



The Link

A Newsletter of the Parent Information Center of Delaware, Inc.

MAKING SENSE OF SENSORY INTEGRATION DYSFUNCTION (SID)

by Jane Miller

Does your child:

- ◆ have tag anxiety from tags at the back of his shirt?
- ◆ hold his ears at the sound of a vacuum cleaner or other loud noise?
- ◆ eat food based on how it feels and/or smells?
- ◆ hate to have her hair combed or cut?
- ◆ strike out when lightly touched?
- ◆ avoid finger painting, coloring, or playing with modeling clay?
- ◆ over-react to places that are too visually stimulating?
- ◆ crave or avoid deep pressure or high stimulation?

If you answer yes to any of these questions, you may benefit from learning more about sensory integration dysfunction.

Our senses tell us about the world. We perceive and react to situations around us subconsciously through our senses of taste, touch, smell, and sight, as well as by movement and body position. We receive information from our senses through the central nervous system. Sensory Integration Dysfunction (SID) occurs when the central nervous system cannot properly process these sensory messages. When that happens, a child receives information that is disorganized and

in turn, reacts to the world in a disorganized manner, which directly impacts emotions, behavior, and learning.

A Snapshot of Sensory Challenges

SID is characterized by over- and/or under-sensitivity to any of the five senses and to movement sensations. Carol Stock Kranowitz, in her book, The Out-of-Sync Child*, places hearing, seeing, taste, touch and smell under the category of “far senses”, because we use them to respond to things outside ourselves. Seeing is not only how well you see, but also how well your eyes team together to see. Poor muscle control can lead to skipped words or lines when reading or problems shifting your gaze from blackboard to paper. Auditory challenges occur when a child is over-sensitive to some noises and cannot filter competing sounds in order to maintain focus or emotional equilibrium.

The less familiar “near senses” are those that we operate subconsciously to respond to things happening within our bodies. They are:

- Tactile - information received through touch;
- Vestibular - information from the inner ear that influences

movement, gravity and balance; and

- Proprioceptive – information received from muscles, ligaments and joints that influences body position and body parts.

As Kranowitz notes in her book, these are “hidden senses because we are not aware of them, cannot control them, and cannot directly observe them.” Yet they represent the primary sensory system on which the four levels of sensory integration are based! And if that foundation is

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Thinking Out LOUD! LOUD! LOUD!

Help Wanted: Advocates

Objective:

- Life long opportunity to stick up for those who cannot speak for themselves (In so many words).

Absolute Requirements: YOU...

- Must have drive, initiative, a car and a reliable baby sitter!
- Must be willing to work long and unusual hours with no pay or perks (evenings or the crack of dawn are usually preferred)!
- Must be available on short notice to attend many meetings in Dover, Legislative Hall, or other beautifully restored mansions in our state (good opportunity for picking up decorating tips)!
- Must be familiar with all laws, rules and regulations governing education and other systems serving children and adults.
- Must be able to make sense of the above and apply when necessary, with more accuracy and diplomacy than the (so-called) experts.
- Must take the *Standardized Acronym Proficiency (SAP) Test* and pass it (short of being left in the dark)!
- At a quick glance must be able to read nametags and remember the names of all persons in a meeting
- Must not object to losing personal identity and be referred to as Mom, your child's mother, or simply a parent, (and be humble in knowing that you probably have more credentials than everyone else present).
- Must ban the word "THEY" from your vocabulary, because they equals YOU!
- Must not expect much gratitude, but be available to accept an occasional award (suitable for framing, with no place to hang it)!
- Must never think of retiring. (AKA burn out)



Absolute Benefits:

- You will join a winning team!
- You will become a pioneer, a trailblazer, and an expert. As an advocate you will meet terrific people just like

you, and make friends for life. Most importantly, you will be directly responsible for improving services for your child and others and our collective lives will be so much better because of **YOU!**

The Link is a quarterly publication of the Parent Information Center of DE, Inc. (PIC/DE). Please do not duplicate The Link in its entirety or partially without permission from PIC/DE.

The Link is made possible through reader contributions, funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, and the Exceptional Children/Early Childhood Division/Delaware Department of Education. Articles contained herein are for informational purposes only and do not imply endorsement by funding sources.

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Pictured above are PIC staff and community members at the ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of the PIC office on N. Bedford Street in Georgetown!

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shaky from the start, it can impact later development of gross and fine motor skills and academic readiness.

Evolution of Sensory Integration

First pioneered by Dr. Jean Ayres in the 1960s, sensory integration is now among the tools that occupational therapists can use to determine how and why children have difficulties with certain tasks or environments.

Margaret Odiorne, an occupational therapist affiliated with the A.I. DuPont Hospital for Children and certified in sensory integration, has been using this approach in her local practice for 32 years. According to Odiorne, in the '70s, "Often poor handwriting was the first indication of a sensory issue. When screening for learning disabilities, the initial referral was often with handwriting coordination issues - that involved motor planning and directing how you plan and act on information."

But as experts began to broaden use of sensory integration techniques, occupational therapists began to recognize its value to a larger population that now includes those with cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome and autism as well as those with learning challenges.

Sensory Defensiveness - A Question of Degree

You don't have to go far to see how our senses affect us. Occupational therapist Margaret Odiorne put it this way. "We are sensory beings and all of us have ways to provide sensory input to alert or calm us down. If you look at...race car drivers, there's a reason they like that sensory input. Other people like to listen to certain kinds of music for its calming effect. Lots of people chew gum for sensory input. There are individuals who need to do a lot of physical exercise because they don't feel good if they don't." But what separates a person with Sensory Integration Dysfunction from the crowd is degree of difficulty. Kranowitz wrote, "...When the brain is so disorganized that a person has difficulty functioning in daily life...the person is diagnosed as having Sensory Integration Dysfunction."

Melody Stack ought to know. In her 24 years as a local occupational therapist and sensory integration practitioner, Stack has seen people on all levels of the sensory spectrum. "It is such an individual challenge...Some individuals uncomfortable with touch or movement who are defensive find ways to protect themselves. Sometimes it's not socially acceptable...and as children become older, it can evolve into things that are self-abusive. One little child who got upset was always biting himself. He needed deep pressure (on his joints and muscles) to help relieve himself (of that compulsion)."

But sensory integration dysfunction does not have to be that extreme to have an impact on someone's life. Stack has found that "if you have sensory delays in one area of your life, it may not effect all areas of your life, but it will affect some." And because our senses do not work in isolation, a delay in one area can lead to delays in other areas as well.

Children with speech delays often have immature vestibular senses. That's why spinning and jumping activities while throwing at a target helps them organize and develop language skills. Combined occupational and speech therapy sessions can be beneficial for that reason.

Occupational therapists have a smorgasbord of activities to help clients organize their senses. According to Carol Stock Kranowitz, these tasks can include:

- searching for toys hidden in therapeutic putty to improve tactile discrimination;
- rubbing arms and legs with special textured sponges and cloths to reduce tactile defensiveness;
- completing obstacle courses for better motor planning;
- throwing bean bags, and playing with balloons or suspended balls to improve ocular control and visual-spatial perception;
- lying or sitting on therapy balls to improve balance.

But, of course, sensory challenges don't occur in

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SID (continued from page 3)

the vacuum of a therapy session. Depending on a child's challenges, there are a number of activities and organizational tools to help children who have sensory organization and motor planning problems function better at home and at school.

Sensory Supports - in School, Home and Community

As an occupational therapist working in local schools, Stack sees her role as being a support to the child within the larger context of what the teacher needs a child to accomplish. So, while an IEP goal may be that the child correctly forms and spaces letters, Stack approaches that goal through sensory integration to help the child motor plan the activity, sit still and attend to instructions if the child is over or under-reactive. "That way, we achieve a more functional goal relative to academic goals," she said.

In her experience, though, schools don't recognize a sensory issue unless there's an attendant behavior problem "If behavior modification doesn't work effectively, it might also indicate the problem is sensory in nature," Stack said. Naturally, that's not always the case, but only testing can determine if there is a correlation between sensory challenges and challenging behavior.

Mt. Pleasant Elementary School in the Brandywine School District is taking a more proactive approach to sensory integration. The school now is putting in place special equipment to help its Intensive Learning Center students cope with sensory challenges. Through an MBNA grant, the school will add study carrols to block visual input; white noise machines to control auditory input in classrooms; weighted vests for children who need proprioceptive input; lap weights to help children stay in their seats and cushions that allow kids to move while seated at the same time. "It was set up to help teachers help kids be more ready to learn," Odiorne said.

Adults, too, can derive benefits from sensory inte-

gration. While some experts believe that neural plasticity narrows after age 11, others are finding it a useful tool for adults with disabilities. "Here in Delaware," said Odiorne, "there was resistance in the past (to its use for people with autism) because the concentration had been on behavior modification plans, but now we are seeing more of a combined approach." She is actively working with young adults in group homes operated by Dungan Delaware, Inc. and at The Chimes, a general services organization for people with developmental disabilities. "The sensory diet that we provide clients gives them the sensory input they need to help them function. In some cases, it can make them less defensive and calmer," she said. Another agency, Keystone Autism Services, is currently having their adult clients assessed for *SID* and plans on conducting intensive training for all of their staff in 2001.

Sensory Integration – A Process, not a Quick Fix

Stack cautions that sensory integration is not a cure for everyone. "Sensory integration techniques *do* work, but it depends on the severity of the issues. Some people may continue to need sensory integration to help them maintain their organization throughout life and help them maintain their level of potential."

In a society seeking quick fixes, sensory integration can be a hard sell. That fact may help to explain why, on one hand, sensory integration is not universally practiced. But for those occupational therapists who practice this discipline, there's no better way to address underlying sensory challenges.

Expanding Sensory Integration Services

To support their cause, many professionals have taken matters in their own hands. In order to increase awareness and availability of sensory integration, a number of occupational therapists, among others, have created books or other materials to reach a broader audience with lessons on the value of sensory integration.

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One such program is How Does Your Engine Run? written by Mary Sue Williams and Sherry Shellenberger, both licensed occupational therapists. This sensory integration program teaches people to become aware of their energy levels and provides them with the corresponding “diet” of sensory activities so that they can self-regulate for better performance and well-being.

Filling a market need also led to the development of Belle Curve Records, Inc. 10 years ago. While working at the Denver Children’s Hospital as occupational therapists, Aubrey Lande and Lois Hickman had been using music and rhythm in therapy with success. They found that music opened the door to improved speech. “We saw a real lack of songs and activities for children with speech and language delays who also might have OT issues,” Lande said. “A lot of our friends were speech therapists, who were trying to get away from table-top tasks to more movement-based speech therapy. We wanted to support that effort” and also provide parents with hands-on programs they could use at home.

“Every rhythm has a corollary in motion,” said Lande. “A waltz makes you want to rotate. Samba makes you want to settle in. We use music and rhythm because rhythm promotes organized movement and movement promotes organized language.” So they created Belle Curve Records. Their first CD, “Marvelous Mouth Music” contains 25 songs integrating sensory, speech and OT therapies. More recently, the company has released “Songames® for Sensory Integration” with Suzanne Evans Morris, PhD. “This CD has 21 song games that are pre-vocal and vocal play for children with apraxia and language processing delays. They often have low-tone problems so the CD addresses OT needs as well,” Lande said. A companion book tells how to use music to enhance environment, calm, energize or support a child’s auditory processing problems.

The Internet also is playing a key role in expanding information and resources to parents as well as professionals. The sinetwork.org is a good site

with many links to related sensory integration sites including sensorycomfort.com and southpawenterprises.com. To contact Aubrey Lande directly at Belle Curve Records, e-mail her at aubrey@bellcurve.com.

How Evaluations Work

Sensory integration works on the principle that you have to identify underlying sensory problems in order to effectively address learning or coping challenges that children (and adults) face. Occupational therapists do not assume that all children with learning challenges have sensory problems. That’s why comprehensive testing is necessary. And if such tests show sensory integration dysfunction, they provide a window into treatment that can improve the child’s ability to perform tasks by improving the child’s sensory organization.

Occupational therapists use a battery of tests as well as observation to help them assess areas of difficulty. Higher functioning children are administered written tests and praxis while lower functioning children are generally assessed by directed observation or praxis.

By watching a child explore his or her environment, an occupational therapist considers how well a child modulates or regulates her behavior based on the four As: by level of arousal (energy /level of alertness), attention (level of focus), affect (emotional/social expression) and action (ability to plan, problem solve, and transition at age-appropriate level).

The occupational therapist applies these evaluative criteria to each of the senses to gather a clear picture of how a child’s sensory system functions. An evaluator considers the influence of physical and social environments on action and asks parents to contribute their observations to complete a profile of the child’s behavior and play preferences. From there, the therapist creates a work plan to address the sensory challenges that the test might have uncovered.

**The Out-of-Sync Child and other resources can be found on page 7 of this issue.*

PARENT PAGE

The Dinner Dance

I believe in life that we can receive signs that we choose to either ignore or act upon. Being a longtime subscriber to “The LINK”, I frequently read the articles that Marie-Anne or another parent writes about their experiences both socially and professional. I am the very proud mother of a young daughter 13 years old with cerebral palsy. There are times off and on when Ashley has exhibited some behavioral problems which are less than appropriate in the eyes of the school system and the powers that be.

I began to feel full of self doubt about the way I was disciplining my daughter. I, like other moms, have fought hard for equality for Ashley and I felt that she should be punished as I would my other children. You know as parents of children who are special, we sometimes put undo pressure on ourselves and do not realize that we know our children better than any professional, be they medical or otherwise.

On June 3, 2000 my daughter was invited to attend the 8th grade dinner dance at Gauger Middle School by the son of my very best friend, Mia. We gladly accepted. Not knowing what to expect, Mia and I were filled with apprehension and low expectations. We even had decided that we were not going to stay very long and that we would not feed the children there because we knew we were a minority and would attract attention, both good and bad.

Well that’s not how it worked out, Brandon and Ashley were driven to the dinner dance by Mia’s Uncle Gamelia in his 1953 vintage Bentley. Mia rode with the couple and I followed behind in my van with their wheelchairs. Aside from the couple there was another young man there by the name of Phillip who was a buddy of Brandon’s from Leach School. The three of them danced...the couple in their wheelchairs while Phillip took the floor (smile). We then escorted the couple to dine with the rest of the students in the dining area where we were fortunate that it was adequate enough to go make their plates and feed them as we normally do while we are out. We took pictures and Brandon’s trade mark “Hi!” was heard all night!

You see, this gave me my second wind. Ashley was absolutely stunning in her white mini dress, white platform shoes and wrap to match. My daughter was beautiful and attracted as much attention as any young lady at that dance. No negative behavior, just a bright beautiful smile. They took pictures at the school and we took pictures at home. And not once did either of our children give us any cause to worry. When I saw some of the young ladies at this dance I realized that this is truly a blessing. When people ask, “It’s midnight do you know where your 16 year old daughter is?” I can proudly say “yes, sitting right next to me and she’s happy”.

This letter is to remind parents like myself that life is beautiful especially when it comes to our special children. Through the heartaches, medical problems and daily challenges in our lives, it has made us super-parents, so when someone says to you, well you can't be a super-parent you can just smile, because you know better!

Submitted by *Robin McKellar*

RESOURCES

The following resources just arrived and are waiting for you at the PIC library!

The Out-of-Sync Child: Recognizing and Coping with Sensory Integration Dysfunction - Carol Stock Kranowitz, Foreword by Larry B. Silver/ Paperback/Berkley Publishing Group/February 1998.

Asperger Syndrome and Sensory Issues, Practical Solutions for Making Sense of the World - Smith Yles, Brenda & Tapscott Cook, Katherine (2000). *This book examines sensory issues related to Asperger Syndrome and provides realistic strategies.*

1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children 2-12 - Phelan, Thomas (1995). *This book addresses the difficult task of child discipline with humor, keen insight and proven experience. Also in video.*
Childhood Speech, Language & Listening Problems: What Every Parent Should Know - Hamaguchi, Patricia McAleer (1995). *This practical guide can help recognize the most common speech/language problems, when to get help and what to ask for.*

Floor Time: Tuning In To Each Child - Greenspan, Stanley (1990). *A professional development program for early childhood staff development and parent education.*

Helping Teens Reach Their Dreams: Self-Esteem Communication Goal Setting Decision Making Attitude Motivation - Schilling, Diane (1993). *This book concentrates on demonstrating to students, through enjoyable activities, that the gap between dreams and accomplishments is filled, not with luck and more dreaming, but with planning and action.*

Ian's Walk: A Story About Autism - Lears, Laurie (1998). *A children's book about autism and siblings.*

Living with Brain Injury: A Guide for Families - Senelick, Richard & Ryan, Cathy (1998). *A guide to help families through this new uncharted territory to help them understand what is going on.*

Nobody Nowhere: The Extraordinary Autobiography of an Autistic - Williams, Donna (1992). *"A story of two battles, a battle to keep out 'the world and a battle to join it."*

Without Reason: A Family Copes with Two Generations of Autism - Hart, Charles (1995). *This is a story of triumph and a mother of two sons, one of whom has autism.*

Father to Father: The ADD Experience - Dendy, Chris Zeigler (1999 video). *Four fathers talk about the challenges of parenting children and teenagers with ADD.*

Get Out of My Life: But first could you drive me and Cheryl to the mall? - Wolf, Anthony (1991). *A parent's guide to the New Teenager.*

Guidebook for Parents of Children with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders (1996) - *Handbook of Effective Migrant Education Practices.*

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: New Help for the Family - Gravitz, Herbert (1998). *A practical step-by-step road map to healing families living under the potentially devastating impact of OCD.*
School Rights: A Parent's Legal Handbook and Action Guide - Condon, Tom (1996). *Explains what your legal rights are in relation to education, teachers, testing, curriculum, school violence, homeschooling.*

School-Savvy Parent, The: 365 Insider Tips to Help You Help Your Child - Clark, Rosemarie (1999). *Useful, practical tips for parents to make school easier and more rewarding for everyone.*

So Your Child Has a Hearing Loss: Next Steps for Parents (2000). *This booklet provides a brief overview of resources and references for families who have child with hearing loss.*

Teen to Teen: The ADD Experience - Dendy, Chris Zeigler (1999 video). *Features 6 teenagers and young adults talking about their experiences coping with ADD.*

Their World-National Center for Learning Disabilities (2000). *National Center for Learning Disabilities Resource Guide for learning disabilities.*

Disability Related Groups for Support, Information & Advocacy

New Castle County

ADD Network for Young Adults A support, advocacy and information group for young adults 16-21. There is also a parent group which meets concurrently. Meetings held once a month. Call for time and location. Rick/MaryEllen Foulds (302) 234-0208.

Appoquinimink Special Education Support Group Parent mutual support group. Call for meeting times and location. Yvonne Coleman (302) 378-4574 yfcol@aol.com or Ellie Laws (302) 653-6375 elaws@aol.com.

ARC of Delaware (Association for the Rights of Citizens with Mental Retardation) Self-Advocacy Group - DE People First. One meeting each month - date/time varies, please call for information. Employment, Housing, Friend-to-Friend. Rita Mariani, Exec. Dir. (302) 996-9400 .max@dca.net.

Brain Injury Association of Delaware Meets the 3rd Thursday of every month (Jan-Nov) at Christiana Care Health System, Newark, Room 1100, at 7:00 p.m. Margie Goodier, Facilitator (302) 378-3035 or (800) 411-0505 www.biausa.org/Delaware/bia.htm.

Children & Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders (CHADD) Greater Newark Chapter of CHADD Support Group meets 3rd Tuesday of the month 7:00 p.m.-United Church of Christ (UCC), Main Street, Newark. Group does not meet in the months of June, July, August or December. Educational sessions, guest speakers and support for parents dealing with children who have attention deficit disorder and co-existing conditions such as: obsessive behavior, tics, learning differences, oppositional defiant disorder and more. Call for meeting topics. Presentation on ADHD to interested groups. Ruth Wolfe, Chapter Coordinator (302) 737-5063, newarkchad@aol.com or www.chadd.org.

Children & Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders (CHADD) Brandywine Valley Chapter Meets 2nd Thursday of each month except August & December at DuPont Hospital for Children, Rockland Road, Wilm. Genevieve Tighe (302) 376-0900.

Delaware Assistive Technology Resource Center Barrier-free centers are open to the public and house assistive technology devices and materials that are available for demonstration and short-term loan. Maureen Schweitzer, Coordinator (302) 328-2872 or (302) 328-2905 TDD.

Delaware Chapter of the American Society for Deaf Children Affiliate of national organization. Main goals are to distribute information, provide educational and emotional support. Joanne Koston (302) 731-4879 Voice & TTY.

Delaware Learning Resource System Educational materials for borrowing. Materials include all subjects and levels birth through adult. Collection includes books, games, toys, video tapes, manipulatives, audio cassettes, software, etc. (302) 831-8148.

Disabilities Law Program Provides free legal assistance to individuals with disabilities in civil areas of law. Brian Hartman (302) 575-0660 or (800) 292-7980.

Early Intervention Program (DMR) Offers developmental testing and care management. Nancy Colley, Director (302) 995-8576 or ncolley@state.de.us.

Easter Seal Society of Del-Mar Medical rehabilitation, independent living services, camping & recreation opportunities, vocational and educational services, other. Sandra Tuttle, President (302) 324-4444.

Epilepsy Foundation of Delaware Maintains resource file of community services for persons with epilepsy. Adult support group meetings are held 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month, 7:00 p.m., Richard Park United Methodist Church. Barbara Blair, RN (302) 324-4455.

FamQuest Personal development, training and coaching firm offering various programs for families and youth. Includes parenting programs. (302) 498-5191 or www.famquest.com.

Family Forum For families of children with developmental delays and disabilities, ages birth to five years. (302) 577-4556.

Muscular Dystrophy Association Provides clinic services and informational pamphlets; organizes fund raisers to support MD research and treatment. Elaine Mann (609) 770-9232.

National Multiple Sclerosis Society Offers information and lending library, assists in service referrals. Sharon Saunders (302) 655-5610 or sharon.sanders@nmss.ded.org or www.skycon.com/mssdel.

National Reye's Syndrome Foundation (Delaware Chapter) Provides information on Reye's Syndrome. Arthur/Carol-Lee Patch (302) 478-3624.

Parents of Children/Adolescents with Mental Illness Meetings held 3rd Thursday monthly, Cedar's Church of Christ. Mike/Judy Barker (302) 998-7684.

Parents of Emotionally Disturbed Youth Support Group (PEDY) Provides support, referrals, and education to parents of emotionally disturbed youths. Connie Williams (302) 737-8522.

Tourette Syndrome Support Group Meetings held 3rd Wednesday monthly, 7:00 p.m., Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 2313 Concord Pk. (Rt. 202) Room 132, Wilmington. Contact: Jean Deerlove (610) 274-2321 or Joy D'Avanzo (302) 999-1916.

United Cerebral Palsy of DE Offers support, advocacy, and referrals for children with Cerebral Palsy and other disabilities; operates a summer camp and client assistance program. Marge Turner (302) 764-2400.

Kent County

ARC of Delaware (Association for the Rights of Citizens with Mental Retardation) Self-Advocacy Group - DE People First. One meeting each month - date/time varies, please call for information. Employment, Housing, Friend-to-Friend. Mary Horn, Office Mgr. (302) 736-6140.

Brain Injury Association of Delaware Meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month (Jan-Nov) at Kent General Hospital Outpatient Therapy Facility, 560 S. Governors Avenue, Dover, at 7:00 p.m. Rusty Sheridan, Facilitator (302) 653-9433 www.biausa.org/Delaware/bia.htm.

Delaware Assistive Technology Resource Center Barrier-free centers are open to the public and house assistive technology devices and materials that are available for demonstration and short-term loan. Hours of operation: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Alma Cordero (302) 739-6885 or (302) 739-6886 TDD.

Delaware Learning Resource System Provides educational material and services to help educate children, including those with special needs. Hours Mon.-Thurs. 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Fri. 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Summer hours differ - please call first. Beverly Bresnahan (302) 672-1958 or (302) 672-1959.

Disabilities Law Program Provides free legal assistance to individuals with disabilities in civil areas of law. Christopher White (302) 674-8503 or (800) 464-4357.

dOORS Is opportunity knocking heavily but you haven't found the right key to get to it? Disabled Outreach Options Resources and Support, is a group of individuals with all types of disabilities that meets with their families, friends and caregivers, the first Tuesday of each month at Easter Seals 1404 Forrest Ave. Dover from 6-8 pm. John Jefferson at (302) 678-3353.

Easter Seal Society of Del-Mar Independent living and outpatient rehab services. Gary Cassidy, Director (302) 678-3353.

Epilepsy Foundation of Delaware Millsboro Easter Seals-Information and Referral Only - Carol Hudson 674-9857, FAX 934-9868 Support Group

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Meetings held 2nd Monday of every month 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at General Foods Conference Room, 1st Floor, Bayhealth Medical Center (formerly Kent General Hospital), 640 State Street, Dover. Donna Goldsborough, RN (302) 674-7135.

Exceptional Family Member Program, Family Support Center, DAFB

Assists families with a member with special needs through referrals, facilities, and housing. Tech. Sgt. Gary Scott (302) 677-3386.

Family Forum-Birth to Three Early Intervention For families of children with developmental delays and disabilities, ages birth to five years. Family Forum meets once a month in Dover & Georgetown. Sandy Ward (302) 422-1335 or sward@state.de.us.

National Multiple Sclerosis Society Mon., Wed., Fri., 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Provides information and a support group meets at Kent General Hospital in General Foods Conference Room. Call for times. Regina Byers (302) 698-0847.

United Cerebral Palsy of DE Offers support, advocacy, and referrals for children with Cerebral Palsy and other disabilities; operates a summer camp and client assistance program. Carma Carpenter (302) 335-5626.

Sussex County

Arc of Delaware (Association for the Rights of Citizens with Mental Retardation) Self Advocacy Group - DE People First. One meeting each month - date/time varies, please call for information. Carol Reid-Hall, Outreach Coordinator (302) 856-6019.

Attention Deficit Disorder Support and Information Group for Indian River School District For parents and professionals - meets at the Frankford Elementary School once a month at 6:30 p.m. Tom Amrhein (302) 732-3808.

Brain Injury Association of Delaware Meets the 4th Tuesday of every month at Wesley United Methodist Church, 102 E. Laurel and Race Street, Georgetown, 7:00 p.m. Eve Tolley, Facilitator (800) 411-0505 or (302) 537-5770 www.biausa.org/Delaware/bia.htm.

Delaware Assistive Technology Resource Center Barrier-free centers are open to the public and house assistive technology devices and materials that are available for demonstration and short-term loan. Call for hours of operation. Carolyn Keene (302) 856-7946 or (302) 856-6714 TDD.

Delaware Learning Resource System Educational materials for borrowing. Materials include all subjects and levels birth through adult. Collection includes books, games, toys, video tapes, manipulatives, audio cassettes, software, etc. Patti Payne (302) 855-1649 or ppayne@outland.dtcc.edu.

Disabilities Law Program Provides free legal assistance to individuals with disabilities in civil areas of law. Patricia Shipe (302) 856-0038.

Easter Seal Society of Del-Mar Independent living and outpatient rehab services. Cathy Anderson, Director (302) 856-7364.

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National Multiple Sclerosis Society Provides information and a parent support group meets at Beebe Medical Center, 1st Wednesday of each month, 7:30 p.m. in the cafeteria. Laura Morris (302) 645-1844.

United Cerebral Palsy of DE Offers support, advocacy, and referrals for children with Cerebral Palsy and other disabilities; operates a summer camp and client assistance program. Carma Carpenter (302) 335-5626.

Statewide

Adoptive Families with Information and Support (AFIS) Provides support to families during all phases of the adoption process including pre-adoptive information. Call for meeting dates/times. Mary Jo Wolfe (302) 239-6232 or AFIS@delanet.com.

Alliance for the Mentally Ill in Delaware (AMID) Offers advocacy, support

and housing information for individuals with mental illness and their families. Meetings for support groups are held in all three counties. Call for meeting dates/times. Allan Williams, Program Director (302) 427-0787 or Oya ALatur, Support Services & Outreach (888) 427-2643 x21 or NAMIDE@aol.com.

Architectural Accessibility Board Reviews all construction plans and documents for state facilities, facilities that receive state funds, and state leased facilities in regard to accessibility issues. Dan Muterspaw (302) 739-5644.

Aspergers Network of Delaware (AND) Support group for Delaware area parents of children with Asperger's Syndrome and related disorders, including High Functioning Autism (HFA), Hyperlexia, Nonverbal Learning Disorder (NLD), Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS), and Semantic-Pragmatic Disorder. Call or email for meeting time and location. (302) 822-3327 or Deasperger@aol.com or www.syncreticssoft.com/Deasperger.

Autism Society of Delaware Support and information for parents of children with Autism/PDD. Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of every month, 7:00 pm usually at the Delaware Autistic Program (4 times a year in Dover). Artie Kempner (302) 777-7273 or delautism@aol.com www.wserv.com/delautism/ Call Marie-Anne Aghazadian for information and referral about educational issues only (302) 366-0152.

CHILD, Inc. Statewide organization offering a variety of services and programs for families including: Family Support and Education Services, Parent Education Classes and workshops, Foster Care, Youth and Family Services, Domestic Violence services. Corrine Lawrence, Director (302) 762-8989 New Castle County, Kent (302) 697-2292 or 697-0411, Sussex County (302) 629-7220 or (800) 874-2070 toll free in Kent/Sussex Counties or childinc.com.

Children & Families First Statewide private social service agency dedicated to improving the quality of individual, family, and community life through prevention, treatment, education and training services such as: Parenting Plus, Community Education, Special Needs Adoption, Parent & Child ADHD Group, Grandparenting Support Groups. New Castle County (302) 658-5177, Kent County (302) 674-8384, Sussex County (302) 856-2388.

Client Assistance Program (CAP) CAP assists persons who are seeking or receiving rehabilitation services with questions or problems they may encounter. Teresa Gallagher, Director (302) 698-9336 or Melissa Shahan, Client Advisor (800) 640-9336.

Coordinating Council for Children with Disabilities Promotes coordinated action among all service providers and organizations concerned with disabilities in Delaware. Robert Piech (302) 654-6987.

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), Delaware Federation Advocacy and support to parents and professionals in the education of exceptional persons. Annette Maymar (302) 684-8516.

Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative (DATI) Maximize access to assistive technology for all Delawareans with disabilities. Beth Mineo Mollica, Director (302) 651-6790 or (302) 651-6794 TDD dati@asel.udel.edu Statewide (800) 870-DATI.

Delaware Association for the Blind To provide services that improve the quality of life for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. (302) 655-2111.

Delaware Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (DELARF) Information and advocacy for adult service providers. Barbara McBride (302) 378-7460.

Delaware Special Olympics Sports training for eligible participants in 14 different athletic pursuits/competitions. Ann Grunert (302) 831-4653.

The Delawareans With Special Needs, Medicaid Managed Care Panel is a parent run group which meets monthly to address health issues and services for our children. Gail Launay (302)226-5232 for more information.

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Developmental Disabilities Council To assure that individuals with developmental disabilities receive services, supports, and other assistance and opportunities that promote independence, productivity, and inclusion in the community. Meetings open to the public - call for times. (302) 739-3333 TDD.

Down Syndrome Association of Delaware Support & information for families of a person with Down Syndrome. Call for information on meeting location, date, time. Contact: Theresa Moore, President (302) 239-2860.

Educational Surrogate Parent Program Recruits, trains, and supports volunteers who represent children in state custody who receive special education services. Faith Moore (302) 577-3545.

Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens Provides advocacy for people with disabilities. Ron Sibert, Chair or Wendy Strauss (302) 739-4553.

Governors Council on Deaf Equality Provides advocacy and information to members of the deaf community and their families. Kyle Hodges (302) 739-3673.

Independent Resources, Inc. Resource center for persons with disabilities and the communities in which they reside. Satellite offices in Kent County (302) 735-4599 and Sussex County (888) 561-2120 Larry Henderson (302) 765-0191 or (302) 765-0194 TTD.

Leukemia Society of America Offers free educational materials - Leukemia, Hodgkins Disease, Multiple Myeloma, Lymphoma. Patient Aid Financial Program. Judy Stoddard, RN (302) 661-7300 or Bob Hessler, Exec. Dir. stoddard@de.leukemia.org.

March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation Offers programs, educational services, research, advocacy for the prevention of birth defects and the improvement of maternal and infant health. Cathy Kanefsky (302) 737-1310.

Mental Health Association of Delaware Offers support, advocacy and information. Diane Treacey (302) 765-9740 or (800) 287-6423.

Nurses 'N' Kids at Home Provides "Prescribed Pediatric Extended Care" to medically/technologically dependent children; prescription from primary physician required. Statewide services available. (302) 323-1436 or (302) 424-4467 Kent & Sussex.

Prader-Willi Syndrome Delaware Association Provides information and support to families, teachers, caregivers, and physicians. Meetings held monthly at varied locations and times. Please call for details. Contact: Karen Swanson, RNC (302) 836-6213 or Becky Trump (302) 791-0102.

Reading Assist Institute Support for parents of children with reading difficulties; lending library at the Edgmoor Community Center. Volunteer tutoring teams in local schools. Referrals for private tutoring. Instruction for volunteers & teachers. Contact: Lisa Simon (302) 764-1010 or Ruth Baxter readinfo@projectassist.org.

Spina Bifida Association of Delaware To promote the prevention of SB and to enhance the lives of all affected. Provides seasonal newsletter and social activities. Meetings held every other month on Wed. 7:00 p.m. at Easter Seals, Commons Blvd. Contact: Kelly Moore (302) 478-4805 or sbaofde@juno.com or www.angelfire.com/de/sbaofde.

State Council for Persons with Disabilities Provides advocacy for and reviews issues related to disability. Contact: Bob Osgood, Chairman or Kyle Hodges, Staff (302) 739-3613.

Supported Employment Program, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Provides services related to supported employment such as job coaching, training and follow-up services. Office hours: M-F 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (302) 761-8275.

University of DE Center for Disabilities Studies University affiliated program whose mission is to enable people with disabilities to achieve their personal goals. (302) 831-6974.

“The answers to our questions lie just outside the fences we build around our thinking.”

Ben Bruse



Are you looking for a topic for your next support group meeting OR staff training?

PIC staff will be happy to visit your meeting and present information about the services and resources offered by the Parent Information Center of Delaware.

We also have a variety of 1 to 2 hour workshops that we offer to families and professionals.

Topics include:

Stress and Coping
Sibling Support
Legal Guardianship
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
Individualized Education Programs
Developing Advocacy Skills

Our workshops are popular events...
Don't wait to schedule yours...Call now!



LEGISLATIVE UPDATES



Federal Special Education Law Celebrates 25 Years on November 29, 2000...

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) formerly known as Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (EHA) or PL 94-142 is a quarter of a century old! Over the years, the IDEA has been reauthorized with amendments several times, most recently in 1997. Congressional history shows that before this law was passed more than half of children with disabilities in the United States did not enjoy an equal opportunity for appropriate educational services. One million children in the nation were excluded from public schools all together. Many children failed in school because their disabilities went undetected. Families had to find services outside the public school system often at great distances from their home and at considerable expense. Today, in addition to improving the education and lives of 5.9 million children with disabilities and their families, this law also provides basic funding for Parent Training and Information Centers such as the PIC of Delaware. This is what President Clinton said to commemorate the event:

“Today I join millions of Americans in celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) - a landmark of civil rights law that opens the doors to education and success for more than six million American children each year. As we recognize this milestone, we know that education is the key to our children’s future, and it is the IDEA that ensures all children with disabilities have access to a free appropriate public education. We have seen tremendous progress over the past 25 years—students with disabilities are graduating from high school, completing college, and entering the competitive workforce in record numbers—and we must continue this progress over the next 25 years and beyond.

The benefits of the IDEA stretch far beyond just those with disabilities. The new technologies and teaching methods developed to assist students with disabilities are improving education for all students. Three quarters of children with disabilities are learning in classrooms alongside their non-disabled peers, contributing to the diversity that is one of America’s greatest strengths. This level of success would not be possible without the dedicated involvement of parents and educators who are committed to a strong educational system for all children, and I salute their dedication and accomplishments.

In this time of record prosperity, with more opportunities for success than ever before, we must ensure that all of our children have the education that will allow them to go to college, get good jobs, and play active roles in their communities. America’s ongoing commitment to this principle, embodied in the IDEA, is both an economic and moral imperative for our future.”

Congress presents the Developmental Disabilities Act (DDA) to President Clinton for signature in October 2000...

The DDA that was last reauthorized in 1994, has become a significant provider of federally funded services for families and professionals. The DDA funding is usually administered by State Developmental Disability Councils. In Delaware, the DDA funds, among other projects, the Center for Disability Studies of the University of Delaware, the Disabilities Law Program and a number of other projects such as the Parent Mentor Project of the ARC as well as PIC’s very own Disability Awareness Campaign. (see p. 16 for more details)

President Clinton signs the Children’s Health Act of 2000...After many months of negotiating, the House and Senate passed a bi-partisan bicameral Children’s Health Bill, Title I of the Children’s Health Bill 2000 (HR 4365). The Children’s Health Act of 2000 is a truly comprehensive piece of legislation, encompassing many diseases and disorders that impact the health of children in this country. Division A of this Act includes autism as well as Fragile X, arthritis, diabetes, asthma, birth defects prevention (folic acid), hearing loss, epilepsy, safe motherhood/infant health, pediatric research initiative, childhood malignancies, adoption, traumatic brain injury, child care safety,

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Mark Your CALENDAR For These Events

For weekly updates, please visit our website at www.picofdel.org

Delaware Events

January 24, 2001, Clayton Hall, Newark, DE Delaware **Conference on Volunteerism** Featuring Dr. Bertice Berry "Smart-With A Heart". For information call (800) 815-LINK.

January 25, 2001, 8:00 am - 3:45 pm, Sheraton Dover Hotel, Dover, DE, **3rd Annual LIFE Conference** For information contact DATI (800) 870-DATI or (302) 651-6790.

February 1-3, 2001, **Family Support, Self-Determination and Disability** Sponsored by the U of D, Center for Disabilities Studies. A course for individuals with disabilities, their families, and support professionals. For information contact CDS at (302) 831-2305; TDD (302) 831-4689.

March 8, 2001, Wesley College, Dover, DE Delaware Federation Council for Exceptional Children "**Bridging the Gap**" with Dr. Tom Knoster. Call Mark Chamberlin at the DE Dept. of Education (302) 739-4667 for more information.

March 17, 2001, 9:00am - 5:00 pm, Clayton Hall Conference Center, University of Delaware, Newark, DE, **Greater Newark Chapter of CHADD-How to Think, Not What to Think: Preventing Behavioral Problems at Home and at School** with Myrna Shure, Ph.D. Conference for parents, clinicians, educators, day care providers and others involved in the lives of children ages 4-12 experiencing behavior problems. For information contact Newark CHADD at (302) 737-5063 or email newarkchad@aol.com.

April 23-24, 2000 Ruddertowne, Highway 1 & Dickinson Street, Dewey Beach, DE **Department of Svcs. for Children, Youth and Their Families: 11th Annual Delaware Prevention and Early Intervention Forum** Will emphasize the impor-

tance of "key dimensions of success": Child Safety, Positive Outcomes, Appropriate Services, Respect & Caring Alignment. For information contact 302-892-4500.

Events Elsewhere Around the Country

January 18-20, 2000, Adam's Mark Hotel, Denver, CO, **2001 Conference on Inclusive Education - Kids are the Bottom Line** PEAK Parent Center For information contact: www.peakparent.org.

January 24-27, 2001, Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill, Washington, DC Technical Assistance ALLIANCE for Parent Centers 4th Annual Conference "**Keys to a Brighter Future**". This is an opportunity for parents and professionals to network with those from other Parent Training and Information Centers or PTI's (PIC is Delaware's PTI) and to learn and share information about educational practices in other states. Call Kelly at the Alliance Coordinating Office at 888-248-0822 for more information.

February 7-10, 2001 New York Hilton, New York, NY **Learning Disabilities Association of America - 38th Annual Conf. on Learning Dis.** Speakers include Robert Brooks, Ph.D. Contact: 412-341-1515.

March 7-10, 2001 Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, DC **National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies - Creating Community Constellations: CCR&R Connecting Families with New Voices** Symposium highlights: Panels talking about child care & families, technology tracks, learning sessions, opportunities to talk with policy leaders. Check out their website www.naccrra.org.

March 8-10, 2001 Hyatt Regency Is-

landia Hotel, San Diego, **CA Conference 2001-2nd Annual Conf. on Science in Autism Treatment** Conference is designed for parents, professionals and anyone having an interest in scientifically sound information about autism and its treatment. Call ASAT 516-466-4400.

March 16th and 17th, 2001, Philadelphia Airport Marriott, **Pyramid Educational Consultants, Inc. 2nd Annual PECS EXPO** Speakers include: Dr. Temple Grandin, Ph.D, Scott Helsing, Dr. Andrew Bondy, Ph.D, Lori Frost, MS. CCC/SLP and others TBA.

April 5-6, 2001, Pittsburgh, PA, **Autism Spectrum Disorders: The "SCERTS" Model for Enhancing Communicative and Socioemotional Competence-From Early Intervention to the Early School Years** This seminar will offer a comprehensive model and specific strategies for enhancing the development of young children with ASD and for supporting their families. For more information, visit their website at www.barryprizant.com.

April 20-22, 2001, Inn of the Seventh Mountain, Bend, OR, **14th Annual WAGONWHEEL Conference "Soaring to New Heights"** A conference for children and young adults with disabilities. Conference brings together parents, educators, and health professionals to address issues related to nurturing and advocating for children, youth and young adults with disabilities, a positive focus on their abilities. For more information call (503) 581-8156 or (888) 505-COPE or e-mail orcope@open.org.

April 27-28, 2001, Atlanta, GA, **National F.A.S. Conference "Getting to Standards of Care for FAS: Evidence-based Best Practices"** Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is the leading known preventable cause of men-

tal retardation. There is no safe level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. FAS is 100% preventable. For information contact: Mari Stephens (404) 881-9777 x 217.

April 30-May 4, 2001, New York City, NY, **YAI/National Institute For People With Disabilities International Conference on Developmental and Learning Disabilities.** More than 150 seminars/workshops focusing on issues in field of mental retardation and developmental/learning disabilities. Call Aimee Matza (212) 273-6193.

May 7-10, 2000 Paris Las Vegas Resort, Las Vegas, NV **22nd National Institute on Legal Issues of Educating Individuals with Disabilities** More info to come.

May 10-12, 2001, Portland, OR, **Building on Family Strength's: Research and Services in Support of Children and their Families** Call (503) 725-8118 or website www.rtc.pdx.edu.

May 20-22, 2000 Adams Mark Hotel, Jacksonville, FL **The Promise Partnership Communities, Family Support, and Child Protection** Family Support America brings you information, research results, and training on the most innovative, neighborhood-based practices to ensure the safety of children. Visit their website www.familysupportamerica.org.

June 5-6, 2001, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Topeka, KS, **2nd Annual Governor's Conference on Juvenile Justice** Conference topics include: Legal Issues, Facilities Issues, Research and Prevention, Community Intervention, Information Technology. Phone: (785) 296-4213.

June 20-23, 2001, Grand Hyatt, Washington, DC, **Partners Make a Great IDEA: A National Summit on the Shared Implementation of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.** More information to come.



STUDENT CONNECTIONS REGIONAL MEETINGS

New Castle County – DTCC/
Stanton Campus (Wednesdays)

February 28, 2001–Career options presented by local community colleges and training agencies

March 21, 2001–Motivational speakers – panel of young adults with disabilities who attend college

April 25, 2001–Mock interviews/
Various local employers

Kent County – DTCC/Terry
Campus (Tuesdays)

February 20, 2001 - Career options presented by local community colleges and training agencies

March 27, 2001 - Motivational speakers – panel of young adults with disabilities who attend college

April 24, 2001 - Mock interviews/
Various local employers

Sussex County–DTCC/Owens
Campus (Tuesdays)

February 6, 2001 - Career options presented by local community colleges and training agencies

March 6, 2001 - Motivational speakers – panel of young adults with disabilities who attend college

April 3, 2001 - Mock interviews/
Various local employers

See p. 16 for more information about Student Connections or contact PIC with questions.

Legislative Updates

(Continued from page 11)

Healthy Start, oral health, vaccines, auto-immune diseases, graduate medical education, organ transplants, muscular dystrophy, Tourette Syndrome, obesity, lead poisoning, heritable disorders and pediatric research protections. Division B is entitled “Youth Drug and Mental Health Services”. Title I of this Act contains the autism provisions and there are 5 sections. Section I provides for the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to establish not less than 5 Centers of Excellence to conduct basic and clinical research including developmental neurobiology, genetics and psychopharmacology. Section II provides for the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to establish not less than 3 Centers of Excellence for the purposes of collecting and analyzing information on the number, incidence, correlates and causes of autism. Section III of this legislation directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services (the Secretary) to implement a program to provide education and information to health professionals as well as the general public on treatment and diagnosis. Section IV provides for coordination of the efforts of the NIH, CDC and the Department of Health and Human Services and any other agencies deemed appropriate by the Secretary. Section V provides that there be a yearly report submitted to Congress. Each of the provisions provides for an authorization for appropriations for “such sums as may be necessary”. It remains to be seen how much funding will be available for each section. Passage of the bill was an incredible collaborative effort on the part of 27 organizations from around the nation.

DID YOU KNOW....?

Materials that focus on research and helping students learn to high standards are available from the US Dept. of Education. Call 1-877-4ED-PUBS to request these and other publications that support family involvement in education. When requesting the following resources, use the inventory ID number for better service:

- "Fathers Matter!" Videotape of the recent teleconference on what communities are doing to strengthen fathers' involvement in children's learning. (EK 0216V)
- Start Early, Finish Strong: How to Help Every Child Become A Reader (EA 0103P)
- Parents and Families Learning Together: Mini-catalog of Free US Dept. of Education Publications (ER 0678P) in English and Spanish
- Questions Parents Ask About Schools (EE0314B)

The Consumer Product Public Safety Commission (CPSC) protects the public from unreasonable risk of injury or death from 15,000 types of consumer products and toys. To report a dangerous product or product related injury and for information about CPSC's fax on demand service, call their hotline at 800-638-2772 or CPSC's telewriter at 800-638-8270. Consumers can also obtain information at CPSC's website: <http://www.cpsc.gov>.

Vijai Rajan, a 25 year old Los Angeles woman became the first person granted U.S. citizenship under a new law that accommodates people unable to recite or comprehend the oath of allegiance. Vijai has cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy and Crohn's disease, cannot speak and has the comprehension level of a two year old. Vijai's father, a naturalized citizen, advocated for years to have the law changed after his daughter's application for American citizenship was denied because she was unable to take the oath. President Clinton signed the law in November, which will give citizenship to about 1,000 immigrants a year whose disabilities prevent

them from reciting the oath of allegiance, but who otherwise qualify for citizenship. (News Journal 11/2000)

Hundreds of thousands of children being treated for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder will have a new way to take their medicine. The Food and Drug Administration recently approved the drug Concerta, which provides the same active ingredient, methylphenidate, found in Ritalin. A dose of Concerta lasts 12 hours which is three times as long as Ritalin, allowing children to avoid interrupting class or recess to take pills. The new formulation also reduces the chances of abuse experts say because it is made from paste and cannot be snorted. (Newsweek 2000)

"Disability Information at Your Fingertips" is a handy guide to toll-free telephone and online resources for and about people with disabilities. This 70-page guide covers a wide variety of topics including accessibility, arts, assistive technology, children, employment, legal rights and recreation. Published by Disability Resources, inc., a nonprofit organization, this resource costs \$10.00 which includes shipping and handling. Contact Disability Resources, inc. at Four Glatter Lane, Centereach, NY 11720-1032 or (631) 585-0290.

In October, Nickelodeon premiered a groundbreaking new series focusing on a child who uses a wheelchair and refuses to let his disability define him. Pelswick, which aires at 8:00 pm on Tuesdays, follows the daily life of the fearlessly funny title character who happens to use a wheelchair. Each episode focuses on how Pelswick confronts the issues that go hand in hand with growing up. The cartoon features Pelswick's colorful friends, including his two best friends Ace and Goon, and Julie who is the girl of his dreams. The series was created by John Callahan, a cartoonist who has quadriplegia.

(Exceptional Parent)

CanDo.com is an online resource and web site dedicated to delivering

hard-to-find and relevant information that inspires greater independence and better daily living for people with disabilities and their support circles. Dr. Klein, Section Editor at CanDo.com, states that "Parents are the most important experts in the over 12 million families in the United States that include a child with a disability or chronic illness. At CanDo.com our goal is to empower parents to take charge of their lives and the lives of their children by providing reliable and practical information, emotional support and opportunities to share their expertise with other parents." Visit their web site at www.CanDo.com for more information.

The National Museum of American History in Washington, DC (Smithsonian Institute) is featuring an exhibit commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This program examines the history of activism by those who have fought for the civil rights of people with disabilities. This is an interesting exhibit to visit while in DC or if you want a virtual tour, the web site is a reproduction of the interactive kiosk that accompanies the physical exhibition. The website is <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ve/index.htm>.

Scientists have long theorized that about 15 different genes play a role in who is born with the brain disorder autism-and now they've finally found one of those genes. A study of 57 persons with autism found that 40% carry a mutated version of the HOXA1 gene which plays a crucial role in early brain development (reported in Nov 2000 by University of Rochester scientists). Children need to inherit just one copy of the mutated gene from one parent to have autism. In fact, scientists found only one person with a very severe form of autism who inherited a copy of the gene from both parents. Patrick Rodier, who heads the University's National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded autism research center, suggested that in the majority of cases when this occurs, the fetus usually dies. (Wall Street Journal 11/00)

BULLETIN BOARD

After School Reading/Writing Classes

The Reading Studies Program/University of Delaware is offering after school classes for students experiencing difficulty in the classroom with reading, spelling and writing.

The classes include word decoding and reading comprehension instruction, spelling rules, vocabulary strategies and writing skills.

Classes begin February 6th (Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:30—6:00 pm) and are available to students attending kindergarten through the 8th grade. Tuition for the 10 week session is \$450.00.

Contact 831-2307 for more information.

Psychological Services Training Center Available

The Psychological Services Training Center of the University of Delaware, a psychology clinic which serves individuals and families from Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania, provides counseling and testing for children, adults, couples and families for a wide variety of problems. Fees are on a sliding scale according to income and number of family members, and can be further reduced under circumstances where someone has medical or other expenses. The clinic is accessible to those with disabilities. The clinic is open by appointment, day and evening Monday to Saturday.

Please call 831-2717 for more information.

Are you in need of clothes or are you wearing out your old ones?

The Clothing Bank of Delaware is part of Friendship House, a ministry that brings together more than 25 churches and community organizations to serve the poor. The Clothing Bank distributes clothes to those who need them and it also provides employment opportunities for women who are seeking to enter the job market.

Located on the grounds of the Kalmar Nyckel Shipyard, it is open from 7:30 am—4:00 pm Monday through Friday. Call 654-1390 for more information or to make a donation.

Family Circles

*For Grandparents and Other Relatives
Raising Another's Children*

Family Circles is a support and information group where grandparents and other relatives can learn about issues confronting today's "Second Time Around" parents. Some of the issues addressed during the program are:
Legal issues; School concerns;
Dealing with acting out
Children and Coping with absent parents.

Register by calling Linda Cox at
Children and Families First
658-5177, x260.

PARENT INFORMATION CENTER OF DELAWARE WORKSHOPS

THE NEW YEAR HAS BEGUN... LOOK WHAT'S NEW FOR 2001!

A Parent's Right to Know: Getting Services for Your Child From Your School District

This workshop will focus on the process of obtaining educational services for your child who may be experiencing difficulty in school. Participants will gain information and knowledge about educational evaluations, reasonable accommodations and supports in the classroom.

Advocacy & Building Positive School Partnerships

This workshop offers effective communication methods for families, educators and professionals. Options for resolving conflicts and building positive partnerships with school teams will be explored. Participants will also learn methods for organizing and maintaining records and school files.

Basic Rights & IDEA: What it means to YOU!

This workshop provides an overview of statutes and policies regarding the provision of educational services. The IDEA (special education law), for children with a broad range of identified, unidentified and misidentified disabilities from birth to twenty-one years of age, will be discussed.

The Future Starts Now! Transition from School to Adult Life

The purpose of education is to maximize students potential for graduation and post school employment or studies. This workshop will give families and students guidelines of what they should know and do during the high school years (for students with special learning needs). Representatives from various adult service agencies will also be available to provide information.

The Individualized Education Program (IEP): A Blueprint for Education

This workshop focuses on the basic components of IEP's, including an explanation of annual long-term goals, short-term objectives, related service provisions, parent and professional participation, implementation, and monitoring procedures. Participants will also be updated on new IEP requirements.

What is Special Education? Just the Facts!

This workshop will answer your basic questions about special education services. Is my child eligible for services? Who do I call? What do I do?

HOT NEW WORKSHOPS!

School Discipline—Questions Answered!

Has your child been suspended or expelled pending criminal charges? Do you know who your school resource officer is? Do you know what behaviors require police involvement? Rhonda Denney, Deputy Attorney General in Charge of Prosecuting School Cases in New Castle County, will provide information on the legal process. A school resource officer will discuss their responsibilities.

Assistive Technology: How Will It Benefit My Child?

Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative joins PIC/DE in presenting this very informative workshop. See a demonstration of different assistive technology devices. Learn about the process for obtaining assistive technology and how your child may benefit.

PIC/DE WORKSHOP DATES AND LOCATIONS!!!

TOPIC	LOCATION	DATE	DAY	TIME
Advocacy & Building Positive School Partnerships **	UCP Building 3249 Midstate Road, Felton	January 17	Wednesday	12:00—2:00 p.m.
Advocacy & Building Positive School Partnerships	PIC/DE Office 109 N. Bedford St., Georgetown	January 24	Wednesday	6:00—8:00 p.m.
Basic Rights & IDEA: What it Means to YOU! **	Carvel State Office Building 802 French Street, Wilmington	January 30	Tuesday	7:00—9:00 p.m.
The Individualized Education Program (IEP): A Blueprint for Education	Carvel State Office Building 802 French Street, Wilmington	February 13	Tuesday	7:00—9:00 p.m.
The Future Starts Now! Transition from School to Adult Life	Dover Public Library 45 S. State Street, Dover	February 21	Wednesday	6:00—8:00 p.m.
School Discipline—Questions Answered!	Carvel State Office Building 802 French Street, Wilmington	February 28	Wednesday	7:00—9:00 p.m.
The Future Starts Now! Transition from School to Adult Life	PIC/DE Office 109 N. Bedford St., Georgetown	February 28	Wednesday	6:00—8:00 p.m.
Basic Rights & IDEA: What it Means to YOU! * (Presented with Christina School District REACH Program)	Bayard Elementary School Dupont Street, Wilmington	March 1	Thursday	6:30—9:00 p.m.
School Discipline—Questions Answered!	New Castle County Police Station Broad Street, Middletown	March 14	Wednesday	7:00—9:00 p.m.
Basic Rights & IDEA: What it Means to YOU! **	New Castle County Police Station Broad Street, Middletown	March 21	Wednesday	7:00—9:00 p.m.
Advocacy & Building Positive School Partnerships * (Presented with Christina School District REACH Program)	Bayard Elementary School Dupont Street, Wilmington	March 22	Thursday	6:30—9:00 p.m.
The Future Starts Now! Transition from School to Adult Life	New Castle County Police Station Broad Street, Middletown	April 4	Wednesday	7:00—9:00 p.m.
Assistive Technology: How Will It Benefit My Child?	<i>DATES/TIMES AND LOCATIONS TO BE ANNOUNCED- WATCH OUR WEBSITE !</i>			

* Pizza will be provided!

** Door Prizes—Register early, don't miss out!

✓Workshops are designed for families and professionals.

✓Workshops are **FREE** of charge!

✓Snacks and beverages will be provided.

✓Directions to various workshop locations will be mailed to you, upon request, when you register!

Please **REGISTER** by calling the Parent Information Center of Delaware at
(302) 366-0152 in New Castle County or
(302) 856-9880 in Sussex County and toll free for families in Kent County at (888) 547-4412.

PIC PAGE - All about Delaware's Parent Training and Information Center

A new project...The Parent Information Center of Delaware has partnered with the Division of Child Mental Health in a five year federal government grant project called *Families and Communities Together (FACT)*. The grant project seeks to provide better care for children with special needs and their families by developing supports and services within their community. PIC's role in the grant will be to assist families to advocate for their child as they develop their plan of care. The Parent Information Center's Parent Partners will be a resource to families about education issues and service resources. Presently, the Parent Partner in New Castle County is Myra Edmond and the Kent/Sussex Parent Partner is Kim Beauchamp. These Parent Partners will strive to work with families on the grant to seek solutions to problems that they and their child face during this process. The criteria for eligibility in the grant is that the child must:
*Have a special education classification * Have one or more behavioral, emotional or psychological classifications as outlined in the DSM IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition) * Not be functioning well in school, home and/or the community * Be involved with two or more state agencies (i.e. Child Mental Health and public school) AND * Be under the age of 18 with a priority given to children aged 9 - 14 years of age. Referrals are made through the child's school. Call the FACT grant team at 368-6903 for more information.

dAP Days 2001...PIC will be presenting *disAbility Awareness Programs (dAP)* in the following schools this year: St. Catherine of Siena School on Wednesday, January 31; Anna P. Mote Elementary School on Friday, March 30 and Gauger Middle School on Friday, April 27. dAP days are a unique and fun way for both students and teachers to learn more about people with different abilities. Individuals with various disabilities (both physical and cognitive) will demonstrate their talents and skills through basketball and martial arts presentations, classroom discussions and interactive group sessions.

PIC will be conducting a **Disability Awareness Campaign** in five Delaware schools starting in January 2001. Funded by a grant from the DE Developmental Disabilities Council, the campaign is one way for students to express, through artwork, their feelings about peers and family members with different abilities. One student's artwork will be chosen from each school to be reproduced on a "cd" case holder which will be disseminated statewide by the DE Developmental Disabilities Council in an effort to promote awareness and understanding of disabilities.

2001 Student Connections Regional Meetings...With funding and support from the DE Department of Education (through the Transition Quality Services Management Grant), the PIC will again spearhead a program called *Student Connections*. *Student Connections* consists of groups of high school students with disabilities that meet three to four times during a school year. *Student Connections* provides students with the opportunity to: Meet with students from other schools; Learn about the IEP transition process; Network and exchange ideas with peers and potential employers. Most importantly, *Student Connections* allows students to become directly involved in shaping their own future. During the 1999-2000 school year, *Student Connections* groups shared informative and educational experiences by visiting with potential employers such as Grotto Pizza, SunRoc Corp and MBNA. Students also participated in sessions where they practiced appropriate job interviewing skills; interacted with motivational speakers; and were involved in skits about youth leadership. Student Connections 2001 promises to be even more exciting! Sessions will be interactive and will again focus on providing information and opportunities for students to learn what they can do now to ensure that they are successful after they leave high school. High school students with disabilities and their teachers are welcome to participate in any of the meetings. All meetings will be held from 10:30 am – 12:30 pm (with lunch included). *Meeting dates are listed on p. 13.*

Don't Miss...PIC's Valentine's Day Conference!

Wednesday, February 14, 2001

Sheraton, Dover - 8:15 am—2:30 pm



It's a FACT, Families And Communities Together Are At The Heart Of It All

AGENDA

8:15 - 8:45 am	Registration/Continental Breakfast
8:45 - 9:00 am	Welcome/Introduction— Marie-Anne Aghazadian , <i>Executive Director</i> , Parent Information Center of DE; Eileen Fink, Ph.D. , and Mary Moor , <i>Families And Communities Together (FACT/CMHS) Grant Team</i>
9:00 - 10:15 am	Keynote Address— Sandra Spencer , <i>Executive Director</i> , WE CARE Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, N.C. <i>"Together We Are Better - New Roles for Families in Systems of Care"</i>
10:15 - 10:30 am	Break
10:30 - 12:30 pm	<i>"Every Child Is Special - How to develop effective programs that address the cultural and diverse needs of children at risk and their families"</i> Edna O'Connor, Ph.D. , <i>Executive Director</i> , Oak Hill Academy, MD
12:30 - 1:30 pm	Lunch—Atrium
1:30 - 2:30 pm	A) <i>"Families as Teachers and Advisors - A University Affiliated Parent In Residence Model Program"</i> Sandra Spencer B) <i>"Promising Practices in Community Wraparound"</i> - A panel of families and professionals serving children with special needs in mental health and or education systems will share their perspectives.

Please mail conference registration form with your check payable to: PIC/DE 700 Barksdale Road, Suite 16 Newark, DE 19711

2/14/01 CONFERENCE Registration Form	Registration Fee \$15.00 Checks payable to PIC/DE
Name _____	<input type="checkbox"/> I have enclosed my check for \$15.00.
Address _____	<input type="checkbox"/> I am requesting a stipend* for the following:
City _____ State _____ Zip _____	_____ Conference registration fee
Day Phone _____	_____ Transportation
Evening Phone _____	_____ Child Care
E-mail _____	*A limited number of stipends are available for family members only .
Child's Name: _____	My afternoon session of choice is:
Child's Date of Birth: _____	_____ A) <i>Families as Teachers and Advisors</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Member	_____ B) <i>Promising Practices in Community Wraparound</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional _____	Please notify PIC should you need accessibility accommodations.
<input type="checkbox"/> Educator _____	
If professional or educator, please list your agency or school.	Registration Deadline is February 7, 2001.

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Look Now for PIC's VALENTINE's Day Conference Information on Page 19!