



PLUK eNews Summer, 2004

Vol 2 Num 51

Welcome to the weekly PLUK eNews!

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.

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Summer MU available online

The PLUK Summer 2004 issue of MU is available online at http://www.pluk.org/MU/MU_Sum04.pdf. The paper version should be in the mail within one week.

Free tickets for families, August 7, Billings

The Vigilante Theater from Bozeman, sponsored by the Yellowstone County Deputies Association, will present a brand new comedy, "Neon Dreams", on August 7th, at 7pm, at Lincoln Center. Contact Sheryl at the PLUK office, 255-0540.

Autism & Asperger Support Groups in Billings

- **Spectrum Disorders (Autism, Aspergers, ADD, ADHD) Jaime and Nicholas Moran 256-8007, located in Billings Heights. Call for meeting times.
- **Aspergers Disorder - Cheryl & Vern Bass 245-8338, located at the 17th Street Station. Call for meeting times.

Rewrite of Special Education Law Stalls in Congress

By Erik W. Robelen, July 14, 2004
 With each day that passes, the chances that Congress will deliver a bill rewriting the nation's main special education law to President Bush's desk this year appear to be fading.
 Analysts and education lobbyists are growing doubtful that, even with all of the work lawmakers have invested in the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the final hurdles can be overcome. They point mainly to partisan tensions in Congress inflamed by the upcoming elections as the reason.
 "They're just absolutely stuck right now," said Kim Anderson, a lobbyist for the National Education Association. "It should be able to move, but I don't think it's going to happen before Election Day."

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Read the complete article at:
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/ewstory.cfm?slug=42IDEA.h23> (will require free registration).

RURAL HOUSING REPAIR LOANS AND GRANTS

The Rural Housing Service (part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture) offers up to \$7,500 to make dwellings accessible for household members with disabilities in rural areas. To find out how to apply call 202-720-4323 or go to http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/sfh/brief_rep_airgrant.htm.

New Decision from U. S. Court of Appeals - Parental Nightmare Ends

In Missouri Department of Education v. Springfield R-12 School District, the U. S. Court of Appeals issued a strong decision on behalf of Katherine Lewis, a severely disabled deaf-blind child:
 "The facts of this case describe a parental nightmare – Katherine's parents watched as the scholastic needs of their child were processed through the grinding machinery of state and local education bureaucracies."
 In a long-running saga of bureaucratic indifference, the state department of education repeatedly passed the buck for Katherine's education, then denied that they were responsible for educating Katherine, a child with severe disabilities. In their decision, the Court wrote:
 "No Missouri educational agency wanted to take responsibility for educating this child, and all of them were attempting to 'pass the buck,' both figuratively and literally. Missouri statutes make clear that given the facts of the instant case, the 'buck' stops with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
 For more information, go to:
<http://www.wrightslaw.com/law/caselaw/04/8th.modoe.springfield.lewis.htm>

**FAMILY OPPORTUNITY ACT (FOA) AND
MONEY FOLLOWS THE PERSON (MFP)
LEGISLATION STALLED**

After almost two weeks of intense negotiation, the Family Opportunity Act and Money Follows the Person legislation has stalled in the House of Representatives. House Energy and Commerce Committee Chair Joe Barton (R-TX) and House sponsor Rep. Pete Sessions (R-TX) proposed language to the bill that would offset the cost of FOA/MFP by making Medicaid "targeted case management" (TCM) services payable as an administrative expense. TCM service is currently considered a "service," meaning that states with higher Medicaid matching rates get more than half of the cost for the service from the federal government. But hopes for quick passage of this legislation faded last week as Congressional leaders were unable to find offsets rather than the TCM which several Congress people and other organizations opposed. The bill, originally on the suspension calendar for Monday, June 14, was postponed after Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA), the bill's lead co-sponsor, said that more time was needed to examine the changes to the bill. Also, the Children's Defense Fund, a key back of the FOA legislation, withdrew its support of the House measure because of the offset provision. A number of disability organizations, including NCIL, also expressed concerns about the offset.

In the final week before Congress broke for a recess, the legislation never again was placed on the suspension calendar. However, NCIL remains committed to pushing for the passage of this legislation. MFP has been a top priority for our organization since President Bush made his promise to enact Money Follows the Person as part of his New Freedom Initiative over a year ago. While we very much appreciate the efforts of the Administration, the Center for Medicaid/Medicare Services, the Congress people and their staffs in the attempt to pass this recent legislation, we will not rest until Money Follows the Person becomes a reality! We feel good about being included in the process and the discussions these past two weeks, and we hope that this will continue in the future. Our position is explained in the following statements of principle.

1) We remain strongly committed to MFP as a top priority in this Congress and will continue to seek mechanisms for passage.

2) We support the linkage of MFP with FOA and will strongly oppose any de-linking of the two. Medicaid enhancements should not take place unless they are being accompanied by progress on the basic civil rights front since MFP

is a policy acknowledgement of basic "Olmstead" rights.

3) We understand that the "pay-fors" remain the problem with this bill. NCIL respects the presence of this problem but remains committed to seeking out a payment mechanism that will result in passage of MFP and that is fair and equitable to all concerned. In the current political climate, there may very well have to be a "cost" to moving ahead with Medicaid policy improvements. NCIL believes that MFP represents a substantial improvement in Medicaid and is worth a cost, a "pay-for" as long as the "pay-for" is fair and evenly spread around the country. WE WANT MFP TO PASS DURING THIS CONGRESS!

Based on this position, NCIL urges its members to continue to advocate with your Congressional representatives and senators and with the White House and CMS. While Congress is in recess this week and part of next, schedule meetings and send e-mails and faxes to them encouraging them to pass the Family Opportunity Act and Money Follows the Person! Also, send faxes, e-mails and calls to the White House urging President Bush to follow through with his promise under the New Freedom Initiative for Money Follows the Person. Call, fax or e-mail Dr. Mark McClellan and Dennis Smith at the Center for Medicaid/Medicare Services and advocate for them to find the means necessary for this legislation to pass.

**Five Years After Key Decision, Bazelon
Center Blasts Slow Movement of People
with Mental Illnesses Into the
Community, Lack of Services**

WASHINGTON, DC (June 21, 2004)—Five years ago tomorrow, the Supreme Court issued its historic Olmstead decision, affirming that, under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), people with disabilities should be served in the most integrated setting possible—their communities. The following is a prepared statement by Ira Burnim, legal director at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, on the anniversary of the ruling:

"While many Americans with disabilities have made progress since the Olmstead ruling, people with mental illnesses have been largely left behind in efforts to implement the decision. Most states are enacting Olmstead reforms at a snail's pace, defying the spirit of the ruling and preventing Americans with mental illnesses from participating in their communities.

"Rhetoric has far outstripped action to promote community services for people with

mental illnesses. States are quick to trumpet their limited efforts to implement Olmstead, but these have produced little actual movement of people with mental illnesses into integrated community settings.

"Budget pressures have closed psychiatric hospitals across the country, but few appropriate community services have been adequately funded to help people with mental illnesses live successfully in the community. Instead, states have 'transinstitutionalized' people with mental illnesses to settings as outmoded, isolating and inappropriate as the facilities they were meant to replace. Increasing numbers of people with psychiatric disabilities now find themselves in large board and care homes, 'adult homes,' nursing homes, and other institution-like settings. Thousands wind up in jail or prison because chronically underfunded community mental health systems fail to provide meaningful support.

"Where real progress has occurred, it is largely because states have been sued. Five years after Olmstead and 14 years after enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act, litigation should be unnecessary. Yet it remains the single most effective way to combat the persistent segregation of people with mental illnesses.

"It's past time for Olmstead implementation to move out of the courtroom and into America's communities."

Read more at:

<http://www.bazelon.org/newsroom/6-21-04olmstead.htm>

2003 National Health Interview Survey Released

Findings released this week from the 2003 National Health Interview Survey showed that more children than ever had health insurance. The percentage of children without health insurance coverage dropped from 13.9 percent in 1997 to 10.1 percent in 2003, the highest rate of health insurance coverage for children ever measured by CDC's National Center for Health Statistics. The improvement reflects an increase in public coverage for poor and near-poor children, including through the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

The survey also found, however, that the number of uninsured working-age adults increased. Moreover, lack of health insurance also continues to disproportionately affect minorities. In 2003, about 1 in 3 (33 percent) Hispanics lacked health insurance, as opposed to 17.4 percent of the non-Hispanic black population

and 11 percent of the non-Hispanic white population. The full report is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/Default.htm>

Medical Debt a Problem for Almost 20 Million American Families

Medical Debt a Problem for Almost 20 Million American Families Almost 20 million American families had problems paying medical bills in 2003, forcing many to make tough trade-offs between medical, food and housing expenses, according to a national study by HSC. Center for Studying Health Systems Change, Issue Brief No. 85 See:

<http://www.hschange.org/CONTENT/689/>

also see

<http://www.hschange.org/CONTENT/690/>

VisuAide unveils Maestro: the first mainstream handheld PC for blind and visually impaired

http://www.visuaide.com/news_maestro_en.html

Atlanta, Georgia, June 30, 2004 -- VisuAide unveiled today Maestro, the first mainstream handheld PC accessible to the blind and visually impaired. The launch coincided with the National Federation of the Blind convention held in Atlanta this week.

Maestro is an HP iPAQ Pocket PC made accessible by VisuAide using text-to-speech technology and a tactile keyboard membrane over the PDA touch screen. Now, the visually impaired can enjoy the ultra-compact size of a real PDA and essential information-access functionality: text and vocal note taking, agenda, contact directory, etc. The visually impaired can benefit from the same applications than sighted users without handling a stylus.

Maestro takes advantage of wireless communication networks such as Bluetooth to yield a modular system that can be operated with or without an external keyboard (Braille or standard), depending on user preference and the task at hand. For example, Maestro allows Braille input using either the tactile keyboard on the unit for brief notes, or an external Braille keyboard for extensive note taking.

With its open environment, the system readily integrates third-party or other VisuAide applications, such as Trekker, a GPS orientation system, and Victor Reader, a digital talking-book player.

As a mass-market product, Maestro can evolve in price, power and connectivity at the same rate as electronics for the sighted. Users can benefit

from the latest innovations in the PDA market much earlier and at a lower price.

To begin shipping in September 2004, Maestro is the most affordable and compact personal information-management and communication system available to the visually impaired.

"VisuAide's objective was to provide users with a low-cost, highly portable mobile-computing solution," said Gilles Pepin, president of VisuAide. "VisuAide hopes to make technological aids available to a larger number of blind and visually impaired individuals."

http://www.visuaide.com/news_maestro_en.html

Resources for Families on Positive Behavioral Supports and Interventions

http://pbis.org/english/Family_support.htm

The Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) has been established by the Office of Special Education Programs, US Department of Education to provide information and assistance to schools and families for identifying, adapting, and sustaining effective school-wide disciplinary practices.

In the Family Support section, Laura Riffel and Ann Turnbull have written two booklets that coordinate collaboration between parents and educators on writing an IEP that has PBS components. These books can be downloaded from this site. Follow the instructions to put the booklets together. They are meant to be staggered pages so you can easily flip to the section that you need.

2004 N.O.D./Harris Survey Documents Trends Impacting 54 Million Americans

WASHINGTON, D.C. JUNE 24, 2004 –

Americans with disabilities are at a critical disadvantage compared to other Americans in ten key areas of life, according to the 2004 National Organization on Disability/Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities, released in Washington today. Continuing a trend, the survey found slow and modest progress in the indicators, which Harris has tracked since 1986.

Harris Poll Chairman Humphrey Taylor, who directed related surveys in 1986, 1994, 1998 and 2000, highlighted statistics:

- Only 35 percent of people with disabilities reported being employed full or part time, compared to 78 percent of those who do not have disabilities.
- Three times as many live in poverty with annual household incomes below \$15,000 (26 percent versus 9 percent).

- People with disabilities remain twice as likely to drop out of high school (21 percent versus 10 percent).
- They are twice as likely to have inadequate transportation (31 percent versus 13 percent), and a much higher percentage go without needed health care (18 percent versus 7 percent).
- People with disabilities are less likely to socialize, eat out, or attend religious services than their non-disabled counterparts.
- Not surprisingly given the persistence of these gaps, life satisfaction for people with disabilities also trails, with only 34 percent saying they are very satisfied compared to 61 percent of those without disabilities.

"Progress is too slow, and the gaps are still too large," said National Organization on Disability President Alan A. Reich. "Looking back four years, or ten years, to our earlier N.O.D./Harris surveys, we see Americans with disabilities heading in the right direction. But people with disabilities remain pervasively disadvantaged. Our goal of full participation is a dream deferred. I hope that the findings we are releasing today will inspire legislators, public officials, and the American people to rededicate themselves to this goal. A fifth of Americans have disabilities; everyone knows people with disabilities; and anyone can acquire a disability at any time. Everyone has a stake in these findings."

In addition to the primary findings, Mr. Taylor reported several others of note:

- Although 22 percent of employed people with disabilities report encountering job discrimination, this is a dramatic drop from 36 percent four years ago.
- The severity of disability makes a significant difference in all of the gap areas, and people with severe disabilities have much greater disadvantages.
- People with disabilities are much more worried about their future health and well-being. Half are worried about not being able to care for themselves or being a burden to their families, compared to a quarter of other Americans.
- Americans with disabilities rely on assistive technology, and a third say they would lose their independence without this technology.
- People with disabilities are more likely to have a common sense of identity

with other people with disabilities; 56 percent now say they do, compared to 47 percent in 2000.

Access the complete report at:

<http://www.nod.org/content.cfm?id=1537>

Preparing for College: An Online Tutorial

by Sheryl Burgstahler, Ph. D., University of Washington

Transition from high school to college is a big step for everyone. Students with disabilities have even more things to consider than their nondisabled peers.

College-bound youth should begin preparing for postsecondary education and beyond while they are still in high school by selecting appropriate classes and earning good grades. In addition, they can begin to prepare for and to explore college options online. This publication shares a few Internet resources for college-bound teens with disabilities. If you use the online version at

<http://www.washington.edu/doi/Brochures/Academics/cprep.html> you can simply click on each website address rather than type it in.

To be cautious, parents and teachers should always check out websites before recommending them to a child. Keep in mind that the content of a website may change over time, so a site that was once a great resource for a teenager may no longer be appropriate. Parents and teachers should also consider exploring websites with a child, side-by-side. As always, if you find sites that are inaccessible to you or someone else who has a disability (for example, they include video clips without captioning for individuals who are deaf), do something about it. Send electronic mail to the website sponsors requesting that they make their pages accessible to everyone. These situations provide opportunities for young people to practice skills in self-advocacy, as well as advocacy for others.

UPDATED TIPS FOR AIR TRAVELERS WITH DISABILITIES

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA), a division within the Department of Homeland Security responsible for protecting the nation's transit system, has posted updated guidance for air travelers, including those with disabilities, on security screening procedures. This information explains the rights of passengers with disabilities and details necessary screening procedures. Guidance is provided concerning different types of disabilities and assistive devices. These tips are posted on TSA's website at <http://www.tsa.gov/public/display?theme=156>

AOL debuts service for disabled

By Dinesh C. Sharma, CNET News.com, July 8, 2004, 12:10 PM PT

America Online announced an instant messenger relay service for users who are hard of hearing or speech disabled.

AIM Relay Service will let hearing- and speech-disabled users place relay telephone calls using their AOL Buddy List or AIM Buddy List feature, the company said. The service can be accessed from any PC or device running AOL services and will be free for AOL members and Apple Computer's iChat users.

Relay services facilitate telephone communication for people who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech disabled. Usually, hearing- or speech-impaired people use a teletypewriter or TTY devices to connect with a relay communications assistant, who places the call and relays the conversations between two parties. The assistant reads the caller's text to the recipient and types the recipient's voiced response back.

Read the complete article at:

http://zdnet.com.com/2100-1104_2-5261503.html?tag=zdfd.newsfeed

Doing Your Homework: Alternatives to Name-Calling & Other Behavior We Will Regret

by Suzanne Heath, Research Editor, *Wrightslaw*

Murphy's Law: Parent Version

Law # 1 - The only tape recording the school will never misplace is the one of you being sarcastic at an IEP meeting.

Law #2 - If you lose your mind and call someone a name during an IEP meeting, that person will be connected to your child, in some way, for the next 1,000 IEP meetings.

Behaving Well: Alternatives to Name-Calling

Children need parents to have the necessary skills to behave well in frustrating situations. They cannot afford their parents to lose tempers or waste time learning on the job.

You need to anticipate that you will be caught off guard during meetings. When you are upset, you need to have skills and strategies in place that you can rely upon.

These articles describe some alternatives to name-calling and other behaviors you will regret.

Crisis Management, Step-By Step - Virtually nothing from the school requires an immediate response from you. Avoid taking action when you

are angry, frustrated or feeling threatened.
<http://www.fetaweb.com/02/crisis.manage.htm>

Assertiveness and Effective Parent Advocacy - Being assertive is not the same as auditioning for the "Bombastic Hall of Fame." In this short article, parent advocate Marie Sherrett describes the joys and challenges of parent advocacy.

<http://www.fetaweb.com/01/assert.sherrett.htm>

Reasonable Expectations, Power Struggles, and Perspectives - As advocate Pat Howey says, "There is nothing wrong with disagreement. Problems come from the manner in which disagreements are handled. I have learned that there are better ways to obtain positive results than to roar through meetings in a Mack Truck."

http://www.wrightslaw.com/advoc/tips/howey_a_dvice.htm

Mistakes Parents Make - Because the stakes are so high, it is difficult for parents of children with special educational needs to advocate calmly and objectively for the educational and related services their children need. Parent attorney Bob Crabtree describes some common mistakes that undermine parents' ability to obtain appropriate services.

<http://www.fetaweb.com/02/mistakes.parents.crabtree.htm>

Learning About School Districts, School Teams, Gatekeepers

Your emotions will be easier to manage when you learn about school districts, school teams, and the mission of public schools.

<http://www.fetaweb.com/02/about.schools.htm>

When you advocate for your child, you are likely to meet Gatekeepers. The Gatekeeper's job is to say, "No!" Read 10 Reasons Why Schools Say No.

http://www.fetaweb.com/02/10_reasons.no.htm

What do you do when you meet a Gatekeeper? Do you accept "No"? Read Gatekeepers: Their Job is to Say No.

<http://www.fetaweb.com/02/gatekeepers.htm>

Negotiating and Handling Disagreements

When Parents & Schools Disagree. Educational consultant Ruth Heitin describes common areas of disagreement between parents and schools and offers suggestions about how to handle these disagreements.

<http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/advo.disagree.heitin.htm>

Learn more about advocacy strategies on Wrightslaw:

<http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/advo.index.htm>

VSA arts Offers Young Soloists Awards for Performing Artists With Disabilities

VSA arts (<http://www.vsarts.org/>) is an international nonprofit organization working to help create a society where people with disabilities can learn through, participate in, and enjoy the arts.

The VSA arts Young Soloists Award annually recognizes outstanding young musicians with disabilities, ages 25 and under, who have exhibited exceptional talents as vocalists or instrumentalists. Each year, a committee of music professionals selects four award recipients to receive scholarship funds and the opportunity to perform at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. All types of music are encouraged. Go to VSA arts' website for further information

<http://www.vsarts.org/programs/ysp/>

Children Served Under IDEA, Part B in Montana

Ages 3-21 by State, 1976-77 Through 2001-02

<u>State</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Students Served</u>	<u>Total Enrollment</u>	<u>Prevalence Rate</u>
MONTANA	1976-77	8,610	170,552	5.05
MONTANA	1977-78	10,444	168,732	6.19
MONTANA	1978-79	12,549	164,326	7.64
MONTANA	1979-80	12,781	158,208	8.08
MONTANA	1980-81	13,424	155,193	8.65
MONTANA	1981-82	14,279	153,435	9.31
MONTANA	1982-83	15,215	151,000	10.08
MONTANA	1983-84	15,480	153,646	10.08
MONTANA	1984-85	15,930	154,000	10.34
MONTANA	1985-86	15,376	155,000	9.92
MONTANA	1986-87	15,369	153,330	10.02
MONTANA	1987-88	15,154	152,207	9.96

MONTANA 1988-89	15,615	151,944	10.28
MONTANA 1989-90	16,250	150,593	10.79
MONTANA 1990-91	16,955	151,670	11.18
MONTANA 1991-92	17,741	153,075	11.59
MONTANA 1992-93	18,395	158,031	11.64
MONTANA 1993-94	17,999	162,891	11.05
MONTANA 1994-95	17,679	164,295	10.76
MONTANA 1995-96	18,364	165,499	11.10
MONTANA 1996-97	18,600	166,909	11.14
MONTANA 1997-98	18,735	163,999	11.42
MONTANA 1998-99	18,797	161,023	11.67
MONTANA 1999-2000	19,039	157,236	12.11
MONTANA 2000-01	19,313	155,860	12.39
MONTANA 2001-02	19,262	151,947	12.68

Accommodating Students with Disabilities: A Tutorial for Job Corps Staff

The Job Corps tutorial on Accommodating Students with Disabilities is designed to provide Job Corps admissions counselors and center staff with information and resources that will allow them to better support and meet the needs of applicants and students with disabilities, although it also offers resources and reference materials that are relevant to anyone who works on behalf of youth with disabilities.

The site provides an overview of (1) disability-related legislation and its applicability to Job Corps, (2) the different types of disabilities common in the adolescent/young adult population served by Job Corps, and (3) the basic etiquette staff should observe when interacting with individuals with varying abilities.

It also serves as a resource for staff-providing up-to-the-minute information on (1) the procedures and forms necessary to process an accommodation request, (2) materials (slides and handouts) available to support on-center training, and (3) the national and local resources available to offer advice on how best to provide services and support to individuals with disabilities. For more information go to <http://www.jobcorpsdisability.com/>

Disability Studies for Teachers

This website developed by the Center for Human Policy at Syracuse University contains lesson plans and materials designed to help teachers integrate disability studies into social studies, history, literature, and related subjects in grades 6-12. The plans and materials also can be adapted for use in postsecondary education. Lesson plans & essays on "disability studies" examine disability as a social, cultural, & political phenomenon. Among the topics: a history of

deaf education, efforts to reform poorhouses in the 1840s & 1850s, P.T. Barnum & "freak shows," & conscientious objectors during World War II who exposed horrific conditions at state institutions, & an introduction to disability studies.

<http://www.disabilitystudiesforteachers.org/>

Advocacy In Special Education: Free Internet Course

This course is part of a research study approved by Columbia University in New York. Participation is voluntary, all information is confidential, and there are no obligations. This course is designed to empower parents with the tools for successful advocacy by providing information on legal rights, special education documentation, and practical strategies for obtaining supports and services.

Course Elements: two surveys, three readings, self-study questions, and one short-answer assignment. Total time commitment 3-5 hours.

An extensive resource list with nearly 400 references to informative websites on special education law, advocacy strategies, disability information, parent networks, and many valuable national organizations, is yours to print and keep when you complete the course. Participants will also receive a course certificate and be entered to win one of five \$25 gift certificates on Amazon.com.

The course is only available through fall 2004.

For more information or to register:

advocacy@tc.columbia.edu.

Course Instructor, Principal Investigator:
Andrea Sherwin Ripp, Ed.M., MS, OTR/L,
advocacy@tc.columbia.edu, graduate student in special education at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York.

PLUK trainings and activities planned for 2004-05

PLUK & associate boards around the state have planned a number of training and activities for this upcoming school year. Mark your calendar if you are interested in participating.

Statewide Interactive Videoconferences

- September 14, 6-8pm, "Parents Working with Schools"
- October 12, 6-8pm, "The Process of Transition"
- November 9, 6-8pm, "Students with Deaf-Blindness"

Other Training/Community Activities

- July 15 & 22, Art Workshops, Billings
- August 14, Softball Tournament, Billings
- September 8, Founders Day Celebration, Billings
- September 22, Legislative Forum, MSU-Billings
- September 28, "Closing the Achievement Gap" with BJ Wise in collaboration with MCASE
- First week of October, Flathead Valley Children's Theater event, Kalispell
- October 14, "Stop the Bullying" with Dr. Marlene Snyder
- October 26, Magical Tymes party, Missoula
- Late February 2005, Sports Festival, Billings
- May 13, 2005, Kids at Heart, Billings

Training/Workshops/Meetings/Conferences in Montana:

NAMI-Billings Upcoming Events: Support Group, July 27, Billings

- Tuesday, July 27 & August 3—Support Group, 7PM @ NAMI-Billings office
- Prairie Winds Bike Ride, August 28—The major fundraiser for NAMI-Billings. We encourage all of you to support and participate in this fun family day. To get involved, please call the NAMI-Billings office (256-2001).

New NAMI-Billings Support Group Meeting in the Heights—Scheduled for 2nd and 4th Thursdays each month, 2225 Main Street #7, from 7PM to 8:30PM—For more info, please call 256-7780.

Conscious Discipline Associates "Setting Limits without Guilt", July 27, Billings

This training provides classroom management skills and strategies to positively guide children. It is a useful tool for parents and teachers.

When: Tuesday, July 27, 7-9 PM

Where: MSU-Billings Education Building, Room 122

Cost: \$10.00

A two-hour training sticker will be available.

Register: Call Wendy Martin at 259-2307, or Jenny Barkac at 256-0766. Walk-ins are welcome.

Creating Independence through Student-owned Strategies, August 2-3, Glendive at DCC

(CRISS) with an emphasis on Math and Science.

This is a research-based program designed for all content teachers. Project CRISS represents an integration of research-based practices in reading comprehension, vocabulary instruction and in the models of teaching. Teachers will learn various strategies to present material to help students learn content information.

For more information, please contact: Helen Murphy at 406-485-2143 (h) or dmurphy@midrivers.com

Financial Protection for Your Child After You're Gone, August 4

Wednesday, August 4, 2004, 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Nancy P. Gibson, Attorney at Law, Via Telephone Conference Call

The goal of this presentation is to provide information on how to financially protect a person with disabilities after the death of their parents and to acquaint parents with Special Needs Trusts.

Topics to be covered:

1. How a Special Needs Trust Works
 - a. Protection of Government Benefits
 - b. Financial and asset management
2. Alternatives to a trust

3. Advantages of a trust
4. How to decide how much to put into the trust?
5. Who should be the trustee?
6. How distributions are made from the trust for the benefit of your child?
7. Using a Letter of Intent to provide guidance for the best care of your child.

This is a great way to ask questions and learn more without having to leave your house. Just call or email the PLUK office to register -1-800-222-7585 or plukinfo@pluk.org with your name/address/phone and we will provide you with a toll free number and access code.

Register early as there are a limited number of lines available.

S'Cool Moves, August 9-11, Miles City

by Debi Heiberger-Wilson, Miles City at MCC

Contact: Helen Murphy 406/485-2321 or email: dmurphy@midrivers.com

7th Annual Region 5 CSPD August Institute: August 11-13, Missoula

For more information or to register go to the Region V CSPD Online Registration website at <http://www.cspd.net> or contact Nancy Marks at admin@cspd.net or 728-2400ext 5036 for more information.

S'Cool Moves, August 16-18, Billings

by Debi Heiberger-Wilson, SUB Ballroom, MSU-Billings

For more information on the program, visit: <http://www.schoolmoves.com>

To register or download the brochure, visit: <http://www.msubillings.edu/cspd/events.htm>

For information, contact Deb Miller at the Montana Center on Disabilities at 406/657-2312 or dmiller@msubillings.edu.

Montana SILC "Tools For Change" August 18-20, Great Falls

Hear the current issues, learn about the legislative process, and gain the tools to advocate for positive change. Symposium registration is limited, will be "first come, first served," and includes; room (Holiday Inn, 8/18-8/19), continental breakfast, served lunch and dinner, planned events.

Cost: \$35.00 (Checks payable to NCILS)

Mail Payment to: Montana SILC, PO Box 4210, Helena, MT 59604

Location: Holiday Inn, 400 10th Ave. South, Great Falls, MT

406-727-7200, or 1-800-257-1998

Registration Closes: July 21, 2004

Contact: Denise Wolf, dewolf@state.mt.us, 1-877-296-1197

AIMSweb Training Seminar, August 19-20, Billings

AIMSweb® is a formative assessment system that 'informs' the teaching and learning process by providing continuous student performance data and reporting improvement to students, parents, teachers, and administrators to enable evidence-based evaluation and data-driven instruction.

Based on over 25 years of scientific research, the AIMSweb system consists of Standard Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) testing materials and web-based data management and reporting applications.

Combined, these components provide schools a pro-active and preventative solution for documenting student achievement, identifying students at risk, demonstrating adequate yearly progress, and establishing and ensuring accountability.

Visit <https://aimsweb.edformation.com/training/TrainWrapper.cfm?inc=TrainList.cfm&step=1> or <http://www.learningclinic.com/seminar.html> for information.

The Impact of Childhood Disability: Understanding the Parents Journey, August 20-21, Billings

Saint Vincent Hospital is sponsoring Dr. Ken Moses, a psychologist who has devoted his career to working with issues of personal growth in the shadow of profound loss. A limited number of scholarships are available to parents. For more information call Health Access at 657-8792.

Step Up to Writing, August 23-24, Circle at Circle High School

This program will present multisensory, classroom-proven teaching strategies which will improve the writing of all students, regardless of ability levels. (K-12)

For more information, please contact: Helen Murphy at 406-485-2143 (h)or dmurphy@midrivers.com

Bright Solutions for Dyslexia, August 26, Hardin

Susan Barton will do an all-day presentation in Hardin, Montana. The public is invited, free of charge.

Speaker: Susan Barton, Founder, Bright Solutions for Dyslexia

Date: Thursday, August 26, 2004

Time: 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Subject: Dyslexia: Symptoms, Causes and Solutions

Venue: Hardin Middle School Auditorium, 611 W. 5th Street, Hardin, MT

Cost: FREE

Come learn the warning signs of dyslexia, the latest brain research, the genetic link- and how to help students with dyslexia.

Lunch will be provided

Reservations are required by August 18.

To reserve a spot, contact Anna Gregerson at Bright Solutions for Dyslexia.

Phone: 408-559-3652 x8

E-mail: anna@brightsolutions.us.

<http://www.dys-add.com/>

Quality of Life Montana Realtor Run, August 28, Billings

TIMES: 8am for 5mile run/8:15am for 2 mile run

FEE: \$15

REGISTER: Billings Association of Realtors Office, 1643 Lewis Ave., Ste. 12
248-7145 (phone), boardoffice@billings.org (email)

PURPOSE: To raise funds to help the YMCA

FOR MORE INFO: Call 248-7145

Yellowstone City-County Health & Montana AFSP Join Forces for Suicide Prevention, September 15 or 16, Billings

The Montana Chapter of the American Foundation For Suicide Prevention (AFSP) and the Yellowstone City-County Health Department are offering a full day of QPR training. Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) is a recognized suicide intervention/prevention skill that teaches people of all ages to become gatekeepers (people in the position to recognize crisis and the warning signs of someone contemplating suicide). QPR teaches people to recognize warning signs, clues, and communication from those in distress, and to respond vigorously to prevent suicide.

When: September 15, or September 16

Where: Mansfield Education Center, on the St. Vincent's Healthcare campus in Billings, MT

Cost: \$355 per person. Limited \$200 scholarships are available for agencies and individuals not able to afford the entire fee, one scholarship per agency.

Registration: Space is limited to 50 people per day. RSVP by August 6; call Katie Mayer (YCCHD) at 406-651-6437 or katiem@ycchd.org.

Augmentative Communication Seminar, September 23, Billings

Tanya Rose Curtis of Augmentative Communication Solutions will present a half-day seminar on communication devices September 23 at Billings Clinic Room #3 from 3:00-7:00pm. More detailed information will be available later in the summer.

Classroom Instruction That Works, October 21-22, Glendive at Dawson County High School

Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement

The results of research findings of 9 broad teaching strategies that have positive effects on student learning will be presented.

For more information, please contact: Helen Murphy at 406-485-2143 (h)or dmurphy@midrivers.com

2004 MEA-MFT Educators' Conference, October 21-22, Helena

'Let the Light In: Teach a Child'

Registration information will be coming to MEA-MFT's K-12 local presidents after Labor Day. For more information, go to: <http://www.mea-mft.org/edconf04.htm>.

Training/Workshops/Conferences outside Montana::

Parents and Children Making it Against the Odds: National Parental Involvement Conference, September 14-16, Atlanta GA

Parents & Children Making It Against the Odds: National Parental Involvement Conference is an interactive professional development opportunity for all individuals within schools and school systems who have responsibility for or an interest in strengthening the ties between parents and schools.

The event will bring together experts and colleagues to discuss, explore and learn about parental involvement programs that work. You'll hear ideas for improved communications and interactions between schools and parents, and have the opportunity to work with your parent involvement team to craft your policy or plan. Other conferences may include sessions about parental involvement... this conference is focused only on parental involvement.

For more information, visit <http://www.aplusevents.com/npi04/>

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ART, EDUCATION AND DISABILITY, October 10-13, New York

Sponsored by VSA arts and held in New York, New York. For more information go to: <http://www.vsarts.org/programs/institute/index.cfm>

Closing the Gap, October 21-23, Minneapolis MN

Pre-conference sessions October 19-20

Closing The Gap's Annual Conference has an international reputation as a leading source for information on innovative applications of computer technology for persons with disabilities. The 2004 Conference builds on a tradition of providing a comprehensive examination of the most current uses of technology by persons with disabilities and the professionals who work with them.



Topics will cover a broad spectrum of technology as it is being applied to all disabilities and age groups in education, rehabilitation, vocation, and independent living. People with disabilities, special educators, rehabilitation professionals, administrators, service/care providers, personnel managers, government officials, and hardware/software developers will share their experiences and insights at what has become known as the most significant networking experience of the year -- the annual Closing The Gap Conference.

<http://www.closingthegap.com/conf/>

"Assistive Technology and Accessible Media in Higher Education" November 9 -12, Boulder, CO

<http://www.colorado.edu/ATconference>

The conference is presently seeking proposals and intends addressing:

- The beneficial implementation of Assistive Technology in post-secondary education for individuals with
 - physical, sensory, and learning disabilities;
 - ADA and Section 508 compliance; and
- Accessible university information, web, library, and media resources and services.

"This conference is intended for disability service providers in the post secondary setting, Assistive Technologists, faculty, Web designers and programmers interested in accessibility, special educators, college administrators responsible for legal policy related to disability and accommodation, rehabilitation counselors and persons with disabilities."

<http://www.colorado.edu/ATconference/coverview2004.html>

Kathy Martinez, Deputy Director of the World Institute on Disabilities, will be the keynote speaker. She is internationally recognized for her work with employment, gender and minority disability rights issues.

Martinez oversees the National Technical Assistance Center for Latinos with Disabilities, and the NIDDR funded International Disability Exchanges and Studies (IDEAS) for the New Millennium Project.

TASH Conference 2004, November 18-20, Reno NV

The TASH conference is one of the largest and most progressive international conferences to focus on model, innovative, and effective strategies for achieving full inclusion of people with disabilities. This invigorating conference brings together some of the best hearts and minds in the disability movement with several hundred presenters and features over 450 breakout sessions, exhibits, roundtable discussions, poster sessions and much more, jam-packed with info. It provides a forum for individuals with disabilities, families, researchers, administrators, educators, scholars, and others to create dialogue and action for social and systems reform. This is a wonderful opportunity to attend a conference with over 2500 other people from around the world (15 nations last time) which showcases national and local achievement and brings a global perspective to the community on issues of importance in the lives of people with disabilities and their families. For renewing the spirit, lifting the heart, and challenging the mind:



For more information and call for papers: <http://www.tash.org/>

Some of the more than 40 topics at the TASH Conference will focus on the following themes:

- Building Partnerships & Relationships, Communication
- Inclusive Education Across the Lifespan
- Transition, Community Living & Employment
- Diversity, Values, Equality, Advocacy & Ethics
- Quality of Life

Selected Sources:

1. *Monday Morning in Washington, DC*, <http://www.inclusionresearch.org>
2. *Rocky Mountain DBTAC*, <http://www.adainformation.org>
3. *Transition Newsflash, Montana Center on Disabilities*, <http://www.msubillings.edu/transition>
4. *PEN Weekly NewsBlast* <http://www.publiceducation.org>
5. *Reference Points: Transition updates from the TATRA Project*, <http://www.pacer.org/tatra/tatra.htm>
6. *The American Indian Disability Technical Assistance Center Training Calendar* <http://aidtac.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/TrainingCalendar.htm>
7. *Rural Policy Matters*, <http://www.ruraledu.org/rpm/rpm.htm>
8. *Technology for Nonprofits*: <http://www.techsoup.org>

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- View an *archive* of all Weekly eNews at <http://www.pluk.org/eNews.htm>

Mission Statement: Parent's Let's Unite for Kids unites parents, professionals, families and friends of children with special needs to support one another, and share information for the benefit of their children.

Vision Statement: Given information and support, individuals with disabilities and their families will feel empowered to advocate for themselves and participate fully in educational and community opportunities.

Statement on accessibility: Today, we endeavor to be conscious of the need for making all electronic information accessible, as we are aware of physical accessibility issues in our community. For design guidelines visit <http://ncam.wgbh.org/cdrom/guideline/>.

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