

# Family Support Newsletter

BH&DSSC

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## College Students with Disabilities

After twelve or more years of public school education and enjoying the protections afforded to students with disabilities through IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), many families are surprised to learn the same protections are not available to students with disabilities who attend post-secondary schools. Services to students with disabilities who are attending post-secondary schools are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

One of the major changes is that the student with a disability is effectively his/her own case manager. While there are centers to assist students with disabilities, there is no one assigned to check on the progress a student is making. College students need to be aware of their own support needs and be able to express them to their school support center. This can be difficult for students who have not been included in the IEP process throughout high school. In college, if you don't request services, they may not be offered.

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## Partners in Health News

The PIH Parent Council met on Tuesday, July 30, 2002, and at the meeting Tammy Munroe volunteered to chair the council. Thanks Tammy - we know you'll do a great job! Our next PIH Parent Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 20, 2002 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at DSSC. The council has been working hard to get the new PIH posters out into the community. I would like to thank all of the parents involved for their efforts. At our next parent council meeting, parents will be focusing on visioning for the future, council teambuilding, planning a Family Fun Day and a Parent's Night Out. I would like to thank the parents that were able to attend the July meeting - some great ideas were generated. Please encourage the parents that were not able to attend to join us for the August 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## What's Happening at DSSC for Fun?

Developmental Services has a Recreation Committee that meets monthly. Representatives share department updates in regards to recreational activities as well as brainstorm ideas for future events and funding possibilities. We thought you might be interested in hearing what's going on for fun stuff for both adults and families.



- Community Support Services went to see Huey Lewis on August 7
- Men's and Women's groups are having a cookout at Hilton Park
- Case Management camping trip on July 31
- Women's Group is working on a talent show
- CSS will be going to Milton 3 Ponds this summer
- October Fest is scheduled for October 25 at the Rollinsford Legion
- 411 people attended the Works Summer Party in June
- DSSC will have a booth at the Rochester Fair on September 19 and at Apple Harvest on October 5
- CSS Coordinator is being trained as a Winter Olympics coach
- Teen Social Group played miniature golf on August 3
- Recreation Guide being updated by UNH intern
- ADA Guidelines for recreation facilities available

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Another major change is around course modifications. In secondary education, course content is often reduced or altered according to students needs and abilities. As completion of a post secondary course of study can lead to licensing and the privilege of practicing in the area of study, course content cannot be altered or reduced. What can be modified is the manner in which a student with a disability either learns the subject material or demonstrates that he/she has learned the subject material being taught. Allowable modifications could include (but are not limited to) interpreters, assistive listening systems, note takers, audio recordings, captioning systems, TTY's, text readers, taped texts, professor's lecture notes, materials on computer disk, as well as adapted computer terminals.

Much more information is available on the Internet. There is a computer with Internet access available through Family Support for our families. Information from the federal government on Section 504 is available online at:

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCR/regs/34cfr104.html> or [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

## Ten Steps to Start the School Year

The first few days of a new school year can set the tone for the next nine months. Students (and parents) may be apprehensive about going back to school, especially if the year before was a negative experience. Parents always hope that "this year will be better." Here are some ideas about how to make that happen.

1. **Get the teacher on your side:** Try to approach the new year and the new teacher with a fair and open mind. How you view your child's teacher has a tremendous effect on whether or not you can have a productive relationship with this person. How you view - and talk about - the teacher also effects how your child will view him or her. Do your best to give the new teacher a fair chance, without holding them responsible for mistakes or bad relationships you may have had with other teachers.
2. **Call the school and schedule a time to meet with your child's teacher:** Remember that the beginning of a school year is a hectic time for teachers. Try to schedule your meeting at a time that is convenient for both of you. Do this either before the year starts or within the first few weeks. Some parents like to "drop in" to visit. There are times when a surprise visit may be appropriate. However, scheduling the meeting before hand allows both you and the teacher to prepare. A scheduled meeting is less likely to be interrupted or cut short. Also, scheduling the meeting shows that you respect the teacher's time and workload. This is a simple courtesy that can go a long way towards fostering a positive relationship.
3. **Be professional:** Teachers are really into the "I am a professional" thing. But, parents need to present themselves as professionals, too. Parents who arrive late don't make a good impression. Arrive on time. Dress in nice clothes. A suit isn't required, but you should wear something that you would expect a teacher to wear. Rather than carrying all of your papers in a shoebox, invest in a briefcase. The goal is to make a positive impression.
4. **Be fair:** You may have already heard some things about your child's teacher that you may not like. But, chances are that he or she may have heard some things about you that aren't particularly thrilling, especially if you have had to present a vigorous case for the special needs of your child. Try to think of the teacher as a partner and a professional. This attitude will help establish a friendly tone.
5. **Explain your child's disability:** Don't assume that the teacher understands autism, or ADHD, or dyslexia or anything else. Take along some information about your child's disability. Don't bring an entire library - a one-page sheet will suffice. You may want to write a letter explaining specifically how your child is affected by his or her disability.
6. **Speak honestly about your child:** Acknowledge your child's limitations in an honest and objective manner. Accept the fact that your child is not perfect. But don't dwell only on your child's problems. Talk about strengths, skills, any favorite activities, and what has worked for teachers in the past. As much as possible, show the total child to the teacher.
7. **Be willing to listen:** Listen carefully to any thoughts or questions the teacher may have. If you would like feedback about certain behaviors or subjects, ask for it and accept what the teacher has to say. Even if you disagree, at least try to be empathetic: "I know it can be frustrating." Here is an exercise for empathy: Imagine your child on his or her worst day. Now, imagine your child in a class with 25 other kids. Now, imagine your child in a class with 25 other kids who act just like your child.
8. **Establish a plan:** How can the two of you communicate during the school year? What type of communication do you expect? What does the teacher need from you? Is a phone call convenient, or are letters a better idea? How can you find out about homework, field trips, and other important information? Talk with the teacher about how you can stay informed and in touch. Be sure that the teacher has all of your phone numbers and knows that he or she can call you.
9. **Ask about expectations:** Does the teacher give a lot of homework? How does he or she grade? How can you help your child?
10. **Don't forget to watch the time:** During the meeting, stay focused on your child. Teachers hate meetings that drag on forever. You can encourage future conferences by keeping this first meeting short.

### Remember to say "Thank you."

Thank the teacher for his or her time before you leave the meeting. Later, send a thank you note. This helps to establish a positive relationship and encourages communication

## The Year in Review

The Family Support Council would like to update you on some of the activities of the Family Support Program over the past year.

- The Family Support Program sponsored a number of workshops during the year on topics that included information on guardianship and financial planning with John Kitchen, Internet training and information on alternative health care.
- The Family Support Program provided 2 facilitated discussions on Safety and Sexuality with Deb Thibodeau.
- The Family Support Program organized a ski trip to Mount Sunapee, family swim time at the Dover Indoor Pool and the Annual Family Support Council picnic to White Lake State Park in July which 40 people attended.
- The Recreation Committee helped to organize a number of events for the Teen Social Group including mini golf, swimming, bowling, a trip to Joker's, a movie night, and a hay ride.
- The Family Support Council again this year participated in a local legislative breakfast to increase awareness of the issues faced by families who have a child with a developmental disability.
- The Family Support Council paid for 21 families and 4 staff to attend the Family Support Conference weekend in Bartlett.
- The Family Support Council gave summer recreation scholarships to over 65 individuals and families this summer.
- The Family Support Council continued its support of the Leadership series organized by the Institute on Disability by sponsoring two families to attend from Strafford County.
- The Family Support Program worked with the local radio station, WHEB, to help 80 families with food baskets and food vouchers over the last Winter season.
- The Family Support Program received a small grant from Strafford County Incentive Funds to work with the HUB Family Resource Center and Strafford County Cooperative Extension on parenting classes for families where one or both parents have a developmental disability.
- The Family Support Program continued work in reaching out to older parents by using grant money for a luncheon at Strafford Farms and to launch the Futures Planning Guides. which are available by calling Deirdre or Betsy at 749-4015.
- Our Respite program worked with 140 families.
- The Family Support Program continues to support groups for Parents of Children with C.P., Parents of Children with Down Syndrome, Parents of Adult Children, and the Father's Group.
- The Family Support Program publishes a quarterly newsletter that is mailed to all our families.

The Family Support Program worked with 261 families in the past year. We helped families in a variety of ways from accessing community resources and benefits, helping pay for home modifications, respite and adaptive equipment and assisting parents to meet and support each other.

## New Joint Adventure for the ESS Program

The Early Supports and Services program (ESS) has initiated a collaborative adventure with the Early Head Start Program (EHS) and the Family Support Parent to Parent Coordinator here at DSSC. Diana Bonneau and Tanya Wiggin-Lebroda, early intervention specialists from the ESS program, have begun a community based playgroup at Early Head Start in Rochester. The playgroup is for children between the ages of 18 months and three years of age and includes children enrolled in the ESS program and children enrolled in the EHS child care program. Tanya and Diana are also working collaboratively with two EHS staff to provide this routine and semi structured language based play opportunity for all the children. There are currently 9 children who are enjoying playing and learning together every Friday morning for an hour and a half. And, while the children are having fun and playing in the stimulating environment that EHS provides, the parents and grandparents, assisted by Betsy Carroll from the Family Support team, are getting a needed opportunity (without kids) to get together to share their experiences raising little ones. This group was initiated on a trial basis awaiting the feedback we received from parents and staff. Given the feedback so far, we hope to make this a regularly occurring event. If you are interested in participating in a DSSC supported community based playgroup, please speak to your service coordinator (i.e. your regular home visitor) for details regarding the best group for your child

## It's an election year.....

In this election year many openings are occurring in the New Hampshire State Government as many incumbents have not filed to be reelected. If you are interested in specific information about who is running in your district and have access to the internet , type in your zip code at:

<http://capwiz.com/familiesusa/election/>



**KASA** [www.fvkasa.org](http://www.fvkasa.org)

Kids as Self Advocates (KASA) is a national, grassroots network of youth with special needs and friends, speaking on behalf of themselves. Their purpose is to help spread helpful, positive information among their peers to increase knowledge around issues such as: living with special health care needs, health care transition issues, education, employment, and many more. They also help health care professionals, policymakers and other adults in their communities understand what it's like to live with special health care needs. They also participate in discussions about how to help each other succeed. They are teens and young adults with special health care needs speaking on their own behalf. Some members may not have special health care needs, but maybe a friend, brother or sister does . Visit them on the web at [www.fvkasa.org](http://www.fvkasa.org)

## Recreation Guide Updates

Family Support is working on updating Fun Things to do in Strafford County. Our UNH intern worked hard on getting current information from places in the area but we need your input as far as new places in Strafford County in addition to the ones that are in the current guide. Call Betsy at 749-4015 if you have a great place to add.

## Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

Thanks to the support of Family Support Council members Karen Salter and Cathie Lacasse, we had a great Fun in the Sun day (and it was sunny!) at White Lake State Park on July 14. Thanks to Darlene Towle for saving picnic tables for us at 7am! 70 people joined Deirdre (and her son), Betsy (and her daughter), and Gerry (and her grandson) at the picnic. We rented kayaks and paddle boats for families to enjoy and most everyone got in the lake to cool off. Hope more of you can make it next year.



## Autism Support Group

If there is an interest in Strafford County, in starting a support group for parents of children with any of the Autism Spectrum Disorders (Asperger's Syndrome, Pervasive Developmental Delay, Autism), please contact Pamela Bishop in New Durham at 859-7880. As a parent of a teen, Pamela has an interest in providing an opportunity for parents to get together and support one another in that area. She has received the support of the school system there and would like to hear from parents with questions or suggestions.

## Soap Box Derby

Thanks to all the kids and families who helped out by participating in the Soap Box Derby on June 23. In spite of the rain, the kids who went down the hill had a great time. David Moholland came in 9th and received a special trophy! Hope to see more of you 8 to 16 year olds out there next year!



The Thrill on the Hill!

## Passings

Family Support wishes to acknowledge the recent losses that three of our families have suffered. We are sad to report that Billy Duke passed away at his home on April 28, Robby Maloomian passed away at his home on June 29 and Scott Dubois passed away at his home on July 12. Our condolences go out to the families.

## Parent Information Center Workshops

We don't have any dates yet, but our plan is to have a 2-3 part series of presentations done by someone from PIC on educational planning for your child. The workshops would be about writing IEP's and building good relationships with your child's school and teachers. We'll send out flyers as soon as we have specific dates.

We also hope to have an Educational Advocate Training here in the Dover area. This training would give you extensive knowledge on Special Education Law and the IEP process and enable you to become a better advocate for your child. Please let us know if you have an interest in attending this 12 week series as we would need at least 15 attendees. Call Betsy or Cheryl at 749-4015.

## Access Expo of Northern New England

The Expo is northern New England's largest display of adaptive products. Discover products and services that can enhance your independence. Test the latest equipment. Learn how assistive technology can benefit you. Attend up to four workshops, visit the job fair, have fun at the recreation area. The Expo is scheduled for September 5, 2002 at the Center of New Hampshire in Manchester, NH. For more info visit [www.gsil.org](http://www.gsil.org) or call Granite State Independent Living at (800) 826-3700

"Adaptive Products - from the everyday to the extraordinary - for people of all ages with disabilities!"

## Donations Needed at Crossroads

Crossroads House in Portsmouth, a local homeless shelter accepts donations to assist their residents who are temporarily homeless. Crossroads serves both individuals and families who are homeless. According to their website, most needed items are: Laundry Detergent, Toilet Paper, Paper Towels, Cleaning Supplies, Disinfectant Spray, Trash Bags, Disposable Gloves, Disposable Razors, Personal Hygiene Products, Shower Curtains (Tub Size), White Towels, Washcloths, as well as food. They also accept working automobiles to give to families. Call 436-2218 for details.

## Grandparents Support Group



Joanne McKeon is inviting local grandparents who have a grandchild with a disability to a monthly meeting to talk, support each other, and learn about raising a grandchild with a disability. Call her at 749-6156 for more information.



## August Raffle

Win a \$50.00 Gift Certificate!

This issue's raffle is for a \$50.00 gift certificate to Wal-Mart. Great for Back to School needs or whatever your heart fancies. Use the below form or a piece of paper with your name address and phone number and the words "August 2002 Raffle" written on it and return it to Gerry Riecks at the below address by Sept 2, 2002.

### August 2002 Raffle

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Return by Sept. 2, 2002

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## Family Support Newsletter

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