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Update from the U.S. Department of Education

Using Technology and Personal Touch, Department of Education Opens Government

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and the U.S. Department of Education have embraced President Obama's vision of an open government. The secretary has travelled the country to listen to people's ideas for education reform, and the department is using technology to provide the public with data to track federal spending and to evaluate colleges and universities.

"Everybody wants our schools to improve. The level of commitment from our teachers and principals is extraordinary," Duncan said. "We want to hear the ideas of educators, parents, and students so they will be engaged in transforming our schools to prepare all of our students for success in the global economy."

In 2009, Secretary Duncan and his senior staff travelled the country on a "Listening and Learning" tour, asking for the public's ideas on how to improve the No Child Left Behind Act. The secretary has held events in every corner of the country, including inner-city Detroit, rural villages in Alaska, an Indian reservation in Montana, and a community school Orlando, Fla. He also held a televised town hall meeting with teachers in October.

By the end of the year, a representative of the department will have visited every state to hold public meetings to discuss education reform.

In addition to face-to-face meetings, the Department of Education has used www.ed.gov in innovative ways to provide information about the Listening and Learning tour to the public and to ask for input.

Those efforts have included a blog in which the secretary invites comments on topics he has discussed at Listening and Learning events and invites comments from the public. Some blog entries resulted in hundreds of comments. Duncan initiated follow-up conversations with teachers and others who made comments on his blog.

The department also has used its Web site to share information about the Listening and Learning tour. Videos and transcripts of events held at the department's headquarters are on the Web site as a resource for the public.

The Listening and Learning Tour has been highlighted on the White House's Web site in its Open Government Innovations Gallery.

In addition to the Listening and Learning Tour, the department has taken several other steps to improve the public's access to important government data.

The department is publishing data about federal financial assistance provided to students and families through loan, grant, and work-study programs. The data include recipient and volume numbers for each aid program by school. This will enable researchers, policy makers, and advocacy groups to analyze a school's financial aid data along with indicators of school

performance. This research will give the public information on the comparative bang-for-the-buck of federal dollars at work in individual colleges and universities.

The department also provided unprecedented transparency to how states spent money under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Based on reporting from states, the department documented that Recovery Act funds saved or created at least 325,000 jobs in America's schools.

Applications Now Available for \$3.5 Billion in Title I School Improvement Grants to Turn Around Nation's Lowest Achieving Public Schools

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the final requirements for \$3.5 billion in Title I School Improvement grants to turn around the nation's lowest performing schools. The applications are now available at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/sif/applicant.html> and are due into the Department of Education by Feb. 8, 2010.

"As a country, we all need to get into the turnaround business," said Duncan. "Today we are providing \$3.5 billion and four models that have proven results so that school districts, unions, charter operators, universities and the business community can come together to turn around our nation's lowest performing schools. Adults need to have the courage to make these tough decisions and do right by our kids."

These funds are made available to states by formula and competed for by school districts. As they compete for the funds, school districts (LEAs) must identify the schools they want to transform, and then determine which of the four following models is most appropriate. If a school has begun implementation of one of these four models or components of one of these models within the last two years, it may apply to use SIG funds to continue to implement the full model.

Turnaround model: Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the staff and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.

Restart model: Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.

School closure: Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the LEA that are higher achieving.

Transformation model: Implement each of the following strategies: (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness; (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms; (3) increase learning time and create community-oriented schools; and (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

In selecting the districts to which funds will be awarded the state must use specific criteria outlined by the Department. In their applications, states must identify and prioritize these funds to its persistently lowest-achieving schools. These schools are defined as:

Tier I: Any Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that-
Is among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the state;

Is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years;

Tier II: Any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds that-
Is among the lowest-achieving five percent of secondary schools in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds; or

Is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years.

Tier III: Any state Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring; SEAs will set exact criteria, which could include schools with low absolute performance but high growth rates over a number years, or the bottom 6–10 percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.

Title I School Improvement Grants are funded by \$546.6 million in the fiscal year 2009 appropriation and an additional \$3 billion from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to support the transformational changes that are needed to turn around the nation's lowest-achieving schools. The Department is also making available the 5 percent administrative funds to SEAs to assist with planning and program activities related to SIG implementation. The full list of requirements and final application can be found at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/sif/applicant.html>

Duncan Appoints Six Members to National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan today announced the Department's six appointments to the newly constituted National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI).

"This committee will play a vital role in ensuring the highest standards of accountability for accrediting agencies," Duncan said. "These agencies have the formidable task of assuring that schools participating in federal student aid programs provide a quality education to their students. These six new members bring varied expertise, talent, and experience to the committee, and their input will be invaluable as the department continues to improve these programs."

NACIQI advises the Secretary on accreditation issues and the eligibility and certification process for institutions of higher education. It is charged with recommending to the Secretary which accrediting or specific state approval agencies should be recognized as reliable authorities for judging the quality of postsecondary institutions and programs.

The Department's six members, appointed for three-year terms, are:

- Earl Lewis, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs, Emory University, Atlanta, Ga.
- Susan Phillips, provost and vice president for academic affairs, University at Albany, State University of New York
- Jamienne Studley, president and CEO, Public Advocates Inc., San Francisco, Calif.
- Aron Shimles, student, Occidental College, Los Angeles, Calif.
- Frank Wu, professor, Howard University Law School, Washington, D.C.
- Frederico Zargoza, vice chancellor of economic and workforce development, Alamo Colleges, San Antonio, Tex.

Established in 1972, NACIQI was changed by the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2008 (P.L. 110-315) from a 15-member committee appointed solely by the Secretary of Education to an 18-member committee appointed equally by the Secretary, the Senate, and the House of Representatives. The House and Senate are expected to complete their appointments soon and the newly-formed committee will then meet shortly thereafter.

Department of Education Video Highlights School Counselor Jobs Saved in Fairfax County, Va.

The U.S. Department of Education today released a six-minute video about three school counselors whose jobs were saved by the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The video can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDj1B9l8O7Y>.

The counselors, Sue Synan, Jill Wilson and Jon-Paul Sousa, all work for the Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia where they provide academic support for students applying to colleges and help students address problems they face outside of the classroom. In spring 2009, Synan, Wilson and Sousa were among 58 counselors in the district who were notified that their jobs would be eliminated due to the Fairfax County Public Schools' \$219 million budget deficit. Through the ARRA, the school district received \$49.3 million in stimulus money. Some of the funding was used to save all 58 counselor positions, ensuring that students would receive necessary academic and emotional support.

"We knew that counselors were vital, and we are fortunate to have saved these jobs through this funding," Assistant Superintendent Kim Dockery said.

In February 2009, ARRA allocated \$100 billion to the U.S. Department of Education to save and create jobs and drive reform. According to www.recovery.gov, approximately 325,000 education jobs were either created or saved to date.

This video is one of a series produced by the Department of Education about the impact of ARRA on education jobs. Others include:

- A video on teaching and learning facilitator positions saved in St. Louis: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWlPgU4WiT4>.
- The impact of ARRA on Mount Vernon Community School in Alexandria, Va.: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gadQz6QuM7M>.
- The impact of ARRA in Clark County, Nev., and Memphis, Tenn.: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZZcVZ6A0w0>.

Duncan Calls on State Legislators to Lift Barriers to Reform

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan urged state legislators to become leaders of the school reform movement and urged them to carefully review their education codes to identify places where state law is impeding reform.

Speaking in San Diego to the fall forum of the National Conference of State Legislatures, Duncan said that legislators have the power to write laws that will create an environment where reforms can take root and improve the achievement of students.

"Education is very much a state and local responsibility," Duncan said. "And the truth is that state lawmakers must play a vital role in improving our schools, quite apart from any federal initiatives and incentives."

Duncan noted that states allocate more money for education than any other purpose. But too often states laws interfere with efforts to make the structural changes necessary to increase student achievement.

Specifically, Duncan called on legislators to rewrite state laws to:

- Ensure that students—especially disadvantaged students—are taught by an effective teacher and that all policies related to the teaching profession promote effective teaching.
- Offer high-quality alternative certification routes to becoming teachers for military veterans and career changers.
- Give districts the ability increase learning time by extending the school day or school year.
- Expand the number of charter schools and to increase accountability so bad charter schools are shut down.

Duncan praised state legislatures for leading the way on several fronts over the past several decades. In the 1980s, statehouses were in the forefront of the movement to set academic standards. Today, Louisiana is leading efforts to measure the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs by tracking the graduates' success in improving student achievement, and Florida, Texas and Colorado are preparing to follow suit.

"I applaud each and every one of these home-grown initiatives," Duncan said. "Yet I think that if state lawmakers want to be architects of reform today, they must think even more ambitiously—and especially when it comes to our neediest students in our lowest-performing schools."

Before addressing NCSL, Duncan held a meeting in Los Angeles with Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa, educators and civic leaders to discuss turning around low performing schools and other reform initiatives.

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Update From The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities

NICHCY shares several new resources in Spanish with you, freely available on their website and recently updated to reflect the requirements of IDEA 2004. All are part of the original series of letters called Comunicándose con la Escuela a Través de Cartas (Communicating with Your Child's School Through Letter Writing).

Cómo solicitar los expedientes de su niño.

(Requesting your child's school records)

<http://www.nichcy.org/Documents/Spanish%20pubs/archivos.pdf>

Cómo solicitar que se revise el IEP de su niño.

(Requesting a Meeting to Review the Individualized Education Program)

<http://www.nichcy.org/Documents/Spanish%20pubs/iep.pdf>

Cómo solicitar un cambio de ubicación.

(Requesting a Change of Placement)

<http://www.nichcy.org/Documents/Spanish%20pubs/ubicacion.pdf>

Cómo solicitar una evaluación de su niño.

(Requesting an Initial Evaluation for Special Education Services)

<http://www.nichcy.org/Documents/Spanish%20pubs/evaluacion.pdf>

Cómo solicitar una evaluación independiente al costo del público.

(Requesting an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at Public Expense)

<http://www.nichcy.org/Documents/Spanish%20pubs/iee.pdf>

IT ALL STARTS IN FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

From baby to big kid.

ZERO TO THREE's newest resource for parents is a monthly e-newsletter on how children learn and grow each month from birth to 3 years. Baby to Big Kid helps parents understand how development unfolds, what makes their own child tick, and offers strategies that parents can tailor to the needs of their unique family and individual child. To subscribe, go to:

www.zerotothree.org/baby2bigkid

National campaign to find and enroll uninsured children.

On November 4, 2009, HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius called on states and communities to redouble efforts to find and enroll the 5 million children who are currently eligible for Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), but are not yet covered. To learn more, go to: <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2009pres/11/20091104a.html>

Healthy People 2020: Request for comments.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services invites you to comment on the DRAFT set of objectives for Healthy People 2020. For three decades, Healthy People has provided a set of national 10-year health promotion and disease prevention objectives aimed at improving the

health of all Americans. Lend your voice to what those objectives will be. Comments will be accepted through December 31. <http://www.healthypeople.gov/hp2020>

A survey to understand family technology use patterns.

An important survey is being conducted by the Special Education Assistive Technology (SEAT) Center and the Family Center on Technology and Disability to identify the preferences of families of young children with disabilities for information conveyed via different computer-based technologies. The results of the survey will be made available on the FCTD website in early 2010. SEAT and FCTD ask, "Please help us reach the greatest number of families by forwarding the survey link to those in your network. Thanks!"

<https://forms.coe.ilstu.edu/sed/TakeSurvey.aspx?PageNumber=1&SurveyID=86L1872>

Successful systems of care.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has released Working Together to Help Youth Thrive in Schools and Communities, a report showing that systems of care in communities really are successful.

<http://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/advisories/0905064401.aspx>

The Resource Center on YouTube.

The Corporation for National and Community Service's Resource Center's YouTube page has become bigger and better. More than 60 videos have been added on a broad array of topics related to national and community service, including social media webinars and training.

<http://lists.etr.org/t/859034/353580/3981/0/>

Google announces automatic captions on YouTube.

Our colleagues at the Family Support Clearinghouse tell us that a new captioning feature is now out in Beta (beginning stages) format from Google. This should help us all make our videos universally accessible!

<http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2009/11/automatic-captions-in-youtube.html>

Connecting a million minds.

Time Warner Cable's Connect a Million Minds introduces youth to opportunities and resources that inspire them to develop the important science, technology, engineering, and math skills they need to solve the economic, environmental, and community challenges of the future. Search the Connectory for activities and resources in your community.

<http://www.connectamillionminds.com/connectory.php>

Introduction to social thinking.

Social thinking is required before social skills can develop. Successful social thinkers consider the points of view, emotions, thoughts, beliefs, prior knowledge and intentions of others. Many have great difficulties with this process. Enter: social thinking methodologies. They can teach people with social limitations the ability to interact socially.

<http://socialthinking.com/social-thinking-home/introduction-to-social-thinking.html>

Military OneSource.

This service is provided by the Department of Defense at no cost to active duty, Guard and Reserve (regardless of activation status), and their families. It is a virtual extension of installation services. Military OneSource offers help with parenting and child care, education, relocation, financial and legal concerns, and everyday issues. Call the center at 1.800.342.9647 (in English or Spanish), or visit: <http://www.militaryonesource.com/>

Upcoming LDA conference: February 17-20, 2010.

The Learning Disabilities Association of America's 47th Annual International Conference will be held in Baltimore, MD. <http://www.ldaamerica.org/conference/index.asp>

THE LITTLE ONES: EARLY INTERVENTION/EARLY CHILDHOOD

A review of research in early childhood transition.

From the The National Early Childhood Transition Center (NECTC), this technical report summarizes the findings of a review that included articles published in refereed journals between January 1990 and March 2006.

http://www.hdi.uky.edu/Libraries/NECTC_Papers_and_Reports/Technical_Report_5.sflb.ashx

Brain development in the early years: FAQs.

http://www.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ter_key_brainFAQ

A judge's guide.

Healthy Beginnings, Healthy Futures; A Judge's Guide is jointly published by the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and ZERO TO THREE. It provides developmental information specific to the needs of very young children in foster care. While written for judges, this volume presents the latest research in a format useful to all professionals working with young children in foster care.

http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/Healthy_Beginnings.pdf?docID=9822

Supporting young children affected by a military injury or death.

Honoring our Babies and Toddlers is a guide for professionals.

<http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/InjuryMay27.pdf?docID=9323>

How states are addressing the needs of substance-exposed infants.

An estimated 400,000-440,000 infants (10-11% of all births) each year are affected by prenatal alcohol or illicit drug exposure. This new report from the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW) examines state policy on this issue, looking at: prevention, intervention, identification, and treatment of prenatal substance exposure, including services for the infant, the mother, and the family. <http://www.ncsacw.samhsa.gov/files/Substance-Exposed-Infants.pdf>

Preventing challenging behaviors in young children with autism. The Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children (TACSEI) has posted this recorded online Webinar. The session presents a three-tiered framework for organizing prevention and intervention strategies that is appropriate for home, community, and preschool applications.

http://www.challengingbehavior.org/explore/webinars/11.2.2009_tacsei_presentation_teleconference.htm

Head Start 2008 state fact sheets.

CLASP has created state fact sheets analyzing Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) data for 2008, which all grantees are required to report annually to the federal government. Each profile includes all Head Start programs in the state: Early Head Start, Head Start preschool, American Indian and Alaskan Native Head Start, and Migrant/Seasonal Head Start.

- National fact sheet.

<http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/headstartdata2008us.pdf>

- Find your state's fact sheet.

http://www.clasp.org/in_the_states/

SCHOOLS, K-12

Hot off the press from the Department of Education: Q&A on serving children with disabilities eligible for transportation. <http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CQaCorner%2C12%2C>

Have you heard about Open Educational Resources (OER)?

OER are all about sharing. In a brave new world of learning, OER content is made free to use and, in some cases, to change and share again. This resource is made possible through licensing, so that teachers and learners can share what they know. Browse and search OER Commons to find curriculum, and tag, rate, and review it for others. <http://www.oercommons.org/>

Supporting the military child.

This toolkit from the AASA (American Association of School Administrators) offers guidance for school leaders on meeting the unique educational needs of children whose parents are deployed or in transition.

<http://www.aasa.org/content.aspx?id=9008>

For elementary school principals: Promising practices.

Principals from across the nation have offered promising practices, project ideas, programs, and techniques that they've implemented in their own schools to raise student achievement and improve learning communities.

The practices are divided into eight categories explaining their primary impact: academic excellence, parent/family involvement, business/community relations, school climate, funding and grants, staff development, public relations, and other areas of school leadership.

<http://www.naesp.org/promisingpractices.aspx>

Learning modules on UDL.

These two online modules by CAST introduce the theory, principles, and application of universal design for learning (UDL) to teacher candidates and in-service teachers.

<http://udlonline.cast.org/home>

Accommodations manual.

This manual will guide you through selecting, administering, and evaluating the use of accommodations for instruction and assessment of students with disabilities.

<http://www.osepideasthatwork.org/toolkit/pdf/AccommodationsManual.pdf>

Including students with disabilities in charter schools: Primers.

These Primers provide background information and resources to facilitate the successful inclusion of students with disabilities in charter schools.

http://www.uscharterschools.org/cs/spedp/print/uscs_docs/spedp/home.htm

Consumer's guide to reading comprehension assessments for adolescents.

This guide from the Carnegie Corporation of New York's Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy draws together evidence on nine of the most commonly used, commercially available reading comprehension assessments for use with adolescents, and provides a critical view into the strengths and weaknesses of each.

http://centeroninstruction.org/resources.cfm?category=reading&subcategory=materials&grade_start=4&grade_end=12#252

Using student achievement data to support instructional decision making.

This guide from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) provides a framework to help educators use student achievement data to guide classroom decisions such as adapting lessons, classroom goals, or instructional grouping in response to student needs as well as creating conditions to support effective use of assessment data.

http://centeroninstruction.org/resources.cfm?category=reading&subcategory=materials&grade_start=0&grade_end=12#260

Helping students navigate the path to college: What high schools can do.

This new practice guide from the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) recommends five steps that educators, administrators, and policy makers can take, beginning in 9th grade, to prepare students academically for college, assist them in completing the steps to college entry, and improve their likelihood of enrolling in college as well as the research evidence that supports these recommendations.

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/higher_ed_pg_091509.pdf

Family involvement and vocational rehab: Research to practice.

Materials from Family Involvement: Research to Practice, a session presented by TATRA staff, are now available online through the PACER Web site. The session highlighted strategies that promoted family involvement in the transition and vocational rehabilitation processes based on the findings of a number of recent studies.

<http://www.pacer.org/tatra/pdf/FamilyInvolvement-ResearchToPractice.pdf>

Webinar on reducing behavior problems in the elementary school classroom. You are invited to participate in a no-cost webinar sponsored by the LRE-Part B Community of Practice on Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom, based on the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Practice Guide of the same name. Schedule? Monday, December 14 at 3:00 PM Eastern. You will need access to high speed Internet and a phone line.

• **Download the IES Practice Guide from:**

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/>

• **Register for the webinar at:**

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/F6S2DP7>

New IRIS Module: Functional behavior assessments.

The newest training module from the IRIS Center explores the basic principles of behavior and the importance of discovering the reasons that students engage in problem behavior. The steps to conducting a functional behavioral assessment and developing a behavior plan are described.

<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/fba/chalcycle.htm>

Upcoming Webinars from the RTI Center.

Pre-registration is not required for these free events. For more information, visit the Center's

website, at:

http://www.rti4success.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=18&Itemid=75

- December 9th, 2:00pm EST

Interventions in RTI

- January 4th, 2:00pm EST

RTI and Behavior

- February 9th, 2:00pm EST

RTI in Middle Schools

How does RTI and math differ from RTI and reading?

Watch the video of Dr. Lynn Fuchs from Vanderbilt University as she answers this question in the second installment of the RTI Center's Ask the Expert video series.

http://www.rti4success.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1399

More on RTI: Creating your own blueprint.

This series, offered by the RTI Action Network, delineates six stages of RTI implementation based on frameworks developed by Dean L. Fixsen and his colleagues. The series includes articles on each stage to guide readers through the process of creating a plan for implementing RTI.

<http://www.rtinetwork.org/GetStarted/Develop/ar/Create-Your-Implementation-Blueprint>

Effective reading interventions for students with learning disabilities.

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/33084>

National Autism Center publishes National Standards Report.

The National Autism Center has published the final report of its National Standards Project, a rigorous multi-year project to analyze treatments for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and answer one of the most pressing public health questions of our time: How do we effectively treat individuals with ASD? The report is meant to serve as a single, authoritative source of guidance for parents, caregivers, educators, and service providers as they make informed treatment decisions.

<http://www.nationalautismcenter.org/affiliates/>

Effective practice for mentoring.

The 3rd edition of Effective Practice for Mentoring includes six evidence-based standards: addressing mentor and mentee recruitment, screening, training, matching, monitoring and support, and closure. The standards provide benchmarks for day-to-day operation and how they are applicable in stand-alone mentoring programs, as well as programs where mentoring is one element. www.mentoring.org/elements

Helping youth with mental health needs avoid transition cliffs.

The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth recently released an info brief that discusses challenges faced by young adults with mental health needs during their transition to adulthood and describes strategies used by youth service professionals to avoid age-related transition cliffs and prevent service interruptions during this critical stage of development.

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/information-brief-24>

When your students are using the Internet for research.

CITED tells us about Students' Guide to Web Searching, which is designed to help students distinguish reliable information from false information when using the internet for school.

http://www.findingdulcinea.com/guides/Education/Students-Guide-to-Web-Search.xa_1.html

Justice Department releases ADA employment video.

The Justice Department's new video is aimed at educating employers about the employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Ten Employment Myths: Information about the Americans with Disabilities Act uses a question-and-answer format to express common misconceptions, fears, and false assumptions that many employers have about employees with disabilities. This fully accessible, 17-minute video can be used for ADA training as well as for presentation to local Chambers of Commerce, Rotary Clubs, merchants associations, and similar organizations. Single copies in DVD format can be ordered through the toll-free ADA Information Line at 800.514.0301 (voice) or 800.514.0383 (TTY).

STATE & SYSTEM TOOLS

Early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers: Recommendations for states.

This report by ZERO TO THREE offers a road map for states as they develop policies and programs that lay a strong foundation for child development and future learning through responsive, appropriate, and high-quality early experiences.

http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/Early_Learning_Guidelines_for_Infants_and_Toddlers.pdf?docID=4961

Surrogate parents and children with disabilities: State-level approaches.

Hot off the press from Project Forum at NASDSE in collaboration with the Legal Center for Foster Care and Education, this indepth policy analysis is based on survey findings from 41 state departments of education. The document provides a detailed introduction to the intricacies of the provision of surrogate parents for children identified for service under IDEA.

<http://www.projectforum.org>

Developing structured work systems for students with ASD.

For students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), activities such as transitioning from one location to the next, organizing their learning materials, and completing assigned activities, can be very challenging. This Snapshot from the FPG Child Development Institute summarizes the findings of researchers, who studied structured work systems as one effective approach educators can use to address the unique learning styles and challenges experienced by students with ASD.

http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~snapshots/Snap59_WEB.pdf

A flood of pubs from the National Center for Education Research.

NCER is releasing a list of publications that demonstrate the breadth of work from more than 400 research grants funded since 2002. Organized by topic areas such as reading, writing, mathematics, science, and education policy, the publications include scientific articles describing the impacts of novel instructional practices on student achievement, articles describing new curricula written for teacher use, and brief summaries of research aimed at the general public.

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncer/projects/>

HEOA Net Price Calculator Template.

In accordance with the Sec. 111 of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA), the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Office of Postsecondary Education

(OPE) at the U.S. Department of Education, announce the release of a net price calculator template. With its release, all Institutions participating in Title IV Student Financial Aid Programs institutions have two years to implement use of the template on their websites, or develop a customized version that must include, at a minimum, the same elements as the Department's version. A link to the calculator is available under What's New at:

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea08/>

SPECIAL FOCUS: Season's Greetings and Gift Ideas

It may be the season to be jolly, but it can be crazy, too, and challenging when it comes to gifting ideas, holiday activities, and what will "work" for a child with a disability. So here are a few resources that we hope will help make this holiday season enjoyable for all who participate.

Gift ideas for youth with disabilities.

<http://www.doitmyselfblog.com/2007/>

[gift-ideas-for-youth-with-disabilities/](http://www.doitmyselfblog.com/2007/gift-ideas-for-youth-with-disabilities/)

Gift ideas from the heart.

<http://www.all-creatures.org/living/fft-christmas.html>

Lekotek.org.

Visit the country's central source on toys and play for children with special needs.

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

The 2009 Toys "R" Us guide for differently-abled kids.

<http://www.lekotek.org/resources/toysrus.html>

Ableplay!

AblePlay provides parents of children with special needs and the professionals who work with them a unique search tool to match AblePlay-Rated toys to disability categories. AblePlay evaluates the toys and their appropriateness within four disability categories -- physical, communicative, sensory and cognitive, taking the guesswork out of toy shopping for children with special needs. <http://www.ableplay.org/>

Do you have a specific question about toys and play for the child in your life with a disability?

Lekotek has experts on staff that will answer your questions via e-mail. Ask the Expert at:

lekotek@lekotek.org

Children's books and authors.

Reading Rockets has gathered many resources for sharing the joy of reading with children. By highlighting great books and authors, Reading Rockets says, "we hope you'll find the books that unlock the love of reading in the children you care about." <http://www.readingrockets.org/books>

Toys for special needs children.

<http://www.answers4families.org/family/special-needs/tools/toys-special-needs-children>

Choosing toys takes consideration.

<http://www.answers4families.org/family/special-needs/assistive-technology/choosing-toys-takes-consideration>

Easy toy and game adaptations.

<http://www.answers4families.org/family/special-needs/assistive-technology/easy-toy-and-game-adaptations>

Thanks for the dreamers.

Children sometimes need reminders that big changes in our world often start with the small actions of just one person. Meet people whose passion for art or science or helping others just may inspire others. And who knows what special dreamers may read a book today!

<http://www.readingrockets.org/articles/books/c823>

On including individuals with disabilities in religious activities across a spectrum of religions.

The Family Support Clearinghouse's December 2009 enewsletter will connect you with lots of resources.

<http://www.familysupportclearinghouse.org/Newsletters/Pages/Default.aspx>

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Newest Items on the National Institute of Mental Health Web Site

National Survey Tracks Rates of Common Mental Disorders Among American Youth

Only about half of American children and teenagers who have certain mental disorders receive professional services, according to a nationally representative survey funded in part by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). The survey also provides a comprehensive look at the prevalence of common mental disorders.

The results are part of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), a collaboration between NIMH and the National Center for Health Statistics of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The survey conducted from 2001 to 2004 had 3,042 participants. These most recent results include data from children and adolescents ages 8 to 15, and were published online ahead of print December 14, 2009, in the journal *Pediatrics*.

"Data on the prevalence of mental disorders among U.S. youth have been varied, making it difficult to truly understand how many children and teens are affected," said NIMH Director Thomas R. Insel, M.D. "These data from the NHANES survey can serve as an important baseline as we follow trends of mental disorders in children."

In the study, the young people were interviewed directly. Parents or caregivers also provided information about their children's mental health. The researchers tracked six mental disorders—generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), panic disorder, eating disorders (anorexia and bulimia), depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and conduct disorder. The participants were also asked about what treatment, if any, they were receiving.

Overall, 13 percent of respondents met criteria for having at least one of the six mental disorders within the last year. About 1.8 percent of the respondents had more than one disorder, usually a combination of ADHD and conduct disorder. Among the specific disorders:

- 8.6 percent had ADHD, with males more likely than females to have the disorder
- 3.7 percent had depression, with females more likely than males to have the disorder
- 2.1 percent had conduct disorder
- 0.7 percent had an anxiety disorder (GAD or panic disorder)
- 0.1 percent had an eating disorder (anorexia or bulimia)

"With the exception of ADHD, the prevalence rates reported here are generally lower than those reported in other published findings of mental disorders in children, but they are comparable to other studies that employed similar methods and criteria," said lead author Kathleen Merikangas, Ph.D., of NIMH.

Those of a lower socioeconomic status were more likely to report any disorder, particularly ADHD, while those of a higher socioeconomic status were more likely to report having an anxiety disorder. Mexican-Americans had significantly higher rates of mood disorders than whites or African-Americans, but overall, few ethnic differences in rates of disorders emerged.

Merikangas and colleagues also found that overall, 55 percent of those with a disorder had consulted with a mental health professional, confirming the trend of an increase in service use for childhood mental disorders, especially ADHD. However, only 32 percent of youth with an anxiety disorder sought treatment, a finding consistent with other studies. Moreover, African-Americans and Mexican-Americans were significantly less likely to seek treatment than whites, reiterating the need to identify and remove barriers to treatment for minority youth, noted the researchers.

"Until now, there has been a dearth of reliable data on the magnitude, course and treatment patterns of mental disorders among U.S. youth," said Dr. Merikangas. "When combined with data from other nationally representative surveys, the data will provide a valuable basis for making decisions about health care for American youth," she concluded.

Substance Use Associated with Low Response to Depression Treatment Among Teens

Depressed teens who report low levels of impairment related to drug or alcohol use tended to respond better to depression treatment than depressed teens with higher levels substance-related impairment, according to an analysis of data from the NIMH-funded Treatment of SSRI-Resistant Depression in Adolescents (TORDIA) study. However, it is unclear whether less substance-related impairment allowed for better response to depression treatment, or if better treatment response led to less substance-related impairment. The study was published in the December 2009 issue of the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*.

Background

Substance use is more common among teens with depression than among those without depression. Researchers have also found that depression can inhibit teens' response to treatment of substance abuse, and substance abuse is associated with a poorer response to treatment of depression. Still, few trials have examined how coexisting depression and substance use among teens may affect treatment outcomes for both.

In the TORDIA study, 334 teens who did not respond to a type of antidepressant called a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) before the trial were randomly assigned to one of four treatments for 12 weeks:

- Switch to another SSRI
- Switch to venlafaxine (Effexor), a different type of antidepressant
- Switch to another SSRI and add cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), a type of psychotherapy
- Switch to venlafaxine and add CBT

Results of the trial were previously reported in February 2008. They showed that teens who received combination therapy, with either type of antidepressant, were more likely to improve than those on medication alone.

In this new analysis, Benjamin Goldstein, M.D., of the University of Toronto, and colleagues examined TORDIA data to determine the relationship, if any, between substance use, major depression and response to depression treatment. Substance use was defined as using alcohol or

drugs without meeting criteria for having a full-blown substance abuse disorder. Teens who were diagnosed with a substance abuse disorder were excluded from the TORDIA study.

Results of the Study

Substance use was fairly common among TORDIA participants. At baseline, about 28 percent reported experimenting with drugs or alcohol. Those who showed more substance -related impairment were older, felt more hopeless, had greater family conflict, developed depression at an earlier age, were more likely to have a history of physical or sexual abuse, and were more likely to have coexisting oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) or conduct disorder (CD).

Substance-related impairment included certain attitudes and behaviors such as craving the substance, feeling hooked on it, accidentally hurting oneself or others while using it, and other similar effects.

Participants with low levels of substance use and substance-related impairment throughout the study tended to respond better to depression treatment than those who showed persistently high or increasing levels of substance-related impairment. There were no significant differences in rates of substance use and impairment among the treatment groups.

Significance

This study is one of the first to examine the association between substance use and depression treatment among depressed teens. The findings are consistent with other studies that found depression severity to be associated with a history of physical or sexual abuse, coexisting ODD or CD, and substance-related impairment. However, the direction of the association is uncertain. The data could not determine whether low substance-related impairment facilitates improvement in depression symptoms, or whether improvement in depressed mood leads to a decrease in substance-related impairment.

What's Next

The authors caution that the study does not provide definitive conclusions about depression treatment and substance use. However, they do suggest that clinicians treating teens for depression screen for signs of substance use and address those issues as well, even if the teen does not meet criteria for a full-blown substance abuse disorder.

Major Databases Link Up to Advance Autism Research

Researchers studying autism spectrum disorders (ASD) will soon have access to a vast range of data and research tools through the NIH National Database for Autism Research (NDAR).

Different labs often collect the same kinds of data. But they are often described differently, making it difficult to pool those data in any meaningful way. The NDAR research portal was designed to specifically address these differences by providing tools to define and standardize the complex data landscape that characterizes ASD research.

"Open access to data from many people and many studies is paramount in ASD research because of the tremendous range of symptom type and severity among those affected," said NIMH

Director Thomas R. Insel, M.D. "This network of digital resources will enable the research community to more quickly solve the scientific puzzle of ASD."

By spring 2010, NDAR will make available the data from more than 10,000 participants enrolled in ASD research studies. Investigators will be able to perform a single query in the NDAR portal to view results across multiple datasets.

NDAR eventually will link with other significant data resources, including:

- The Autism Genetic Resource Exchange (AGRE), which was created by the advocacy group Cure Autism Now and is currently sponsored by Autism Speaks, is an electronic data repository housing genotypic and phenotypic information from more than 1,000 families affected by ASD
- The Interactive Autism Network (IAN), which is an online project of the Kennedy Krieger Institute with funding from Autism Speaks, contains data on 30,000 individuals with an ASD diagnosis whose families have voluntarily submitted information of interest to scientists
- The NIMH Genetics Repository, which stores clinical data, biological materials, and genetic analysis data for more than 3,000 individuals with ASD
- The NIMH Transcriptional Atlas of Human Brain Development, which aims to map when and where in the brain genes are transcribed through development
- The Pediatric MRI Data Repository, which receives support from four NIH Institutes including NIMH, stores rich phenotypic and imaging data from more than 500 typically developing children, from birth to young adulthood.

"A major goal of NDAR is to ensure that submitted data are clearly defined and to harmonize those definitions across other key ASD-relevant data resources," explained NDAR Director and associate director of NIMH for Scientific Technology Research, Michael Huerta Ph.D. "Doing so will not only help in pooling data across different labs and studies, but will also help to transform ASD research from traditional, individual lab projects to a more collaborative approach."

Researchers supported through the Autism Centers of Excellence (ACEs) were the first to contribute data to NDAR in 2008. Since then, NDAR staff has continued to transfer data from earlier NIH programs, such as the Collaborative Programs of Excellence in Autism (CPEA) and Studies to Advance Autism Research and Treatment (STAART) into NDAR. Data from the majority of ASD grants that were recently funded through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (Recovery Act), as well as from ASD studies conducted at NIH, will also be submitted to and shared through NDAR. Other ASD researchers have also been encouraged to add their study data, regardless of funding source.

Silenced Gene for Social Behavior Found in Autism

For the first time, inherited disruption of gene expression in a brain system for social behavior has been implicated in autism. NIMH grantee Margaret Pericak-Vance, Ph.D., at the University of Miami and Simon Gregory, Ph.D., at Duke University, and a multinational team of researchers found evidence for such epigenetic effects on the gene for the oxytocin receptor — part of a brain system that mediates social behaviors disturbed in autism. The findings suggest a potential genetic biomarker for the disorder.

The researchers report on their findings online October 22, 2009 in BMC Medicine.

Background

Environmentally-influenced and heritable chemical tags called epigenetic marks regulate the mix of proteins needed to build each tissue of the body. These alterations do not change a person's DNA, or genetic blueprint. However, epigenetic changes that occur from the moment sperm meets egg can alter when and where genes get turned on.

Researchers are testing oxytocin as a possible treatment for social behavior disturbances in autism. Oxytocin is a hormone produced in the brain, which works through the oxytocin receptor. Previous studies had hinted at oxytocin receptor abnormalities in autism, but not at an epigenetic mechanism.

The researchers first used high-tech, genome-wide techniques to search for deletions or duplications of genes in 119 people with autism from families that had multiple children with the disorder and 54 healthy controls. They then searched in brain tissue and blood samples from affected and unaffected individuals for a common type of epigenetic mark created by methylation. In this process, molecules called methyl groups attach to DNA in response to an environmental trigger, preventing a gene's expression.

Findings of This Study

The researchers found a deletion in the oxytocin receptor gene in a person with autism and his mother, who had obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). OCD shares with autism symptoms of repetitive behaviors. Oxytocin receptor genes were similarly silenced — but by methylation — in a sibling with autism who lacked the deletion. That is, two separate mechanisms of gene expression regulation resulted in the same outcome — loss of oxytocin receptor expression — in the same family.

Following up in blood cells and temporal cortex brain tissue of people with autism, the researchers pinpointed higher levels of methylation — about 70 percent vs. the normal 40 percent — at an epigenomic site known to regulate the oxytocin receptor. They also found decreased expression of the receptor in the temporal cortex tissue, an area previously linked to autism.

Significance

Excess methylation of the oxytocin receptor could render people with autism less sensitive to the social hormone's effects. Gene expression most likely became altered in very early gestation (between fertilization and implantation), suggest the researchers. This could increase vulnerability of the oxytocin receptor gene to environmental insults during the first few weeks of pregnancy, they say. The results suggest that such epigenetic misregulation of the oxytocin receptor gene may be an important factor in the development of autism.

What's Next?

Since evidence of excess methylation of the oxytocin receptor gene in temporal cortex was also found in blood cells, the researchers suggest that the blood measure may be a marker, more generally, of the methylation status of the temporal cortex. So measuring the methylation status of the oxytocin receptor in blood could potentially serve as a biomarker for autism that might be

used in conjunction with traditional diagnostic criteria. Drugs that target methylation might also hold promise for treatment.

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Calls to Participate

Braille Readers Are Leaders Annual Contest for Blind and Visually Impaired Youth

http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Braille_Readers_Are_Leaders_Overview.asp

The Braille Readers Are Leaders Contest is a national contest for students who read Braille, kindergarten through twelfth grades, and all adult Braille readers. The purpose of the program is to promote the joy of reading for pleasure, to promote a pride in Braille as a viable literacy medium equal to print, and to demonstrate the importance of independent reading in the development of Braille literacy skills. All contest material must be received by January 22, 2010.

NCIL 2010 Annual Conference Workshop Proposals

<http://www.ncil.org/conference/conference2010.html>

Ideas and experiences will be shared in the Independent Living Movement at the National Council on Independent Living 2010 Annual Conference, “20 Years of the ADA: The Fight Goes On!” July 19-22, in Washington DC. In addition to topics on the Americans with Disabilities Act and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, workshops for new advocates and attendees that offer basic as well as historical information on the Independent Living Movement, Centers for Independent Living, Statewide Independent Living Councils, advocacy, systems change and non-profit management are welcome. Deadline for submissions: January 15, 2010.

Critical Education

<http://www.criticaleducation.org>

Critical Education is an international peer-reviewed journal, which seeks manuscripts that critically examine contemporary education contexts and practices and is interested in theoretical and empirical research as well as articles that advance educational practices that challenge the existing state of affairs in society, schools, and informal education. Critical Education is hosted by the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of British Columbia and edited by Sandra Mathison (UBC), E. Wayne Ross (UBC) and Adam Renner (Bellarmino University). Critical Education is an open access journal, launching in early 2010.

GWU's Transition Special Education Distance Education Certificate Program

<http://gsehd.gwu.edu/Transition+Special+Education+Certificate>

The George Washington University is recruiting students for its Graduate Transition Special Education Certificate Distance Education Program, beginning spring semester 2010. The courses are designed for: graduate students enrolled in special education and related programs; professionals and secondary special educators employed by school districts; professionals working in vocational rehabilitation settings and youth development and services; related service personnel; and advocates and parents. Under the Federal TEACH Program students may be eligible for financial support if they meet specific conditions.

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Special Education Resources

Creating an Inclusive Environment: A Handbook for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in National and Community Service Programs

Handbook

<http://www.serviceandinclusion.org/handbook/index.php>

The Corporation for National and Community Service has published a guide that provides information on how to make national and community service programs more inclusive for persons with disabilities. The “Handbook for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in National and Community Service Programs” provides information about creating an inclusive environment, a brief historical overview of social perceptions of people with disabilities, disability-related laws, how to write inclusive service descriptions, recruitment and outreach, and accommodations issues and legal requirements.

Family Involvement and Vocational Rehab: Research To Practice

Power Point

<http://www.pacer.org/tatra/pdf/FamilyInvolvement-ResearchToPractice.pdf>

Materials from Family Involvement: Research to Practice, a session presented by TATRA staff, are now available online through the PACER Web site. The session highlighted strategies that promoted family involvement in the transition and vocational rehabilitation processes based on the findings of a number of recent studies. (Available in pdf, 1.44 MB, 44 pp.)

Helping Students Navigate the Path To College: What High Schools Can Do

Report

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/higher_ed_pg_091509.pdf

A well-educated workforce is critical for maintaining the economic competitiveness of the United States. The strength of the economy hinges on the education system’s ability to meet the demand for educated workers, so calls are always being made to improve access to higher education and to encourage students and adults to continue their education beyond high school. But reaching college remains a challenge for many low-income and potentially first-generation students who are not academically prepared or who lack knowledge about how to apply to, and pay for, college. College enrollment rates for these students lag behind those of their peers despite improvements in college attendance. This practice guide from the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) recommends five steps that educators, administrators, and policy makers can take, beginning in 9th grade, to prepare students for college, assist them in completing the steps to college entry, and improve their likelihood of enrolling in college, as well as the research evidence that supports these recommendations. (Available in pdf, 1.96 MB, 86 pp.)

Including Students with Disabilities in Charter Schools: Primers

Report

http://www.uscharterschools.org/cs/spedp/print/uscs_docs/spedp/home.htm

Primers provide background information and resources to facilitate the inclusion of students with disabilities in charter schools. These reports address critical issues in the field of special education in charter schools, such as: testing students with disabilities, virtual charter schools, accessing Medicaid reimbursements, schools designed for students with disabilities, standards-based IEPs, and the TA Customizer Model.

Linking Data Across Agencies: States That Are Making It Work

<http://tinyurl.com/yd4fuc7>

As a condition for receiving funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, every governor and chief state school officer agreed to develop statewide longitudinal data systems that follow students from early learning to postsecondary education and into the workforce. This report, co-authored by the Data Quality Campaign and the Forum, looks in detail at the collaborative, cutting-edge work of Children's Cabinets and others to share data across agencies in order to improve the planning and delivery of services. The brief also presents highlights of work going on in Massachusetts, Maine, Connecticut, Florida, Washington, Minnesota, South Carolina, New Mexico, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Utah and the District of Columbia.

New Guide for Parental Engagement

Guide

<http://www.pta.org/3717.asp>

A new publication from the National PTA provides key facts, background, analysis, noteworthy statutes, and policy recommendations for state PTAs and other family and child advocates for crafting successful school-family engagement legislation at the state level. Research shows that children benefit from family engagement in their schools, and that family engagement helps close educational gaps between children from different racial groups and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Publications Emerging From Research Funded through the National Center for Education Research

Document

http://ies.ed.gov/ncer/pdf/NCER_pubs.pdf

This document, released by the National Center for Education Research, contains a list of publications that demonstrate the breadth of work from more than 400 research grants funded since 2002. Organized by topic areas such as reading, writing, mathematics, science, and education policy, the publications include scientific articles describing the impacts of instructional practices on student achievement, articles describing new curricula written for teacher use, and brief summaries of research aimed at the general public. (Available in pdf, 922 KB, 91 pp.)

State Test Score Trends Through 2007-08: Has Progress Been Made in Raising Achievement for Students with Disabilities?

Report

<http://tinyurl.com/yeutzgw>

This report by the Center on Education Policy (CEP) examines progress in raising achievement for students with disabilities. It also describes the factors that make it difficult to clearly discern achievement trends for this particular subgroup. The data within this analysis were collected by CEP with technical support from the Human Resources Research Organization, and come from the state reading and mathematics tests used for NCLB accountability in all 50 states.

Strategic Use of Individualized Learning Plans: Preparing Students with Workforce Readiness Skills for 21st Century Jobs

Research Brief

<http://tinyurl.com/ylnk77>

Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) are described as strategic planning tools that assist students in course selections and provide opportunities for coordinated learning experiences, including career development and career exploration activities intended to help them identify and achieve

post-secondary goals. The National Collaborative on Workforce and disability (NCWD) proposes that electronic ILPs can be an effective means for schools to coordinate workforce development activities, which are led by school counselors, career and technical education coordinators, and special education administrators. Strategies for helping schools identify workforce development activities and increase the impact of these activities are described within this brief. (Available in pdf, 546 KB, 9 pp.)

Successful Systems of Care

Report

<http://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/advisories/0905064401.aspx>

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has released “Working Together to Help Youth Thrive in Schools and Communities,” a report showing that systems of care in communities really are successful. Systems of care are able to dramatically improve the academic, behavioral and emotional performance of participating youth. The report measured performance outcomes of system of care programs and found that these improvements occurred among many young people within 12 months of their enrollment in these programs, and that system of care programs are associated with higher graduation rates among high school youth with emotional challenges.

Surrogate Parents and Children with Disabilities: State-Level Approaches

Policy Analysis

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

“Surrogate Parents and Children with Disabilities: State-Level Approaches,” an in-depth policy analysis from Project Forum, in collaboration with the Legal Center for Foster Care and Education, is based on survey findings from 41 state departments of education. It provides a detailed introduction to the intricacies of the provision of surrogate parents for children identified for service under IDEA. The survey found that most states have issued policy or formal guidance pertaining to surrogate parents and children with disabilities; most also described efforts to ensure that the educational decision-making rights of biological and adoptive parents were preserved whenever possible.

Systematic Reviews of Research: Postsecondary Transitions - Identifying Effective Models and Practices

Report

<http://tinyurl.com/yftk7z2>

This report focuses on transition programs for youth to postsecondary education, addressing the following questions: (a) What models or programs of transition exist? (b) On what basis can it be said that one transition program is more effective than another (how is successful transition defined)? (c) How are transition models and programs evaluated? and (d) What is the impact of transition programs, specifically those that aim to facilitate transition from one educational system to another, to program completion, or to specific career-related employment for disadvantaged youth? From a public policy perspective, this review points to the need for more investment in rigorous studies that investigate in more depth and detail the specific aspects of programs associated with program success. Studies are also needed on the interaction between programs and student characteristics to determine what types of programs are most effective for which students.

Connect a Million Minds

<http://www.connectamillionminds.com/connectory.php>

Time Warner Cable’s Connect a Million Minds introduces youth to opportunities and resources

that inspire them to develop the science, technology, engineering, and math skills they need to solve the economic, environmental, and community challenges of the future. The “Connectory” is a searchable guide to activities and resources in local communities.

Global Youth Justice, LLC

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

Global Youth Justice, LLC strives to promote solutions which alleviate some of the world’s most pressing social problems, especially reducing crime and incarceration rates around the world and supporting the empowerment of youth to become global youth justice champions and activists for positive social change. The Web site contains a comprehensive catalog of organizations and links helpful in finding funding, relevant information, media contacts, or potential organizational partners in working to improve youth outcomes.

The Resource Center on YouTube

<http://lists.etr.org/t/859034/353580/3981/0/>

The Corporation for National and Community Service's Resource Center's YouTube page has grown. More than 60 videos have been added on national and community service topics, including social media webinars and training. Focusing national attention on the need for mentors, as well as how individuals can work together to increase the number of mentors, helps assure brighter futures for young people. Service as a mentor enriches the mentor’s own life as much as it does the life of a child, leading to new experiences, new connections, new insights, and new satisfactions.

Big IDEAs Newsletter from the National Dropout Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD)

<http://www.ndpc-sd.org/contact/bigIdeasSubscribe.php>

“Big IDEAs” is NDPC-SD’s quarterly newsletter, which addresses current issues in dropout prevention and school completion. It features evidence-based dropout-prevention and recovery programs from around the nation as well as information about past and upcoming NDPC-SD events. “Big IDEAs” is available via electronic subscription.

Education Research News from the Institute of Education Sciences

<http://ies.ed.gov/whatsnew/newsletters/>

The Institute of Education Sciences is announcing the latest on research initiatives from John Easton, recently sworn in as IES director, and news from the four centers of IES. Other items in Education Research News include an update on the 2010 research conference, a link to the new financial aid calculator, and new staff introductions.

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Upcoming Conferences, Workshops and Events

January 2010

International Conference On Child and Family Maltreatment

Date: January 24-29, 2010

Location: San Diego, CA

Abstract: The San Diego Conference focuses on multi-disciplinary best-practice efforts to prevent, if possible, or otherwise to investigate, treat, and prosecute child and family maltreatment. The objective of the San Diego Conference is to develop and enhance professional skills and knowledge in the prevention, recognition, assessment and treatment of all forms of maltreatment including those related to family violence as well as to enhance investigative and legal skills. Issues concerning support for families, prevention, leadership, policy making and translating the latest research into action are also addressed.

Website: <http://www.chadwickcenter.org/conference.htm>

February 2010

19The Earlier They Get Started, The Faster They Learn To Talk

Date: February 18-20, 2010

Location: The Moog Center for Deaf Education, 12300 South Forty Drive, St. Louis, MO 63141

Contact Information: Betsy Moog Brooks, Director of the Moog School and Family School, bbrooks@moogcenter.org or www.moogcenter.org, 314-692-7172 voice, 314-692-8544 fax.

Abstract: For teachers and SLPs providing early intervention services to children with hearing loss. This workshop will focus on techniques for helping parents work with their own children and strategies for professionals working with very young children to develop spoken language skills. Instruction will include live demonstrations, videos and hands-on opportunities.

At+Promise Conference: "Transforming At-Risk to At-Promise" *Conference*

Date: February 19, 2010 - February 21, 2010

Location: San Diego, CA

Website: <http://www.atpromiseconference.org/>

Abstract: The At+Promise Conference brings together educational leaders, teachers, parents and counselors, who are dedicated to finding solutions that work for at-promise students. This conference will provide tools to help build stronger schools and raise graduation rates.

March 2010

NCES Winter Forum and 23rd Annual Management Information Systems (MIS) Conference "DESERTech" *Conference*

Date: March 1, 2010 - March 5, 2010

Location: Phoenix, AZ

Website: <http://ies.ed.gov/whatsnew/conferences/Register.aspx?id=554>

Abstract: The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), in the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES), will sponsor a two-day meeting of the

membership of the National Forum on Education Statistics. This conference will be followed by the 23rd Annual MIS Conference, co-sponsored by the Arizona Department of Education. The 2010 MIS Conference offers information about best practices, innovative ideas, current issues, and how-to advice about data systems for K-12 education, with more than 80 presentations, demonstrations, and workshops conducted by practitioners from K-12 information systems.

Anxiety Disorders Association of America - 30th Annual Conference

Date: March 4-7, 2010

Location: Baltimore, MD March 4-7, 2010

Abstract: The Annual Conference of the Anxiety Disorders Association of America is designed to meet the educational needs of members and nonmember clinicians and researchers. Current data suggests that in any given year more than 40 million adults in the United States suffer from an anxiety disorder. Anxiety disorders are the most commonly diagnosed disorders in children.

Website: <http://www.adaa.org/conference&events/AnnualConference.asp>

2010 Child Engagement Conference

Date: March 5-6, 2010

Location: Chattanooga, TN

Abstract: The 2010 Child Engagement Conference will be ground-breaking event for the field of early child development. Early childhood professionals and families are invited to the first conference focused on child engagement. Participants will take part in lively discussions and learn from top scholars in the fields of early child development and community engagement. The speakers presenting at the Child Engagement Conference will impart tools for promoting child engagement in the home, in early childhood settings, and in the community. Both families and professionals will benefit from the strategies and skills presented in general lectures and breakout sessions.

Website: <http://www.childengagementconference.com/Home.aspx>

April 2010

26th Annual Pacific Rim International Conference on Disabilities Conference

Date: April 12, 2010 - April 13, 2010

Location: Honolulu, HI

Website: www.pacrim.hawaii.edu

Abstract: The Pacific Rim International Conference on Disabilities dates back to 1985 and has evolved into one of the top rated international educational offerings for and from persons with disabilities, family members, researchers, service providers, policymakers, community leaders, advocates, and nationally recognized professionals in the various disciplines in the diverse field of disabilities. The 2010 Pacific Rim International Conference program design is organized into three broad thematic areas: Foundation topics, Exploration topics, and Innovation topics.

Registration and a call for proposals are now open. Deadline for final submissions is December 18, 2009. Registration deadline is January 15, 2010.

Council for Exceptional Children Convention: Expo (CEC)

Date: April 21-24, 2010

Location: Nashville, Tenn

Abstract: CEC Convention is a unique opportunity to learn about proven instructional strategies, converse with internationally recognized speakers, and renew your professional enthusiasm. Hundreds of sessions, posters, and roundtables are included.

Website: <http://www.cec.sped.org>

Telephone: (888) CEC-SPED TTY: (866) 915-5000

Email: service@cec.sped.org

National Deafblind Conference (8th) - Deafblindness in Australia

Able Australia Services (Formerly the Deafblind Association)

Date: April 28-30, 2010

Location: Melbourne, Australia

Abstract: The Conference will present the latest news, research and developments relating to deafblindness from local and overseas sources. A trade Exhibition will also showcase the latest in technology, services and products from around Australia. We are anticipating between 200-300 participants including people with deafblindness and their families, Government officials, medical and allied health professionals as well as representatives from deafblind and disability groups. An extensive social program is being developed to provide excellent networking opportunities amongst all Conference participants. For more information on the 8th National Deafblind Conference please go to the website. (Please note, this site is regularly being updated)

Website: <http://www.ableaustralia.org.au>

Contact Information: Patricia Karagiorgos-1300 225 369 or (03) 9861 6255

TTY: 03 9882 6786

email: patricia.karagiorgos@ableaustralia.org.au

June 2010

Alstrom Syndrome International Congress (ASI)

Date: June 24-28, 2010

Location: Unicoi State Park and Lodge, Helen, Georgia

Website: http://www.alstrom.org/foundation/2010_conference.html

Contact Information: Robert P Marshall-(207) 244-7043

Email: robin@acadia.net

July 2010

Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired Conference (AER)

Date: July 20-25, 2010

Location: Little Rock, AR

Website: <http://www.aerbvi.org/conference/>

Contact Information: Ginger Croce-(877) 492-2708 (toll-free)

Email: Ginger@AERBVI.ORG

September 2010

Conference of the Acquired Deafblindness Network (8th)

Date: September 29-October 3, 2010

Location: City of Aalborg, Denmark

Abstract: The theme of the conference is Building bridges - connecting people. The conference will take forward the work from the 7th conference of ADBN held in Norway in 2008. Using the theme of Building Bridges we will be exploring notions of developing relationships between deafblind people, families, friends and professionals. Bridges not only connect people but enable

movement and development, independence and growth of potential.

Website: <http://www.adbn.org>

Contact Information: Else Marie Jensen-+45 4439 1250

Email: adbn2010@cfed.dk

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Funding Forecast and Award Opportunities

Forecast of Funding Opportunities under the Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs for Fiscal Year 2009

<http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/find/edlite-forecast.html>

This document lists all programs and competitions under which the U.S. Department of Education has invited or expects to invite applications for new awards for fiscal year 2009 and provides actual or estimated deadlines for the transmittal of applications under these programs. The lists are in the form of charts organized according to the Department's principal program offices and include programs and competitions previously announced as well as those to be announced at a later date.

Forecast of Funding Opportunities under the Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs for Fiscal Year 2009

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FY 2009-2010 Discretionary Grant Application Packages

<http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/grantapps/index.html>

This site, from the Department of Education, provides information on grant competitions that are currently open.

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Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation: Christopher Columbus Awards

<http://www.christophercolumbusawards.com/>

The Christopher Columbus Awards Program combines science and technology with community problem-solving. Students work in teams with the help of an adult coach to identify an issue they care about and, using science and technology, work with experts, conduct research, and test their ideas to develop an innovative solution. Maximum award: \$25,000 and an all-expense-paid trip to Walt Disney World to attend the program's National Championship Week, plus a U.S. Savings Bond of \$2,000 for each student team member. Eligibility: middle-school-age (sixth, seventh, and eighth grade) children; teams do not need to be affiliated with a school to enter. Deadline: February 8, 2010.

General Mills Champions for Healthy Kids Grant Program

<http://www.generalmills.com/corporate/commitment/champions.aspx>

The General Mills Foundation, in partnership with the American Dietetic Association Foundation and the President's Council on Physical Fitness, developed the Champions for Healthy Kids grant program in 2002. Each year since inception, the General Mills Foundation

awards 50 grants of \$10,000 each to community-based groups that develop creative ways to help youth adopt a balanced diet and physically active lifestyle. Deadline: January 15, 2010.

Intel Foundation: Schools of Distinction

<http://www.intel.com/education/schoolsofdistinction/application.htm#Categories>

The Intel Foundation Schools of Distinction Program honors U.S. schools that have demonstrated excellence in math and science education. To be considered as an Intel School of Distinction, schools must develop an environment and curricula that meet or exceed benchmarks, including national mathematics and science content standards. Maximum award: \$25,000.

Eligibility: middle and high schools in the U.S. Deadline: February 17, 2010.

Muzak Heart & Soul Foundation Invites Grant Applications for Music Education Programs

<http://heart.muzak.com/>

Grants of up to \$12,000 will be awarded to public schools and nonprofits working to fund existing or planned public school or independent music programs across the nation. Music education, vocal or instrumental, must be the key component of any music program requesting funds. Applications will be accepted from public school programs (qualifying for Title I federal funding and serving a minimum of 70% low-income students) and nonprofit 501(c)(3) programs directly funding music education (serving students regardless of their ability to pay). Deadline: February 5, 2010.

NEA: The Big Read

http://www.neabigread.org/application_process.php

The Big Read is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts to restore reading to the center of American culture by giving citizens the opportunity to read and discuss a single book within their communities. The initiative includes innovative reading programs in selected cities and towns, comprehensive resources for discussing classic literature, and an extensive Web site providing comprehensive information on authors and their works. Maximum award: varies. Literary organizations, libraries, and community organizations across the country are eligible. Deadline: February 2, 2010.

President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities: Coming Up Taller Awards

<http://www.pcah.gov/cut.htm>

The Coming Up Taller Awards recognize and support outstanding community arts and humanities programs that celebrate the creativity of America's young people, providing them learning opportunities and chances to contribute to their communities. The awards focus national attention on exemplary programs fostering the creative and intellectual development of America's children and youth through education and practical experience in the arts and the humanities. Maximum award: \$10,000. Eligibility includes: programs initiated by museums, libraries, performing arts organizations, universities, colleges, arts centers, community service organizations, schools, businesses, and eligible government entities. Deadline: January 29, 2010.

Sprint Character Education Grant Program Seeks to Support Positive Development of Young People

<http://tinyurl.com/8hqa29>

Sprint has announced the 2010 entry dates for the Sprint Character Education Grant Program, its annual character-education grant program for schools and school districts across the United States. The 2010 program will run January 4-February 5, 2010. Now in its third year, the program awards Sprint Foundation grants to school districts and individual schools in support of

resources that facilitate and encourage character education among K-12 students. The program is open to all U.S. public schools (K-12) and U.S. public school districts. Grants of up to \$25,000 will be awarded to school districts and individual schools. Deadline: February 5, 2010.

Toshiba/NSTA: ExploraVision Awards

<http://www.exploravision.org/about/>

The Toshiba/National Science Teachers Association ExploraVision Awards Program encourages kids to create and explore a vision of future technology by combining their imaginations with the tools of science. All inventions and innovations result from creative thinking and problem solving. ExploraVision, more than a contest, can be the beginning of a lifelong adventure in science, as students develop higher-order thinking skills and learn to think about their role in the future. Maximum award: \$10,000. Eligibility: students K-12. Deadline: February 2, 2010.

Welch's/Scholastic: Harvest Grants

<http://www.scholastic.com/harvest/>

Welch's, a family farmer owned company that is proud to grow and nurture grapes, is partnering with Scholastic to teach the value of sustainable agriculture and healthy eating by supporting school garden programs through Welch's Harvest Grants. Entries will be judged by experts at the National Gardening Association, and two schools in every state will be selected to receive a Welch's Harvest Grant. Winning schools will receive a customized indoor or outdoor garden package filled with a variety of tools, seeds, educational materials, and more. Maximum award: packages valued at \$1,000 each. Eligibility: K-8 teachers. Deadline: February 6, 2010

Fund for Teachers Accepting Applications for 2010 Summer Education Grants

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

Fund for Teachers invites educators from across the United States to submit proposals for their own educational adventures next summer. The program is designed to provide educators with the opportunity to pursue areas of personal and professional interest and bring their experiences back to the classroom for the benefit of their students. Eligible projects include tours, conferences, and independent studies anywhere in the world. Individual grants of up to \$5,000 and team grants of up to \$10,000 will be awarded. Deadline: January 29, 2010.

National Endowment for the Humanities and American Library Association Announce We the People Bookshelf Grant Opportunity

<http://publicprograms.ala.org/bookshelf/>

Each year, NEH chooses a theme important to the nation's heritage and selects books that embody that theme to build the We the People Bookshelf. The theme for the 2009-2010 Bookshelf is "A More Perfect Union." Four thousand public and K-12 libraries will receive seventeen books that help young readers understand great literature and explore themes in American history. Deadline: January 29, 2010.

Powered by Service Offers Funding to Seed Youth-Led Service Projects

<http://tinyurl.com/y8l7j44>

Grants will be awarded to young people around the world who are conducting service projects that encourage youth to become involved in addressing problems facing their communities. Grants presently are being accepting only from Atlanta GA, Detroit MI, Los Angeles CA, Milwaukee WI, New Orleans LA and New York NY, but other communities will be added at intervals. Deadline: Open.

American Association on Health and Disability (AAHD) Announces the Creation of the 2009 AAHD Scholarship Program

<http://aahd.us/page.php?pname=Scholarship%20Program>

The AAHD Scholarship will provide support for students with disabilities who are pursuing higher education. Those who are pursuing undergraduate/graduate studies in the field of public health, health promotion, or disability studies, to include disability policy and disability research will be given preference. Please, visit the above website to download the application.

Siemens We Can Change the World Challenge Invites Students and Teachers to Address Environmental Issues

<http://wecanchange.com/>

Students and teachers in grades K-8 will be awarded grants and publicity for their solutions to classroom environmental issues. Grades K to second will seek to create solutions to environmental issues in their classroom, grades third to fifth in their school and grades six to eight in their community. Student and teacher/mentor prizes, which vary according to grade level, include savings bonds, school grants, trips, TV appearances, and more. Deadline: Elementary-level entries is January 31, 2010; the deadline for middle-school entries is March 15, 2010.

Travelocity's Travel for Good Volunteer Travel Opportunities

<http://tinyurl.com/2v7sh2>

Travelocity's Travel for Good offers funding quarterly for its Change Ambassadors Grant to help support Americans who wish to travel to participate in volunteer opportunities (volunteer vacations). Two grants of \$5,000 each will be awarded to individuals or groups going on volunteer vacations; applicants must demonstrate a previous commitment to volunteering and financial need. Deadline: not applicable.

Financial Aid On Disabilityinfo.Gov

<http://www.disabilityinfo.gov/digov-public/public/DisplayPage.do?parentFolderId=84>

This Web site includes links to scholarship applications for students with various disabilities for graduate and undergraduate as well as vocational studies.

Got Grants?

<http://www.teachersourcebook.org/tsb/articles/2009/03/16/02grants.h02.html>

Successful education grant writers offer advice on how to access teacher-learning funds.

Michigan State Library of Financial Aid

<http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/3disable.htm>

Michigan State's comprehensive list of financial aid resources for students with disabilities can be found at their Web site.

Scholarships4students.Com

http://www.scholarships4students.com/special_scholarships.htm

Scholarships4students's Web site includes a list of scholarships for students with disabilities, by disability category.

National Scholarship Providers Association

<http://www.scholarshipproviders.org>

The National Scholarship Providers Association (NSPA) web site offers information on NSPA scholarships for Latino students and for students formerly in foster care. A new NSPA product,

the Scholarship Data Standard, allows students to complete an online scholarship application and then re-use the information with other scholarship providers without retyping their data.

Charles Lafitte Foundation: Grants for Education & Child Advocacy

<http://www.charleslafitte.org/education.html>

The Charles Lafitte Foundation Grants Program helps groups and individuals foster lasting improvement on the human condition by providing support to education, children's advocacy, medical research, and the arts. Maximum award: varies. Eligibility: 501(c)3 organizations.

Deadline: rolling.

Plum Grants

<http://www.dosomething.org/programs/plum-grant-guidelines>

Individuals who have recently created a sustainable community action project, program or organization and need \$500 to further the growth and success of the program are eligible to apply for a Plum Youth Grant. Plum grants are given out weekly. Deadline: None.

Nonprofit Music Programs

<http://www.guitarcentermusicfoundation.org/grants/index.cfm?sec=info>

The Guitar Center Music Foundation's mission is to aid nonprofit music programs across America that offer music instruction so that more people can experience the joys of making music. Maximum Award: \$5000. Eligibility: 501(c)(3) organizations. Qualifying applicants are established, ongoing and sustainable music programs across the United States that provide music instruction for people of any age who would not otherwise have the opportunity to make music. Deadline: N/A.

Live Monarch Educator Outreach Program

<http://www.lmf-educator-award.com/index.html>

The Live Monarch Foundation Educator Outreach Program provides funding for U.S. teachers to enroll in the National Campaign to bring monarch butterflies into the classroom. This program provides education and materials to strengthen the monarch's 3,000-mile migratory route within North America by creating self-sustaining butterfly gardens and refuges. Materials will be provided for each participant to raise a virtual butterfly and start a real butterfly garden with professional instruction on each level of its maintenance and care. Maximum Award: n/a. Eligibility: teachers and classrooms in areas on the monarch migratory route. Deadline: rolling.

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