

# SPEAK OUT

Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center, Inc.

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## *What's The Big IDEA?*

Over the past three years, *SPEAKOUT* has been keeping you updated on the progress of the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 1997. After a long process, the IDEA 2004 was signed into law on December 3, 2004. This new law will go into effect on July 1, 2005. Changes have been made, however, it is important to remember Connecticut State Regulations that exceed the IDEA 2004 requirements will remain in effect. The Connecticut State Department of Education is currently in the process of considering revisions to the state regulations. This process should be completed by December 2005.

As we move into this new era of teaching and learning with a strong focus on data and scientifically based research, we hear terms such as adequate yearly progress, highly qualified and accountability. We see districts paying more and more attention to standardized test scores (Connecticut Mastery Tests and Connecticut Achievement Performance Tests). Data is important and necessary to collect so that we can measure the effectiveness of the instruction and services for all students. This new focus is reflected in the alignment of the IDEA 2004 to the No Child Left Behind Act. However, as parents and professionals, we must remember the intent of the law, which has not changed since 1975, when it was signed into law as the *Education for All Handicapped Children Act* (Public Law 94-142), protecting the rights so all students have access to education. All students are unique and require individualized instruction, attention and support. The centerpiece of this law has always been to provide all students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) access to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Although changes have been made to the law over the years, we need to remember that students have unique needs and programs need to be determined on an individual basis.

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***...The centerpiece of this law has always been to provide all students access to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment...***

As the Parent Training and Information Center in Connecticut, we encourage you to call us with any questions you have about to your child's educational program. We strive to educate parents and professionals about current special education laws and practices, both federal and state, to ensure that the needs of all students are being met in schools across Connecticut. CPAC has fact sheets and other information available on the reauthorization of IDEA 2004. We are also available to present trainings to school districts or parent groups on the changes to the law. Parents need to know their rights and it is important to stay up-to-date on current practices to ensure that all students have positive outcomes in school and are successful both in school and in life.

## Summer Schedule



CPAC will be closed on Fridays from July 1 through August 12. Our normal business hours (Monday - Friday, 8:00am - 4:00pm) will resume the week of August 15, 2005. We look forward to hearing from you this summer!

## THANKS!!

The board and staff at CPAC want to offer a special thank you to staff member Andrea Deshefy for her years of service and support for families throughout Connecticut. For those of you who do not know, Andrea took an extended leave of absence from her work at the Center to care for her mother. Andrea has decided to devote more time to her own family and will not be returning to CPAC. We miss her, as do so many of the families she helped over the years, but we know that she will always be there ready to offer a helping hand to anyone in need.

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The staff at CPAC would like to extend a thank you to Sally Sherman. Sally is a graduate of our Next STEPs training. Over the past year, she has been a great help to us both in the office by taking phone calls and in supporting families and providing training opportunities for families and professionals in her community. Thanks Sally!



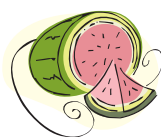
### The Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center, Inc.

is a statewide non-profit organization that offers information and support to parents of children with disabilities and the professionals who work with them. The center is staffed primarily by parents of children with disabilities who assist other parents in understanding how to participate more effectively in their children's education. A range of services is available, including telephone consultation, workshops and in-service presentations for parents, schools and service providers, a website and a lending library of books and videotapes.

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## CPAC FAMILY PICNIC

**Saturday, July 16, 2005**  
**12:00pm - 5:00pm**

CPAC is hosting our annual Friends and Family Picnic at Camp Harkness in Waterford. It will be a great opportunity to meet other families and the CPAC Board and Staff. Food and activities will be provided. Bring your swim suits! We look forward to seeing you there. ***Please call us at 1-800-445-2722 by July 1, 2005 to let us know if you are coming.***  
***Raindate: Saturday, July 23, 2005.***

## Take me out to the ball game!

Help support the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center by purchasing tickets to the Norwich Navigators baseball game on Sunday, August 7, 2005 at 2:05pm at Dodd Stadium in Norwich. ***Tickets must be purchased through CPAC.*** (Tickets may be exchanged for another day if you are unable to attend on August 7.) Tickets are \$8 per person. Please call CPAC to get your tickets at 1-800-445-2722. Thanks for your support!



## Connections in Connecticut: How Parents are Making a Difference

If you know of parent activities that you would like to share with others, please let us know! We will be happy to add your information to our website and publish it in our next issue of SPEAK OUT if space allows.

### DeafBlind in Connecticut

The New England Center Deafblind Project's mission statement is to build and strengthen a collaborative system that enable infants, children and youth who are deafblind to participate meaningfully in their homes, schools and communities in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts and New Hampshire. For more information contact Andrea Garewski or Janette Peracchio at 1-800-842-4510 ext. 4128 or visit their website at [www.necdbp.org](http://www.necdbp.org).

### NOFAS Connecticut

NOFAS Connecticut, an affiliate of the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, is a statewide support and advocacy group for parents and caregivers of individuals affected by Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). Their goal is to raise community awareness regarding prevention of FASD and improve the quality of life for those affected. For more information contact NOFAS Connecticut at 860-836-4024 or visit their listserv at [groups.yahoo.com/group/connfas/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/connfas/).

### A.S.K.

Advocates Sharing Knowledge (A.S.K.), a parent group in Connecticut's Eastern Region is designed to help parents explore community resources and learn about new and existing services in a supportive environment. All are welcome! Meetings are held on the last Tuesday of every month 6:30pm-8:00pm. For location or more information, please contact Beth at 860-742-8410 or [bethreel@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bethreel@sbcglobal.net).

### Our Place

The Kennedy Center offers this group for Young Adults ages 17-21 with special needs entering those transitional years into their 20s! The group meets on Wednesday evenings from 7:00pm - 9:00pm at The Kennedy Center in Trumbull. For more information call Opportunities Unlimited at 203-332-4535 ext. 223 or email [oppunlimited@kennedyctr.org](mailto:oppunlimited@kennedyctr.org).

### The Parent & Grandparent Planner

*The Parent & Grandparent Planner* is a free monthly publication for parents and caregivers of young children in Northeast Connecticut. It has information about local activities and events, daycares and schools. Visit their website at [www.parentplanner.net](http://www.parentplanner.net) or call 860-684-6183 for more information about the publication. CPAC is now a distributor of *The Parent and Grandparent Planner*. Contact CPAC at 1-800-445-2722 or via email at [cpac@cpacinc.org](mailto:cpac@cpacinc.org) for their latest issue.

### Connecting Connecticut



Through a generous donation from the Savings Bank of Manchester Charitable Foundation, Inc., CPAC has just published a revised printing of the *Connecting Connecticut Directory*. It is a resource directory for schools and community organizations serving parents of children with disabilities. For information on obtaining a copy for your school or parent organization, please contact CPAC at 1-800-445-2722 or email [cpac@cpacinc.org](mailto:cpac@cpacinc.org).

### Helpful Connecticut Resources For Families

This new brochure, compiled by the Connecticut State Department of Education's Parent Work Group, is designed to provide families access to organizational resources in Connecticut. Contact CPAC at 1-800-445-2722 if you, your school or parent organization would like a copy of this brochure.

The contact information for the Connecticut Down Syndrome Congress is not current in the new brochure. Their contact information is:

Connecticut Down Syndrome Congress  
P.O. Box 3485  
Stamford, CT 06905-0485  
Phone: 203-351-1157  
Toll Free: 888-486-8537  
[www.ctdownsyndrome.org](http://www.ctdownsyndrome.org)

***Families as Partners: School-Family  
Collaboration in the Education of  
Students with Disabilities***

CPAC received funding from the State Improvement Grant received by the Connecticut State Department of Education, to design and implement this project to develop partnerships and promote collaboration between schools and families in the implementation of the IEP. Three training modules were presented jointly to parents and district personnel, Preparing for the PPT, Developing the IEP and What To Do When You Disagree. Families were involved in the project from the planning to the implementation and evaluation of all activities. CPAC partnered with the following districts on this project:

Bridgeport	Hampton	RSD 11
Chaplin	Lisbon	Scotland
Coventry	Manchester	Waterbury
Enfield	New Haven	West Haven
Groton	New Milford	Windham

This training was designed to ensure that all students receive a free appropriate public education and that families learn how to create a program for their child in the least restrictive environment. For more information or to see how your school district can get involved, please contact Annie Stockton at CPAC at 1-800-445-2722 or via email at [astockton@cpacinc.org](mailto:astockton@cpacinc.org).

**Transition from School to  
Work and Adult Life**

Students with intellectual disabilities have made great progress in public school over the past three decades with support from their parents, educators and school officials, who are working together, working out differences and striving to meet the vision of federal special education laws. In the 21st Century, the nation can aspire to even higher expectations for people with intellectual disabilities. Public schools must now prepare students with intellectual disabilities for a meaningful place in the economy and the workforce.

*U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, The President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities, 2004. Please contact CPAC at 1-800-445-2722 if you would like a copy of the complete article.*

**Helping Students With Disabilities  
Participate in Standards-Based  
Mathematics Curriculum**

The challenge for teachers is to provide effective math instruction to students with disabilities so they can meet the high standards set for what all students must be able to know and do mathematically. Unfortunately, many students with disabilities experience difficulties with the reformed math curriculum. As University of Maryland researchers Paula Maccini and Joe Gagnon have found, students may have difficulty processing and distinguishing relevant information, have deficits in computational skills, or lack reasoning and problem-solving skills. But with the right support, students with disabilities can succeed in a higher level math curriculum.

John Cawley, Professor Emeritus at the University of Connecticut, has found that for students with disabilities to do better in math, math must be meaningful for them. Both knowing and doing mathematics must be emphasized to enhance the quality of mathematics instruction and learning for students with disabilities.

*Cynthia Warger, Eric Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, ERIC/OSEP Digest, July, 2002. For a full copy of this article, please contact CPAC at 1-800-445-2722 or via email at [cpac@cpacinc.org](mailto:cpac@cpacinc.org).*



***Song of Our Children*  
A New Documentary Film  
Available at CPAC**

Song For Our Children is a new documentary film about how schools can successfully include children with special needs in the classrooms with typically developing peers. Teachers, parents and students are introduced whose daily routines exemplify what “educational inclusion” means. This portrayal of four memorable children – preschool through high school – reveals the challenges, strategies and benefits of inclusion for all. For more information about the film, access [www.landlockedfilms.com](http://www.landlockedfilms.com) where you can find discussion questions and web-based resources on educational inclusion.

*If you would like to borrow this DVD from CPAC, please contact us at 1-800-445-2722 or [cpac@cpacinc.org](mailto:cpac@cpacinc.org). A \$25.00 refundable deposit is required to borrow this DVD.*



## **Dear Parent Advocate,**

Dear Parent Advocate,

My son is 12 and the school tells me he's having trouble learning. They did some tests and now want to put him in special education. My son is a handful and has some behaviors but I don't think this is really his problem. What can I do if I think they are just being racist and picking on him because he is black?

Mom Seeking Advice

Dear Seeking Advice,

When a child is identified with any kind of disability it should be decided based on an appropriate evaluation. As a parent you have a right to be part of the decisions about what tests should be given and why. I would suggest that you sit down with the school staff now and get a thorough explanation of what tests were done, and why they reached this conclusion. You can decide at that time if you think this information describes your son as you understand him and his needs.

If you disagree with what the school says you should ask some additional questions like: Were any classroom interventions tried before they did the testing? Were the tests given by people who are familiar with how your son's culture may have impacted how he performed on the test or how he acts in school? If you still feel that your son should not receive special education services, you may refuse to give your consent for services to be provided. I would encourage you to talk with the team about what other supports could be offered so that his learning and behavioral difficulties are addressed.

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Over identification of minority students in special education is a critical issue nationally and in Connecticut. The Connecticut State Department of Education is working closely with local school districts to help them deal with the variety of issues that affect disproportionate identification and the growing achievement gap that exists between minority and white students. Below, we have listed some additional questions that may help school personnel and others evaluate factors which can contribute to the problem of over identification. Please watch in future issues of *SPEAK OUT* for more information about this important topic.

### **Does Over-Representation Exist In Your School? What Signs Administrators Should Look For in their Schools**

Are special education referrals being made for appropriate reasons?

Is there a noticeable pattern in which teachers refer students regularly? Do certain teachers and/or schools have particularly high referral rates?

Is there a high percentage of students whose families have low socioeconomic status or who are culturally and/or linguistically diverse in special education classes?

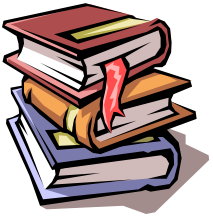
Have other possible sources of the problem been investigated, such as limited instructional materials, a non-welcoming school climate, language differences, poor instruction, etc.?

What documented interventions were attempted before the student was evaluated for special education?

Were the interventions instituted and modified for enough time before they were abandoned?

While this document is for administrators, it appears in a document that also addresses how families can be involved in addressing over-representation. For copies of that information contact CPAC at 1-800-445-2722 or [cpac@cpacinc.org](mailto:cpac@cpacinc.org).

*From: Addressing Over-Representation of African American Students in Special Education, An Administrator's Guide, Council for Exceptional Children, 2002.*



## **The Bookworm**

*The Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center's collection of books and videos/DVDs is available to parents and professionals. You are welcome to visit our library during regular business hours, 8:00am to 4:00pm, Monday through Friday, or you may call and borrow materials through the mail.*

**Making The System Work For Your Child With ADHD** by Peter S. Jensen, M.D. There's help out there for kids with ADHD, but getting it isn't easy. Where can you turn when the insurer denies your claims or those motivating star charts no longer encourage good behavior? Dr. Peter Jensen is a child psychiatrist, scientific expert, parent advocate, former NIH Mental Health investigator, award-winning researcher and father of a son with ADHD. The Guilford Press, 2004.

**How to Reach and Teach Children with ADD/ADHD, Second Edition** by Sandra F. Rief. This book is filled with practical strategies and techniques to improve the academic, behavioral and social performance of students with ADHD. The book is easy to read and includes the most current research-based information on ADHD and outlines effective treatments. Jossey-Bass, 2005.

**Colleges With Programs For Students With Learning Disabilities or Attention Deficit Disorders, Sixth Edition**, Edited by Charles T. Mangrum II, Ed.D. and Stephen S. Strichart, Ph.D. More and more students diagnosed with learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders are going to college, succeeding there and graduating. They are going to all types of colleges and universities, participating in the mainstream of college life, including advancement to graduate and professional programs. Petersons, 2000.

**Helping Children Who Are Deaf** by Sandy Niemann, Devorah Greenstein and Darlena David. The activities in this book were created to help parents, caregivers and health workers teach deaf children how to communicate to the best of their ability. Topics in this book include: why young children need to learn a spoken or sign language, teaching them the language and supporting other parents.

**Helping Children Who Are Blind** by Sandy Niemann and Namita Jacob. The activities in this book were designed to help parents, caregivers and health workers deepen their understanding of assessing how much a child can see, how to prevent blindness, how to move around safely and how to prepare a child for school.

*The Hesperian Foundation. Early Assistance Series for Children with Disabilities, 2004.*

## **Children's Books**

**My Beautiful Child** by Lisa Desimini and Matt Mahurin. Parents share their hopes and dreams for their child. Scholastic Inc., 2005.

**Fidgety Fish**, by Ruth Galloway. Tiddler was a fidgety fish, darting and swimming, wriggling and squiggling all over the cave. This children's book is an entertaining story full of colorful pictures. Scholastic Inc., 2002.

### ***Summer Reading Tips for Parents***

Studies show that most students experience loss of reading skills over the summer months, so extra efforts are needed during this time to keep children reading. A tip sheet from the Coordinated Campaign for Learning Disabilities gives parents ideas on how to help children sustain their reading skills over the summer. The document is available at: [www.focusonlearning.org/summer.pdf](http://www.focusonlearning.org/summer.pdf).

For a copy of this document, please contact CPAC at 1-800-445-2722 or at [cpac@cpacinc.org](mailto:cpac@cpacinc.org).



## New Website Just For Kids Who Learn Differently

*SparkTop.org* is a new website designed for kids ages 10-12 with learning difficulties, including identified learning disabilities (LD) and Attention - Deficit /Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD).

Kids who struggle in school need to know that it is okay to learn differently, that everyone has their own strengths and challenges and that their talents can help them achieve their dreams. Children with learning difficulties can learn. Kids who struggle in the classroom can succeed in school and in life. This website can help kids realize their potential by providing kids with information about how their brain works, recognizing their unique strengths and showcasing their creativity.

Check out *www.sparktop.org*. It can make a difference for you and your child.

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The Department of Public Health has put together a directory of Licensed Youth Camps in Connecticut. You can access this directory on the web at [www.dph.state.ct.us/BRS/Youth\\_Camps/YC\\_PubliclistByTown.pdf](http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BRS/Youth_Camps/YC_PubliclistByTown.pdf). If you would like a copy of this directory, please send a check for \$3.00 (to cover copying and postage) to CPAC, 338 Main Street, Niantic, CT 06357.



[www.abilityhub.com](http://www.abilityhub.com)

AbilityHub Assistive Technology Solutions is a website about assistive technology for people with a disability who find operating a computer difficult, maybe even impossible. This web site will direct you to adaptive equipment and alternative methods available for accessing computers. AbilityHub.com's purpose is to help find information on adaptive equipment and alternative methods available for accessing computers.



## Asthma and Allergy News

The American Lung Association of Connecticut provides information about support groups, education and a speaker's bureau. Some of the programs they offer include:

- ***Open Airways for Schools*** - a school-based program for kids with asthma in grades 3 to 5 that teaches children about their asthma, the importance of taking their medication and asthma management.
- ***A Is for Asthma*** - a program for preschoolers and their parents and caregivers to teach kids and caregivers about asthma.
- ***Breath Express*** - a 34 foot vehicle that travels to schools teaching kids about lung health.

For further information, check out their website at [www.alact.org](http://www.alact.org) or call 1-800-LUNG USA.

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CPAC has resources available about asthma that have been produced by the CT Department of Public Health. Please contact us if you would like to borrow any of the following resources:

**Managing Asthma in CT Schools**  
A Resource Manual

**Helping Your Child Manage Asthma**  
A Parent's Handbook

**Managing Asthma in CT Child Care Facilities**  
A Resource Guide

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### ***The Use of Automatic Injectables in Child Day Care Centers and Group Day Care Homes***

Connecticut General Statutes, Section 19a-79, require the Department of Public Health to adopt regulations specifying that child day care centers and group day care homes *shall not* deny services to a child on the basis of a child's known or suspected allergy or because a child has a prescription for an automatic pre-filled cartridge injector or similar automatic injectable equipment used to treat an allergic reaction. For additional information, contact the CT Child Day Care Licensing HELP DESK at (800) 282-6063.

*All Children Considered, University of Connecticut  
Cooperative Extension System, Volume II, 2004/05.*



# LEGISLATION

## Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act 2004

The following is a list of some of the most critical changes affecting children with disabilities and their families in IDEA 2004, concentrating on the IEP process, due process and the discipline provisions. How these changes affect our children will depend, at least in part, on how the U.S. Department of Education interprets them through policies and regulations and how they are implemented at the state, district and school level. Most of these changes will be effective as of July 1, 2005.

### IEP PROCESS

- Short-term objectives
- IEP progress reports
- Transition information in IEP
- IEP attendance and participation
- Pilot program for multi-year IEPs
- Pilot program for paperwork reduction
- IEP team transition
- Transfers between school districts

### DUE PROCESS

- Procedural safeguards notice
- Statute of limitations
- Due process complaint notice
- Resolution session
- Attorney's fees
- Qualifications for Hearing Officers

### DISCIPLINE

- Stay put
- Services to be received in interim alternative educational setting
- Manifestation Determination Review
- Special Circumstances
- 45 day limit
- Functional Behavioral Assessments
- Case-by-case determination


[www.nichcy.org/reauth/2004IDEASUMMARY-12.04.doc](http://www.nichcy.org/reauth/2004IDEASUMMARY-12.04.doc)

Please contact CPAC at 1-800-445-2722 if you would like individual fact sheets or information about specific changes to IDEA 2004.

## Attention, Public! Seeking Comment About Nation's Special Education Law

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) is seeking public comment on the upcoming draft of regulations for the newly amended Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This summer, the Department will host a series of public hearings across the country where individuals will have the opportunity to make comments. Suggestions may be submitted electronically to [comments@ed.gov](mailto:comments@ed.gov). For locations for the public hearings, visit the Department's Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 web page at [www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html](http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html) or call OSERS at 202-245-7468.

*Source: U.S. Department of Ed., The Achiever, May 1, 2005.*



On Monday, June 27, 2005 the U.S. Department of Education is holding two Public Meetings on IDEA 2004 in New York City. The first session will be held from 1:00pm - 4:00pm and the second will be from 5:00pm - 7:00pm. Both sessions will be held at the W Hotel of New York, Forest Room 1541 Lexington Ave, between 49th and 50th Street, New York, NY. For more information please contact Troy R. Justesen, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services at 202-245-7468. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1-800-877-8339.

The following are websites you can access to find more information about the changes to IDEA, including fact sheets, frequently asked questions and articles:

- [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)
- [www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html](http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html)
- [edworkforce.house.gov](http://edworkforce.house.gov)



## Student Success Depends on More Than Test Scores

Student success depends a great deal on what we call "the other side of the report card." Students who are actively engaged in class and come prepared, who cooperate with their peers, who resolve conflicts peacefully, who complete their work, who attend school often and on time, and who demonstrate initiative and leadership are more likely to succeed in school and, ultimately, in life. With the recent focus on the academic side of the report card, we risk losing sight of the other side - the side that reflects how we live with one another, whether we are inclined toward peace or war, and whether we have the skills we need to avoid violence and alcohol and drug abuse.

Research conducted by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory for Student Success is yielding a clearer picture of the skills and competencies students need for academic and life success. Research confirms that social and emotional factors affect academic grades and school performance. Enhancing social-emotional competencies, in combination with a positive, supportive classroom and school climate, can improve academic performance.

*Collaborative For Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), originally from National School Boards Journal, 2002. This complete article can be accessed on the web at [www.casel.org/downloads/otherside.pdf](http://www.casel.org/downloads/otherside.pdf) or contact CPAC for a copy at 1-800-445-2722 or via email at [cpac@cpacinc.org](mailto:cpac@cpacinc.org).*

### Education News

#### Parents Can Use



This is a television series from the U.S. Department of Education that focuses on schools, learning and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. On the third Tuesday of each month during the school year, Education News airs live via satellite, offering parents and anyone else with an interest in education vital information about getting involved in children's learning. For more information about the series visit [www.ed.gov/news/av/video/edtv](http://www.ed.gov/news/av/video/edtv) or call 1-800-USA-LEARN.

## Raising Achievement: Alternate Assessments for Students with Disabilities

States may develop modified academic achievement standards and use alternate assessments based on those modified achievement standards for students with persistent academic disabilities and served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. States may include proficient scores from such assessments in making adequate yearly progress (AYP) decisions but those scores will be capped at 2.0% of the total tested population. This provision does not limit how many students may be assessed against modified achievement standards.

This policy allows students with persistent academic disabilities to take academic assessments that are sensitive to measuring progress in their learning and that recognize their individual needs. This provision is for those students who are not likely to reach grade level achievement because of their disability in the same timeframe as students without disabilities, but who will make significant progress. Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams will make the decision about which individual students should take such an assessment.

States may continue to use alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. States may continue to include proficient scores from such assessments in making AYP decisions and those scores will still be capped at 1.0% of the total tested population.

The provision for students with persistent academic disabilities does not take away or add to any provisions for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These students may continue to be assessed with alternate achievement standards. IEP teams will continue making the decision about which individual students should take such an assessment.

*U.S. Department of Education, [www.ed.gov/print/policy/elsec/guid/raising/alt-assess-long.html](http://www.ed.gov/print/policy/elsec/guid/raising/alt-assess-long.html)*

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For a copy of the full article, please contact CPAC at 1-800-445-2722 or [cpac@cpacinc.org](mailto:cpac@cpacinc.org).

## Teaching Social Skills: Why Are Social Skills Important?

Effective social problem solving requires reading one's own and others' feelings, and being able to accurately label and express those feelings. Such skills are aspects of social and emotional learning (Zins, et al., 1998, p. 19). Well-developed social skills can help youth with disabilities develop strong and positive peer relationships, succeed in school, and begin to successfully explore adult roles such as employee, coworker/colleague, and community member. Hair, Jagar, and Garrett (2002) observe that adolescents who have strong social skills, particularly in the areas of conflict resolution, emotional intimacy, and the use of pro-social behaviors, are more likely to be accepted by peers, develop friendships, maintain stronger relationships with parents and peers, be viewed as effective problem solvers, cultivate greater interest in school, and perform better academically (p. 3). Adequate social skills need to be acquired while students are still enrolled in school and further supported and refined in postsecondary, community, and work settings.

*Information Brief, October 2004, Vol. 3, Issue 5. For a copy of the complete brief, please call CPAC at 1-800-445-2722 or email [cpac@cpacinc.org](mailto:cpac@cpacinc.org).*

### Age of Majority/Transfer of Rights

Did you know that at the age of 18 your child is considered an adult and all educational rights under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act transfer from the parent to the student? If your child needs your continuing support for making decisions and signing documents regarding education, residence, vocational or behavioral programs, release of clinical records and photographs, or medical and dental care, you need to find out about applying for Guardianship or Conservatorship.

To find out how you can apply, call the local Probate Judge in your town. You can find their telephone number in the blue pages of your local phone book. When you call, ask for a booklet on both Guardianship and Conservatorship and see which one would be appropriate for your child.

## Self Advocacy

Whether your plans after high school involve work or college, it is important that you understand your strengths and limitations, know how they affect your performance, and be able to communicate this to others. Understanding your disability is the first step in the process. There are a number of things you can do to help increase your understanding of your disability:

1. Begin to accept your disability as a description of how you learn or function in a particular environment.
2. Do not let your disability determine your identity.
3. Realize that accepting your disability may take time.

*From: An Educational Journey from Self Discovery to Advocacy, A Handbook for Students, Debora Presbie, June 2003. Contact CPAC for a copy at 1-800-445-2722.*

The following article was written by Jose Santiago, a student in West Haven who has already learned, at a young age, how to be his own best advocate.



*"I got sick of getting picked on."*

The thing that made me talk to the class about my hips was that I got sick of getting picked on. So, every time I went to gym, they used to make fun of me and how I ran. They used to laugh, call me names, bully me around. Sometimes my mom talked to the kids, but nothing ever changed. Then my podiatrist came to my class asking for me. Her name was Trace Wall. Then she introduced herself. I told her my problems in class. She said to think about it for two weeks. After two weeks past, I was ready!!! I first started with a picture of my hips. I explained to them how much apart they were. I even showed them how my bones crack. When I was done with that, I explained the story of my birth. Of my hips. After that I explained, I felt like I was in heaven I even cried. Then the class left me alone.

## CPAC Workshops

### Modifications and Accommodations for Students with LD/ADHD



Learn how to contribute to the development of the IEP and understand the range of modifications and accommodations that can support a child in the general education classroom. Participants will leave with several easy-to-use tools that can help their children be more successful at home and in school.

**Monday, September 12, 2005 Wallingford**  
Wallingford Public Library

**Monday, September 19, 2005 Torrington**  
Charlotte Hungerford Hospital

Both workshops will be held from 6:00pm - 8:00pm. For more information or to register, please contact CPAC at 1-800-445-2722.

In mid-October CPAC will be hosting a workshop on sexuality education for persons with developmental disabilities in Southeastern Connecticut. For more information, visit our website or watch for it in our next issue of *SPEAK OUT*.



## *Celebrating Our Children's Successes*

Congratulations to all of the children of our CPAC board and staff who are graduating from high school and college this spring. We know what a long journey this has been for the students and their families and we are so proud of all that you have accomplished!

High school graduates include: Lindsey Bolles, Cara Bolles, Michael Maus and Sarah Allen. Special congratulations go to Lindsey for winning two Gold medals in swimming during the recent Special Olympics meet. Congratulations also to Sarah for being one of only 23 high school seniors in the state to receive a scholarship from the Governor's Coalition for Youth with Disabilities.

College graduates include: Isabel Lizardi from the University of Pennsylvania and Patrick Ahlberg from Marist College. It is hard for us to imagine that Patrick's mom, Diane, first contacted CPAC when he was just six years old. Diane is a prime example of how an informed, effective parent can support their child so that their dreams become a reality.

***Our very best wishes to all of you for continued success and happiness in all that you do!***

## Free Educational Evaluations by Southern Connecticut State University Were Helpful For Families

Free educational evaluations were provided to six students to determine if they were eligible for Special Education services under the category Specific Learning Disability. This Diagnostic Testing was conducted by Masters candidates from the Special Education and Reading Department of Southern Connecticut State University, under the supervision of their professor Dr. Jules Tolis as part of a class requirement in Diagnostic Testing and Reporting in Learning Disabilities.

Five of the six students tested were referred by CPAC. After the testing, the parents and a CPAC representative had the opportunity to meet with the diagnosticians for a feedback session to discuss findings and to develop a plan of action. For four parents, the results confirmed their suspicions about their children's inadequate progress in reading. On behalf of the parents, we thank Dr. Tolis and her students for this great learning experience.

A Directory of Community Rehabilitation Providers for Youth in Transition and Adults with Disabilities in Connecticut, compiled by the Connecticut Interagency Transition Task Force, is now available at your school. Please contact the transition coordinator at your school to access a copy of this booklet.



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Advocacy Center, Inc.

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Please share this newsletter with others!

**SPEAK OUT** is received by over 12,000 parents and professionals in Connecticut.

**Printing costs continue to rise. If you would like to receive SPEAK OUT via email, please contact CPAC at 800-445-2722 or [cpac@cpacinc.org](mailto:cpac@cpacinc.org).**

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## **SAVE THE DATE!**

- July 16, 2005      **CPAC Friends and Family Picnic.** Camp Harkness, Waterford, CT. Sponsored by the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center. Food and activities will be provided. All are welcome to attend. For more information or to register, contact CPAC at 1-800-445-2722 or via email at [cpac@cpacinc.org](mailto:cpac@cpacinc.org).
- August 7, 2005      **Norwich Navigators Baseball Game.** Join CPAC for an afternoon at a Norwich Navigators Baseball Game at Dodd Stadium in Norwich. Tickets are \$8 a piece and can be purchased by calling CPAC at 1-800-445-2722.
- September 24, 2005      **"LD and ADD/ADHD Through the Lifespan," CACLD's 35th Annual Conference.** Harold S. Koplewicz, M.D., founder and Director of NY University Child Study Center will be the keynote speaker. The conference will be held at the Stamford Marriott. For more information, call CACLD at 203-838-5010 or visit their website at [www.caclld.org](http://www.caclld.org).
- October 1, 2005      **Autism Spectrum Resource Center's 2nd Annual Resource Fair,** Moore Field House, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven. For more details, please contact ASRC at [www.ct-asrc.org](http://www.ct-asrc.org) or at 203-248-5222.
- October 27, 2005      **Expanding Horizons: A Marketplace of Ideas,** 8th annual conference on educating students with disabilities in general education classrooms, Radisson Hotel, Cromwell. For more information, contact SERC at 860-632-1485.

Visit the CPAC website, [www.cpacinc.org](http://www.cpacinc.org), for more Upcoming Events!