

# Innovations & Perspectives

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*The VCU T/TAC is a grant-funded program of the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Institute for Developmental Disabilities. VCU is an EEO/AA Institution and does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, age, religion, ethnic origin, or disability. The primary purpose of the T/TAC system is to provide improved educational opportunities and contribute to the success of children and youth with disabilities (birth to 22 years) and children who have disadvantages or are at risk for school failure (birth to nine years).*

## Lazy Kid or Executive Dysfunction?

Tracy Landon, Ed.D.  
Linda Oggel, M.A., CCC-SLP

Do you have a student who seems incredibly lazy? Intentionally forgetful? Absolutely unmotivated? Deliberately late? Do you feel like a broken record? Constantly asking where his homework is? Constantly asking him to clean out his desk? Constantly asking her to pick up stuff around her desk? Do you have a student who is chronically distracted? Are you repeating directions to get the student back on task when he gets distracted? Do you have a student who knows the information but can't seem to communicate it to you in a logical sequence? Do you ask a question and get an answer that's related but not quite connected to the question? If so, it might be that the student is not using these behaviors intentionally.

One of the least studied and most frequently overlooked contributors to academic and behavioral problems is a problem in the frontal lobes of the brain known as executive dysfunction (Parker, 2001). Students with executive dysfunction have problems of a neurobiological nature that particularly affect "planning, flexibility, organization, and self-monitoring (Ozonoff, 1998, p.282). These students may have "difficulty picking a topic, planning the project, sequencing the materials for a paper, breaking the project down into manageable units with intermediate deadlines, getting started, and completing the activity. And because these students frequently underestimate how long something will take, they'll generally leave the project until the night before it is due" (Packer, 2001, p. 2). Just imagine how difficult it would be if you had trouble organizing your time, materials, belongings, thoughts or any combination of these!

If you believe your student has executive dysfunction (also called executive function deficits—called "executive" because the tasks are often the responsibilities of a company executive), consider helping the student to organize himself. Begin by developing a relationship with the student that is emotionally supportive. Emphasize that you want the student to

succeed. Help the student to understand his problems and that there are strategies he can use to organize him/herself. For example, you could say, "Kids with executive function problems have difficulty in certain areas. There are many ways you can help yourself. Let's talk about the areas and supports. Then you can choose which ways to help yourself." Then describe the following potentially troublesome areas and potential supports that are identified in the shaded area. (Linda Parker, 2001):

### Managing Time

- Use time management techniques such as the use of checklists, prioritized "To Do" lists, and prioritizing assignments.
- Estimate how long a task will take and then check on the accuracy of your estimate.
- Plan for more time to do a project that you think you will need.
- Break long assignments into chunks with time frames for completing each chunk.
- Establish intermediate deadlines for big projects with your teacher and show her the project at these deadlines.
- Use a word processor and time management software such as the Franklin Day Planner, Palm Pilot, Lotus Organizer.
- Write the due date on the top of each assignment in a brightly colored marker.

### Managing Space

- Ask the student to identify ways he would like to organize himself.
- Have separate work areas with complete sets of supplies for different activities.
- Schedule a weekly time to clean out your desk and book bag (in school).

### Managing Materials

- Leave a large supply of pencils/pens in the classroom with the teacher.
- (For younger students) Have one notebook in

which all assignments are recorded. Ask your teacher to check the assignments at the end of each day to insure that the assignments are recorded properly and that the necessary materials to complete the assignments are packed in your book bag. Also ask her to make sure the due date for each assignment is written at the top of each page.

- (For older students) Use a three-ring binder with organized sections enclosed by a zipper. Headings could include "Assignments Due/Date," "To Do Tonight," "Ongoing Work." Use dividers in the notebook that are color-coded (e.g., Red for assignments that must be done right away, yellow for those due at the end of the week, etc.).
- Color code materials. Cover the textbook for one course in the same color as the notebook for that course. Use the same color coding to prioritize assignments.
- Establish a daily routine for school organization and include a written version of it in the notebook (e.g., turn in homework at the beginning of classes, get out paper/text/pen and check blackboard for assignment, prepare to leave class three minutes before it ends—pack books, papers, etc., turn in assignment book for checking and initialing at the end of each day, etc.). Use this same approach at home (e.g., do homework at a certain time, have parent initial homework, clean out book bag, check for necessary supplies for school).
- Obtain two copies of each textbook. Mark one "To be left in school" and the other "To be left at home."

### Managing Work

- Use a checklist to guide you through an independent assignment. Include items such as: get out pencil and paper, put name on paper, put due date on paper, read directions, ask teacher to further explain if needed, do work, put work away in notebook in appropriate section (e.g., to do tonight, to do this week), write assignment on assignment sheet, get teacher to sign, take home and complete work.

- Finally, have the student identify which strategies she would like to try using and get started. Consider meeting with the student after a week to evaluate her use of the strategies. Be sure to praise the student's progress rather than focusing on areas of continued disorganization. In addition, suggest that student's family be included so that they can help him or her continue the strategies at home.

As the educator you can support the student (and others) by making some changes in the classroom. Some suggestions (Stokes, 2001, pg. 6) you can implement include:

- Maintaining a highly structured classroom.
- Using a written (visual) schedule to keep the student focused and "on task" so that he or she can complete tasks as independently as possible.
- Giving written directions whenever possible (dry erase boards, index cards, etc.) rather than auditory prompting.
- Giving fewer problems/questions on worksheets and/or creating boxes next to each question so the student can check it off as it is answered.
- Making the classroom as distraction free as possible (away from windows, doors or favorite activity areas).
- Keeping assignment folders in specific and consistent places.
- Using a visual calendar for both school and home to help the student anticipate events.
- Using a visual timer to help the student understand time constraints.

Also, if you suspect a student has executive dysfunction, consult with your school psychologist. While executive function deficits are most commonly associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder, they also are known to occur in students with ADHD, Fragile X Syndrome, conduct disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, traumatic brain injury, and schizophrenia (Ozonoff, p. 277). Although there are currently no agreed-upon protocols that constitute a battery of tests for executive dysfunction, several tests have been used in research that seem to tap into aspects of the disorder. These include the Matching Familiar Figures Test (Waterhouse & Fein, 1982), Wisconsin Card Sorting Test, and various computerized tests. For more information on tests and their purposes, see the resources at the end of this article.

Teach your student with executive dysfunction to organize himself. In addition, provide support by making some adaptations in your classroom and in your interaction style. Remember that students with executive dysfunction are not unmotivated or willfully engaging in problematic behavior. They really cannot organize and flexibly solve problems themselves without appropriate supports.

#### References:

- Parker, L. (2001). Executive Functions. Tourette syndrome "plus". [www.tourettesyndrome.net/ef.htm](http://www.tourettesyndrome.net/ef.htm).
- Stokes, S. (2001) Children with Asperger's syndrome: characteristics/ learning styles and intervention strategies. [www.cesa7.k12.wi.us/sped/autism/asper/asper11.html](http://www.cesa7.k12.wi.us/sped/autism/asper/asper11.html)

#### Resources:

- Ozonoff, S. (1998) Treatment of executive dysfunction. In E. Schopler, G. B. Mesibov, & L. Kunc (Eds.), *Asperger syndrome or high-functioning autism* (pp 263-289). New York: Plenum Press.
- Pennington, B.F., Rogers, S.J., Bennetto, L., Griffith, E.M., Reed, D.T., & Shyu, V. (1997). Validity tests of the executive dysfunction hypothesis of autism. In J. Russell (Ed.), *Autism as an executive disorder* (pp. 142-178). New York: Oxford University Press.

## Plan to Attend

### The 26th Annual Conference of The Virginia Branch of The International Dyslexia Association

March 22-23, 2002  
Holiday Inn-Koger Center South  
Richmond, VA

## Dyslexia: A Challenge for Champions

### Presenting Friday & Saturday Keynote Speakers:

**G. Reid Lyon, Ph.D.**, is Chief of Child Development and Behavior, Director of Research Programs in Learning Disabilities, Disorders of Attention, and Developmental Neuroimaging at the National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development at the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Lyon is responsible for the direction, development, and management of research in learning disabilities, dyslexia, language disorders, and cognitive and developmental neuropsychology. He is also responsible for translating NIH scientific discoveries relevant to the health and education of children to the United States Congress. Dr. Lyon's topic, **The Next Horizon: Fluency and Reading Comprehension**, will summarize the converging evidence that allows for a better understanding of the foundational factors that under gird fluency and reading comprehension with an emphasis on translating research findings to instructional practice. He will discuss how best to improve student performance in these critical domains.

**Barbara A. Wilson** is director of Wilson Language and cofounder of the Wilson Learning Center for children and adults with language learning disabilities in Millbury, MA. She is the author of the Wilson Reading System, a multisensory, structured language program for individuals with dyslexia. Additionally, she has served on several committees of national and international organizations, including the IDA, AOGPE, and IMSLEC. She was a consultant to the Bridges to Practice Project for the National Institute for Literacy. Currently, Barbara is chair of the Advisory Council for the Language and Literacy Ed.S. degree program at Simmons College in Boston, MA. Her topic, **Putting Research into Practice - Strategies for Success**, will address the essential elements and teaching techniques needed for success by students who are unable to read. She will discuss how effective intervention and remediation are possible when important factors are considered and incorporated into instruction.

### Also

*During this full two-day conference there will be over 40 workshops and concurrent sessions on various topics that include:*

*Decoding-Reading, Reading Comprehension, Oral Language, Teaching in the Content Areas, Spelling, Written Expression, Mathematics, Assessment, Fluency, Brain Research, Behavior Management, Collaboration, Learning Strategies, Legal Issues, Summary of USDOE's Summit on Learning Disabilities, Assistive Technology, ADHD, Parental Rights and Issues, and Transition*

**If You Can Only Attend ONE Conference This Year,  
THIS Is The One! There is Something for Everyone!**

*To receive a conference program and registration form in January 2002, write*  
VBIDA, 805 Hepler Road,  
Richmond, VA 23229;  
call 1-800-988-8336;  
or E-mail: [cdruss1@mindspring.com](mailto:cdruss1@mindspring.com)

## How to Define Educational Outcomes, or, Words of Wisdom from the Cheshire Cat

Joanne Gutkin, M.A.  
Phyllis L. M. Haynes, M.Ed.  
Kathy Lynch, Ph.D.  
Sarah Wright

*"Cheshire Puss," she began, rather timidly.... "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" "That depends on where you want to get to," said the Cat. "I don't much care where -" said Alice. "Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat. "- so long as I get SOMEWHERE," Alice added as an explanation. (Carroll, 1991, chap. 6).*

The current emphasis on standards-based reform in public education, and the ever-increasing demand that schools be held accountable for educational outcomes, have made it important for those of us working in the field of education to be very clear about what we are all about. We need to be able to state, in words that anyone can understand, what we expect to accomplish through our instructional programs; that is, we need to explain our intended outcomes. This is true at all levels – from the individual student, to classrooms, educational programs, schools, and school divisions. Unlike Alice, we do and must care about where we “want to get to.”

Being able to state intended outcomes in a clear manner is a skill that can be developed. It requires that we not automatically assume that everybody “is on the same page,” or that we all share the same implicit meaning for particular words, phrases, or education initiatives. For example, terms such as inclusion, team teaching, research-based programs, collaboration, or best practices may be understood differently by different participants in the education process. Articulating and agreeing upon outcomes can help to prevent the misunderstandings, crossed communication, and divergent expectations that sometimes occur when decisions are being made about what is educationally best for children.

Most people who work with schools have at some time been involved in writing goals and objectives as part of a planning process for bringing about desired improvements. Typical statements of educational goals might read: “to meet with the PTA monthly to collaborate on school projects,” or “to provide every student with access to a computer,” or “to send out a parent newsletter on a quarterly basis.” While these may all be worthy undertakings, they are actually descriptions of intended activities, rather than intended outcomes. This type of goal statement does not convey information about why those particular strategies were chosen, or what the school hopes to accomplish by implementing them.

At the VCU T/TAC, we as an organization have begun to move towards a planning process that involves stating goals and objectives in outcome terms. What does this mean? It means that, after completing a needs assessment process to identify

our priorities, goals are developed by focusing on the changes that we want to bring about. The most important aspect of writing goals as intended outcomes is to state what will be different if we have successfully addressed the identified priorities. That is, to articulate what changes will have occurred in people, things, organizations, or systems at least in part because of what we do.

Outcome statements indicate how we expect people will be “better off” or how situations will be changed if we successfully implement our plans for improvement. Outcome statements answer questions such as: What do we hope students, teachers, or the school community will be doing differently? What benefits or gains do we anticipate our “customers” will derive (our customers might be individual students, groups of students, teachers and other school personnel, family members, and the community)? What is our purpose for implementing an activity? Ultimately, all outcomes, even those that occur at the system- or organization-level (e.g., changes in policy or procedure), should be tied to people-focused changes.

The mechanics of writing outcome statements are simple. Think of it as painting a word picture of what success “looks like.” Use noun phrases or simple declarative sentences in the present tense. Be clear, concise, and concrete. To eliminate jargon, pretend you come home from school and your favorite 10-year-old asks you to explain what you do when you are at work and why you do it. Describe who or what will be different and in what ways, such as intended changes in people’s knowledge, skills, behavior, attitudes, values, condition, or status; or changes in an organization’s policies, procedures, or priorities. Do not confuse activities with outcomes (e.g., “training was provided” is an activity, not a statement of how something has changed), or report effort as outcomes (e.g., 20 teachers participated in training).

The following examples of outcome statements illustrate these principles. Student-level outcomes might include: improved reading fluency, gains in percentage of spelling words learned weekly, increased participation in extracurricular activities, increased on-task behavior, or improved note-taking skills. At the classroom level, there might be increased role-sharing between general and special educators, more students using curricular adaptations and assistive technology, increased use of graphic organizers, and different students working on different tasks suited to their particular learning styles. At the school level, we might see increased small group and peer interaction that includes students with disabilities, a school climate that supports and encourages students’ personal aspirations, decreased use of office referrals to resolve discipline issues, and greater acceptance of individual differences among staff and students.





Finally, what is so important about defining outcomes in this way? If our intended outcomes are clearly articulated, they will serve as our steady guide. Stating what we want to accomplish before we have embarked upon a program, a strategy, or a technique, frees us to consider a multitude of ways to reach that desired end point. Keeping our outcomes in mind helps us to stay on track, because we evaluate everything we do against how well the activity helps us to reach success. The VCU T/TAC has articulated as its ultimate intended outcome the following: “Students with disabilities and students-at risk for school failure are prepared for adult life and making choices to fulfill their potential and dreams.” Everything that the T/TAC does is intended to contribute in some way to making this outcome a reality for students in Virginia’s schools.

### References:

Carroll, L. (1991). Chapter six. *Alice's adventures in Wonderland, and, Through the looking-glass and what Alice found there.* (Original work published 1885). Retrieved November 27, 2001, electronic text from Project Gutenberg Release 2.7a, Duncan Research: <http://www.cs.indiana.edu/metastuff/wonder/ch6.htm>

## Long Range Applications Spring 2002

We have disseminated applications for requesting long-range assistance from the VCU T/TAC to all Directors of Special Education, Title 1 Coordinators, and VCU T/TAC Planning and Management team members. This round of applications is for partnerships in the following areas:

-  Instructional strategies for students at risk for school failure
-  Best practices for secondary transitions service delivery in Middle/High School to adulthood
-  School based teams to support teachers in assistive technology
-  Continuum of placement options for students with severe disabilities

Applicants will receive technical assistance support from T/TAC for 3-5 years while developing and implementing a initiative in the areas listed above. Deadline for applications is **April 15, 2002**. If you have not seen this application, please contact the Special Education, Title 1 Coordinator, or PMT member in your school, state operated or infant intervention program. You may also obtain a copy by calling the T/TAC office at (804) 828-6947

## But Mrs. Middleton, We Didn't Have Reading Class Today...

Jane Middleton, M.Ed.

For students who have managed to get past primary education without acquiring basic literacy skills, reading class can be a very scary place indeed. This anxiety may actually impede progress. Hardiman (2001) references several studies in recent brain research that indicate a high level of anxiety or fear actually impedes memory and learning.

As the hour for reading class draws near, it is not uncommon for weaker students to report feeling sick or sleepy. Others may show signs of restlessness, or exhibit acting out behaviors. All of these behaviors tend to divert the teacher's attention away from the task, thus delaying or avoiding reading class. As the instructional mismatch between a student's skills and his performance expectations widens, the level of perceived threat also increases.

When fear takes over, the body's natural response to any threatening situation is to fight or flee. In fact, when the body feels threatened, it releases chemicals in the brain to enhance the abilities to meet the challenge of the physical threat. This emotional reaction to the process of learning to read constitutes a significant affective factor to be overcome in developing literacy skills in these students. Many students will no longer put forth sustained effort, because not being successful doesn't seem to hurt so much when one has not made much personal investment. Lack of success in situations where there is limited investment in the learning is understandable and even to be expected. On the other hand, if a student really puts forth a good effort, and is still not successful, the student is likely to conclude that there is something wrong with him and his self-confidence erodes. He is likely to disengage with print, even if he doesn't drop out, act out or opt out by some other means.

In order to create a learning situation that is relaxed enough for these students to learn, we initially have to engage students in lessons where they can be successful without having to decode print. It is also essential that the activities are age appropriate. Finally, the activities must keep the students engaged throughout the lesson. Daily opportunities exist to create these lessons when teaching in the content areas of math, science and social studies. When a student can be successful in one class, he begins to view himself as a successful student.

If the teacher is able to identify why the student is successful in that class, often there are clues as to how the student can be more successful in other classes. For example, if a student is most successful in math class, consider the study skills that are required for success in math. Does he learn best when things are presented in a well-defined order? If so, concept maps used in other areas of study may help to provide that sense of order. If he is able to learn multiplication facts, explore how he learns those facts. Is it that he studies facts by saying the multiplication tables? If so, then the student may learn information in other classes more easily if he is taught to restate information in his own words as discrete information is presented. If he learns the facts by singing or "rapping" the tables, craft mnemonic devices, short skits to act out the lesson, songs, or other activities requiring creative interaction in other classes. If writing the facts repeatedly is the preferred method, then he may learn best by making some kind of notation to aid repetition in other classes. Other students may make flash cards of all the key terms (names, important dates, formulas). These cards can be reviewed

quickly and efficiently by sorting out the few that need further study.

In our attempts to keep one student engaged by employing one or more of these strategies, we find that the learning is reinforced for all students. Employing a whole repertoire of activities to appeal to a variety of learning preferences results in more successful classes. Students stay engaged, exhibit fewer behavior problems, and tend to enjoy the class more.

In employing a variety of strategies, opportunities continually arise where basic literacy skills can be developed. Reading is a complex task involving a number of different processes. Keep in mind that literacy involves decoding, comprehension, fluency, and encoding. Listening or receptive vocabulary and comprehension is prerequisite for expressive vocabulary and verbal expression of ideas. Likewise, oral receptive and expressive skills precede development of symbolic language represented in reading and writing tasks.

In teaching content material, this same progression can be employed to ensure learning and develop more complex skills. First present the material by reading aloud, presenting a video clip, having students use a screen reader to "read" the material themselves, or providing a demonstration or lab activity while "thinking aloud" to model the thinking processes for the students. Next, involve students in some activities that require them to summarize, restate, or present the information in some other form, such as a diagram, skit, song.

Next, begin to involve students in decoding the print related to key vocabulary in the lesson. Model word attack strategies in the decoding of this key vocabulary. Reading aloud together in unison by rows, groups or tables will help students engage with text. Encourage students to identify unfamiliar vocabulary by looking over the material in advance. Help students stay engaged with the print by reading aloud and having students pronounce the key vocabulary words whenever they occur in the text. Accept volunteer readers from the class, allowing the option of a "life line" to other classmates when an unfamiliar word is encountered. Have weaker students be responsible for a single word in the text, and then speak the word aloud whenever it occurs. This keeps them following along, word-by-word. It is helpful for students to know that only about 50% of the words in English conform to the basic "rules". Therefore, it is important for students to make educated guesses when attempting unfamiliar words. If the "guess" fits into the context and connotes the correct meaning, then it is likely to be the correct choice.

Finally, the students are ready for the most difficult task of restating or presenting the lesson in written format. The students need to be able to express the ideas verbally, before capturing what was said in written form. Having the class summarize or restate the key points of the lesson as a group, while capturing it on a concept map or graphical organizer, is a powerful tool. Together the students can spell key words aloud, sounding each word out together to reinforce the sound-symbol relationships. The concept map then serves as a word bank when the students attempt to write their responses individually. The concept map also serves as an organizer, so students can readily recall the main ideas (which they develop as topic sentences) and support these ideas with the detail sentences. The introductory paragraph and the closing paragraphs are developed last. The class concept map serves as an organizational model throughout.

Involving the class in groups at all stages helps to create a more supportive, interactive learning climate. The varied forms of presentation reinforces the learning, makes the classroom climate more relaxed and fun, and helps every student be more successful. Individual students are less likely to panic and more likely to stay engaged with the learning. Over time, students' literacy skills develop. Many of my students would often say at the end of my most successful teaching days, "But Mrs. Middleton, we didn't have reading class today!"

### References:

Hardiman, Marial M. (2001, November). Connecting brain research with dimensions of learning. *Educational Leadership*, 59(3), 52-55.

## Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) Workgroup "Are We There Yet?" Road Trip Through The VAAP

What now? Where do you go? To help answer some of your questions, this workshop will devote one hour to reviewing the VAAP timeline. Participants are encouraged to bring their Collections of Evidence (COE) to use for a self-evaluation guided activity. The second hour will be an open forum for participants to ask questions, share ideas, and tell success stories. Please be conscious of a student's and parent's right to privacy when preparing your comments and sharing your COEs.

**February 19, 2002; 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM**  
**VCU T/TAC Office**  
**Blackstone, VA**

**or** **February 21, 2002; 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM**  
**Mecklenburg Airport Conference Center**  
**Brodnax, VA**

**To register, contact Sarah Clevinger**  
**by phone at (434) 292-3723 or by E-mail at [scleving@vcu.edu](mailto:scleving@vcu.edu).**

## Integrating TechKnowledge for Inclusion

Linda Ingleson, Ed.S.  
Sandy Wilberger, M.Ed.

As we explore placement options for preschoolers with disabilities, we frequently must turn to assistive technology and augmentative communication to enable children to participate in classroom activities in meaningful ways. Teachers must seek ways to provide children with opportunities to develop autonomy and make choices, to be a part of the group learning process, and to communicate effectively (National Center to Improve Practice, 2000).

Some supports currently being used in classrooms across the country include eye gaze boards, switch accessible devices, voice output communication aids, and alternate membrane keyboards.

An eye gaze board is a low or light tech device that is easy to make. It is a board with pictures fastened on, (usually with Velcro for a quick and easy change of pictures) that the child looks at to indicate choices or answers. Eye gaze boards also may be purchased commercially.

Switches provide a means for accessing the environment as well as for communicating. They can be used to activate toys and computer software. Also, switches can be used to activate scanning devices in which a pointer moves in a circular fashion (like a clock). A child may use the switch to start and stop the pointer.

Voice output communication aids (VOCAs) range

from low to high tech. A picture is placed on a target cell and the child presses the cell to activate the device in order to hear a message. Some devices may be capable of holding many messages in memory while others hold only a few.

At the higher end of the technological spectrum are alternate membrane keyboards that simplify computer access for young users. They make use of overlays that often have large letters and numbers.

On the National Center to Improve Practice Website, ([www2.edc.org/NCIP](http://www2.edc.org/NCIP)) one can view video clips of two exemplary early childhood classrooms that use assistive technology. The fundamental goal of assistive technology is to provide to children with developmental disabilities full access to rich language and literacy experiences. When you visit each on-line classroom you will witness four key elements of effective practice:

- ➔ engineering the classroom environment to optimize access to learning,
- ➔ modifying instructional strategies, materials, and tools to meet individual needs,
- ➔ integrating the curriculum through theme-based learning,
- ➔ embedding assessment in all classroom activities.

Instructors in these classrooms use a broad range of high and low technology tools to attain these elements. One classroom available for viewing on the Internet is an integrated preschool program with children from ages three to six. The teacher works with 14 children, of whom eight are developing typically and six have disabilities. The teacher has engineered the environment to support children in their communication efforts. She has organized the room into activity centers that change periodically. Centers include the water table, computer, kitchen and dress up area. All the centers make use of picture symbols that relate to that center. Both children and adults use these centers routinely to augment their play-based

interactions. The symbols are attached to Velcro strips and are easily accessed and are interchangeable depending on the curriculum.

All children also have opportunities to participate in circle time through the use of assistive and augmentative strategies. One child on the video, Sabrina, uses a scanning device when it is her turn to describe the day's weather. She hits her switch to start the spinner and then hits it again when she wants the pointer to stop on the chosen picture. She also uses an eye gaze board to indicate what song she wants to sing during circle time. The child is not limited to one device but has access to a variety of modes of communication.

The National Center to Improve Practice also has additional resources and links as does the T/TAC website ([www.soe.vcu.edu/ttac](http://www.soe.vcu.edu/ttac)). Many of the assistive and augmentative devices can be checked out from our technology lab. Please give us a call if you are interested in coming in to try them or would like to take them for a test drive.

### References

National Center to Improve Practice. [www2.edc.org/NCIP](http://www2.edc.org/NCIP)  
*(This material was developed by the National Center to Improve Practice (NCIP), located at Education Development Center, Inc. in Newton, Massachusetts. NCIP was funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs from October 1, 1992 - September 30, 1998, Grant #H180N20013. Permission is granted to copy and disseminate this information. If you do so, please cite NCIP. Contents do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by NCIP, EDC, or the U.S. Government. It isn't necessary to include this paragraph in the citation)*

## Program Specialists In Special Education Virginia Commonwealth University T/TAC

**Full time 12 month Program Specialist positions available in the following areas at the Virginia Commonwealth University Training and Technical Assistance Center (VCU T/TAC):**

### Mild/Moderate Disabilities

To provide training and technical assistance to personnel working with students with learning disabilities, emotional disturbance and mental retardation. Master's degree in Special Education or related field with an endorsement in learning disabilities emotional disturbance and/or mental retardation required.

### Behavior, Autism and Communication

To provide training and technical assistance to school and agency personnel related to students with behavior disorders and/or autism spectrum or communication disorders. Master's degree in Special Education with an endorsement in behavior/emotional disturbance, and/or mental retardation or Master's degree in communication disorders required.

### Early Childhood Special Education

To provide training and technical assistance to early intervention and early childhood special education personnel in the areas of assessment, program planning, assistive technology, behavior, collaborative teaming and IFSP/IEP development. Master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education and ten years service/teaching in the field of early intervention or early childhood special education required.

**For a complete job description,  
contact Sandy Wilberger at (804) 827-1405 or Linda Oggel at (804) 827-1400.**

*Virginia Commonwealth University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.  
Woman, minorities and person with disabilities are encouraged to apply.*

## Getting Past Defiant Behavior: When Natural Tendencies Don't Work

Tracy Landon, Ed.D.

Every once in a while I read something and say, "Oh my goodness!" Well, it happened this week. Brophy wanted to give regular education teachers ways to cope with students who are time-consuming, difficult, or frustrating to teach. So, in 1996, he asked 98 teachers how they cope with problem students. He wanted diverse responses so he asked principals to rate teachers as either truly "outstanding in handling difficult students—minimizing their problem behavior and responding to it effectively when it does occur" or "neither outstandingly effective nor notably ineffective in this regard". Brophy then gave the 49 outstanding and 49 average teachers 24 vignettes involving problem students and asked them what they would say and do in the depicted situations. They were also given descriptions of 12 types of problems exhibited by students (including failure syndrome, perfectionist, underachievers/alienated, low achiever, hostile-aggressive, passive-aggressive, defiant, hyperactive, distractible, immature, peer rejected, and shy/withdrawn) and asked to describe how they would handle each type of problem. Brophy taped and coded the interviews to determine what teachers did with students with different problems and how they felt about it.

Brophy's general findings were not surprising. All the teachers relied on brief verbal responses that they could make on the spot. They also preferred neutral or positive/supportive methods to negative/punitive ones, and based their approaches on common sense and personal experience rather than expert advice or well-articulated theories of diagnosis and intervention. Additionally, the "outstanding" teachers "showed more willingness to become personally involved in working with problem students, expressed more confidence in their abilities to elicit significant improvement, and provided richer descriptions of long-term prevention and solution strategies" (Brophy, 1996, p. 438). But what is surprising is how teachers responded to the different types of student problems.

Even though teachers said they felt sympathetic and oriented toward helping several problem types, their responses were primarily controlling or punitive for defiant students (Brophy, 1996). In fact, punishment was mentioned the most frequently for students who are defiant. Referral to the principal was the most frequently cited approach in comparison to other problem types and physical punishment was occasionally suggested for these students. Similarly, although encouragement and support was the approach of choice for other student problem types, seldom was it identified as useful with students who are defiant. Also, instruction, training, and modeling were not identified as typical responses to defiant students. Finally, counseling and shaping improved behavior were NEVER mentioned as options for these students.

Although it makes perfect sense that teachers would react emotionally and punitively to blatant defiance, these approaches actually make students MORE defiant. It, therefore, should not be surprising that Brophy found teachers feel the LEAST confident in their abilities with students with this type of problem (Note: teachers also reported feeling the least confident with students who are hostile-aggressive, and underachievers).

Brophy also compared his findings with 14 other studies involving parents and teacher's attitudes and behavior towards children and found similar results. Bottom line is "adults respond with concern, assistance, and attempts at long-term solutions when children's problems do not threaten or irritate them; but they respond with anger, rejection, and emphasis on short-term control or punishment when they do" (Brophy, 1996, p.431).

### So, how can teachers cope with students who defy their authority?

First, validate your feelings! Blatant defiance is anger provoking. It does threaten the stability of your classroom. There is a natural tendency to get angry and strike back at defiant students (Brophy, 1996). If you are prone to powerful emotional reactions to defiance consider getting some help in working through and getting past them (Brophy, 1996).

Second, take the time to learn why students are defiant. You may be able to change how you feel when your authority is challenged if you are able to interpret their behavior differently. Although temperament plays a role in personality types, defiance is primarily learned.

Patterns of oppositional and defiant behavior typically begin as reactions to ineffective parenting (Frick, 1994; Horne & Sayger, 1990; Patterson, 1982; Schaefer & Millman, 1981). The parents may either fail to articulate clear expectations and impose needed limits or else impose limits in ways that are authoritarian and punitive rather than instructive. Even more likely, the parents vacillate unpredictably between these extremes. Vague and inconsistent expectations leave children unclear about how to please their parents, and to the extent that the parents are authoritarian, they erode their children's motivation to attempt to please them. The children begin to ignore parental wishes, to exploit parental inconsistencies, and to wear down the parents through oppositional behavior. This pattern of resistance to parents then generalizes to other adult authority figures, notably teachers (Brophy, 1996, p. 233).

Third, resist the temptation to judge the student's parents. Parenting is *ABSOLUTELY* the toughest job anyone takes on. Parents are operating on learned behaviors from their parents coupled with conflicting recommendations from friends, relatives, peers, and the "experts" about how to raise their children. Only one thing is certain, parents love their children. If a parent feels you judge them or their child, you will not ever be able to form a productive relationship with the family. Changing defiant behavior requires a productive relationship with the family (Brophy, 1996).

Fourth, make the time to learn what makes these most challenging students less defiant. In general, strategies that work with students who are defiant include teacher use of basic socialization and helping skills, effective/consistent behavior management focused on prevention, strategy teaching (e.g., social skills training

and steps in conflict resolution), and productive relations with the student's parents, and flexible consequences. Students do accept flexible consequences if they understand that rules are enforced each time they are broken and that being fair means treating individuals differently (Curwin & Mendler, 1997). Teachers have to have a range of consequences to deal with situations in a caring, individualized manner (Brophy, 1996). For more information on each of these strategies, ask for an information packet on "Teaching Students Who Are Defiant" from the T/TAC or see Brophy (1996).

Fifth, develop a plan for preventing and responding to students who are defiant with these student's parents. Good and Brophy (1997) emphasized the importance of remaining calm in conflict situations and resisting the natural tendency to strike back with a show of force designed to indicate that they "can't get away with it" (Brophy, 1996, p. 234). It may be easier to resist that normal inclination if you have a plan. ... "[Remember], consistency is more important than severity" (Curwin & Mendler (1997, p.124). These students fare better when issues are handled in the classroom versus sending them to the office (Brophy, 1996). Also, make the plan feasible. You'll need something easy enough to use on the spot. When developing a simple plan, however, avoid the mistake of omitting the elements listed earlier that will make your plan effective.

Preventing and responding effectively to students who are defiant involves altering our natural tendencies. What a challenge! It is so easy to think in terms of winning and losing when working with these students (Brophy, 1996). Trouble is, it is ineffective. "You have the right to exert leadership and impose control, but you will be more successful if you are understanding and supportive of students and if you make sure that students understand the reasons behind your demands in addition to stating the demands themselves" (Brophy, 1996, p.21).

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### **CHANGE IN TRAINING DATE**

**The VCU T/TAC sponsored training An Overview of Strategies for Serving Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in the Classroom Setting, scheduled for February 21, 2002, has been RESCHEDULED for March 14, 2002. For more information about this training, please contact Linda Oggel by phone at (804) 827-1400 or by e-mail at lsoggel@vcu.edu.**

## Augmentative and Alternative Communication: What's Old? What's New?

Kelly E. Ligon, M.Ed.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) consists of any aided or unaided communication used to enhance or to replace oral communication, such as sign language, gestures, picture symbols or computers with voice output (Glennen & DeCoste, 1998). Communication is a challenge for many people with disabilities and AAC provides the tools necessary for assisting individuals to become active participants in their environment. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 requires students with disabilities to have access to and show progress in the general education curriculum. AAC plays a major role in the learning process for many individuals. IDEA 1997 has prompted many educational providers to reexamine the methods and opportunities for communication available to students with disabilities. There are many strategies that are still effective ("Oldies but Goodies") while fairly new techniques ("Not so New, but Innovative") should also be considered when addressing AAC development.

### Oldies but Goodies:

#### → *Variety of Communication Options*

Students should not be locked into one way to communicate just because of assessment results that deemed them a "picture symbol user", for example. Students who use AAC should have a communication system, not static in nature, allowing for multiple ways in which to communicate. AAC strategies include aided and unaided methods of communication (Glennen & DeCoste, 1997). Aided methods include those such as using pencil and paper to using a more advanced computerized system. Unaided methods rely solely on the individual using his/her body to communicate. These methods may include gestures, signs, eye gaze, vocalizations and body movements (Glennen & DeCoste, 1997). In most instances, the person who relies on alternative methods to communicate will use both aided and unaided methods and as listeners, we must be aware of and accepting of all attempts to communicate.

#### → *Visual Strategies*

Many of us rely on visual tools to help us in our daily routines (i.e. calendars, shopping lists, notes of reminders, recipes etc.) Most of us need some type of visual cue to help us plan and move through the day. Many people with disabilities have these same needs, especially in the area of communication (Hodgdon, 1998). Making the things "visual" includes using body language, objects, or printed text, but all must be easily recognized, understood and universal to have the most benefit (Hodgdon, 1998). In the classroom, a simple change can be made by converting the daily schedule into a visual format that can be understood by all students. Individual schedules can be created to address specific communication strengths (some may use pictures, while others use objects to convey a schedule). Teachers should also consider expressing directions for completing work in a visual format that can be easily understood by all students. The number of steps and the format of the directions (i.e. pictures, words, and objects) will vary depending upon the learning style of each individual. In order to have the greatest impact on student learning, teachers must consider everything that needs to be said and done and then translate important information into a visual format.

#### → *Engineering the Environment*

Many of us rely on labels that we see around us to give us information. For example, bathrooms are labeled, as well as exit signs, doctors' offices, restaurants, buses, and streets. We rely on these cues in our environment to help us find purpose and meaning. People with disabilities need to learn these same cues and would also benefit from more labels in school and home settings to assist with independence and communication (Hodgdon, 1998). In the school setting, common labels may include personal items, such as coats, clothing, desks and storage areas. Areas around the classroom and school settings, in which specific activities occur, can also be labeled (i.e. gym, art room, work area, library, circle time area and computer). Organization of shelves can be simplified by using labels for specific items such as toys, dishes, finished work etc. (Hodgdon, 1998). To assist students in making sense of their environment, label objects to match the label in the area in which they belong. Students can learn to match the label on the object to the label in the area (Hodgdon, 1998). Labels can take the form of words and/or pictures. Remember whatever form you use, students will need to be taught what the labels mean and how to use this information, in order to become more independent. (Hodgdon, 1998).

### Not so New, but Innovative:

#### → *Linking AAC devices to the computer*

Many people who use AAC devices have not had the opportunity to produce written materials because of poor motor skills and other challenges. Until recently, accessing

the computer to allow individuals to enter information for writing and/or to communicate via E-mail has involved finding other adaptations completely separate from their usual AAC device (Hanser, 2001). Augmentative and Alternative Communication Institute has created a free software program, "AAC Keys" for Microsoft Windows-based computers that transfers keyboard and mouse functions through the serial port on the computer to another device, like an AAC system ([www.aac institute.org](http://www.aac institute.org)). A built-in option on PC computers, "Serial Keys", is a free utility program available under Accessibility Options, and can be downloaded for the Mac at ([http://tracewisc.edu/world/computer\\_access/mac/sk\\_soft.html](http://tracewisc.edu/world/computer_access/mac/sk_soft.html)). For more information about these options and for troubleshooting guides, go to Caroline Musselwhite's website [www.aacintervention.com](http://www.aacintervention.com).

#### → *Literacy and Augmentative Communication*

Reading, writing and verbal expression operate together to form language (Musselwhite & King-DeBaun, 1995). In the field of emergent literacy, research shows that children learn at a very early age the process of reading and writing, as they are developing language (Musselwhite, 2001. "Balanced literacy!"). As children interact with their environment, they are practicing language and learning about the early stages of literacy. Literacy and language develop together and are intertwined (Musselwhite, 2001. "Balanced literacy!"). In the classroom, combining communication overlays with activities and books helps students to associate and practice literacy skills. Allowing students to choose their own stories and providing the opportunity for repeated readings, if desired, allows the student to become more involved in the activity and to use their communication skills in an active, functional manner (Musselwhite & King-DeBaun, 1995).

#### → *Social Scripts*

Developing and learning writing skills poses particular difficulty for students with communication challenges. Creating narratives has a great impact on an individual's written communication growth (Musselwhite, 2001. "Write on!"). Social scripts are narratives that can be used in daily activities. The purpose behind using social scripts is for people to use AAC for real, meaningful, conversations. Using a social script, the AAC user is encouraged to take turns in conversations (Musselwhite & Burkhart, 2001). Individuals with limited language, poor access skills or cognitive delays can benefit from social scripts (Musselwhite & Burkhart, 2001). Musselwhite & Burkhart (2001) describe three categories of scripts: action scripts; class/work participation scripts; and conversation scripts. In action scripts the student engages his/her communication partner in action and the student receives tangible feedback from communication attempts (i.e. Playing ball; snack; backscratch). Action scripts work particularly well with beginning communicators and those with more complex cognitive challenges. Class/work participation scripts are for situations that do not allow for as much interactive communication. For younger students, class participation scripts may involve roles for "line leader", "attendance recorder" or "activity organizer". Older students and adults work scripts might include, "reshelving books", "distributing information" or "organizing the stockroom". Conversation scripts involve partners in interactive communication (Musselwhite & Burkhart, 2001). Some social agendas that can involve conversation scripts are for the purposes of achieving social closeness and sense of belonging (i.e. talking about common interests) or for information transfer (i.e. presenting new information, a transferring of information or giving directions) (Musselwhite & Burkhart, 2001). Conversational opportunities should allow both partners to be initiators and receivers of information.

AAC has impacted the lives of people with disabilities. As we move forward, technology will continue to develop and new AAC devices will be invented, but the importance and value of communication will never change. To quote a Chinese Proverb, "Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I'll understand" (Great Quotations, Inc., 1999). Communication is the key to knowledge. Make sure all of your students are actively engaged and involved in the learning process.

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## Dinwiddie Elementary School Instructional Support Team (IST)

Bernice Bracey  
*Principal*

Shirley Cashwell  
*Director of Special Services*

Adrian M. Williams  
*Instructional Support Teacher*

At Dinwiddie Elementary School, the Instructional Support Team (IST) Initiative is based on the premise that a comprehensive support network must be developed to enhance student learning. Working from that premise, ongoing training and support are provided by several sources (Virginia Department of Education consultants and staff from VCU T/TAC) to the IST teacher who, in turn, trains and supports teachers and students. The IST teacher also trains and supports IST members who intervene with students and teachers.

The work of our IST team features, as it does in the other Instructional Support Teams sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education (presently there are twelve teams in five superintendent's regions), assessing instruction, including assisting in the learning task and environment, so that a match with the aforementioned learning variables can be determined for the student(s) of concern. The guiding principle of team practices is that, upon determination of a match, student learning will be accelerated. Contracting between the IST case manager and the teacher requesting IST assistance as well as team support for the individual team member's collaboration with classroom teachers are two of the mechanisms used by the IST to ensure that quality services are provided.

As the IST at Dinwiddie Elementary School enters its third year of implementation, we are moving to fine tune service delivery. Several goals that will influence our efforts to improve team functioning are:

1. By June 2002, 85% of our classroom teachers will have requested help and received assistance through the IST process during the 2001-2002 school year.
2. By June 2002, the IST will have modeled strategies and interventions during staff development and teacher workdays of the 2001-2002 school year.
3. All team members will continue to receive ongoing additional training in the IST model and processes.
4. The number of special education child study referrals made at Dinwiddie Elementary School during the 2001-2002 school year will be lower than the number of referrals made in the previous year.

In closing, it should be noted that the monthly rate of service requests made to the team has increased steadily since the inception of the IST at Dinwiddie Elementary School in October, 2000. Obviously, this increase in service requests reflects a growing appreciation by teachers of what the IST can do for them and their students.

*Dinwiddie Elementary School, located in Dinwiddie County, is in its second full year of implementing the Instructional Support Team model. The VCU T/TAC serves as a support for the program.*

### **Maximizing Potentials Working Together to Blend Theory & Practice**

**April 17-19, 2002**

**Sheraton Oceanfront Hotel  
Virginia Beach, VA**

**For Information, contact  
Virginia Autism  
Resource Center**

**1-877-667-7771  
info@varc.org**

## **Transition Forum 2002 Updates**

You still have time to register for the **Transition Forum** which will be held at the **Hotel Roanoke** on **March 18-20, 2002**. You may obtain information and/or register on-line at [www.conted.vt.edu/vtf02.htm](http://www.conted.vt.edu/vtf02.htm).

The conference strands include:

**Adult Life Service Options**  
**Assessment for Transition**  
**Basis Transition 101**  
**Career and Technical Education/Career Development**  
**Challenging Behaviors/At-Risk Youth**  
**Disability Specific Practices**  
**Education Reform/SOL Linkages**  
**Family and Community Partnerships**  
**Higher Education**  
**Secondary Best Practices**  
**Self-Determination**

Another transition training opportunity:

**Mini-Transition Practitioner's Council on the topic:  
*Self-Determination and How to Write Individual Transition Plans***

**April 18, 2002, at John Tyler Community College, Chester VA**  
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

**April 23, 2002, at the Virginia Tech Southern Piedmont Extension & Research Center**  
9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

For more information, contact Kathe Wittig by phone at (804) 827-1403 or by E-mail at [kmwittig@vcu.edu](mailto:kmwittig@vcu.edu)

# Integrated Placement Options for Preschoolers: Where are we on the Continuum?

Sandy Wilberger, M.Ed.

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) passed in 1990 guarantees a free, appropriate education for all students with disabilities. In addition, the IDEA and subsequent Amendments of 1997 requires that IEP teams provide services in the "least restrictive environment", and also guarantees a full continuum of services and placements for students with disabilities. In preschool programs the benefits of having young children with and without disabilities learn together has been widely documented. Significant benefits to language development, social interaction skills, and play skills of children accrue when children with disabilities attend preschools with their peers without disabilities (Esposito & Peach, 1983, Ground & Yeager 1987; Guralnick 1981; Jenkins, Odom & Speltz, 1989). Integrated early childhood classes provide a more "normalized" environment in that children with disabilities have the opportunity to acquire, retain and apply skills in environments where they are needed. In addition, integrated classrooms offer a stimulating environment and a wider range of learning opportunities.

The benefits to young children without disabilities are numerous also. Young children without disabilities in integrated classrooms have the opportunity to develop realistic attitudes about children with disabilities, become sensitive to their needs and learn to appreciate individual differences at an early age. In integrated classes children without disabilities have more opportunities to become leaders, thereby increasing their self-confidences.

While many school divisions and schools in Virginia have found ways to provide a continuum of placement options for preschoolers with disabilities, many continue to struggle with numerous challenges to successfully establishing inclusive programs. A recent study of the Virginia's Department of Education's State Improvement Plan (SIP) and services indicated that providing a continuum of placement options remains an issue that needs addressing within our schools.

Several models have been used in programs across Virginia to expand the continuum of placement options for 2-5 year olds with disabilities. Typical ways that Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) programs have provided integration options include the following:

## 1. Collaborative Model

In this model a group of children with disabilities are enrolled in one or two early childhood programs (i.e., eight to ten children with disabilities, with one or two children per classroom). Early childhood special education teachers and assistants are based full-time at the early childhood programs. Another way to provide services in the collaborative model is to combine an ECSE and an ECE class and have the teachers co-teach. Early childhood programs that may work well with this model include Head Start (10% of children enrolled should have disabilities), Virginia Preschool Initiative and community childcare programs.

## 2. Consultative Model

In this model children with disabilities are enrolled full-time in early childhood programs with same peers. ECSE teachers provide limited direct service to children as determined by their IEP and meet weekly with the ECE teacher to develop lesson plans and discuss issues related to the child. Programs that children might be enrolled in using this model also include Head Start, Virginia Preschool Initiative and Community childcare programs.

## 3. Community Childcare Program Model

In this model children with disabilities are enrolled full-time in neighborhood childcare programs with children without disabilities. The ECSE teacher and assistant may serve children via the collaborative model (ECSE teacher and assistant are based at the center) or a consultative model (ECSE teacher and assistant provide limited services as determined by the child's IEP). Some school divisions develop contracts with community programs and pay tuition; others provide only collaborative or consultative services.

## 4. Reverse Mainstreaming Model

With this model children without disabilities are enrolled either full or part-time in ECSE classes. Recommended practice suggests that the number of children should equal or be greater than the number of students with disabilities. ECE practices are used in complement with recommended practices in ECSE. Some programs in Virginia have implemented this model by developing an application process and using a lottery sys-

tem for enrolling students without disabilities in the ECSE class. This model can prove very successful if Head Start, Virginia Preschool Initiative or community classes are not available for integration opportunities.

Regardless of the model, for integration to be successful, change may be needed. Some examples of changes that may be needed include:

### Program Policies

Developing a policy to provide planning time for special and regular educators and related service providers to meet to discuss classroom issues and specific children.

### Staff Roles

Deciding what roles ECSE staff will have in each classroom and how ECE staff roles may change.

### Assessment and Instruction

Adapting existing curriculum and lesson plans to make sure that the needs of all children are met.

### Developing Friendships

Learning and using strategies in classrooms to promote friendships between the children with and without disabilities and make sure the children with disabilities belong.

### Classroom Environment

Making adaptations to your classroom arrangement, furniture, and other areas to ensure that children with disabilities are included in all classroom activities.

### Classroom Discipline

Expanding the use of positive discipline strategies to prevent behaviors from occurring and using specific behavioral strategies to support children with more challenging behaviors.

Court cases have found segregation of students into self-contained classrooms or center-based programs to be in noncompliance of IDEA regulations unless "the nature and severity or the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily". (Federal Register, 9/29/92, 34 CFR Parts 300 & 301). Some courts have interpreted this regulation to mean there must be documentation that the IEP team has attempted to provide services in general education classes with supports before considering alternative placement for a student. At the preschool level it is imperative that we place children in general education settings and do what we can to ensure their success. So, let's get started!

For information on programs implementing integration options please contact the T/TAC 827-1405. Contact Virginia Department of Education [www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE](http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE) for information on Federal and State Early Childhood Programs

### References:

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## *The Young Child with Special Needs The National Conference Addressing Issues in Early Development: Birth to Five Years*

May 20-22, 2002  
Washington, DC

Preconferences  
*Feeding Disorders*  
*Autism*  
May 18-19, 2002

For More Information, Contact:  
Contemporary Forums  
1-800-377-7707, ext. 3  
[www.contemporaryforums.com](http://www.contemporaryforums.com)

## Web Site Adds New Functionality

Fran Smith, Ed.S., CVE

The VCU TTAC Webmaster has been busy adding some new functionality to the website, <http://www.soe.vcu/ttac>. When first entering the home page, users will recognize a few changes to the navigational buttons to the left side of the page. These have been simplified to add instant access to many of the major services we provide. Major categories include:

**What's New:** Provides reference points to recent changes within TTAC.

**Services:**

Summarizes and offers direct links to our major service areas such as Library, TECHNet, Technology Preview Library, Requesting a Consult and Training.

**About Us:**

Provides information on our vision, mission and guiding principles.

**The TTAC System:**

Describes the statewide TTAC model and provides links to other TTACs.

**Regions Served:**

Provides direct connection to all schools served in Regions 1 & 8 and a visual map of the individual counties.

**Staff & PMT Teams:**

Offers a link to each staff member, member of our Planning & Management Advisory Team members and all email addresses.

**TECH Preview Labs:**

Redesigned to offer clickable links to relevant web resources, assistive technology definitions and practices, our library and web sites. An additional button for tutorials will soon be activated that provides instant access to online tutorials of many of our software programs.

**Training:**

Connection to our online training calendars, our Training at a Glance Brochure and many upcoming training events across the state.

**Publications:**

This is where you'll find our current newsletter publications in PDF format (Adobe Acrobat Reader required). We've also provided links to many of our archived publications from previous years.

**Library:**

Redesigned to offer clickable links to many library resources at VCU, the Library of Congress and a short tutorial on using our Athena online automation system.

**Online Discussions:**

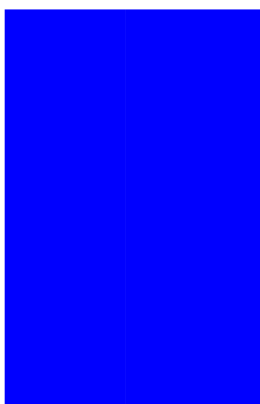
The Practitioner's Discussion Forum has been featured in this spot since last year. Users are encouraged to post topics of interest to others.

**Web Links:**

A potpourri of websites that cover most major disability areas, technology, professional development and national organizations.

One of the redesigned pages, TECHNet Regional Technology Network, is intended to provide many online answers to questions pertaining to assistive technology applications. Many of our constituents are familiar with the TECHNet Regional Network of technology practitioners. We've redesigned the TECHNet page to specifically incorporate some of the national resources that help us define best practices in the assistive technology field. We've also provided direct links to websites in assistive technology. Future plans are to include a link to many of our "in-house" instructional guides and a directory of members in the network. If you find these changes helpful, please email us with your comments....we are always trying to improve.

The Library page also provides some new and improved functionality. Many of our consumers are familiar with the lending library services provided at the Richmond and Blackstone campuses. This newly designed page offers some helpful tips on using our online Athena library system as well as connections to the VCU Library, other Virginia libraries and the Adult Learning Resource Center. Collectively, these offer a rich resource for finding the information you need.



## Call for Entries...Children's Artwork

The Virginia Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Student Services is seeking children's artwork for the 2002-03 edition of the *Family Fundamentals Calendar*. Early childhood educators are invited to submit their students' artwork for the calendar. Classrooms submitting winning entries will receive a \$75 prize for the purchase of instructional materials specifically for the preschool classroom.

### Eligibility Requirements:

- ⇒ Students must be between the ages of two and five and have an active IEP.
- ⇒ A completed entry form signed by the teacher and a parent/guardian must accompany each entry.
- ⇒ The following artwork guidelines must be followed:
  - Original artwork completed during the current school year must be submitted (no photo copies). It should be completed in the classroom and may not be brought in from home.
  - Artwork must be on sturdy, standard-size (no larger than 8.5" x 11") white paper.
  - Media may be of a variety of *colorful* materials (markers, crayons, etc.) *Please do not use tempera paint or neon colors* since they are difficult to reproduce.
  - Identification (artist's and teacher's names and school/program name) must appear on the reverse side of each piece submitted.
- ⇒ Artwork should adhere to the theme assigned to the month for which it is submitted.
- ⇒ Entries must be postmarked no later than May 1, 2002.
- ⇒ Entries cannot be returned to the entrant (child or teacher).

Each classroom may submit up to 13 entries (one for each month, plus the cover). Only three entries from each classroom will be awarded prizes. Entries may include several pieces from one child, several children, or the class as a whole. Fourteen winners will be selected from the following categories and the covers:

SEPTEMBER:	<i>School</i> (learning routines/rules, behavioral supports, riding a bus, meeting new people)
OCTOBER:	<i>Me and My Family</i> (my body, self-esteem, family dynamics, family members and roles)
NOVEMBER:	<i>Foods and Nutrition</i> (where foods come from, cooking, eating habits & feeding skills)
DECEMBER:	<i>Four Seasons</i> (weather, what we wear, changes we see, hear, or smell)
JANUARY:	<i>Science in the Preschool Classroom</i> (mixtures, observing, planting, mixing colors)
FEBRUARY:	<i>Emotions</i> (describing feelings, comforting peers, facing fears, recognizing facial expressions)
MARCH:	<i>Personal Responsibility</i> (helping, caring for toys, jobs in school and the community)
APRIL:	<i>Friends</i> (making and keeping friends, social skills, sharing, taking turns, working in groups)
MAY:	<i>Pre-Literacy Skills</i> (predictable stories, letter sounds, reading with your child)
JUNE:	<i>Early Math Skills</i> (counting, sorting, quality concepts ["just one", more/less, all/some])
JULY:	<i>Moving Your Body</i> : music and movement, fine and gross motor skills and activities, balance
AUGUST:	<i>Transitions</i> : (preparing for Kindergarten, changes at home and school, changes in routines)

For questions, additional information, and sending submissions, please contact:

Susan Pinson, M.Ed.  
 Griffin Yeates Center  
 1490 Government Road  
 Williamsburg, VA 23185  
 susanpinson@mindspring.com  
 (757) 890-5286

Coming this Summer (to a computer near you!)

### **TEDU 500: Current Issues in Early Childhood Special Education**

Purpose: Updated information & resources for educators & related service personnel (for recertification only)

Format: Web-based course

Credit: Three hours of graduate credit

Cost: \$318, in state tuition (subject to change)

This course is a **collaborative distance education project** between universities in Wisconsin and Virginia. It will be taught by faculty from Old Dominion University, Radford University, and Virginia Commonwealth University. **Topics will include:** brain development, sensory processing and temperament, effective learning environments and instructional strategies, new approaches in assessment, natural environments and inclusion, assistive technology and augmentative communication.

This course will be offered through VCU's School of Education, Office of Consulting Education. To **receive further scheduling and registration information** (when details have been finalized), please E-mail your name and full address to baycock@vcu.edu.

Virginia Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Student Services

**Family FUNdamentals Calendar: Entry and Permission Form**

(May be photocopied as needed - one entry *per category*, per classroom, please)

The attached artwork is being submitted for consideration in the following category/ month:

(Please mark one)

- SEPTEMBER *School*
- OCTOBER *Me and My Family*
- NOVEMBER *Foods and Nutrition*
- DECEMBER *Four Seasons*
- JANUARY *Science*
- FEBRUARY *Emotions*
- MARCH *Personal Responsibility*
- APRIL *Friends*
- MAY *Pre-Literacy Skills*
- JUNE *Early Math Skills*
- JULY *Moving Your Body*
- AUGUST *Transitions*
- COVERS

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade/Program: \_\_\_\_\_

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School Division: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

By signing below, I verify that the above information is accurate and that the work submitted is actually that of a preschool student receiving special education services. I have read and agree to the contest rules. If this entry is chosen for use in the 2002-03 calendar, I will accept a \$75 honorarium on behalf of my classroom for the purchase of materials and supplies.

Teacher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*The following must be completed and signed by the child's parent/guardian.*

I hereby give permission for my child's drawing to be included in the 2002-03 Family FUNdamentals Calendar of Activities and Ideas and/or other Virginia Department of Education publications. I give permission for his/her name, age, and school location to be printed in the publication.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(to be used to mail a copy of the finished calendar to artists)*

**VCU T/TAC Library and TechLab Spring Hours**

	<b>Oliver Hall, Richmond</b>	<b>Pickett Park, Blackstone</b>
Monday	8:30 AM to 6:00 PM	8:30 AM to 5:00 PM
Tuesday	8:30 AM to 6:00 PM	8:30 AM to 5:00 PM
Wednesday	8:30 AM to 6:00 PM	8:30 AM to 5:00 PM
Thursday	8:30 AM to 6:00 PM	8:30 AM to 5:00 PM
Friday	8:30 AM to 4:00 PM	8:30 AM to 4:00 PM

Closed Saturdays and Sundays. We will gladly arrange for use outside these hours.  
Please call (804) 828-6947 or 1-800-426-1595 to make arrangements.

## ***Families are Special, Too! Conference***

The 14th Annual Families are Special, Too! Conference for families and educators of young children (aged 0-5) with special needs will be held at the **Richmond Airport Wyndham Hotel** on Friday and Saturday, **February 22-23, 2002**.

This year's theme - **Creating Community for Families** - embraces the growing recognition that families need to begin connecting the community dots when their children are very young.

The host of the conference, **The Family Support & Advocacy Committee of the Virginia (early intervention) Interagency Coordinating Council**, is soliciting proposals for theme-based presentations on topics of interest to families and educators of young children with special needs. **Topics we are especially interested in are: community and/or school inclusion, innovative community, respite and/or faith-based programs, family support, self-determination, etc.**

If you would like the Call for Papers guidelines, or would like a registration form, please contact:

Dana Yarbrough  
Parent to Parent of Virginia  
P. O. Box 38341  
Richmond, VA 23231

Phone: (804) 222-1945  
Fax: (804) 222-3402  
E-mail: [ptpofva@aol.com](mailto:ptpofva@aol.com)

## ***Access for All: Supporting Students with Severe Disabilities***

June 26-28, 2002  
Williamsburg, VA

**Sponsored by:  
The Virginia Department of Education  
The Training & Technical Assistance Centers across Virginia**

### **About the Conference**

This conference is about access for all children. IDEA '97, federal, and state special education regulations require that all students must have access to the general curriculum. In Virginia, the general curriculum is steered by the Standards of Learning (SOL). This conference is designed to provide families, teachers and other educational team members with ideas, recommended teaching practices, and strategies so that children with severe disabilities can access and benefit from instruction in the general curriculum.

### **Strands**

#### **IEP**

Sessions will teach participants the most current information on creating a usable IEP that ensures access to the general curriculum with measurable annual goals, objectives/benchmarks, and accommodations/modifications.

#### **Inclusive Education**

Research has shown that educating students with diverse strengths and needs together in the general education environment is beneficial to all. This strand will share information on problem solving, collaborating, and scheduling for successful inclusion.

#### **Universal Design**

Access for all can be achieved with modifications, accommodations, assistive technology and other supports to make the general curriculum available to all students through the concept of universal design.

#### **Positive Behavior Supports**

Presenters will share how to complete a functional behavioral assessment and develop a positive behavioral support plan. Participants will also hear from a school that has successfully implemented school wide positive behavioral support.

#### **Virginia's Alternate Assessment Program**

If you have heard about Virginia's Alternate Assessment Program, but need to know more, presenters will provide an overview of Virginia's Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) and how to develop a Collection of Evidence (COE) for students whose education you support.

#### **For More Information**

The planning committee will have more specific information about the conference in March. Please contact Kelly Ligon at VCU T/TAC at [kligon@vcu.edu](mailto:kligon@vcu.edu) or call 1-434-298-0421.

## VCU T/TAC Upcoming Trainings

### **Assessing + Analyzing + Planning = Successful Reading Instruction**

Using data-based decision making, participants will:

- Explore reading assessments and how to use them
- Interpret assessment results for instructional purposes
- Design an instructional plan based on assessment results
- Review instructional plans and revise as needed based on students' progress
- Prepare cumulative reviews

Date(s)/Time(s):	1.) <b>February 26, 2002; 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM</b> 2.) <b>February 28, 2002; 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM</b> 3.) <b>March 19, 2002; 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM</b> 4.) <b>March 21, 2002; 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM</b>
Location(s):	1.) Human Services Building Prince George, VA 2.) VA Tech Southern Piedmont Extension & Research Center Blackstone, VA 3.) Radisson Downtown (free parking) Richmond, VA 4.) Brian's Steakhouse South Hill, VA
Cost:	\$15 (includes lunch)
Recommended For:	K-3 general education teachers and teachers of students with mild disabilities
Register By:	One week prior to preferred date
For Information:	<b>Chris Frawley (434) 298-0427 or cdfrawley@vcu.edu</b> <b>Joanne Gutkin (804) 827-1409 or jgutkin@vcu.edu</b>

### **Delivering Services in Natural Environments**

Participants will hear from an early intervention team about how they use natural environments to effectively and efficiently reach outcomes and goals for infants and toddlers. Come learn how they actively include parents, siblings, grandparents, day-care providers, and peers in interventions.

Date(s)/Time(s):	<b>March 15, 2002; 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM</b>
Location(s):	John Tyler Community College Nicholas Student Center Chester, VA
Cost:	\$20
Recommended For:	Teams which may include administrators, family members, infant educators, occupational therapists, physical therapists, service coordinators, and speech and language pathologists
Register By:	<b>March 8, 2002</b>
For Information:	<b>Sandy Wilberger (804) 827-1405 or slwilber@vcu.edu</b>

### **Person-Centered Planning Strategies (Mini Transition Practitioner's Council)**

Person-centered planning is an integral part of the transition process. Come learn best practices in person-centered planning and take part in a person-centered planning activity.

Date(s)/Time(s):	1.) <b>April 18, 2002; 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM</b> 2.) <b>April 23, 2002; 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM</b>
Location(s):	1.) John Tyler Community College Chester, VA 2.) Virginia Tech Southern Piedmont Extension & Research Center Blackstone, VA
Cost:	\$15 (includes lunch)

Recommended For: Adult service agency personnel, guidance counselors, family members, special education teachers, and transition coordinators (teams are recommended)

Register By: **One week prior to preferred date**

For Information: **Kathe Wittig (804) 827-1403 or kmwittig@vcu.edu**

### **Individualized Family Service Plan Development**

Participants will learn about the Collaborative Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP) Handbook, currently in development at the Virginia Institute for Developmental Disabilities (VIDD). Practical strategies for developing and implementing outcomes and sample IFSP outcomes will be shared with participants.

Date(s)/Time(s):	<b>May 20, 2002; 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM</b>
Location(s):	VA Tech Southern Piedmont Extension and Research Center Blackstone, VA
Cost:	\$20
Recommended For:	Teams which may include administrators, family members, infant educators, occupational therapists, physical therapists, service coordinators, and speech and language pathologists
Register By:	<b>May 13, 2002</b>
For Information:	<b>Sandy Wilberger (804) 827-1405 or slwilber@vcu.edu</b>

### **When Life Hands You Lemons, Make Lemonade!! Teaching Students to Be Responsible for Themselves**

Sometimes teachers are called on to make decisions beyond what to teach and how best to teach it. They also have to support students having personal problems. No matter how experienced or well prepared a teacher is, relating to students and managing a classroom require sensitivity and insight. In this training, participants will learn multiple ways to prevent obstacles to teaching by using effective classroom management strategies. Participants will also learn ways to support students with more challenging behavior by teaching them problem-solving and anger-management skills.

Date(s)/Time(s):	1.) <b>August 12, 2002; 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM</b> 2.) <b>August 19, 2002; 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM</b>
Location(s):	1.) Richard Bland College Lecture Room Petersburg, VA 2.) Brian's Steakhouse South Hill, VA
Cost:	\$15 (includes lunch)
Recommended For:	General education teachers, guidance counselors, paraprofessionals, school psychologists and special educators
Register By:	One week prior to preferred date
For Information:	<b>Phyllis L. M. Haynes (804) 827-1408 or plhaynes@vcu.edu</b>

## **NEW REGISTRATION FORM →**

In an effort to serve our consumers better, the VCU T/TAC has made some changes to its registration form.

We have simplified the form to be more user friendly and have added a section for those individuals who are vegetarian or who have dietary needs. Also, we have added a checklist for the location of the event you wish to attend.

During this changeover, we will still except the "old" registration form as well as the "new" one.

**Virginia Commonwealth University**  
**Training & Technical Assistance Center**  
<http://www.soe.vcu.edu/ftac>

### Training Registration Form

Please Print

Name of Training Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Training Location (please check one:)      Date of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

- |  |                                   |                                     |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blackstone    | <input type="checkbox"/> Chester  | <input type="checkbox"/> Petersburg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prince George | <input type="checkbox"/> Richmond | <input type="checkbox"/> South Hill |

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School/Program or Agency You Represent:  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Please indicate where you want training information sent. This information may be used for the transmission of time-sensitive information such as confirmations, receipts, workshop materials, etc.*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

- Dietary restrictions?       Vegetarian
- Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

#### ***Fee & Payment Information***

Total fee(s): \_\_\_\_\_      Check all that apply

Make checks payable to VCU T/TAC       Purchase order #: \_\_\_\_\_

Our Federal Tax I.D. # is 54-6001758       School check: \_\_\_\_\_

DO NOT SEND CASH       Invoice required for payment

(cash payments must be made in person)       Personal check

***Because of food logistics, if you have not preregistered for an event we will not accept on-site registrations***

Send completed form to

**VCU T/TAC**  
**Attn: Paul Robertson**

By mail:  
P.O. Box 842020  
Richmond, VA 23284-2020

By fax:  
(804) 828-7495

By E-mail attachment:  
plrobert@vcu.edu

## **VCU T/TAC**

### **Staff Contact Information**

#### **Richmond Office**

1015 West Main Street  
Oliver Hall - Education Wing  
Room 1038  
P. O. Box 842020  
Richmond, VA 23284-2020

**Toll Free Office Number: 1-800-426-1595**

**TDD: 1-800-828-1120**

**Erik J. Froehlich**, Information Technologies  
(804) 827-1412  
ejfroehl@vcu.edu

**Joanne Gutkin**, Program Specialist - At-Risk  
(804) 827-1409  
jgutkin@vcu.edu

**Phyllis L. M. Haynes**, Program Specialist - Mild Moderate Disabilities  
(804) 827-1408  
plhaynes@vcu.edu

**Mable B. Heiskill**, Secretary  
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mbheiski@vcu.edu

**Linda Ingleson**, Program Specialist-Early Childhood Special Education  
(804) 827-1401  
ldingleson@vcu.edu

**Sharon Jones**, Program Specialist - Early Childhood Special Ed./Assistive Technologies  
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**Tracy Landon**, Program Specialist - Behavior  
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**Kathy Lynch**, Senior Evaluator  
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**Linda Oggel**, Program Specialist - Communication/Autism/Assistive Technologies  
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**Evelyn Reed-Victor**, Principal Investigator  
(804) 828-1305  
ereedvic@vcu.edu

**Paul L. Robertson**, Office Manager  
(804) 828-8151  
plrobert@vcu.edu

**Fran Smith**, Program Specialist - Instructional Technology  
(804) 827-1406  
fgsmith@vcu.edu

**Victoria Walden**, Librarian  
(804) 828-6521  
vlwalden@vcu.edu

**Sandy Wilberger**, Co-Director/Program Specialist - Early Childhood Special Education  
(804) 827-1405  
slwilber@vcu.edu

**Katherine Wittig**, Program Specialist - Transition  
(804) 827-1403  
kmwittig@vcu.edu

#### **Blackstone Office**

440 QM Circle South  
Pickett Park  
Blackstone, VA 23824-3043

**Toll Free Office Number: 1-866-465-0412**

**Chris Frawley**, Program Specialist - At-Risk  
(434) 298-0427  
cdfrawley@vcu.edu

**Kelly Ligon**, Program Specialist - Severe Disabilities/Assistive Technologies  
(434) 298-0421  
kligon@vcu.edu

**Sarah Wright**, Program Support  
(434) 292-3723  
scleving@vcu.edu

# **VCU**

**Virginia Commonwealth University**  
Training & Technical Assistance Center  
School of Education

1015 West Main Street  
P.O. Box 842020  
Richmond, Virginia 23284-2020