

Connecting with Families and Educators



Providing information, support and encouragement to families and educators of children and young adults with disabilities.



Great Expectations:

Iowa Secondary Transition Parent & Educator Connection Conference

October 27 & 28

...a conference that will exceed your expectations

The Parent & Educator Connection and Department of Education Secondary Transition are collaborating with our partners to provide an outstanding conference for parents, educators, community service providers and high school students. This conference is about the transition of students through the middle and high school years to adult life. Focusing on the areas of living, working and learning, national and local presenters will share insights and information. Those who attend the conference will be invited to participate in a number of activities, from accessing resources on-line, to participating in activities designed to help students learn about themselves.

Many conference sessions are designed with student participation in mind, and high school students who are receiving services through an IEP are encouraged to attend. Le Derick Home, a noted poet, playwright and motivational speaker will conduct sessions on his poetry and self-advocacy for students in addition to his closing keynote to the general conference. More information about the student component to the conference will be available in September, as well as the general conference program.

Please join us for a conference that will exceed your expectations. For additional information check the web site at: <http://www.aea267.k12.ia.us/familyed/> or contact the Family & Educator Connection.



New Administrator for AEA 267

Roark Horn, former superintendent at Hudson Community School District, has been selected as the agency's new chief administrator. Horn succeeds Dr. Dean Meier who retired at the end of last school year.

As AEA 267 Chief Administrator, Horn will oversee over 1,150 full and part-time staff members who provide special education and school improvement services along with technology support for over 66,000 students and 5,000 educators throughout 18-counties of north central and northeastern Iowa.

Area Education Agency 267, with service delivery centers in Cedar Falls, Clear Lake, and Marshalltown, is the largest AEA in the state in terms of geography and the number of school districts served. The mission of the agency is to provide educational leadership, services and support to positively impact children, families and educators within the local school districts served.

For more information, visit www.aea267.k12.ia.us

School Year in Full Swing!

With many of our districts starting classes as early as August 18th this year, school has been in session almost a month for some students and teachers. The first few weeks are a good time for students to get to know their teachers and classroom expectations as well as to readjust to life at school. Educators are doing their own adjusting to the demands of the school year; perhaps a different building, administrator, or maybe a different grade to teach. All in all it takes a few weeks to shake off the routine of the summer just past and get into the rhythm and smooth swing of a new school year.

As the year starts anew, the **Family & Educator Connection** would like to remind you of the services we offer to help make your year a positive and productive one. The Family & Educator Connection (FEC) is part of a statewide network of parents and educators working together to support children and young adults with special needs.



Information

The FEC does this by providing one-on-one assistance to parents or educators when there is a need for information or direct support.

We provide information

through our library on topics including disabilities, parenting, instructional and behavior management strategies. The FEC shares information about community resources and supports with parents and educators as requests are made



Newsletters

The *Connecting with Families and Educators* newsletter is distributed about 4 times during each school year to parents of children who have an IEP, kindergarten through high school, school administrators, special education teachers, AEA staff and our community partners.

Bright Beginnings newsletter is distributed about 3 times during the school year to parents of infants and preschoolers and the educators and services providers who work with them.

Our hope is that the newsletters are helpful to families, educators and community partners by providing information about topics related to living, learning, and working for our children both now and in the future. We understand that with such a broad audience there may be some topics that pertain to your situation and some that are less relevant. We ask you to glance through each issue, check out the calendar of upcoming events and learning opportunities, and see what meets your needs.



Website

As part of the AEA 267 website, the Family & Educator Connection posts the *Connecting* and *Bright Beginnings* newsletters, tips for parents and educators, a workshop and events calendar, and links to sites of interest to parents and educators at www.aea267.k12.ia.us. Click on Special Education, then Family & Educator Connection to get to a menu of items.



Support of the IEP or IFSP Process

One of the primary ways that the Family & Educator Connection serves parents and educators is by supporting good home-school communication. This includes providing support to families so that they can more effectively participate in the IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) or IEP

(Individual Education Program) process.

This may include:

- Explaining the IFSP/IEP process
- Reviewing procedural safeguards/parent rights
- Helping parents organize their thoughts in preparation for a meeting
- Attending IFSP/IEP or other school meetings after being asked by the local school, parents or AEA staff



Workshops and Conferences

The Family & Educator Connection publicizes workshops and events that provide information and learning opportunities for families and our education partners. The FEC also collaborates with AEA staff, community organizations and others to provide workshops as needs are identified.

It is easy to connect with the Family & Educator Connection. Just call, write or e-mail your regional office listed below. If you are unsure which office to call, just call one of the offices listed, and we will help connect you to the right office. We look forward to hearing from you.

Clear Lake/Mason City Region

Sandy Kraschel
Mason City Airport Grounds
9184 B 265th Street
Clear Lake, Iowa 50428
Ph. 1-800-392-6640 or 1-641-357-6125
skraschel@aea267.k12.ia.us

Marshalltown Region

Andy Lawler
909 South 12th Street
Marshalltown, Iowa 50158
Ph. 1-800-735-1539 or 1-641-844-2469
alawler@aea267.k12.ia.us

Cedar Falls/ Waterloo Region

Deb Paton
3712 Cedar Heights Drive
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613
Ph. 1-800-542-8375 or 1-319-273-8265
dpaton@aea267.k12.ia.us

Assistive Technology Resources

Assistive Technology (AT) can involve the use of very specialized equipment and can also include the use of everyday equipment, computer applications and other technology. Some websites that may be interesting to you as you consider the needs of students are listed below:

Iowa Department of Education regulations addressing assistive technology and the IEP

http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=572&Itemid=1607

Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QUIAT) is a nationwide consortium of hundreds of individuals who provide input into the ongoing process of identifying, disseminating, and implementing a set of widely-applicable quality indicators for assistive technology services in school settings.

http://natri.uky.edu/assoc_projects/qiat/

Teaching AT: Integrating the concept of assistive technology for function into program curricula:

A project produced by the Consortium for Children and Youth with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs and an interdisciplinary team of AT and Tele-health experts from across the country.

<http://www.teachingat.info/constructs/student2.html>

Tech Matrix: Assistive Technology Tools and Resources for Learning:

A listing of products and assistive technology to consider, organized by content areas (math, reading, science and writing), technology implementation, multimedia, and differentiating instruction through technology.

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

Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative

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

Helping children to Get Along

Everyone gets into conflicts, including young children. A goal parents have for their children is that they learn to get along with others. Families are a great place for children to learn to get along. At times parents can stay close while doing other tasks. At other times they must step in with action. Squabbles can erupt very quickly.

Set rules and limits

- Use words to fix problems (not fists)
- We do not hurt each other (hit, bite, or call names)
- We ask before using items that belong to others

Children learn by repetition and will learn to say the rules as we ask and remind them. "What is the rule about hurting?" Ignoring teasing and bullying behavior gives the message it is okay. Most children will push until they know the limits are set for them.

Encourage getting along and problem solving

Work together toward a common goal:

- Set up a pretend play (a house, school or store.) Have children consider the needs of each role.
- Build together with blocks. Ask, "How can we make the tower taller? Steadier? With roads for cars, etc."
- Solve a treasure hunt. Figure out clues together.
- Make some chores a team effort (rake leaves, fold towels, unload the dishwasher.) Decide together what each will do.
- Provide space where children can play alone and relax.
- Provide opportunities for children to help each other (push a stroller, get diapers, help pick up each other's toys) and say "thanks."
- Model handling strong emotions. Use a clam voice. Delay talking about things when you are upset. "I am upset. I can't talk about this right now. We will talk about it later."
- Teach ways to handle anger. "Walk away or hug your bear until you are calm. Use words or ask for help."
- Resolve conflicts without violence. Separate children until they calm down. Let them cool down before you talk to them. Keep them in separate rooms.
- Give choices. "Take turns or find a way to play together. If not, you need to find something else to do."
- Remove a problem toy. "The broom is not a gun."
- Ask for their ideas. "Fighting in the car is a problem. What would help you?" Sometimes they have good suggestions.
- Provide duplicates of favorite toys.

When children learn to solve problems together, have clear limits and positive ways to handle conflicts, these skills last a lifetime.

This article reprinted from the May/June 2010 issue of Extension to Families at Work...At Home, published by Iowa State University Extension Services.



Appropriate Para-educator Services

In response to numerous inquiries seeking clarification on appropriate duties and roles of para-educators, the Iowa Department of Education has developed the *Appropriate Para-educator Services Matrix* that outlines parameters of suitable assignments for para-educators (aides, associates, etc.) in general and special education settings.

The document provides direction on issues that are frequently raised by parents, teachers, administrators, and para-educators regarding para-educator roles in instruction, assessment, unsupervised settings, and other related areas.

The *Appropriate Para-educator Services Matrix* can be found on the Iowa Department of Education web site at http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=773&Itemid=1297

For more information, contact the Iowa Department of Education at 515-281-6038.

Information for this article provided by the Iowa Department of Education.

Communication in the Special Education Process

Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings and other school meetings are crucial parts of a child's educational program. A parent's responsibility extends beyond giving consent and accepting explanations. Asking questions, bringing up issues to discuss, gathering information and clarifying points are all parts of a parent's role.

Parents can bring someone else to the special education meetings. All participants are working together to benefit the child. The parent is a very important member of the team.

Effective communication is two-way, generating the understanding and support the professionals and parents all need to make effective decisions about the child's educational program. To foster meaningful communication, parents can:

- Make sure the focus stays on the child.
- Be prepared. Know in advance the important points to discuss and questions to ask. Write them down and check them off as they are addressed.
- Listen. Listening will help you gather information about your child and help you understand other viewpoints.
- State your issues clearly. Communicate in an honest and direct manner.
- Ask questions. Asking questions can be an effective way of clarifying a point and keeping the line of communication open.
- Comments and questions should be directed to the person who can best address or answer them.
- Restate your concerns if you are not heard the first time.
- Be confident. A parent never has to feel guilty or embarrassed asking questions or assertively pursuing the appropriate services for the child. It is your role and your right.
- Work together. Remember that neither you nor the professionals have all the answers. Work together as a team to find solutions. Everyone at the meeting has the same goal - to provide an appropriate educational program for the child.

The key to effective communication is preparation and willingness to be actively involved in planning the child's educational program.

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Check us out
on the Web!

www.aea267.k12.ia.us



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FAMILY ED CONNECTION



Parent and Teacher Resources from the Center for Disease Control

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website includes a “portal” that links parents and others to information from all areas of CDC. It provides accurate information and is designed to help parents raise healthy kids and provide a safe home and community.

Information includes children’s topics by age range, and widely varied topics such as autism signs, body piercing, lice, school violence, travel vaccinations and information about pregnancy. Topics are arranged in alphabetical order, so they are easy to find.

Another section has information on topics targeted to health-care professionals and researchers, including subjects such as child abuse prevention, a brain injury toolkit for physicians, a parent training guide, and information on the effects of childhood stress.

Quick links go to developmental milestones and safety in the home, among other subjects. Other resources list product recalls, market withdrawals, and safety alerts.

Check out the CDC site at: www.cdc.gov/parents

Equipment Available for Loan from Easter Seals



Iowans with disabilities or who are ill and need medical equipment but who cannot afford it, or might not have ready access to it, can borrow durable medical equipment at a nominal fee from Easter Seals Iowa.

The Equipment Services Program provides durable medical equipment (such as walkers, wheelchairs, shower benches, etc.) on loan to an individual in need or to a visiting relative or friend who might require the equipment for a short time.

A person with a chronic medical condition may borrow the equipment for an unlimited length of time. A medical prescription, nominal fee, and transportation to pick up and return the equipment are required.

Access of durable medical equipment is based on availability in their inventory. Equipment may include electric hospital beds, electric and manual wheelchairs, bath chairs, and other adaptive home healthcare devices.

To be eligible for the Equipment Services program, a person must have a disability and not reside in a licensed care facility. An initial equipment fee, ranging from \$10 for a walker to \$65 for an electric hospital bed, is charged for the loan of equipment; however, the individuals may use the equipment for as long as needed.

To learn more about the program or download an application, visit the Easter Seals website at http://ia.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=IADR_equipment or call (515) 309-2395 or (515) 309-4069 tty.



Support Groups

There are a number of support groups across Iowa and in AEA 267. If you are affiliated with a support group and would like information about the group listed on the AEA 267 Family-Educator Connection web site and in our newsletters, send information to Sandy Kraschel at skraschel@aea267.k12.ia.us or call 800-392-6640.

ADHD Support Group

Meets second Monday of the month during the school year at Upper Iowa University. 3563 University, Waterloo from 6:30-8 pm. For more information contact Barb at 319-266-2901 or wilk123abc@q.com

ASD/ PDD Support Group

A support group for parents. Meetings are held at 3:00 p.m. the first Sunday of the month in Mason City and the third Sunday of the month in St Ansgar. Locations are Whiskey Creek Woodfire Grill, 1519 4th Street SW in Mason City and Fourth Street Coffee Shop, 230 West 4th Street, in St Ansgar. For more information, or to sign up for the group's E-mail, send a message to pddsupport@mchsi.com.

Designer Genes

A Support Group for families of children with Down Syndrome, provides parent groups as well as family events and playgroups for young children. For more information call 319-404-0396 or e-mail designergenes2005@yahoo.com.

Prader Willi Syndrome Association of Iowa

For more information please contact: Edie Bogaczyk, 515-987-0288 or dbogaczyk@msn.com.

Epilepsy Support Group

Waterloo/Cedar Falls Area
Held at the Kimball Ridge Center, Conference Room 1
2101 Kimball Ave. Waterloo, IA
Held the 2nd Thursday of every ODD month at 6:30 pm
For more information contact Karly Ashlock, Services Coordinator for Iowa

Epilepsy Foundation North/Centra Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, 1111 9th Street, Suite 275, Des Moines, IA 50314
Phone: 515-238-7660; Email: kashlock@efncil.org

Support Group for Parents of Children with special Needs

Just forming in the Iowa Falls area. For more information contact Andy Lawler. alawler@aea267.k12.ia.us or 631-844-2469

ASD Support Group Forming

Jeni Oelkers is a mom who is interested in establishing a support group for parents of children affected by autism and related conditions, and others who are interested in autism spectrum disorders.

If you are interested in making a connection through an ASD support group, please contact Jeni at 641-512-6230 or jhoelkers@gmail.com.



Calendar

September

Wednesday, September 8
ICN on serving students with disabilities in nonpublic schools
2:00-4:30 p.m.

An ICN session on serving students with disabilities in accredited nonpublic schools. This session will discuss the consultation process required by the IDEA and services required under Iowa Code section 256.12.

Audience: Open to the public, designed for accredited nonpublic school personnel, AEA and public school personnel, and parents of students with disabilities who attend accredited nonpublic schools
ICN Sites offered in each AEA
Sponsored by the Iowa Department of Education There is no cost.
Register at: http://www.iptv.org/iowa_database/event-detail.cfm?ID=10530

Wednesday & Thursday,
September 30 & October 1
Lift Every Voice: Second Annual Save Our Children Conference
Coralville, Iowa

The focus of this conference is to generate solutions to the issue of disproportionate placement of Black children who are in the Iowa foster care system in group homes and residential facilities rather than foster homes.

Featured speakers include Mr. Hilary Shelton, National Vice President of Advocacy and Washington (D.C.) Bureau Chief of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples (NAACP) and Mark Anthony Garrett, MSW, LISW and national foster care expert.

Register at www.clubkazi.org
For more information contact LaTasha Massey at 319.356.6090 or lmasey@co.johnson.ia.us

October

Tuesday & Wednesday,
October 12 - 13, 2010
Transition and Inclusion in Autism Spectrum Disorders

Crystal Lake, IL
Tuesday, Oct. 12
Bridges to Adulthood for Learners with ASDs, with Peter Gerhardt, Ed.D.
An overview and practical suggestions for transition planning (inclusive of employment goals) will be presented along with issues related to community based training, social competence, sexuality and quality of life concerns.

Wednesday, Oct. 13
The Inclusive Classroom, with Paula Kluth, Ph.D.
This interactive day features group activities, real-world stories, and tools you can bring back to the classroom immediately. Participants will learn practical ways of supporting students with autism spectrum disorder and other disabilities within a general education classroom.
Sponsored by Spectrum Training Systems
For more information or to register go

to: <http://store.spectrumtrainingsystemsinc.com/crlailco.html>

Or Spectrum Training Systems, 2024 Jonathon Drive, Appleton, WI 54914
Phone: (920) 749-0332

Thursday & Friday, October 14-15, 2010

**Career Planning for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders
Brooklyn Center, Minnesota**

Presenter, James Emmett, M.S., is a national leader in development of employment services for persons with autism spectrum disorders as well as in assisting corporations in creation of outreach efforts to the disability and autism communities. He currently serves as the Chief Operating Officer of Integrated Behavioral Systems and is a Partner in the consulting firm Two Steps Forward.

Sponsored by Spectrum Training Systems

For more information or to register go to:

<http://store.spectrumtrainingsystemsinc.com/brcemn1420.html> or Spectrum Training Systems, 2024 Jonathon Drive, Appleton, WI 54914. Phone: (920) 749-0332

**Monday & Tuesday,
October 18-19, 2010**

Disobedient, Disruptive, Defiant, and Disturbed Students: Behavioral Interventions for Challenging Students

Brooklyn Center, Minnesota
Presenter, Howard Knoff, Ph.D. is the Director of Project ACHIEVE, a comprehensive, evidence-based national school improvement program. Dr. Knof has authored a number of books and published several articles.

Sponsored by Spectrum Training Systems

For more information or to register go to:

<http://store.spectrumtrainingsystemsinc.com/brcemn1420.html> or Spectrum Training Systems, 2024 Jonathon Drive, Appleton, WI 54914
Phone: (920) 749-0332

**Wednesday & Thursday,
October 27-28**

Great Expectations: Iowa Secondary Transition Parent & Educator Connection Conference

Ames, Iowa

This conference is about the transition of students through the middle and high school years to adult life. Focusing on the areas of living, working and learning, national and local presenters will share insights and information.

Those who attend the conference will be invited to participate in a number of activities, from accessing resources on-line, to participating in activities designed to help students learn about themselves.

Audience: Parents of middle and high school students, Educators, Community Providers, High School Students
Register on line at <http://tinyurl.com/2a75ocm>

For more information contact your local AEA Parent & Educator Connection

November

Monday & Tuesday, November 9 -10, 2010

Disobedient, Disruptive, Defiant, and Disturbed Students: Behavioral Interventions for Challenging Students

West Des Moines

Presenter, Howard Knoff, Ph.D. is the Director of Project ACHIEVE, a comprehensive, evidence-based national school improvement program. Dr. Knof has authored a number of books and published several articles.

Sponsored by Spectrum Training Systems

For more information or to register go to:

<http://store.spectrumtrainingsystemsinc.com/wedesmoia920.html> or Spectrum Training Systems, 2024 Jonathon Drive, Appleton, WI 54914
Phone: (920) 749-0332

**Tuesday & Wednesday,
November 16 - 17, 2010**

Autism Spectrum Disorders, and Mental Illness in Children

Northbrook, Illinois

No More Meltdowns: Handling Challenging Behaviors & Teaching Social Skills with Jed Baker, Ph.D.

Mental Illness in Children with Christopher Okiishi, M.D.

Sponsored by Spectrum Training Systems

For more information or to register go to:

<http://store.spectrumtrainingsystemsinc.com/noil1620.html> or Spectrum Training Systems, 2024 Jonathon Drive, Appleton, WI 54914
Phone: (920) 749-0332

Friday, November 19, 2010

Autism society of Iowa Fall Conference & Auction

West Des Moines, Iowa

Featured Speaker: Temple Grandin, Ph.D.

Temple is well-known for her accomplishments in the area of animal science and welfare, and for her personal insight into autism she shares in her many books and public speaking. Her current bestselling book on autism is *The Way I See It: A Personal Look at Autism and Asperger's*. She was recently featured in Time magazine as one of the 100 "people who most affect our world."

For more information contact ASI at 515-327-9075, 1-888-722-4799, e-mail autism50ia@aol.com or check out the web site at www.autismia.org

Remember to check the Disability Training Information calendar at www.disabilitytraining.org/ and the AEA 267 Professional Development web site at www.aea267.k12.ia.us/pd/ for information on more learning opportunities.

The Family & Educator Connection

The AEA 267 Family-Educator Connection provides information and support for families and educators around disability related issues. Whether you would like to talk about family adjustment issues with a new baby or newly diagnosed disability, home-school communication issues, questions relating to understanding a disability, or parenting strategies, we are happy to take your call. We have quite a library of resources available for loan and a number of highly qualified people to consult. If you have a question, we will do our best to help you find the answer. We are available by phone, mail, e-mail or by appointment, in-person.

Cedar Falls/ Waterloo Office

Deb Paton

3712 Cedar Heights Drive

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dpaton@aea267.k12.ia.us,

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9184 B 265th Street

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alawler@aea267.k12.ia.us

Area Education Agency 267 does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, marital status, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability in its educational programs, services, or employment practices. Students, parents of students, applicants for employment and employees of Area Education Agency 267 shall have the right to file a formal complaint alleging non-compliance with equity regulations. Inquiries concerning application of this statement should be addressed to: Ralph S. Bartelt, Equity Coordinator, AEA 267, 3712 Cedar Heights Drive, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613, Telephone (319) 273-8245.



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FAMILY-EDUCATOR

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