



Spring on the Yellowstone.

We are proud to present news of interest for Montana families of children with disabilities and special health care needs, and for the professionals and educators who serve them; however, it does not constitute an endorsement.

**"Folks who claim high moral ground but are indifferent to kids are liars. I know that isn't a nice way to put it, and I wasn't raised to do that. I was raised to be a swan. Yet, as Marian Wright Edelman said, we have to be fleas in the fight against injustice. Enough committed fleas biting strategically can make even the biggest dog uncomfortable and transform even the biggest nation or state." —Susan Pace Hamill (law professor/author)**

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### Billings Associate Board planning Kids at Heart Gala, May 13

May 13, 2005, Kids at Heart Gala with a performance by the *Mid Life Chryslers*, Sheraton-Billings, call Dennis Moore at the PLUK office, 406/255-0540

The event will be at the Sheraton in Billings Friday May 13th and will feature the band – *the Midlife Chryslers*. This band consists of Billings' area doctors who participate in 4 or 5 performances a year for local nonprofits. The Committee is excited about their involvement and is looking forward to the Gala. In addition to the band's performance, the event will include heavy hors d'oeuvres, a silent auction, a live auction featuring Bill Holt and much more. For information on sponsorships or tickets, call PLUK's office at 406 255-0540 or 800 222-7585.

### Harkin introduces Bill to support Community-Based Services for Individuals with Disabilities

(From Monday Morning in Washington, D.C.)

Legislation would allow individuals to receive care in their own homes and communities, rather than nursing homes Washington, D.C. Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) today announced that he introduced the Money Follows the Person Act of 2005. The legislation, co-sponsored by Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR), would reimburse states for community based services for an individual currently living in a nursing home or similar facility.

"We have a Medicaid system in this country that is spending approximately two-thirds of its dollars on institutional care and approximately one-third on community services. This bill is an important step toward switching those numbers around," said Harkin. "It is shameful that our federal dollars are being spent to segregate people, not integrate them."

Under this legislation, the Medicaid money paid by states and the federal government would follow the person with a disability from an institution into the community. The Act would provide 100 percent federal reimbursement for the community services that an individual needs during the first year after they move out of a nursing home or similar facility. After that first year, the individual would remain in the community, and states would receive their regular Medicaid match for their services.

"This bill would allow people with disabilities to have choices that we all take for granted--to live with family and friends, not with strangers; to live in a neighborhood, not a nursing home or institution," Harkin said. "Federal Medicaid policy should reflect the consensus that Americans with disabilities should have an equal opportunity to contribute to our communities and participate in our society as full citizens."

Go to <http://harkin.senate.gov/news.cfm?id=232934> or visit <http://thomas.loc.gov/> and enter the S.528 bill number for the text of the bill.

### Medicaid Cuts Stripped: ABC NEWS

(From Monday Morning in Washington, D.C.)

WASHINGTON Mar 17, 2005 — The Senate voted Thursday to strip all proposed Medicaid cuts from the \$2.6 trillion budget for next year, killing the heart of the plan's deficit reduction and dealing an embarrassing setback to President Bush and Republican leaders.

Read more about it at <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory?id=590313>

### REFERENCE POINTS: House Passes Job Training Improvement Act of 2005

(From Monday Morning in Washington, D.C.)

On March 2, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 27, the Job Training Improvement Act of 2005, a bill that reauthorizes Title I of the Workforce Investment Act; the Adult Basic Education Skills Act, which governs state programs for adult education; and the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, which provides services to help individuals with disabilities become employable and achieve full integration into society.

The bill provides a number of provisions related to vocational rehabilitation and people with disabilities, including an assessment of the transition services provided through the VR system and how those services are coordinated with those under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and strategies the state will use to address the needs identified in the assessment of transitions services. These provisions were initially included in the Senate version of the bill to reauthorize IDEA, but in an agreement worked out between House Education and Workforce Committee Chairman Boehner and Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Ranking Member Kennedy, those provisions were not included in the final IDEA law and were instead included in H.R. 27. CEC and its Division on Career Development and Transition have strongly supported these provisions and are pleased that they are included in the Job Training Improvement Act.

H.R. 27 also requires a set-aside of funds for state VR agencies to provide transition services to students with disabilities served under IDEA as they prepare to move out of school to postsecondary education, employment, or independent living. This set-aside would be triggered once the annual appropriations for the programs reach \$100 million above FY 2004 levels.

For a summary of H.R. 27, go to <http://edworkforce.house.gov/issues/109th/workforce/wia/hr27billsummary.htm>.

### Montana Legislative Update From C. Briggs

Legislative Update #10:

1. Appropriations. I provided in update #9 an update of the 2nd reading action in the House on HB-2, Section B (Human Services, or DPHHS) on Friday. The remaining sections of the bill were heard on Friday (C-E), and the bill barely passed 2nd Reading late in the day (51-49), with only one Republican, John Witt (R-Carter), joining with Democrats to pass it. Witt serves as vice-chair of the House Appropriations Committee, alongside Rosie Buzzas (D-Missoula), the Chair. He said that while he didn't like the bill, as it didn't have enough cuts, he nonetheless thought both sides of the aisle had cut as much as they could probably agree to, even if they stayed another. The \$7 billion biennial government bill was cut by nearly \$60 million in floor action, and projections are it's only about \$3-\$4 million over the statutorily defined spending cap. More than \$20 million of those cuts came from one state agency, Environmental Quality, and nearly \$5 million from Corrections.

Please bear in mind, exceeding the spending cap or not, can only be determined at the end of the next biennium when the state can determine what the average per capita personal income growth has been (past tense). Democrats can arguably maintain they are within striking distance of not exceeding the cap. However, the "big bill" must still pass 3rd Reading.

Here's another immediate sticking point. Democrats on Friday evening tried to get a two-thirds majority to suspend the rules and vote on 3rd Reading (rules say you need to give people overnight to re-think their vote before the non-debatable 3rd Reading. It failed by one vote (66/34). On Saturday, Republicans incensed at the funds appropriated in HB-2 tried to get re-consideration of the Friday vote so they could open debate once again. That motion failed (50-50). But, that leaves the fate of the bill hanging, because if Democrats don't get at least one Republican to vote yes on the 3rd Reading vote the first of the coming week, they're back to the drawing board. Republicans want to hold it hostage so they can (a) both further cut the bill and (b) use as much as \$40 million of the current surplus to give Montana voters a tax refund. Of course, to do that, much of the funding currently in the bill would be slashed – and many Republicans feel that too much of human services has become a sacred cow this year. What's ironic is that all the increases to programs over the biennium that's coming to an end is without any "new" taxes – except the \$1 per pack tax increase to cigarettes approved by the state's voters last November. Many Republican lawmakers are angry at what they believe are inflated

revenue estimates that are being used to fund so much of human services, especially the largest area of the budget's growth, CHIP (Children Health Insurance Program).

One final point, as I mentioned in earlier emails, HB 745, introduced by the House Speaker, Rep. Gary Matthews (D-Miles City), is vital to the appropriations process. This is the supplemental appropriations bill that funds unanticipated expenses at the end of a biennium. It's been as low as \$11-\$12 million in some sessions – as high as \$80+ million. It's set at about \$56 million, and must be approved in some form to cover expenses such as any fire season that starts before July 1. It has requests that came originally from the Martz Administration, such as settling a long-standing lawsuit with the Crow Tribe (about \$9 million), as well as paying up front the costs of much of the new computer system out of the surplus. It failed to move in Appropriations (10/10 vote), so it now sits waiting for 2nd Reading in House, as it was pulled out of the committee by one of the Democrats 12 "silver bullets." It's going to be a cranky week before they recess Thursday for a long Easter weekend.

For your information, when HB-2 finally passed House 3rd Reading, it's transmitted to the Senate, where it will be taken up after the Easter break by the Finance & Claims Committee (composed of Senate members of the six joint appropriations sub-committees that reviewed all agency budgets the first two months of the session). When they complete work on the bill, it's sent back to the House for concurrence. All changes made by the Senate have to be agreed upon by the House, which is unlikely. What happens then is that each chamber appoints representatives to a "free conference" committee that will hammer out the final version, which must be balanced (final revenue estimates deadline were approved last Thursday, the 17th), before they adjourn on the 90th day, April 25th.

2. Other Legislation. Here's the most recent update of other bills we've been following:

- HB 127 (Mendenhall) – passed Senate 3rd reading and has been sent to the Governor. This revises the definition of seriously developmentally disabled and was a legislative priority of the Systems Advocacy
- HB 215 (Cafferro) – completes a name change to the state DD council, and has been transmitted to the Governor.
- HB 336 (Lange) – appropriates \$287,000 over the biennium to provide services to youth with developmental disabilities who have graduated, until they reach age 19. It is still awaiting action by House Appropriations, hopefully this week, before the Easter break.
- HB 438 (Buzzas) – This bill would establish Braille literacy for blind or visually impaired children throughout Montana schools. It is also another bill awaiting executive action by Appropriations, hopefully coming week
- HB 513 (Raser) – this will extend state tax credits to citizens who donate to developmental disabilities programs. Passed 2nd and 3rd Reading in the House this past week; referred to Senate Taxation for hearing.
- HB 550 (Windy Boy) – Appropriates \$100,000 over the biennium for the leadership forum for youth with disabilities. Having already passed the House, it will be heard in Senate Finance & Claims on Monday, the 21st.
- HB738 (Kaufmann) – Will establish an advisory commission to study all provider rates and services provided by DPHHS. Rep. Kaufmann has agreed it can also be another means to track progress and impact of the Medicaid provider rate redesign. It passed favorably out of Senate Public Health on the 17th and is scheduled for 2nd Reading in the Senate on the 21st.
- SB 41 (Keenan) – Establishing "funding principles" for Medicaid; it's one of several the Senator offered as part of a larger Medicaid redesign. It still awaits executive action in House Human Services, possibly this coming week.
- SB 110 (Cobb) – While little known, this bill provides more authority for Medicaid waiver demonstrations, among other things (such as the HIFA waiver) . Passed favorably out of Finance & Claims this past week and sent to the Senate floor for debate on 2nd Reading.
- SB 127 (Keenan) – Another of the Medicaid redesign bills, this focuses on restructuring home & community-based waiver services. It was approved by Houses Human Services as amended, and sent to House floor for 2nd Reading debate.
- SB 146 (McGee) – Based on a lawsuit, this bill intends to redesign – and fund – Montana's public defender system, which could be a good thing for people with disabilities on limited incomes. Passed as amended in Finance & Claims and sent to floor for 2nd Reading.
- SB 150 (Keenan) – Establishes cost-sharing for community-based Medicaid services. Bill was heard in House Human Services on Wednesday, the 9th and faced considerable opposition, especially from advocates of children's DD services and their families. It may be tabled.
- SB 153 (Cobb) – Establishes performance measures for DPHHS. It still awaits executive action in House Human Services.
- SB 428 (Stapleton) – Establishes the 211 emergency human services system statewide. The bill is still before Finance & Claims, awaiting action
- SB 433 (Lind) – Creates a Medicaid pilot project for 50 developmentally disabled individuals, providing retention of unspent funds in their annual cost plan for future services, as well as a portion to the DDP "risk pool." It was heard this past week in House Human Services and awaiting executive action

- SB 485 (Ellingson) – Passed the Senate this past week (delayed because of a disputed fiscal note), this bill establishes for citizens a “next-of-kin” registry, for purposes of hospital or long-term care facility visitation and disposition of one’s remains upon death. It would be housed in the Attorney General’s Office. It’s re-scheduled for a hearing the 23rd in House Judiciary
- SB 500 (Cobb) – Revises state election laws to facilitate voting accessibility for people with disabilities. Having passed the Senate, it’s scheduled to be heard the 22nd in the House State Administration.

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### Region V CSPD Bus Registration for Montana CEC

**Bus to CEC:** Region V CSPD is sponsoring a bus to Montana CEC Conference in Billings. The bus will leave Missoula on April 12 and return on Friday, April 15th. Cost per person is \$40. **Please contact Nancy Marks at [admin@cspd.net](mailto:admin@cspd.net) if you would like a copy of the Bus Registration Form; the registration deadline is April 1st.** Please don’t delay to register if you’d like to ride it’s a great opportunity for networking and saving mileage costs!

### Civil Rights Project—Why Segregation Matters: Poverty and Educational Inequality

(Courtesy of Harvard Civil Rights Project at <http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/deseg/deseg05.php>)  
 Excerpted from the report By Gary Orfield and Chungmei Lee

This report examines the changing nature of segregation and integration in a society that has now become far more profoundly multiracial than it was in the past and explores some of the connections between segregation by race, segregation by poverty, and unequal opportunity. It has several basic goals—to help people understand some of the mechanisms of educational inequality by looking at segregation of schools and students by poverty, discussing the massive research literature showing the ways in which high poverty schools are systematically unequal, and then exploring the racial consequences of the fact that concentrated poverty schools have a vastly larger impact on black and Latino students than on their white and Asian counterparts. Another basic goal of the paper is to show how different relationships between race and poverty in differing parts of a nation in rapid demographic transition challenges the traditional black-white description of segregation. Unlike our earlier studies, this one gives central attention to the issue of segregation by poverty and shows how it relates to racial inequality.

Read the complete report (PDF) from the Harvard Civil Rights Project at [http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/deseg/Why\\_Segreg\\_Matters.pdf](http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/deseg/Why_Segreg_Matters.pdf)

### 2005 Summer Camp Directory for Children with Special Needs from CSHCN

Children’s Hospital and Regional Medical Center for Children with Special Needs has announced that their 2005 Summer Camp Directory is ready! It lists over 70 camps and programs in Washington State for children with special health care needs or disabilities.

This FREE directory is available online at <http://www.cshcn.org> under “Resources” or by mail through ESBA. Evergreen Spina Bifida Association, email: [patti\\_logan04@yahoo.com](mailto:patti_logan04@yahoo.com), web: <http://www.evergreenspinabifida.org>

### Support Group Starts March 22, Billings

NOTICE to Survivors of [a loved one’s] Suicide

Rita Watson, licensed professional counselor in Billings, is beginning a survivor of suicide support group this month. The first meeting is:

Tuesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

1004 Division (CN Plaza) Room # will be posted when you get there

No Charge! Participants may donate IF they can to defray the cost of materials. Questions? Call Rita Watson, Licensed Clinical Social Worker—(406) 208-8961

### NBC Series “Autism: The Hidden Epidemic” Now Available on DVD

(From PACER.org)

Want a DVD copy of the recent NBC programs on Autism? NBC has arranged to offer these programs on DVD through the Autism Speaks website at [www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org). The DVD costs just a penny (since the NBC website system does not recognize “free” items) and shipping and handling is \$4.95. Delivery takes about 6-8 weeks.

To order a copy of the NBC series, email your name and shipping address to [info@autismspeaks.org](mailto:info@autismspeaks.org). \*\*Due to the high volume of requests, you may get an error message saying the email was undeliverable because the recipient's mailbox is full. It is possible that you will need to re-send your request at a later date.

### AirLifeLine Medical and Humanitarian Transport Flights

(Courtesy of AirLifeLine)



For nearly 25 years, AirLifeLine has helped people overcome the obstacle of distance and access to healthcare. Through a nationwide network of 1,500 volunteer pilots, AirLifeLine coordinates free air transportation for people in need. AirLifeLine's generous and compassionate volunteer pilots – men and women from all 50 states with a wide variety of backgrounds - donate flights in their personal general aviation aircraft. Passengers fly totally free, as often as necessary and for as long as needed, to reach medical care or for numerous other humanitarian needs. Since 1978, and AirLifeLine volunteer pilots have flown over 30,000 missions. In 2002, AirLifeLine volunteer pilots provided free air transportation for nearly 9,500 passengers (men, women, and children), saving them over \$4 million in commercial travel expenses, helping them reach medical treatment that would otherwise be inaccessible.

Although the vast majority of its passengers fly for medical reasons, AirLifeLine pilots also offer free flights for other humanitarian reasons. Each summer, AirLifeLine's volunteer pilots transport children from Chernobyl to host homes across the U.S. for a two-month summer respite. They also transport hundreds of children to health-related summer camps each year. Within 48 hours of the terrorist attacks on 9/11/01, and while most aircraft were still grounded, AirLifeLine volunteer pilots were in the air transporting emergency service personnel, disaster victims, blood and medical supplies in support of disaster relief efforts in New York City and Washington, D.C.

AirLifeLine is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization that relies 100% on the generosity of volunteer pilots, as well as individual, corporate, and foundation contributions. AirLifeLine is the oldest and largest national volunteer pilot organization in the United States. For more information about AirLifeLine, call toll-free (877) AIR LIFE (877-247-5433).

### LD Resources Online—Article from Roger Dean Kiser “A D Minus”

(Courtesy of LD Resources.com)

“A D Minus” © Roger Dean Kiser

I remember my Landon Junior High School seventh grade, math teacher's name very well. It was Mr. Young. He stood out because the kids made fun of him. He was missing one of his fingers, and always pointed at students with his middle finger.

For some reason I was not very good in school. English and Math were my worst two subjects. There was just something wrong with me, inside my head. No matter how hard I tried, I just could not figure out why I did not understand what all the other kids found so easy to learn. I don't think there was ever a day I went to school that I was not afraid.

One day, I was told by Mrs. Winters, the head matron of the Children's Home Society Orphanage, that if I got one more E on my report card, I would be taken to the Juvenile Court in downtown Jacksonville, Florida. She would tell the judge to send me away to the 'big prison for kids'.

I tried really hard for weeks to learn how to multiply, do fractions, and compound things. I just couldn't understand how to make different parts of numbers into whole things, but my brain just couldn't do it, no matter how hard I tried.

The day before report cards were to come out, I knew that Mr. Young would give me an E, just like he always did.

After class ended, I went to Mr. Young and told him that the orphanage was going to send me to the big prison if I got another E on my report card. He told me there was nothing he could do; it would be unfair to the other kids if he gave me a better grade than I had actually earned.

I smiled at him, turned and walked towards the door, then I stopped. I looked at the teacher and said, “Mr. Young, you know how all the kids make fun of you because you're missing your finger?”

He looked at me, moved his mouth to one side, like he was biting the inside of his gum, and said nothing.

“They shouldn't do that to you because you can't help not having a finger, Mr. Young. Just like I can't help not being able to learn numbers and stuff like that,” I said.

Again, he said nothing as he looked down at his desk, and began grading papers.

The next day, when I got my report card, I tucked it into one of my books. While on the school bus, I opened the report card envelope and looked at my grades: Geography; B+, Mechanical Drawing; C-, English; D-, History; C-, Gym; B+, Art; C, Math; D-.

That math grade was the most favorite one I ever received in my whole life. Not because I didn't get sent to the big prison for kids, but because I knew that someone in the world finally understood what it was like for me to be missing a finger inside my head.

Read Kiser's article online at <http://www.ldresources.org/?p=1056>.

## Online Gaming for the Visually Impaired

(From Wired.com)

The Blind Fragging the Blind

02:00 AM Mar. 14, 2005 PT

By David Cohn

Michael Feir is an avid gamer. He spent so much time playing games in college he created his own online gaming magazine. But Feir doesn't play the best-selling games and has never seen World of Warcraft -- he's blind. It doesn't matter. A growing library of computer games has been built specially for blind gamers, using sound instead of visuals to let players know what's going on around them.

"My dad had taken me as a young person to arcades and he would tell me what to do, and what was going on," said Feir, founder of Audyssey Gaming Magazine (<http://www.angelfire.com/music4/duffstuff/audyssey.html>), an online quarterly for blind gamers. "I always thought that I could play myself if they were sound-based games."

Now the games exist -- lots of them. Audio games represent almost every gaming genre, from multiplayer role-playing games to action-adventure titles, driving games, science fiction thrillers, and puzzle games.

Read the article online at <http://www.wired.com/news/games/0,2101,66879,00.html?tw=rss.TOP> for more information and links to gaming resources.

## Wrightslaw Information for SPED Lay Advocates

(Courtesy of Wrightslaw.com)

A Tale of Two Advocates: State Bar Issues New Decision on Unauthorized Practice of Law

The question of whether lay advocates can represent parents in special education due process hearings is answered differently around the country.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 and IDEA 2004 contain the "lay advocacy" statute as follows: 20 U.S.C. Section 1415(h) - SAFEGUARDS. Any party to a hearing conducted pursuant to subsection (f) or (k), or an appeal conducted pursuant to subsection (g), shall be accorded

(1) the right to be accompanied and advised by counsel and by individuals with special knowledge or training with respect to the problems of children with disabilities; (emphasis added)

(2) the right to present evidence and confront, cross-examine, and compel the attendance of witnesses; . . .

(Wrightslaw: Special Education Law, page 72)

Under this provision, many parents have been represented by "lay advocates" at special education due process hearings. Some school districts have complained to state Bar Associations that this representation is the Unauthorized Practice of Law (UPL).

In March 2004, the Florida State Bar instituted an investigation of advocate Lilliam Rangel-Diaz for the Unauthorized Practice of Law (UPL).

As the Florida State Bar explains, "The main purpose of UPL investigations and prosecutions is protection of the public from fraud and bad advice affecting legal rights." (See FL Bar UPL)

When the Florida State Bar finds that an individual is guilty of the unauthorized practice of law, an injunction is usually issued against that individual. If the person persists in the UPL misconduct, a contempt violation is issued and six months of jail can be expected. Many states have similar procedures and penalties.

Lilliam Rangel-Diaz is a nationally recognized advocate for children with disabilities. She has testified before Congress and wrote Special Education: Is IDEA Being Implemented as Congress Intended?. She testified before the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education about the reauthorization of IDEA. Ms. Rangel-Diaz also served on The National Council On Disability (NCD).

Why did the Florida State Bar investigate Lilliam Rangel-Diaz? Attorneys for four Miami-Dade County school boards complained that Mrs. Rangel-Diaz's advocacy, which included representing parents in due process hearings, constituted the Unauthorized Practice of Law (UPL).

Read more about UPL and SPED Hearings at <http://www.wrightslaw.com/news/05/diaz.upl.0307.htm>.

## Utah Denounces 'No child' Legislation

(From MSNBC.com)

ASSOCIATED PRESS—SALT LAKE CITYUSA - Gov. Jon Huntsman on Wednesday scheduled a special legislative session for final action on a bill that rebukes the federal "No Child Left Behind" law, after asking lawmakers to delay consideration while he seeks a compromise with federal officials. There had been speculation that the Utah Senate might take up the bill Wednesday before adjourning, making a special session moot. Lawmakers, however, failed to act in the final hours of the 2005 legislative session.

Utah wants to prioritize the federal education law, President Bush's education centerpiece, behind its own system of measuring performance outcomes for students.

The legislation amounts to one of the sharpest denunciations among 15 states considering measures on No Child mandates.

Read the rest of this AP article at <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7091549/>.

### Maternal & Child Health (MCH) Library Resources Available

(Courtesy of MCH Library)

The MCH Library has received a 5-year grant to expand its extensive hard-copy collection of nearly 30,000 items—including a century's worth of historic documents on MCH as well as current documents that are not readily available elsewhere—and to enhance its electronic resources. This wealth of information can be used to inform new program initiatives, educate students, and reach families and other key groups with state-of-the-art knowledge about topics ranging from adolescent mental health and asthma to substance abuse and violence prevention. MCH Library electronic resources include:

- MCH Library Web site—an award-winning Web site (<http://www.mchlibrary.info>) with easy access to information compiled by library staff and electronic links to the best MCH information available elsewhere
- MCH Alert—a weekly electronic newsletter that provides timely information on current research, policies, and programs in the field
- Annotated resource guides on MCH topics—knowledge paths, bibliographies, and organization lists on close to 100 topics important to the MCH community.
- MCHLine® and MCH Organizations databases—searchable, annotated electronic records on over 18,000 print, audiovisual, and electronic resources and over 2,000 government, professional, and voluntary organizations involved in MCH activities.

In addition, the MCH Library provides information assistance available on site and via telephone, postal mail, and e-mail to aid MCH professionals and the public in locating resources.

The MCH Library web address is <http://www.mchlibrary.info>.

### Mercury Pollution Identified As A Threat to Fetal Development

(From Yahoo.com)

Mon Mar 14, 1:07 PM ET

To: National Desk, Health and Education Reporters

Contact: Joel Finkelstein of the National Environmental Trust, 202-887-1345 or 202-285-0113 (cell)

WASHINGTON, March 14 /U.S. Newswire/ -- The Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA), the National Education Association (NEA), and the Arc of the United States today released a brochure that identifies mercury pollution as one of the greatest threats facing developing fetuses, infants and young children. This publication also shows parents how exposure to this potent neurotoxicant can adversely affect their child's learning potential.

Read the rest of the Newswire Press Release at

[http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/usnw/20050314/pl\\_usnw/leading\\_education\\_learning\\_disability\\_advocates\\_alert\\_issued\\_to\\_parents\\_linking\\_toxic\\_mercury\\_and\\_learning\\_disabilities129\\_xm](http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/usnw/20050314/pl_usnw/leading_education_learning_disability_advocates_alert_issued_to_parents_linking_toxic_mercury_and_learning_disabilities129_xm).

Access the informational brochure at <http://www.lidaamerica.org> and <http://www.thearc.org>.

### Easter Seals and PAAS Easter Egg Dyes Team Up, E-Cards "Spread Some Springtime"

(Courtesy of Easter Seals)



For more than 70 years, the Easter Seals seal has been an American -- and springtime -- tradition! This year's free e-cards, which feature the original lily artwork from the 2005 seals, are perfect to send for Easter or Mother's Day -- or just to brighten any day! Remember, there's no limit to how many e-cards you can send, and you can personalize them with your own message. Help spread some springtime -- and the word that Easter Seals provides services that make a difference in the lives of children and adults with disabilities. View and send the cards from [http://www.easterseals.com/site/Ecard?ecard\\_id=1021](http://www.easterseals.com/site/Ecard?ecard_id=1021).

Send an e-card and then vote on the Web site of our sponsor, PAAS® Easter Egg Dyes, for the winning design for their 125th anniversary Easter egg. You'll be registered for a chance to win great prizes for the Easter season.

### A Unique Trip for Young Montanan Representing Children's Miracle Network

(From the Helena Independent Record)

Miracle Child

By PEGGY O'NEILL - IR Health Editor - 03/15/05

Todd Daniels' favorite place is in his mother's lap. It's the place he goes to calm his anger, to watch "Wheel of Fortune," and to be reminded that, yes, his dream of a family actually came true.

Last week, flanked by three of his new brothers, Daniels was recognized on the House and Senate floors at the State Capitol for being the Montana representative of a Children's Miracle Network program called Foresters Champions Across America; his mother, Becky Barrus, stood behind him hugging his small figure in her ample arms.

Daniels travels to Washington, D.C., later this week with 49 other kids from across the country who are representing the 17 million hospitalized children in the U.S. After visiting Capitol Hill and the White House, the young ambassadors will be honored at Disney World.

Read the rest of this story at [http://www.helenair.com/articles/2005/03/15/health/c01031505\\_01.txt](http://www.helenair.com/articles/2005/03/15/health/c01031505_01.txt).

### Study Participants Needed—Depression And Women with Disabilities

(From Monday Morning in Washington, D.C.)

#### NEWS RELEASE

Research Center seeks participants for a study of Depression among Women with Disabilities Who Live in Rural Settings. If you are feeling sad and blue most days, or having difficulties concentrating, sleeping, or eating, etc. and if you would like to help other women like yourself. Contact us Today! Recruitment has started! Call to schedule your interview. Must be present for interview! Workshop will last 8 weeks. See below:

- If you are a women 18 years or older;
- If you have a physical disability such as: multiple sclerosis, arthritis, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injury, stroke, lupus, amputation, spina bifida, orthopedic impairments, fibromyalgia, scleroderma, muscular dystrophy, other physical disabling or other muscular conditions

The Center for Research on Women with Disabilities (CROWD) is seeking women with physical disabilities who would like to participate in a study of depression. This research project is part of a national study conducted by Dr. Rosemary Hughes and her research team at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, TX.

"Women with disabilities often struggle to overcome depression. Their disability may have a significant impact on the way they view themselves. This study will explore the physical and attitudinal barriers that women with disabilities face everyday," said Dr. Hughes, "This project will also help us better understand the effect that depression, stress, and lack of social support can have on women with disabilities."

Women with physical disabilities who are interested may call Caring & Sharing Center for Independent Living, Inc. for more information. Qualified participants will receive a Small Payment. For further information contact: Kathy Lentz, Sr. Program Associate, Toll Free: 1-866-539-7550 or 727/577-0065 Workshop Schedule: (5 wks in April) and (3 wks. in May) DAY/TIME: Friday, 2:00-4:30 PM, PLACE: Centennial Library, 5740 Moog Road, Holiday, FL, Phone# 727/834-3204.

### WestEd Free Publications

(From WestEd.org)

WestEd, a longstanding nonprofit, research, development, and service firm that has worked for years "to promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for children, youth, and adults" offers free publications and other resources on their website. Take a peek at dozens of listings at <http://www.wested.org/cs/we/query/q/1379>. Learn more about WestEd's 35+ years of educational service and read about the agency's newest efforts at <http://www.wested.org>.

### Navigating Medicare and Medicaid, 2005: A Resource Guide for People with Disabilities, Their Families, and Their Advocates

(Courtesy of Kaiser Family Foundation.org)

This guide explains the critical role Medicare and Medicaid have come to play in the lives and the futures of roughly 20 million children, adults, and seniors with disabilities - and gives people with disabilities new information to help them get the most from these programs.

View the report online at <http://www.kff.org/medicare/7240.cfm>.

Download the PDF at <http://www.kff.org/medicare/loader.cfm?url=/commonspot/security/getfile.cfm&PageID=50946>.

### Human Services Resource Institute Offers "EPSDT: Supporting Children With Disabilities"

(From Monday Morning in Washington, D.C.)

Here at HSRI, [www.familysupport-hsri.org](http://www.familysupport-hsri.org), we've recently completed a 50-page booklet entitled, "EPSDT: Supporting Children with Disabilities," (EPSDT = Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment), which was developed as a user-friendly resource to help families, advocates and others better understand EPSDT services. This booklet describes EPSDT, its components, eligibility, access, services, immigration issues, grievance and appeals procedures, and more. We are in the process now, of mailing the booklets out to all of our family support program contacts.

Please feel free to print and distribute this booklet. The booklet is available on our website at <http://www.familysupport-hsri.org/resources/EPSDT.pdf>.

## *Training/Workshops/Meetings/Conferences in Montana::*

### **Making Integration A Reality: Tapping Into Community Resources—Registration Deadline March 22**

This workshop is adapted from STEP's Empowering Parents and Empowering Advocates courses. Topics include:

- Exploring individual interests and preferences
- Identifying potential "community connectors"
- Fostering effective natural supports

Call Ann (863-3013 or 248-2055) to RSVP by March 22. This free workshop will be held at STEP

### **TOOLS FOR INDEPENDENCE teleconference, April 5 & 6, Missoula, Kalispell & Billings**

sponsored by Region V CSPD and PLUK

*Title:* Technology- is Not a Solution, It's a Tool

*Date:* April 5, 2005, 1:00-4:00 PM

*Where:* Teleconference originating from Billings broadcasting to Missoula & Kalispell

*Description:* Session 1. This half day seminar focuses on a simple common-sense approach to determine successful strategies and technology that will work for students at home, in school and at work.

*Title:* Technology for Reading and Writing

*Date:* April 6, 2005, 1:00-4:00 PM

*Where:* Teleconference originating from Billings broadcasting to Missoula & Kalispell

*Description:* Session 2: Technology Solutions for Reading and Writing Difficulties: This session will demonstrate many of the technologies that are available today for use with students who have reading and/or writing difficulties due to learning disabilities, motor difficulties, visual or cognitive impairments. These will include: scanning/reading systems, video magnification, screen reading and typing aids, voice input, electronic keyboards, and more.

*Presenter:* Roger Holt, [rholt@pluk.org](mailto:rholt@pluk.org): Roger has worked as the director of technology programs for PLUK, serving families state-wide for 15 years. He presents nationally focusing on technology and disabilities and the realm of Assistive Technology. He's recognized nationally as a creative and talented professional in the field and is a RESNA Certified Assistive Technology Practitioner.

*Locations:*

- MISSOULA: Blackfoot Telephone, 1221 N Russell
- KALISPELL: Byte Savy, 309 S Main
- Billings: PLUK Office, 516 N 32nd St

*Contact:* Nancy Marks, Region V CSPD Coordinator, 728-2400 ext 1088, [admin@cspd.net](mailto:admin@cspd.net)

*To Register:* Go to <http://www.cspd.net> and register. No Registration FEE for these workshops

*Credit:* OPI Renewal Credit - 3 hours per session, Early Childhood - 3 hours per session

*Audience:* General educators, administrators, technology support personnel, special educators, paraeducators, parents, OT, PT, speech language pathologists, and anyone interested in the range of technology options that are available.

### **Transition Requirements and Practices, March 9, Cancelled Rescheduled for April 7**

The Transition Requirements and Practices workshop has been cancelled. The workshop has been rescheduled for April 7, 2005. Identical sessions will be offered from 8:30-11:30 or 1:00-4:00 so you can attend one or the other. Please sign in to <http://www.cspd.net> to register for this rescheduled session.

### **March 24 Registration Deadline for Upcoming METNET Free Teleconference Trainings:**

#### **Self Employment, April 4 and May 6**

**Self-Employment Part 1 April 4th, from 1:00 – 4:00 PM**

**Self-Employment Part 2 May 6th, from 1:00 – 4:00 PM**

This is a two-part series with nationally renowned self-employment consultant Cary Griffin. During the sessions, Cary will describe how to make self-employment work for people with disabilities. Topics include:

- Using person-centered planning processes
- Generating business ideas

- Connecting to other resources
- Conducting Benefits Analyses
- Writing business plans and evaluating them for feasibility
- Marketing

MET NET will broadcast to these locations simultaneously:

- Missoula: University of Montana Gallagher Building, Room 104, Corner of Arthur and Eddy
- Glendive: Glendive Medical Center, 202 Prospect Drive
- Glasgow: Frances Mahon Deaconess Hospital, 621 Third Street South
- Miles City: Miles Community College, 2715 Dickenson, room 106
- Billings: Montana State University – Billings, Downtown at 214 N. Broadway, first floor conference center
- Lewistown: Central Montana Medical Center, Conference Room #1, 408 Wendell Ave.

Register online at [www.cspd.net](http://www.cspd.net). There is no cost to attendees and OPI Renewal Credits are available. **Please register by March 24.** If you have questions, please contact Kim Brown at [brown@ruralinstitute.umt.edu](mailto:brown@ruralinstitute.umt.edu), or Ellen Condon at [condon@ruralinstitute.umt.edu](mailto:condon@ruralinstitute.umt.edu).

### Bullying: What We Know and What We Can Do, April 14, Miles City Community College

*Presenter:* Marlene Snyder, Ph.D

Marlene is an independent consultant, international conference speaker, curricula writer, and workshop presenter for educational, child welfare, juvenile justice, and parent education agencies. She is one of five Master Trainers for the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. She trains trainers that work with school administrators, teachers, support staff, law enforcement officers and parents to implement the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. In addition, she regularly consults on issues involving juvenile crime and violence prevention in rural communities with professionals in the juvenile justice system.

*Session Description:* Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take many forms, such as hitting, kicking, threatening others, teasing, name-calling, excluding from a group, or sending mean notes or emails. A child who is being bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself. Often, children are bullied not just once or twice, but repeatedly. For many years, bullying has been treated as a rite of passage - an undesirable, but sometimes unavoidable, reality of growing up. This is far from the truth. Bullying is a serious public health issue that affects countless young people everyday. Further, research shows that the effects of bullying can last well into adulthood.

Visit <http://www.pluk.org/training/Bullying.htm> for information and online registration

### Montana Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Conference, April 13-15, Billings

The 2005 Montana CEC Conference focuses on "diverse abilities" and presents variety of topics suited to diverse audiences including parents, professionals, and students. Registration rates vary (\$45-\$125) and CEUs are pending.

**Early-Bird Registration Discount Deadline: March 25, 2005**

Print a copy of the registration form at <http://www.mtcec.org/registration.htm>. For more information, visit the Montana CEC website at <http://www.mtcec.org/conference.htm>.

### Montana Counseling Association Annual Conference

**"A Community of Healing: Integrative Practices in Trauma Response"—April 21-22, Helena**

The Montana Counseling Association (MCA) will hold its annual conference on April 21-22 in Helena entitled "A Community of Healing: Integrative Practices in Trauma Response." The schedule features nationally distinguished keynote speakers, state government officials, University researchers, and clinicians. This conference will address childhood traumatic stress, PTSD, sexual abuse, and trauma response to war, terrorism, natural disaster, and school violence and will emphasize the importance of collaboration between organizations.

The Division of Educational Research and Service (DERS) at The University of Montana (DERS) will contribute expertise from its Montana Center for the Investigation and Treatment of Childhood Trauma Project. This multi-year project is part of the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Child Traumatic Stress Network. The project joins DERS with childhood mental health experts at Duke University, the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA), RAND Corporation, Los Angeles Unified School District, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Similarly, St. Vincent Healthcare will contribute expertise in mental health issues specific to the health care community—particularly first responders. Through funding from the U.S. Department of Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), St. Vincent has begun collaboration with numerous agencies across Montana, including the Department of Public Health and Human Services, to provide training programs using the all hazards approach to disasters as well as placing an emphasis on the interagency response required in the event of bioterrorism.

CEUs are available. For more information, including the schedule and registration, visit <http://www.montanacounseling.org/conferences.htm>.

### **It's NOT About the Technology! Tools for Independence, April 22, Wolf Point**

*Presenter:* Roger Holt, ATP

Roger is a native Montanan. He works as the director of technology programs for Parents, Let's Unite for Kids, serving families state-wide. He serves on a number of Councils and Boards and presents nationally focusing on technology and disabilities and the realm of Assistive Technology. He's recognized nationally as a creative and talented professional in the field. Mr. Holt is a RESNA Certified Assistive Technology Practitioner.

*Overview:* This full-day seminar offers a unique opportunity to gain valuable information on the topic of assistive technology. The two morning sessions will cover the basic information of technology and the law and how to make technology decisions. The afternoon sessions will cover specific strategies, devices, resources and what may be expected in the future.

Visit <http://www.pluk.org/training/AT.htm> for information and online registration.

### **Region I CSPD**

#### **"Child Abuse and Neglect," April 22-23, Glasgow**

Cost - \$20.00, includes lunch on the 23rd. This training is an 8-hour approved training for participants on the Practitioner Registry and for Day Care Provider Renewals and CEU's.

For more information or to register contact: Jody King at 406-228-9431 or 1-800-659-3673.

### **PASSPORT to Health Summit, April 26, Helena**



As the PASSPORT to Health program enters its twelfth year of successfully managing the delivery of health care to Montana's Medicaid clients, the DPHHS Managed Care Bureau is planning provider summits to solicit your feedback about the program and identify suggestions for change. A primary goal of these events is to look at the program in a truly comprehensive way; all ideas are open for consideration.

One-day facilitated summits are planned for locations across the state.

Helena on Tuesday, April 26 at the First Presbyterian Church (535 Ewing) from 10:00 AM to 4:30 PM

Coffee and doughnuts will be served at 9:30 AM, and lunch will be provided.

Summits are also planned for:

- Havre during the week of May 10
- Billings during the week of May 17
- Kalispell the week of June 7

A cross-section of PASSPORT stakeholders will be invited, including: PASSPORT providers, specialists and other non-PCPs, representatives from billing companies, hospitals, FQHCs, RHCs, the tribal health community, and client advocates.

If you have ideas and would like to participate in one of the summits, contact PASSPORT Program Officer Niki Scoffield at (406) 444-4148 or [niscoffield@mt.gov](mailto:niscoffield@mt.gov).

For more information on the PASSPORT to Health Program, visit the DPHHS website at <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/hpsd/medicaid/medrecip/pdf/passporthandbook.pdf>

### **Fourth Annual Native American Brain Injury Conference, April 26-27, Billings**

The Fourth Annual Native American Brain Injury Conference, scheduled for April 26-27 in Billings, will feature nationally recognized speakers and an evening concert with singer-songwriter Jack Gladstone.

Registration fees vary (\$55-\$105). Pre-register by April 8, 2005 for the best rates. Register online at <http://www.msubillings.edu/mtcdregister>. Questions? Call Ian Elliot at 1-888-866-3822, or Nell Eby at 406-655-7636 for more information

### **Step Up to Writing—A Key to Academic Success, April 25-26, 2005 - Missoula, April 27-28 - Kalispell**

Step Up to Writing is a writing program that makes a dramatic difference in student success. This two-day workshop is designed for teachers who want to help struggling students learn to communicate in an organized and effective manner. Participants will leave the workshop with a wealth of strategies that motivate students as they significantly increase their academic success.

The trainer, Neilia Solberg, B.A., is a Step Up to Writing consultant for Sopris West Educational Services. Included in her years of teaching are elementary school and staff development in the language arts and content reading. Recent experience in Academic Achievement plans across the curriculum and grade levels as well as expanded responsibilities in coordinating instruction development.

For more information and to register online, go to the Region V CSPD web site: <http://www.cspd.net>.

### Session 3: Getting Students Past the "Gatekeeper" Courses in Math-Creating Success in Pre-Algebra and Algebra, May 5, Missoula

Effective instruction, especially at the middle school level, is a critical component for laying the foundation for higher-level mathematics. This one-day workshop focuses on the "big picture" concepts and those topics necessary for algebra success. By tackling the important topics and modeling the "big picture" concepts for students, teachers and students can "tear down" these roadblocks to algebra success.

To register, or for further information, please go to <http://www.cspd.net>

### Family Learning Weekend for the Visually Impaired, Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind June 10-12, MDSB, Great Falls

A FREE three-day weekend in Great Falls at MSDB is designed specifically for families with children who are visually impaired. This weekend is packed with ideas. A nationally renowned keynote speaker, Judith Lesner from the National Association of Parents of the Visually Impaired (NAPVI), will be speaking to families about the importance of parent advocacy. She will present with her son, Jacob Lesner-Buxton, who will be addressing the current issues in the education of the blind. Both Judith and Jacob are experienced and will be working with our parents to design a Montana chapter of NAPVI. For more information, please contact MSDB at 1-800-882-6732 or Barb Rolf, Outreach Vision Consultant at (406) 251-5674.

### MASP Summer Institute, June 12-14, Billings

Download brochure at [http://www.pluk.org/MASP\\_SumInstitute\\_2005.pdf](http://www.pluk.org/MASP_SumInstitute_2005.pdf)

### Walk F.A.R. for NAAR Autism Walk—June 12, Great Falls

To date, NAAR has committed \$21.1 million to fund 211 autism research projects and fellowships worldwide - more than any other non-governmental organization. NAAR has been able to make these investments, in large part, through the success of Walk F.A.R. for NAAR, the signature fundraising and autism awareness event of NAAR. Each year, walks throughout the USA, Canada and England attract thousands of walkers and raise millions for research.

Great Falls Walk (<http://www.autismwalk.org/greatfalls>)

Help spread the word about the Montana Walk F.A.R. for NAAR event. Download the event flyer at [http://www.autismwalk.org/site/DocServer/Great\\_Falls\\_Walk\\_Flyer\\_FINAL.pdf?docID=705](http://www.autismwalk.org/site/DocServer/Great_Falls_Walk_Flyer_FINAL.pdf?docID=705). Want to build a Walk F.A.R. team, check out [http://www.autismwalk.org/site/PageServer?pagename=fundraising\\_tips](http://www.autismwalk.org/site/PageServer?pagename=fundraising_tips).

Find out more about the Walk F.A.R. for NAAR Events at <http://www.autismwalk.org/site/PageServer?pagename=homepage>.

Interested? Want to Learn More?

Penny Martin--Local Volunteer Leadership--406.771.3998 or [j.martin@bresnan.net](mailto:j.martin@bresnan.net)

Scott R. Moore--Pacific Northwest Regional Director

National Alliance for Autism Research - 1370 Stewart Street - Seattle WA 98109

206.464.5182 [smoore@naar.org](mailto:smoore@naar.org) <http://www.autismwalk.org> or <http://www.naar.org>

### Northern Rockies Association for Education & Rehabilitation of the Blind & Visually Impaired (NRAER) Conference October 19-21, Bozeman

This conference is designed for professionals in the field of visual impairment, but welcomes those who may have an interest in working with the blind. A full schedule is planned. Keynote speakers will include those from the Helen Keller Institute and Eagle Mount-Bozeman to name a few. The conference will provide an opportunity for hands-on experiences with technology for the blind. Classroom teachers, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, parents and other interested individuals are welcome to attend. For more information, contact Barb Rolf, Outreach Vision Consultant for the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind, at 251-5674.

## *Online Training/Workshops/Events::*

### Closing The Gap Forum Announcements

Closing The Gap Forums is a discussion board exploring the many ways that technology is being used to enhance the lives of people with special needs. Please feel free to participate in the discussions listed below and share this valuable resource with friends and colleagues. There is no fee to participate. Visit: <http://www.closingthegap.com/forums> and go to the "Featured Discussions."

- Activities and Camp for Families  
Begins: March 20, 2005  
Moderators: Jill E. Senner, PhD, CCC-SLP; Lesly Levitas, OTR/L; Pam Harris  
Participants in this discussion will learn about camp and how naturalistic summer recreation activities can provide rich communication opportunities for AAC users.
- Using Technology With Children With Cerebral Visual Impairment  
Begins: March 25, 2005  
Moderators: Roger Bates, Information Director, Inclusive Technology Ltd/Inclusive TLC; Kay Wrench, Team Leader, Oldham Education Authority  
A chance to share expertise and experiences on working with CVI children.

Check out the "Closing The Gap Forums" <http://www.closingthegap.com/forums>.

### Individual Supports to Increase Access to an Inclusive College Experience for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (Online Training Module)

The purpose of this online training module is to provide guidance on developing an Individual Support Model (ISM) to increase access to inclusive college experiences and to improve chances for the success of students with intellectual disabilities. An ISM approach provides students with individualized services and supports (e.g., educational coach, tutor, technology, natural supports) in college courses, certificate programs, internships, and/or degree programs. Offered by the On-Campus Outreach project at the University of Maryland; funded by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs. Learn more at [http://www.education.umd.edu/oco/training/oco\\_training\\_modules/IndividualSupports/start.html](http://www.education.umd.edu/oco/training/oco_training_modules/IndividualSupports/start.html).

### FCTD Hosts Online Discussion of AT and Early Childhood, Beginning March 3

This month national expert Susan Mistrett, Director of the Let's Play! Projects, and parent advocate Lisa Johnson, join us to discuss disabled children and the variety of uses for AT enrichment. This month's discussion expert, Sue Mistrett, has many years of experience helping early childhood programs capitalize on "low tech" tools and strategies that support development and promote play in children's lives. In this discussion, Sue will be sharing her ideas and strategies in the use of assistive technologies for young children with disabilities. The discussion also offers a unique parent perspective from Lisa Larson, who's young son Trey, has been successful with a wide range of assistive technology.

Post your experiences, questions and comments. Learn from the experts! We look forward to "seeing" you online! Join in the forum at <http://www.fctd.info/webboard/index.php>.

### *Training/Workshops/Conferences outside Montana::*

#### People on the Move Sessions, Next Deadline May 27

The People On The Move program consists of two days of instruction for travel trainers, teachers, job coaches, bus operators, transportation coordinators, independent living specialists and others who assist people with disabilities in their use of public and private transportation so that they can go to school, jobs and other community destinations.

If you missed the March 2 deadline for Ann Arbor, there are other dates and cities; each is followed by the application deadline:

- June 8-9, 2005: Salt Lake City, Utah (May 27)
- September 7-8, 2005: Boston, Mass. (Aug. 3)
- November 14-15, 2005: New Orleans, La. (Oct. 3)

### Disability Research Institute 2005 Symposium -- SSA Disability Programs: Comprehensive Work Opportunity Initiative—April 5, National Press Club, Washington, DC

The Disability Research Institute (DRI) 2005 Symposium will bring together nationally recognized disability scholars to discuss key policy questions affecting Social Security disability programs and policies as related to DRI research. This interactive discussion will include designated time for audience participation. Detailed information on DRI research projects will be made available throughout the day and researchers will be available to discuss their work during the scheduled poster session. The Symposium will include four interactive sessions that will address the following key policy questions:

- What are your reactions to the currently identified barriers to return to work in the Comprehensive Work Opportunity Initiative? What other barriers are there (if any) that need to be addressed and what recommendations would you make to SSA regarding strategies that should be employed to decrease or eliminate those barriers?

- How can SSA modify or restructure the disability determination process to facilitate return to work simultaneously with determination of eligibility of benefits?
- What are the most important issues for SSA to address to integrate and coordinate the long-term process of transitioning youth with disabilities to work? What are the educational, career planning, assistive technologies and other transition issues that need to be addressed in order to help youth with disabilities maximize their economic self-sufficiency?
- What are the critical research and policy questions that need to be addressed in order to maximize the impact of research outcomes and policy recommendations on fully integrating persons with disabilities in the workforce and society at large?

Access <http://www.dri.uiuc.edu/symposium2005.asp> for more information, including registration. There is no charge to attend the Symposium; however, registration is required due to limited space.

### 2005 CEC Convention and Expo, April 6-9, Baltimore MD

The "largest and most exciting professional development event devoted to special and gifted education" the CEC Convention and Expo offers pre-convention workshops, more than 700 program sessions, the world's top exhibit show for professionals who work with exceptional students, the CEC Career Connections (with school district representatives from throughout the U.S.), and a variety of special events—including the CEC Teacher of the Year luncheon and the Yes I Can! Awards Gala. Convention registration varies (\$50-\$525), group discounts and CEUs are available. Register by phone 1-888-232-7733, TTY 1-866-915-5000, fax 1-703-264-9494, or online at <http://www.cec.sped.org>. <http://www.cec.sped.org>

### 2005 ADA Multiple Perspectives on Access, Inclusion, and Disability Conference, April 11 - 13, Columbus OH

(Courtesy of Ohio State University, ADA Office)



*April 11th Pre-conference seminar presented by ADA-OHIO Demystifying the Interplay of the ADA, FMLA & Workers Compensation*  
*April 12th and 13th Multiple Perspectives on Access Inclusion & Disability*

The Fifth Annual Multiple Perspectives conference will provide opportunities to share practical information on best practices, explore current research, and develop collaborations. The conference will continue its tradition of bringing together a diverse audience (individuals & employers, students & educators, advocates & policy makers, consumers & service agencies) to reflect on the many dimensions of disability. This year's theme, sameness, difference and equity, is summed up by the comments below:

In her opinion in *Tennessee v. Lane* Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said "Including individuals with disabilities among people who count in composing 'We the People,' Congress understood in shaping the ADA, that it would sometimes require not blindfolded equality, but responsiveness to difference; not indifference, but accommodation."

In an article discussing accommodations for college students with disabilities Paul Grossman, attorney for the Office For Civil Rights, described the accommodation mandate in disability law as an opportunity for rewarding self-examination. "No other set of laws so entreats academia to take its own temperature, examine its traditions, and thoughtfully deliberate about which of its standards are essential and which are merely unexamined habits." Grossman's observation is as true for the workplace and wider society as it is for education. For more information, contact: [ada-osu@osu.edu](mailto:ada-osu@osu.edu) or ADA Coordinator's Office, 614-292-6207 (V), 614-688-8605 (tty).

Visit <http://ada.osu.edu/conferences/2005.htm> for more details.

### Making Sense—Autism and Sensory Processing Conference, April 15, Denver CO

Discussing medical, intervention, educational, and research issues related to autism and sensory processing. This conference offers dozens of choices for attendees and features keynote speaker Dr. Morton Ann Gernsbacher, PhD, "internationally recognized researcher, and mother of a sensational child with autism and severe dyspraxia. For 20 years, Gernsbacher has investigated the cognitive processes and mechanisms that underlie language comprehension. She is a central figure in the field of psycholinguistics and cognitive psychology."

Registration rates vary (\$150-\$175). Register online at [https://www.blacktie-colorado.com/online\\_sales/kidfoundation.cfm](https://www.blacktie-colorado.com/online_sales/kidfoundation.cfm) or download a registration form at <http://www.kidfoundation.org/conference/conference.reg.pdf>.

### Autism One Conference, May 26-29, Chicago IL

As always, Autism One 2005 features four major tracks to help parents and professionals make the most informed choices and decisions, they are: Biomedical Treatments; Behavior / Communication / Education Therapies; Complementary/Alternative Treatments; Government/Legal/Personal Issues. Each track offers three days of presentations focusing on particular treatments, research, and/or issues of that field. All presentations are open on a walk-in basis—conference registration covers them all.

Learn about the most effective treatments and therapies, how to obtain services and how to deal effectively with schools. Learn what to expect in future for the fields of medicine, education, government, and law.

Registration rates: \$99-\$295

Register online at <https://www.exporeg.com/autismone/>. Questions or registration concerns, email [Registration@AutismOne.org](mailto:Registration@AutismOne.org). For more information, visit <http://autismone.org/homepage.cfm>.

### National ADA Symposium, May 17-19, Overland Park, KS

(From Monday Morning in Washington, DC)

The National ADA Symposium is the most comprehensive and effective event available on the Americans with Disabilities Act and disability related issues. It is designed to meet the specific needs and interests of professionals who are involved in interpreting and implementing the American with Disabilities Act's guidelines and regulations. Experts directly involved in interpreting, regulating and implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act provide the training. The Symposium brings together presenters from the key agencies involved with the ADA including the U.S. Dept. of Justice, the EEOC, Dept. of Education, Dept. of Labor and the U.S. Access Board. These presenters provide dynamic training that participants can put to use in their professions.

For more information, including online registration, go to <http://www.adaupdate.org/Symposium.html>.

### "Making Connections, Strengthening Communities" 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Technology Conference June 17-19, Cleveland, OH

(Courtesy of CTCNet.org)

The Community Technology Center Network's major event is "the largest national gathering of community technology organizations, programs, and experts." The goal for the 2005 conference is to "to chart the progression of the community technology movement from a small grassroots effort, focused on technology access, to a growing national and international field of practice harnessing technology to meet human and social needs." According to CTCNet, the Annual Conference "is a gathering of our member organizations, leaders in the field, and others in related fields interested in creating equitable participation in information technology. CTCNet members receive a discounted registration rate and repeatedly cite this conference as one of the most important services CTCNet offers."

Register before May 17<sup>th</sup> to take advantage of early-bird discounts. For registration rates and more information, visit [www.ctcnet.org/conf/2005](http://www.ctcnet.org/conf/2005). Online registration may be available soon. Registration concerns or other questions? Email Stephen Quinn, CTCNet Member Services Coordinator, at [squinn@ctcnet.org](mailto:squinn@ctcnet.org).

## Selected Sources::

1. *Monday Morning in Washington, DC*, <http://www.inclusionresearch.org>
2. *Rocky Mountain DBTAC*, <http://www.adainformation.org>
3. *PEN Weekly NewsBlast* <http://www.publiceducation.org>
4. *Health and Disability Training Calendar* <http://mtdh.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/training.htm>
5. *The American Indian Disability Technical Assistance Center Training Calendar*  
<http://aidtac.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/TrainingCalendar.htm>
6. *Technology for Nonprofits*: <http://www.techsoup.org>

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