

Innovations and Perspectives Innovations and Perspectives



Newsletter of the Virginia Commonwealth University Training and Technical Assistance Center (VCU T/TAC) for School Personnel Serving Children and Youth with Disabilities and Children At-Risk for Academic Failure

Linking People and Resources

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How to Make Bad Inclusion...Good

It's December, the honeymoon is over, and your good intentions as a special educator have gone sour. Back in May when the IEP was written, you were excited because the team agreed to place Jamelle in a regular classroom. When the parents asked who Jamelle's teacher would be, you said they would know as soon as you did.

The week before school began, you found out Jamelle would be in Mrs. Foster's regular education classroom. You went running to Mrs. Foster's classroom to express your excitement. Mrs. Foster didn't know anything about Jamelle but said she was sure things would be fine. She indicated she needed to get her class ready and suggested you meet another time to talk about Jamelle.

The first month of school went well! You asked Mrs. Foster if she needed to meet, she smiled and said, "Not yet! Jamelle is sweet, and quiet but I really don't know anything about her disability. Jamelle's parents dutifully sent in written information. You and the related service staff continued providing direct service to Jamelle in Mrs. Foster's classroom.

At the beginning of October, you and the related service staff noticed that the regular education teacher didn't seem as excited to see you. She mentioned Jamelle's chaotic schedule. When individual members of your team went to Mrs. Foster's class to serve Jamelle, they tried asking how they could help. She was frustrated by the interruptions and suggested each of you take Jamelle to a corner in the room to work, away from the group, and you agreed. She also indicated it would be easier if one extra adult came daily versus having three other adults in the room on Thursdays. You explained that two of the therapists were there only on Thursdays and that Jamelle needed to see both of them. She said she understood.

By mid October, Jamelle was exhibiting challenging behavior during math and reading, in P.E. and art, and each time you and the related service staff entered the room. The regular education teacher had begun sending Jamelle to the office when her behavior was so disruptive that she was unable to keep the rest of the class on track. She indicated she did not understand why Jamelle was in the class during activities that she could not do. You were worried because the other children did not interact with Jamelle. You decided to schedule an IEP team meeting with Mrs. Foster. Unfortunately, it would be another two weeks before everyone could be present for a meeting. You waited with baited breath.

At the meeting, you asked everyone to share their concerns. Forty-five minutes later, the list of concerns was lengthy, and a few team members said they had to leave. You quickly identified a few strategies for everyone to use when Jamelle had a temper tantrum, said you would share some written information on adapting materials, and asked when the team could meet again.

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(continued from page 1)

The meeting adjourned and the parents asked you, “Is inclusion a good idea?” If Bob Bogdan, a proponent of inclusion, had been there he would have suggested it’s a bit like asking if Tuesday is a good idea. We have good Tuesdays, and we have bad Tuesdays. It all depends on what we make of Tuesday. So it is with inclusion. Inclusion is good when the necessary supports are in place for the child and staff to make it work. The question is, how do we go about getting appropriate supports for Jamelle and the staff in her inclusive classroom?

1. Recognize that bad inclusion is a school-wide problem.

It may sound daunting, but, if you focus your efforts solely on making Jamelle successful in Mrs. Foster’s class, then you will have to repeat your efforts next year when Jamelle goes to another class, and another class, and another class... If you consider that bad inclusion is a school-wide problem, then you can begin to conceptualize the magnitude of the changes required to make it work.

2. Gain support from administrators to create a team to help you improve the way inclusion works in the school.

Ask your principal and the special education director (or coordinator for your program) to form a team to go through a series of steps to improve the way inclusive programming occurs within your school.

3. Form a team with willing participants.

Ask representatives from the different groups within the school (e.g., the principal or vice-principal, a special education administrator, a regular education teacher, a special education teacher, a few parents, a related service provider who works through a contract and one who is based at your school) to join a team that will meet monthly to systematically make improvements to the way inclusion is implemented in the school. Make sure the team includes representatives of all the different groups within your school so that the different perspectives are represented.

4. As a team, survey the people involved in inclusion regarding what works and what doesn’t work.

Get everyone’s opinions so that you can fully understand why inclusion is not working well within your school. Encourage everyone to complete and return the survey. Categorize the results into major indicators of and barriers to successful inclusion.

5. As a team, develop a plan to address the staff’s and families’ concerns about inclusion in your school.

Some school teams have addressed concerns by developing a school-wide vision statement and an action plan for meeting

supportive policies and providing the tools and time to change existing practices.

6. Share the survey results with the staff, the Parent Teacher Association, the Special Education Advisory Council, and the School Board. Present your team’s plan for improving the way inclusion works in the school.

Let people know that your team respects their concerns and plans to address them. Consider the following ways to keep everyone involved in the planning process. Put a “dialogue box” in the front office for staff and families to use by placing their concerns and suggestions in the box; share written responses to their concerns; have representatives from the team periodically attend faculty meetings to provide updates; keep written team meeting notes available in a set location for staff and families to review; and be creative!

7. Have team representatives visit an inclusive program that is going well and find out how they make it work.

You know the saying, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” Seeing a successful program helps your team understand its goal for improving your inclusion program.

8. As a team, learn about practices that make inclusion successful.

Consider assigning teams of two to become experts on different practices. At a minimum, gather information about the purpose of inclusion and the program policies needed to support inclusion. Learn about staff roles in inclusive programs, integrated therapy, and collaborative teaming with families as team members. Gather information regarding how effective inclusive programs use a blend of positive classroom discipline and individualized positive behavioral supports, develop curricula that encompasses the STANDARDS OF LEARNING and implements Individualized Education Programs, make adaptations to activities and materials, document progress, and grade diverse learners. Spend time learning about how to foster friendships and social interaction between children with and without disabilities. Make sure that everyone on the team has a common understanding of these practices.

9. As a team, plan for and provide workshops and follow-up to the staff and families about practices that make inclusion successful.

Change is not a typical outcome of a workshop. In order for change to occur, people have to feel some ownership of the change. Workshops should include examples of concrete ways to make sanctioned change to your existing program. Furthermore, people who are expected to implement the change need to have some say in how the change will occur. Therefore, it helps to give them time to review various ways to make the change and adapt them for their own uses (e.g.,

recommended roles in inclusive classrooms, a process for developing a unified approach to discipline for all staff who share students as well as an individualized, but simple approach to use for children who need additional behavioral supports). Hands-on activities can be included in workshops or assignments, with scheduled time and accompanying materials needed to complete the assignments between workshops. Always provide follow-up activities and materials as well as time at the subsequent workshop to discuss how things are going.

10. Make joint planning a requirement for regular and special education teachers.

Some schools have regular and special education teachers do weekly grade level planning; others have regular and special education teachers conduct weekly team meetings with related service providers attending these meetings on a regularly scheduled basis. Successful teams use a structured meeting process with assigned roles such as facilitators, recorder, agenda keeper; time limits for agenda items; strategies for identifying issues and reaching consensus regarding solutions; and an agreed upon strategy to resolve conflict.

11. Recognize that change takes time and requires support.

Identify support staff who are skilled at facilitation and knowledgeable about recommended practices in inclusive settings. Ask them to participate in grade level and classroom planning meetings as regular and special educators go through the process of change.

12. Call the VCU T/TAC for help.

We realize that changing the way the school system provides inclusive programs is a daunting but essential task. Our library, network, and team of program specialists are available to help you with your journey.

--Tracy Landon

Adapted from:

Voorhees, M.D., Aveno, A., & Landon, Carra (1993). Planning for inclusive preschool programming. In A. Aveno (Ed.) Inclusive Preschool Partnerships: A Guide for Making them Work. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education.

Voorhees, M.D., Landon, T. & Harvey, J. (1996). Early childhood education. In L. Power-deFur and F. Orelove (Eds.), Inclusive Education: Practical Implementation of the Least Restrictive Environment, pp. 131-152, Aspen.

Voorhees, M.D., Landon, T., & Harvey, J. (1995). Integrated placement options for preschoolers: A planning guide. Richmond, VA: Virginia Department of Education.

Planning and Management Teams

Many consumers may not be aware of the team work that helps guide the VCU T/TAC. This guidance comes from our two Planning and Management Teams (PMTs). Region 1 and Region 8 have separate teams that include representatives from local school divisions, LICCs, State Operated Programs, Parent Resource Centers, and the Virginia Department of Education. Each PMT meets with T/TAC staff to review and plan for training and program development. These representatives serve as liaisons to each of you in your school divisions or programs. Please contact the representative from your area if you have ideas or concerns you want them to share at the next meeting.

Region 1 PMT Members

Delores Bagby	Richmond City	(8 0 4) 7 8 0 - 4 0 4 4
Larry Brown	Petersburg City	(8 0 4) 8 6 1 - 4 5 6 3
Ken Bunting	Henrico County	(8 0 4) 6 5 2 - 3 8 0 0
Myla Burgess	Chesterfield Co.	(8 0 4) 5 6 0 - 2 7 3 0
Kathy Burgess	New Kent Co.	(8 0 4) 9 6 6 - 9 6 6 3
Tamara Colbert	Dinwiddie Co.	(8 0 4) 4 6 9 - 4 2 8 0
Ceceily Damour	Prince George Co.	(8 0 4) 7 3 3 - 2 7 0 0
Mitizie Eubank	Hopewell City	(8 0 4) 5 4 1 - 2 3 8 5
Sheila Fowlkes	Hanover County	(8 0 4) 7 5 2 - 6 0 1 8
Barbara Gravely	Sussex County	(8 0 4) 2 4 6 - 5 5 1 1
James Hopkins	Goochland Co.	(8 0 4) 5 5 6 - 5 3 2 1
Cynthia Jones	District 19 ICC	(8 0 4) 8 6 2 - 8 0 4 9
Charlene Lee	Chesterfield PRC	(8 0 4) 7 4 3 - 3 0 7 3
Debi Miles	Chesterfield PRC	(8 0 4) 7 4 3 - 3 0 7 3
Donald Schmidt	Colonial Heights	(8 0 4) 5 2 4 - 3 4 4 5
Paula Smiley	Surry County	(8 0 4) 2 6 7 - 2 8 1 0
Tina Smith	Charles City Co.	(8 0 4) 8 2 9 - 9 2 1 9
Harley Tomey	Virginia DOE	(8 0 4) 3 7 1 - 8 2 8 3
Shirley Wiley	Virginia Treatment Center	(8 0 4) 8 2 8 - 2 6 7 6

Region 8 PMT Members

Julia Adams	Brunswick County	(8 0 4) 8 4 8 - 6 9 1 3
Sarah Aubel	Lunenburg County	(8 0 4) 6 9 6 - 2 1 6 1
Brenda Carrier	Cumberland Co.	(8 0 4) 4 9 2 - 4 1 2 6
Joanne Catron	Charlotte County	(8 0 4) 7 3 5 - 8 6 1 2
Cecelia Coleman	Mecklenburg Co.	(8 0 4) 7 3 8 - 6 1 1 1
Michelle Crane	Nottoway County	(8 0 4) 7 6 7 - 5 2 3 0
Laura Early	Buckingham Co.	(8 0 4) 9 6 9 - 6 1 0 0
Barbara Edwards	Greensville Co.	(8 0 4) 6 3 4 - 5 5 6 6
Barbara Eggleston	Prince Edward Co.	(8 0 4) 3 9 2 - 8 1 0 5
Jean Gore	Halifax County	(8 0 4) 3 9 2 - 8 1 0 5
Tammy Maxey	Amelia County	(8 0 4) 5 6 1 - 4 4 2 2
Kathleen Toms	Crossroad ICC	(8 0 4) 3 9 2 - 5 9 1 4
Chet Walrod	Virginia DOE	(8 0 4) 7 8 6 - 9 7 7 5

High School and Beyond

Included:

Does that Mean I Should Help Plan?

(First in a series of two)

This case study is obviously a fictitious one, yet it addresses issues regarding the involvement of a student in his education planning. Pete's story is not one that would be expected to be modeled in today's educational environment, but it is very clear that many times it is not far from reality. As you read this case study think about how Pete's involvement could have been used to meet his needs more effectively.

Pete is completing the 10th grade this year at UnProgressville High School. He has been in the program for students with learning disabilities since the second grade. The school psychologist informed him that he had a severe auditory processing learning disability. Pete says that he knows he has a real problem taking notes during the lectures in his classes. He also said that his mom came home one day and told him that his LD teacher told her at the IEP meeting they had no idea what he was going to do with his life! His mom told him he would probably end up flipping hamburgers or frying chicken until he finally decides what he wants to do.

Pete received his notice to meet with his guidance counselor about next year's schedule. When they met, she asked him if he was interested in going to college. He told her he was interested in going to the technical center and getting into carpentry. The guidance counselor went to the files and pulled out the aptitude inventory all 9th graders took. This information stated that Pete's interests were in working outside and with his hands. The counselor asked Pete if he had considered horticulture. "That's where I send a lot of the SPED students." Pete, being a little confused, told her he liked to cut grass at home, but he did not really know anything about horticulture. The counselor gave Pete an application and told him to list his choices. He checked carpentry because that was the only thing he really knew anything about at the center. He had seen some of the projects that had been displayed at the art and technology fair this year and thought that he would enjoy working with wood. Pete had always liked to build things and liked working with wood. He would watch the workers who built the new houses down the road from his home.

A week later his guidance counselor told him she had good news! They had an opening at the technical center in Horticulture and she had scheduled him to attend next year. Again, Pete was a bit

confused and not sure what the good news was.

When Pete got to the Technical Center the next year he was surprised at the large amount of book work. The exciting thing was that the carpentry class was next door to the green house so he got to see the house the second year students were working on. His horticulture instructor loved to talk about plants and growing plants, and it was hard to get all the information for the tests. Pete asked her about getting her notes so he could study. She told him she used no notes. "What I know is from experience." Pete talked to his special education teacher about this, and she told him they could put something in his IEP and work on it in resource class. She added, "That horticulture teacher probably doesn't even know you are in special ed." Pete's mom told him later that his teacher had called to get permission to make the change in his IEP. They wanted him to bring the horticulture tests to the resource class to complete. Pete thought to himself, "Man, I sure am glad I only have two years of this. Well, I had better get ready for work. Where is my McBurgers uniform?"

Ask yourself these questions:

What could have been done right from the start to include Pete in the decision-making of his plan? How could the guidance counselor have included Pete more in the decision of what to study at the technical center? What might they have done to make a more informed decision? Was Pete ever really included in the decision-making process?

Stay tuned for the next addition when Pete decides to contact his cousin Re-Pete who attends Progressville High School

--Doug Russell

THE LAST WORD

Never doubt the ability of a small group of committed people to change the world.

Indeed it is the only thing that every will.

Margaret Meade

NEWS FROM LONG-TERM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Amelia Elementary Makes Great Strides in Inclusion

Amelia County Elementary School has begun work on its long-term technical assistance project for the 1998-1999 school year. The intended outcome of the assistance is to expand integration opportunities for students with disabilities, with a goal of establishing at least one inclusive, collaborative class by the fall of 1999. To achieve this goal, we will provide a series of training sessions for the entire school staff, implement a school-wide positive behavioral support plan, and establish a resource library of assistive technology, adapted materials and information sources. In September, our T/TAC colleagues, Sandy Wilberger and Sharon Jones joined our Planning Team. They provided a presentation to our staff to introduce this project, which was met with favorable reactions. We are very enthusiastic about our long-term plan. We are seeing a spirit of collaboration as our teachers begin to understand the potential benefits to all our students.

--Cory Hughes
Amelia Elementary School
Planning Team Member

TECHNOLOGY TIDBITS

VISUAL WHAT?

(first in a series of two)

With the emphasis on technology in the schools, it would be easy to believe our teaching would be better if we were using "high" technology devices in our classrooms. In many instances, however, "light" or "low" technology meets the needs of the vast majority of students in our general education classrooms. This article will examine ways to use one form of "light" assistive technology: visual supports. A forthcoming article will look at additional visual supports such as schedules, choice boards, calendars, transition helpers, and labeling.

Do you use a planner or organizer that helps you know what you need to do and when? Do you make out a list of things you need to buy before you go to the store? Do you follow a recipe to make a special casserole or dessert? Do you write notes to family members or colleagues to remind them of something they need to do? Have you ever tried to assemble a piece of furniture or a toy by following the "easy" directions?

If you answered "yes" to any of the questions above, then you are using assistive technology (in this case, visual supports) to help you organize your life, to do a task, or to communicate with others.

Often, we assume that if a student can talk, he or she can understand everything being said. We should not make that assumption, however, because many students do not understand all that they hear. These students need visual strategies to help them comprehend what is happening in their world. As Linda Hodgdon in her book, *Visual Strategies for Improving Communication* (1996) aptly states: "Visual tools provide the support necessary to raise students to increased levels of participation and independence."

What does the term "visual supports" mean? It can mean anything that you **see** such as pictures, printed material, calendars, lists, schedules, maps, or furniture arrangements. The type of visual tool that you use should be determined by the needs of the student. However, for the greatest benefit, the supports must be easily recognized and universally understood.

Visual supports are successful for a couple of reasons. They are fixed (not transient like auditory information or body language) and can be referred to again and again. Also, they do not require one to block out background sounds in order to focus on the auditory foreground information.

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! ALERT !

In 1993 the toll free number for the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) was changed. For several years a message let callers know of the new number. Last year, the old 800 number was put back in the general pool of toll free numbers. NICHCY's former number was assigned to an adult entertainment service.

NICHCY has a web site alert and state agencies have been sent the current 800 number. If you have any questions or want assistance, please call Suzanne Ripley, Director, NICHCY at **1-800-695-0285**, and use that number to update your files.

One of the easiest ways to provide visual supports is by using **visual schedules**. Students who are in inclusive settings may benefit the most from visual schedules, and that support may help determine whether they succeed or fail in the setting. Don't assume that the students know their schedules and routines; sometimes they may forget or get confused. Schedules help them understand what will happen that day, what will not happen, any changes from the usual routine, and the sequence of activities/classes. To prepare a visual schedule, try the following:

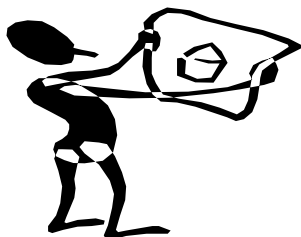
- Divide the day into activities, i.e., activities that are noticeably different.
- Give each activity a name that is meaningful to the student (Maybe you could let the student help choose the name).
- Use a visual support that will be interpreted easily by all of the students (e.g., pictures or a combination of words and drawings).
- Select a format (group vs. individual, what it will look like, size, location, and how mobile it needs to be).
- Decide how the students will learn about the daily schedule at the start of each day.
- Decide how the schedule will be used to acknowledge transitions (e.g., check off, turn picture over, take off the chart, etc.).
- Decide how you will integrate the use of the schedule into the day.
- Develop mini-schedules for students to guide them through an activity such as arrival time.

Schedules are just one example of a visual strategy. In the next newsletter look for more ways of providing visual supports. Meanwhile, develop some schedules and see what a difference that makes to **all** of the students, not just those with special needs.

--Linda Oggel

Reference:

Hodgdon, Linda. (1996) *Visual Strategies for Improving Communication*. Troy, MI: QuirkRoberts Publishing



IT'S ACADEMIC

Inclusion and SOL's: Are They Compatible?

The stakes are high in Virginia and other states that have made the reform of the educational system a priority. It is easy to understand why most educators may be feeling extremely anxious about their accountability for students' successful mastery of the Standards of Learning (SOLs). When special education students who are included become a part of this scenario, the task seems overwhelming. If we can step back for a few minutes, it might be possible to see this challenge in a positive light.

The Standards of Learning offer definite, clear-cut guidance for us as we go about the business of educating all students. Expectations for student learning, as well as consequences for not meeting them are defined. We now have definite goals and objectives to reach. A review of the curriculum and teaching strategies we are currently implementing is a necessary first step if positive academic impact is to be made.

Many schools have embraced an inclusive philosophy. General education and special education teachers in these schools are working in collaborative teams to offer unique services to their students. The general education teacher brings content knowledge to the team while the special educator brings a wealth of information about learning and behavior strategies. Together they offer students a strong network of support and encouragement coupled with a comprehensive, quality learning experience. This quality programming, however, does not happen magically. It depends on teams that share the belief that all children can and do learn best in an environment with consistency, support, and high expectations. In support of this belief, collaborative teams make planning together a high priority. They use a problem-solving approach to address tough situations, take equal responsibility in the classroom for all students, and provide modifications and adaptations for students based on the students' need to show what they know without the impediment of their disability.

Mark Burke, et al., (1998) describe six features of instruction, identified by the National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators (NCITE), that have been found to enhance student learning. These strategies, if employed by collaborative teams, have great potential for helping students with learning challenges successfully tackle the Virginia SOLs.

1. **Identifying and teaching the BIG IDEAS.** This strategy will yield significant results because:

- More information can be covered in less time; and
- It helps students who have difficulty separating the details from the important issues; and
- It focuses on knowledge students will use over and over.

Teachers can introduce students to the Problem-Solution-Effect technique as a way to examine the big issues of human rights or economic conditions of the United States.

2. **Providing students with conspicuous strategies** gives them:

- Clear steps to follow when problem solving; and
- Cues for identifying when and where a specific strategy can be applied.

The Scientific method is an excellent example of a conspicuous strategy.

3. **Employing preteaching of background knowledge.** This strategy prepares students for learning new concepts by preteaching background information such as concept specific vocabulary.

To use this strategy in math prior to teaching a unit on fractions, teach the meaning and use of the terms “numerator” and denominator”. In English, prior to teaching sequencing of events, teach vocabulary that indicates order - first, then, next, after.

4. **Providing scaffolding.** This is an important strategy for students because:

- It furnishes students with teacher, peer, material, and/or process supports as they work toward becoming independent.

Cooperative learning groups and the use of peer tutors are two well-respected methods that can be used with students who are dependent learners.

5. **Practicing judicious review** entails:

- Sufficient and continuous opportunities for concept application (not “drill and kill”).
- Providing a format for new applications of initial concepts.
- Providing for cumulative review.

For example, when teaching fractions and/or decimals, review the principles of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

6. **Employing strategic integration.** To be successful, this strategy requires focusing on the careful planning and sequencing of instruction so that content overlapping occurs. As an example, structure the teaching of the “food chain” so that the vocabulary as well as the effect the different stages have on each other is understood.

With the implementation of the SOLs and the accountability placed on us to ensure that adequate learning opportunities have been given to ALL students, we now have the opportunity and responsibility to place students with disabilities on an even playing

field with the rest of their peers. The way we go about meeting standards and the needs of our learners is indeed a challenging task. Let it be one that we attack with confidence and a sense of hopefulness!

--Jayne Bradley

Reference:

Burke, M. D., Hagan, S. H., & Grossen, B. (1998). What curricular designs and strategies accommodate diverse learners? Teaching Exceptional Children, 31(1), 34-38.



WHAT'S YOUR IQ*?

*Inclusion Quotient

Professionals often use terminology related to collaboration and inclusion in different, sometimes interchangeable ways. Take a few minutes to test your knowledge of the following terms. Match the **letters** with the correct **numbers**. Answers can be found on page 15.



LETTERS

A. Selective placement of students with disabilities in one or more regular education classes. Students must earn this privilege and demonstrate that they can keep pace with the other regular education students.

B. Regular education teachers sharing physical space and teaching responsibilities for a blended class of students.

C. The belief that each student with a disability is to be educated to the maximum extent appropriate in the school and classroom that he/she would attend if not disabled.

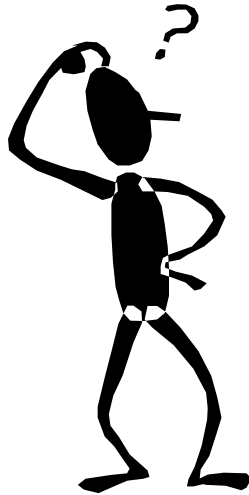
D. An approach used by two or more teachers, which is characterized by the voluntary use of shared decision making to reach a common goal.

E. A problem-solving approach which allows professionals to pool their expertise to address concerns presented by students.

(continued on page 8)

NUMBERS

1. Inclusion
2. Collaboration
3. Mainstreaming
4. Co-teaching
5. Consultation



ATTENTION

It's hard to believe that the T/TAC system has been in operation for two years now! The time has flown by, and we've accomplished so much. The Virginia Department of Education has contracted with the University of Kentucky's Human Development Institute to evaluate the services provided by the T/TACs across Virginia. A team of evaluators will conduct site visits lasting 2-3 days in each of the eight T/TACs before the end of March. The visits for Regions 1 and 8 are scheduled for the week of January 25th to 29th. The visits may include classroom observations and interviews with principals and teachers. We will contact you if the team plans to visit your school. We're looking forward to the process of evaluating how you've used our services.



RISKY BUSINESS

AT-RISK STUDENTS: Are They Included in Your Classroom?

Do you have at-risk students in your classroom? You know these students, the ones who exhibit academic failure but do not qualify for special education services. Most classrooms include at-risk students. These students are in the classroom physically, but do we truly address their academic needs? Are they fully included in the classroom?

How we include at-risk students and how we make accommodations to meet their needs has a major impact on their achievement. First and foremost we must know the students. We must know their personal backgrounds as well as how they perform in school. It is essential that we identify each child's strengths. Heaven knows we usually know a great deal about their weaknesses, or so we think. Once we have established a clear and complete picture of the individual, we can design and implement accommodations that will accelerate his or her learning.

Accommodations? Yes, we can accelerate student learning and progress by making accommodations to match children's learning styles. Students learn best when instruction capitalizes on their strengths. Making accommodations for students does not mean making exceptions for them. When a student is provided on-going opportunities to use his or her learning strengths to aid information processing, accelerated learning takes place. A multisensory approach to instruction will accommodate multiple learning styles. It is a good approach to instruction for all kids, therefore relieving the teacher of the task of creating parallel experiences for other students.

Let's say a student is very artistic and is often admonished for drawing in class during direct instruction. Why not let the student draw a picture of the concepts presented? Once completed, he or she can write a story or complete another assignment that demonstrates understanding of the concept that is being taught. Assisted reading on tape will support a student auditorily while he or she is reading the visual print. Acting the story out through Readers' Theater will provide a tactile/kinesthetic approach to addressing the student's needs. Finally, videotape the production for students to view. This will provide another opportunity for the student to interact with the material.

Many students need the support of hands-on experiences. Young children will enjoy manipulating objects and figures to establish a story line while they listen to a story. Manipulatives can be used for many subjects to make abstract concepts concrete. Using objects to represent spelling words, data, graphs, maps, or other science and social studies concepts helps some students to process and learn concepts more effectively. Spelling manipulatives can include

TEAMWORK

Inclusion Requires Teamwork

dry lima beans with letters written on them, dry pinto beans, pipe cleaners, sponge paint letters, and playdough. Students will enjoy using these items to form the letters and practice spelling their words. Many of the same type of objects can be effective when used to teach science and social studies concepts. Manipulatives are not just for math anymore!

Students can be accommodated in many other ways. Consider the student who is in constant motion. What better way to teach a world map to him/her than to provide a floor-sized map and play a map version of "Twister" (*The New City School, 1994*). And what about the student who can't seem to focus or stay on task? Graphic organizers and kitchen timers are great for helping distracted students stay on target. The kitchen timer provides the student with a time frame to complete a task. It motivates the student to complete the task within that time frame. The use of color will also enhance students' ability to focus. Teachers and students can highlight important concepts so that students will be able to discriminate the most important information from non-essential material.

Many students learn best through social situations and require interaction with others. Some students do not but still need to collaborate with others. Provide opportunities for students to collaborate in centers, on projects, on worksheets, and even more importantly in reading. A wonderful way to avoid "round robin" reading is to engage students in strategically planned share pairs.

Students who are at risk for school failure are everywhere. They are in the room next door and they are in your room. Seek them out. Really get to know their strengths, and don't dwell on their weaknesses. Provide the accommodations they need to learn the material you teach. Make your accommodations fun and engaging. Design each lesson to address many learning styles and multiple intelligences. Teachers and at-risk students will reap the rewards of each child's accomplishments.

--Pam Kinney

References:

The New City School. (1994). Multiple intelligences: teaching for success. St. Louis, Mo.: Author.

Winebrenner, S. (1996). Teaching kids with learning difficulties in the regular classroom. Minneapolis, Mn.: Free Spirit Publishing Inc.

*Contact Debby Wesson or Pam Kinney for additional T/TAC resources.



In a list of the top ten truisms in education today, "inclusion requires teamwork" would have to be at or near the top. There is simply no way that successful inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms can be achieved by individual teachers, working alone. General education teachers, special education teachers, parents, administrators, teaching assistants, therapists, and students have to work together to make the inclusion of each individual student a success. Teamwork includes collaborative planning, systematic implementation of the plan, careful monitoring and mutual support, modifying the plan as required, and celebrating together.

Collaborative planning. Prior to a student with a disability making the transition from a self-contained, special education class into an inclusive, general education classroom, an inclusion team needs to be formed to develop a plan for all to follow. The team should include all professionals who will provide direct services to the student, the parents, and an administrator. This team will meet to identify the student's strengths, interests, and skills as well as the areas where the student will need accommodations, support, and related services within the general education setting. The team will create a plan to provide these in the least intrusive and least restrictive manner possible. The plan will specify the roles and responsibilities of all team members in preparing for and executing the transition into the general education classroom.

Implementing the plan. All who participate in developing the inclusion plan understand and feel ownership for all of its components. The principal will play a key role in communicating with the parents of the other students in the general education classroom regarding the benefits inclusion will bring to their children. The general education teacher, the special education teacher, and the parents of the included child have key roles in preparing the other students to welcome their new class mate. The teachers will also develop team teaching strategies, allowing each to both teach the whole class and work one-on-one with the included student as needed. Related services professionals provide integrated therapies in the classroom, avoiding the negative effects of the old pull-out model. Timing is everything, and the team will communicate with one another regularly as the plan is implemented.

Careful Monitoring and Mutual Support. In the early days of the transition from special education into general education, the team will observe and monitor the adjustment of the student with a disability and the responses of the other students. The first days and weeks are critical as relationships are built, academic tasks are completed, and routines are established. Careful planning

(continued on page 10)

(continued from page 9)

produces positive results, but sometimes, extra attention and energy are required on the part of teachers, therapists, and parents. During these times, the team meets, solves problems, and provides both encouragement and appreciation. There is no problem that a team of caring adults cannot face together and resolve.

Modifying the Plan as Needed. The inclusion team will modify its plans as necessary to guarantee the success of the student's transition into the general classroom. Changes may be as simple as changing the time of integrated therapies, involving other students more actively in supporting the student with a disability, or using more assistive technology to enhance communication and independence. It is difficult to anticipate every support, modification, and accommodation that will be necessary. Once the plan is implemented, however, the team can see what is needed and provide it consistently.

Celebrating Together. There are many wonderful stories now being told about the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms around the country. These stories almost always include beautiful, new relationships between students who were previously segregated from one another. They also usually include deeply satisfying working relationships among adults who previously worked in isolation from one another. These success stories signal the power of inclusive programming and serve as food for thought for teams who may be contemplating new ways to serve youngsters with disabilities.

--Howard Garner

FUNCTIONALLY SPEAKING

Including Students with Severe Disabilities - A Team Commitment

A regular education teacher recently asked a colleague of mine, "Why is Maydha even in school if she's at a two-year-old developmental level?" I initially reacted with indignation then quickly realized I had judged this teacher unfairly. All she knew was that a child who did not speak or walk came to her class with a special education paraprofessional for a few activities every day. She did not see the point and rightly questioned the purpose of the visits.

The regular education teacher may not have known that Maydha has a right to attend public school and that there are laws that enable Maydha to be in school with children of the same age without disabilities. She also may not have understood that Maydha's individualized educational goals replace her curriculum goals and that they are as important to Maydha as are her curriculum goals for the other students in her class. She was probably unaware of Maydha's unique learning characteristics which dictate that, in order to learn, Maydha must work on skills in multiple places where those skills are needed with multiple teachers. She and the special education and related service staff also probably had not had time to meet to plan how to teach or who would teach Maydha within her regularly scheduled activities. Her other students had probably not formed friendships with Maydha, and she was most likely concerned that Maydha was an outsider. Most importantly, she was probably feeling unprepared to teach Maydha.

In order for Maydha to be meaningfully included, there must be coordinated, collaborative efforts between the regular educator, special educator, and related service providers to meet the educational goals and objectives on a student's IEP within the regular education classroom with same-aged peers. So what does coordinated, collaborative efforts mean and how do you accomplish it?

Consider starting by establishing weekly team meetings between the regular and special educator. Plan for these meetings to occur on a day that other therapists are in the building and have therapists attend meetings on a planned, rotating basis. Use a structured meeting process with time limits for agenda items, strategies for identifying issues and reaching consensus regarding solutions, and an agreed upon strategy to resolve conflict.



In initial team meetings, make sure that team members get to know the student, not the student's disability. An effective way to do this is to bring a previously completed Positive Student Profile

HAVE YOU HAD A CHANCE TO VISIT US ON THE WEB?.....

If you haven't, please do! You can find us at:

www.vcu.edu/eduweb/ttac.htm

On our Home Page you can....

-  **Access T/TAC Services**
-  **Read our newsletter**
-  **Learn about upcoming workshops and conferences**
-  **Find other educational resources**
-  **Look up library materials for loan**
-  **E-mail us.**

(Rainforth, McDonald, York, & Dunn, 1992) and review it at the meeting. Also help the team to develop a common expectation of what the student should learn in the class, who will be doing the teaching and how the teaching will be done (Giangreco, 1998). Consider doing this in two phases. In phase one the team should complete three steps.

- 1) Review the child's IEP and identify a limited number of learning priorities. Talk about why these are priorities in terms of functionality, frequency of use, age appropriateness, ongoing and future usefulness, student preference, parental priority, and immediacy of need (Giangreco, 1998).
- 2) Review the regular education teacher's curriculum and identify other learning outcomes that, although not specified on the child's IEP, the student will be expected to pursue.
- 3) Identify general supports such as positioning equipment, sensory support, a peer to help the student access computer software or an effective behavioral support. Jotting this down on a one- to two-page program-at-a-glance will help to streamline information and provide a way to communicate the student's needs to all the teachers that work with the student (Giangreco, 1998).

In phase two, the team should identify teaching strategies, who will do the teaching for each priority and learning outcome, and how supports will be provided. For example, the speech-language pathologist may read a story to a small group and include choral responding via a voice-activated device for a student with severe disabilities. The regular education teacher may observe in order to learn to use the switch in future activities. Spend time discussing effective teaching strategies and reach consensus regarding which ones to use, in what contexts, and with which classroom staff or students. Make sure everyone understands that generalization will occur for a student with severe disabilities if he/she is also able to practice a skill in many different settings, with different teachers, using different cues. Also plan how peers will be involved in the student's instruction. Focus the discussion on how staff can blend into the classroom and become a part of the ongoing activities. As a rule of thumb, if an outsider walks into the classroom, he or she should not be able to pick out the special education or related service staff. Point out the importance of encouraging peers to initiate interactions with the student with severe disabilities.

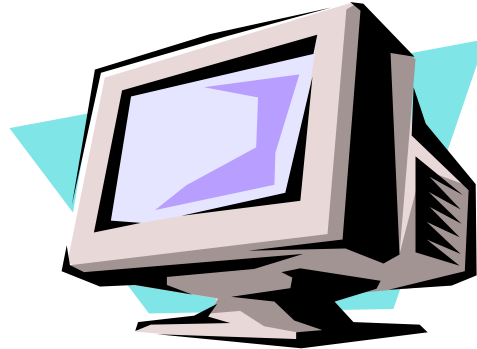
When planning who will teach the priorities and other learning outcomes, make sure to limit the number of professionals that enter the regular education classroom daily. Regular education teachers frequently have concerns about the chaos that ensues when too many adults are in the room either at the same time or on a given day.

As your team continues to meet, continue to work toward a common understanding of your purpose, share decision making, and strive for joint responsibility for educating all the students in the classroom. Together you will be better.

--Tracy Landon

References:

- Giangreco, M. (1998). Quick-guides to inclusion (2). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishin Co.
- Rainforth, B., McDonald, C., York, J., & Dunn, W. (1992). Collaborative assessment. In B. Rainforth, J. York, & C. MacDonald (Eds.), Collaborative teams for students with disabilities (pp. 105-155). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.



SOLs On Line

A recent newspaper carried an interesting story about the SOLs now being available on line for teachers. Actually the idea is hardly new; several universities are already on line with SOL teaching resources and other resources related to the development of SOL based curriculum.

You should know that VCU is now in this arena too. Check out our website at: <http://128.172.185.59/centersols/CSOLS.htm>. This website was developed by Gary Sarkkozi, a doctoral student and an off-campus adjunct instructor.

The VCU SOL website provides an example of what an SOL based curriculum should look like. Between 30 and 40 teachers have written objectives based on their assigned SOLs in each discipline. Their writing will continue to appear on this website as they develop the instructional design which will eventually include instructional resources and learning experiences all referenced to their assigned SOLs.

Technology and the SOLs appear to be a perfect marriage...if you would like to know more about this project - call the VCU School of Education Office of Continuing Education at (804) 828-1322.

FIVE AND UNDER

The Best of Both Worlds: Blending ECE and ECSE Practices to Support Young Children

Early childhood special education (ECSE) and early childhood education (ECE) programs are both designed to promote the achievement of young children. ECE programs typically provide rich educational experiences to promote cognitive, language, literacy, motor, social and cognitive development. ECSE programs are designed specifically to promote the development of the same types of skills in young children who have disabilities. Professionals and paraprofessionals that work in each kind of program have specific, but different training and expertise.

While the programs are intended to produce similar outcomes for their students, they often approach the task very differently. The basis for these differences is that the populations of children enrolled in ECE and ECSE programs are distinctly different. Because of this difference, each type of program has a different mission and uses different strategies.

ECSE programs rely heavily on teacher developed strategies that are designed to meet the individual learning needs of children with disabilities. They typically have eight to ten children in the classroom, which provides a very low adult-student ratio. Instruction is highly individualized, with activities derived from children's IEP goals and objectives. Each child receives numerous opportunities to develop and practice new skills. Detailed data collection occurs to document progress toward each child's IEP objectives. These strategies, which are effective and practical in ECSE classrooms, probably would not be possible in an ECE classroom.

General education ECE programs are tailored to the learning, social, and adaptive needs of children who do not have disabilities, including many whom are at risk for school failure. There may be between 15 and 17 or more children in a pre-K classroom. These programs tend to be very child directed, with an emphasis on pre-readiness skills for success in the K-12 education system. Because of their higher adult-child ratio, ECE programs must rely more heavily on large group instruction. Centers offer small groups of children multiple opportunities to explore, learn new concepts, and apply their knowledge. Assessment occurs mostly through portfolios and beginning and end of the year screenings.

In inclusive early childhood programs, ECE and ECSE professionals and paraprofessionals are challenged to blend the best of their practices to benefit all children in a common setting. A major goal of inclusive efforts is to find natural and less restrictive ways to educate students with disabilities in general education

programs. The most successful programs will be planned, implemented, and evaluated by teams that include ECE and ECSE teachers, paraprofessionals, related service providers, administrators, and parents. In order for teams to be successful, their efforts must include three things: joint planning, shared responsibility for working with all children, and respect for everyone's ideas.

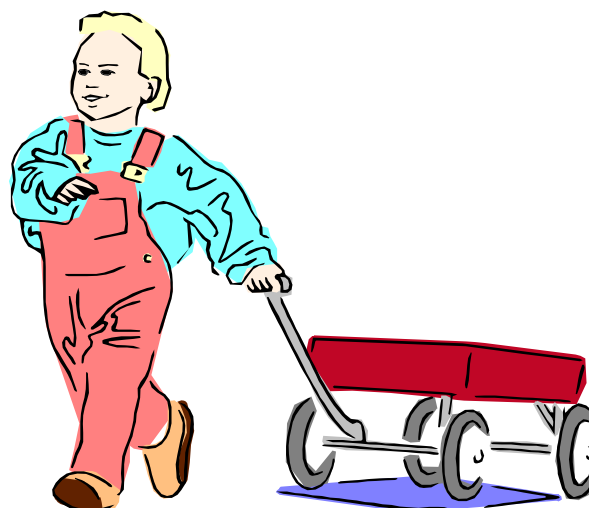
Joint planning should occur at regularly scheduled team meeting times. Each meeting must be guided by an agenda, and the records of the previous meeting should be reviewed at each one. These practices will allow the team to maximize their limited planning time and keep focused.

When everyone on the team shares responsibility for working with all children, each adult has the benefit of learning new strategies and skills from one another. Each child has a higher likelihood of receiving individualized attention, and positive peer interactions are encouraged through the efforts of the team.

Respect for everyone's ideas and suggestions must be a cornerstone of successful collaboration. Professionals and paraprofessionals have deep reservoirs of strategies that may be brought to bear on any specific problem. When each team member is viewed as a valuable source of knowledge, issues of power and control can be avoided. When team members work on equal footing, they can offer each other valuable feedback about what works best.

There are several different models for including young children in general education settings. Each team must choose its own approach. Regardless of the model chosen, however, ECE and ECSE service providers must be willing to take the risk of releasing their role identities in order to consider every child their student, everyone else's idea worthy of consideration, and all children as capable of great things.

--Deb Stanley and Jo Smith Read



INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Natural Environments for Young Children and Families

Early intervention services, as defined under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 1997) are available to eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families in the child's natural environment. Natural environments can be described as any place the child feels safe, comfortable, and happy and environments that are natural for the child's same-age peers without disabilities. Natural environments are different for each family based on its lifestyle, work status, and community resources.

Early intervention services may be provided in the child's home, family day care homes, child care centers, community-based preschools, and informal play groups, such as parent-initiated play groups, story time at the library, neighborhood co-op groups, and community center play groups. Providing services in natural environments requires flexible scheduling, creative planning, and a commitment between service providers and families. The location of services will change based on the ever-developing needs of the child and family.

Locating quality community-based programs that meet the needs of children with disabilities and their families may be challenging. The quality of the early childhood program in which any child participates has a direct impact on the success of the experience for the child and family. The service provider can play an important role in locating and facilitating the development of good programs for young children. The following guidelines may be useful.

- Become aware of public and private community programs. This includes public and private child care programs, community preschools, and church affiliated preschool programs. Use quality indicators observation forms when making site visits to collect information about each program. Make this information available to families in a community resources notebook.
- Facilitate family visits to community programs. Help families learn how to look for quality indicators when observing local community programs and making decisions about the appropriateness of each program based on their child's and family's needs. If possible, visit programs with families to help them learn to make structured observations.
- Identify programs being used as inclusion sites by local public school early childhood special education programs. Coordinating services with these same community programs

will help to facilitate smooth transitions into early childhood special education services if determined necessary. Coordinating training resources between early intervention and public school programs will benefit the staff of both programs.

- Determine which programs are licensed and monitored for compliance with quality control standards. Programs may be licensed as a Medicaid provider or proprietary school.
- Assist community programs in seeking accreditation through the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (NAEYC). The accreditation process provides some assurance that quality programming is occurring. Reviewers examine the total program, including the quality of interactions among staff and children, developmental appropriateness of the curriculum, safety of the facility, staffing, staff qualifications, physical environment, and administration. This is a three-step process of self-study, validation, and final accreditation.
- If there are no or few accredited or licensed programs in your area, explore opportunities to provide training to community providers through your local interagency coordinating council, local social service agencies, and the Virginia Department of Social Services.
- Identify Head Start and adult literacy programs in your area for structured play group opportunities. Head Start mandates that ten percent of the children enrolled have disabilities. adult literacy programs have a family component that provides parent-child education in group settings.

Some communities have many high quality public and private community programs, play groups, and well trained home child care providers. Your efforts to initiate and support training to the programs that do not meet standards of best practice will help build a network of natural environments and adds quality programs to benefit all children and families in your community.

--Sharon Jones

E-MAIL ADDRESS UPDATES

Deb Stanley's e-mail address is:

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Doug Russell's e-mail address is:

dlrussel@saturn.vcu.edu

We apologize for a misprint of Doug's e-mail address in the last issue.



Professional Development Opportunities

23rd Annual Conference of Virginia Branch of Dyslexia Association - "Pathways to Literacy"

Location: Holiday Inn-Koger Center South
Richmond, VA
Date: March 12-13, 1999
Contact: (800) 988-8336

Making Inclusion: (Grades K-6) - Practical Classroom Strategies

Sponsors: Bureau of Education & Research
Location: Hyatt Hotel
Richmond, VA
Date: January 11, 1999
Cost: \$155
Contact: (800) 735-3503

The Leading Edge - 1999: National Videoconference/Seminar on Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs

Sponsors: NAEYC
Location: call contact number for sites in your area
Date: March 12-13, 1999
Contact: (800) 424-2460, Ext. 633
<http://www.naeyc.org>

High/Scope Preschool Series: "Key Experiences"

Sponsors: High/Scope
Location: Williamsburg, VA
Date: January 15-16, 1999
Contact: (734) 485-2000 Ext. 228

18th National Conference on the Training and Employment of Paraprofessionals in Education and Rehabilitative Services - "Contributing to Quality"

Sponsors: The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals In Education and Related Services, Center for Advanced Study in Education, The Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York
Location: DoubleTree Hotel
Little Rock, Arkansas
Date: May 6-8, 1999
Cost: \$100 (special rate of \$45 for paraprofessionals)
Contact: Anna Lou Pickett
(212)642-2948

17th Annual International Conference - Technology, Reading & Learning Difficulties

Location: San Francisco, CA
Date: January 28-30, 1999
Contact: (510) 594-1249

Early Childhood Partnership Conference: Developing Relationships to Better Serve Children in Preschool Programs

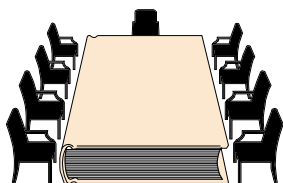
Sponsors: Head Start Collaboration Project, Virginia Department of Education, Training & Technical Assistance Center Network
Location: Fort Magruder Inn and Conference Center
Williamsburg, VA
Date: July 15-16, 1999
Cost: \$50
Contact: Sandy Wilberger
(800) 426-1595 or
Barbara Flannagan
(800) 848-2714

S.I., Applied Behavior Analysis and Floor Time

Sponsors: Care Resources, Inc.
Location: Baltimore, MD
Date: February 26-27, 1999
Contact: (888) 613-2275

Virginia Council for Learning Disabilities: Annual Spring Conference - "The Key is We"

Location: Airport Marriott
Roanoke, VA
Date: March 4-5, 1999
Contact: Helen Barrier - (540) 989-1207 or
Sue Vinson - (540) 362-8627



The preceding conference will also be held a second time:

Location: Donaldson Brown Hotel and Conference Center
Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA
Date: July 26-27, 1999
Cost: \$50
Contact: Sandy Wilberger
(800) 426-1595 or
Barbara Flannagan
(800) 848-2714

JUST A REMINDER!



The 3 workshop training strand in **Mild/Moderate Disabilities (all ages)**, sponsored by the VCU T/TAC, still has two more presentations.

Strategic SOLUTIONS: Ensuring the Success of all Students With Virginia's SOL's

Presenter: Pat Parrott, M.Ed.

Dates: January 14, 1999
"Written Language"

March 10, 1999
"Content Instruction"

Location: Chesterfield Technical Center

Contact: Jo Smith Read
(804) 848-6339

If you missed the first presentation "**Reading Comprehension**", please plan to attend both presentations still remaining.

Mark Your Calendars! The 3rd Annual TAPESTRY for Learning

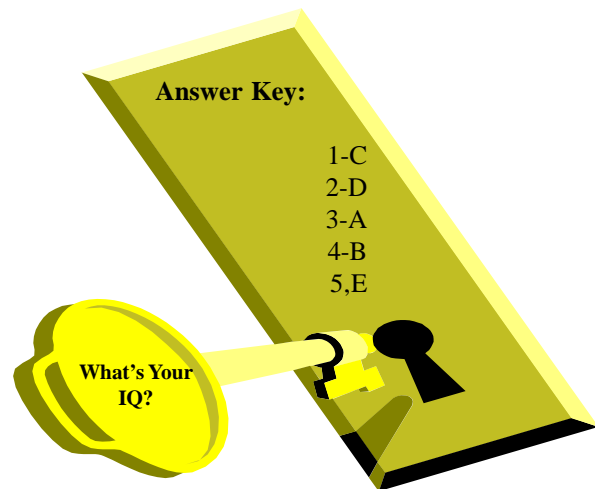
...is coming to Virginia Commonwealth University Student Commons,
March 11, 1999.

For more information, please call:

VCU Region 1 Office
(804) 828-6947 or
800-4226-1595
TDD: 800-828-1120

VCU Region 8 Office
(804) 848-6339

*See registration in this newsletter.



Do you want to learn more about providing early intervention services in natural settings?

In May and November, 1998, interactive live national video teleconferences focusing on natural environments took place. Part 1 was titled Natural Environments: Linking to the Community. Part 2 was titled Natural Environments: Implementation in the Community. These teleconferences discussed new Part C IDEA infant and toddler policies with an emphasis on ideas and strategies for implementation of services in natural environments in the community. Through January, 1999, you can engage in web-based follow-up to the teleconferences. Link to: <http://www.nectas.unc.edu/NatSet/> for a wealth of information on the principles and practices of providing early intervention services in natural environments. Through December 2, 1998, you may join in discussion forums on a variety of topics related to natural environments with teleconference speakers and other experts in early intervention. To obtain tapes of the video teleconference at \$35 each contact: Western Instructional Support Center, The Distance Learning Center, (724) 443-7821 Ext. 285 or 292.

The teleconferences were sponsored by the Pennsylvania Departments of Education, Public Welfare and Health through Early Intervention Technical Assistance, and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) through the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System (NECTAS).

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**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS**

The Training and Technical Assistance Center (T/TAC) at Virginia Commonwealth University is one of a network of regional T/TACs funded by the Virginia Department of Education.