowledge and respond to health and mental health mental health of Parent Information Center has developed a resource program for Hispanic families in Sussex County that provides support, information, education and training in Spanish about mental health including a Hispanic parent support group

with monthly meetings addressing different issues affecting families. In this endeavor, Parent Information Center of Delaware is partnering with the Center for Disabilities Studies at the University of Delaware CDS and the Delaware Division of Public Health. CDS, through a two-year contract is to serve as an "umbrella organization" to develop greater capacity and collaboration among organizations and agencies committed to serving children and youth with special health

care needs. The goal is to make it easier for families to find and access the services and supports they need. CDS, Parent Information Center, and others will expand the overall capacity of organizations, develop and implement trainings, identify service gaps, implement needed services and supports, and foster cooperation and coordination among partners to secure funding and sustain activities and programs. FSI will help Delaware achieve the six core outcomes set by the Mater-

nal and Child Health Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For more information, contact Maria Mendoza at mmendoza@picofdel.org or Phyllis Guinivan: 302.831.7464 or pguiniva@udel.edu.

<http://mchb.hrsa.gov/>

The New Delaware State Assessment Test

DCAS and accommodations for students with special needs

What is DCAS and how is it different from the DSTP?

DCAS, the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System, was rolled out in September 2010 for students in grades 3 through 10. This test replaces the DSTP. The DCAS is a computer based, online test. It can be scheduled over more than one day if necessary. Students can take as much time as is needed to complete the test. Another feature of the DCAS is that every time a student answers a question, the response helps determine the next question given to the student. Questions above and below grade may be asked of a student in some subjects depending on their answers to previous questions.

Students can also use the following tools to help them take the test:

- Zoom in on text and graphics
- Pause the test
- Highlight reading passages
- Access online calculators and formula sheets
- Strike out options for multiple choice questions
- Mark questions for review

More information is available at: <http://de.portal.airast.org/resources-General.html>

How have test accommodations changed compared to DSTP?

Because of the capabilities of the computer based system, some accommodations are no longer needed or have been changed. The IEP / 504 teams do not need to reconvene unless a new accommodation needs to be added. Otherwise previous DSTP accommodations are rolled up to equivalent DCAS accommodations.

Here is a summary of the major changes:

1. Using the computer text-to-speech feature instead of a Human Reader:

DSTP Accommodations number 105 and 117 dealt with having a person read questions or passages. These accommodations have been rolled up to accommodations number 106 and 119 in DCAS which involve having the computer read the question or passage

2. New accommodations:

The following accommodations are new with DCAS. To add these for your

student, the IEP or 504 team must reconvene:

#120 – Teacher finger-spells words for the student

#121 – Student may request test questions to be printed electronically from the online system for the student to review the question on paper

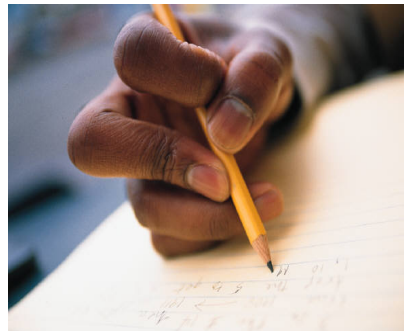
#122 - Student may request reading passages to be printed electronically from the online system for the student to review the passage on paper

#123 – Test is presented in paper and pencil. (Please note that the features and benefits of using the computer version will not always be translatable to the paper and pencil version.)

#301 – A TA or other assistant can help with questions needing mouse manipulation

A full list of the accommodations is found on pages 21-24 of the following document:

<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/aab/files/2010-2011%20GFI%20v6%2008-16-10.pdf>





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All donations to the Parent Information Center of Delaware are tax deductible under Section (501) (c) (3) of the IRS tax code.

PIC is a United Way of DE write in: #725
State Employee Charitable Campaign
#70088

For information on how to make a tax deductible gift or to become a PIC member, log onto www.picofdel.org select DONATE.

If you wish to volunteer with PIC, please contact us by phone at (888)

547-4412 or by email at picofdel@picofdel.org.

Please mail your contribution to:
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