



Network News

Your Arizona Parent School Connection



Winter 2010

Vol. 18 No. 2

What's New?

by Barb Ross

The Parent Information Network (PIN) is pleased to announce a new PIN Specialist for Cochise, Graham, and Greenlee Counties, Nilda Townsend. Nilda has many years of experience in family support and early childhood services, and is bi-lingual in Spanish. She has two adult children and lives with her husband in Sierra Vista. "I am excited about assisting families as they advocate for their children to achieve success in their education." We regret to announce the resignation of PIN Specialist Holly Reycraft. Holly served Central Maricopa County (area code 602). Holly's commitment to parental involvement in the special education process was exemplified in her role as a PIN Specialist (PINS). Holly will be greatly missed. **The interim Central Maricopa County PIN contact information is 877-230-PINS (7467) or PINS@azed.gov.**



The PIN is pleased to announce the addition of a new training, ***Beginning with the End in Mind***. This PowerPoint training covers the entire postsecondary transition planning process; including information and discussion on all components of transition services; measureable postsecondary goal development; a coordinated set of activities; courses of study; and annual IEP goal related to the postsecondary goals. This training is sure to help parents learn how to actively participate in the secondary transition planning process. To schedule this training or other trainings offered by the PIN, please contact the PIN Specialist for your area on page 4 of this newsletter.

The Parent Information Network Clearinghouse (PINC) has been totally updated and revamped for this school year including a host of new technical assistance documents that will provide parents more information to effectively advocate for the unique needs of their child(ren) with disabilities.

The new *Sensory Integration (DR40)* document offers families good foundational information on what sensory integration means, the seven systems involved, and how a dysfunction in one or more of the systems might impact a child.

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) section added five new documents:

- *Continuum of Services for Students with Disabilities (IE02)*
- *Prior Written Notice (PWN) (IE03)*
- *Related Services (IE04)*

- *Accommodations in the Individualized Education Program (IE09)*
- *Third Party Payments (Medicaid) (IE14)*

These five new documents will increase your knowledge base of various components of the IEP document which is designed to ensure your child receives a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

New in our Special Education section is *Dispute Resolution – Filing a Complaint (SE23)*; this document is a great resource to help guide parents through filing an administrative complaint when a parent believes the school is not complying with state and federal laws and/or regulations. Also added to the Special Education section is the much requested *Sample Letter: Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting Request (SE17)*. These and all PIN Clearinghouse documents can be accessed online at www.azed.gov/ess/pinspals; please feel free to print and share with others!

Once again the Parent Information Network Specialists around the state have researched, selected, or developed the essential, topical, and up-to-date information parents need to fully participate in the special education process.

U.S. Department of Labor

The U.S. Department of Labor recently launched **Disability.gov**, a redesigned federal website that connects the more than 50 million Americans with disabilities to thousands of trusted



resources on disability-related issues, programs and services. Formerly known as DisabilityInfo.gov, the site has been completely redesigned and updated with new social media tools, such as a blog and a Twitter feed, to encourage feedback and interaction among visitors. Disability.gov is not just for Americans with disabilities, but also for parents of children with disabilities, employers, workforce and human resource professionals, veterans, educators, caregivers and many others.

Disability.gov features comprehensive information from 22 federal agencies, as well as educational institutions, non-profit organizations and state and local governments. Topics covered on the site include: benefits; civil rights; community life; education; emergency preparedness; employment; health; housing; technology; and transportation. To review all these resources and more, please visit www.disability.gov.

Special Education Eligibility in Arizona Category Changes

by Teri Rademacher

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 contains a provision for states to use the term “developmental delay” as an eligibility category for children to receive special education services and for use when implementing child find requirements. Arizona was one of thirteen states that did not utilize the category of Developmental Delay as published in the May 2007 report by The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC). On September 30, 2009, that all changed due to the passage of the Senate Omnibus Bill 1196 in June of this year.



For some time researchers have worried about the appropriateness of many of the disability categories when using them with very young children. Many of the developmental areas are so interrelated (i.e., cognitive and communication) that it is sometimes difficult to determine the underlying disability. Early childhood advocates have long thought that the use

of this category could prevent the unnecessary labeling of children who might benefit from early interventions and may not need further special education services. Another concern is the reliability of standardized and norm-referenced assessments used to identify specific categories of eligibility when used to assess young children. With the passage of this legislation, schools can now utilize the category of Developmental Delay (DD) for a child who is at least three years of age but under ten years of age, if they meet certain criteria.

The language of the new category reads like its predecessor—Preschool Moderate Delay (PMD), with the exception of the ages of the children to which it applies. The following is the new language found in the Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) 15-761 (3):

Developmental Delay means performance by a child who is at least three years of age but under ten years of age on a norm-referenced test that measures at least one and one-half, but not more than three, standard deviations below the mean for children of the same chronological age in two or more of the following areas:

- (a) cognitive development
- (b) physical development
- (c) communication development
- (d) social or emotional development
- (e) adaptive development

The results of the norm-referenced measure must be corroborated by information from a comprehensive development assessment and from parental input, if available, as measured by a judgment-based assessment or survey. If there is a discrepancy between the measures, the evaluation team shall determine eligibility based on a preponderance of the information presented.

Other changes include the deletion of the “Preschool Speech/Language Delay” category. This eligibility criterion was simply merged with the existing Speech/Language Impairment (SLI) category which previously only addressed school-aged children. The SLI category now contains eligibility criteria for children 3 to 21. Only one preschool category remains untouched by the legislative changes and that is Preschool Severe Delay.

Communication from the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) unit at the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) reminds schools that while a school-aged category is no longer mandatory when transitioning children from preschool to kindergarten when identified under the categories of DD or SLI, teams should reevaluate whenever necessary. They also reinforce that teams “must reevaluate every three years, unless the parent and public agency agree that a reevaluation is unnecessary.” For children receiving special education services under the category of DD, their teams must determine the appropriate school-aged category **before** the child turns ten years of age.



Parents have expressed concerns regarding the use of the DD category when their child has a clearly identified disability, multiple or severe disabilities, and/or need specific services. ECSE is clear in their Memo dated July 31, 2009 regarding this issue, “the use of a developmental delay category does not preclude the use of appropriate disability categories and should not be used to postpone identification of a more suitable category.” For more information regarding the Early Childhood Special Education’s memorandum, check-out their website at www.azed.gov/earlychildhood/MemosAlerts/.

If you are interested in learning more about the eligibility categories in Arizona, check out *Disability Classification in Arizona (DR02)* online at www.azed.gov/ess/pinspals or you might want to attend the Parent Information Network (PIN) training, *Disability Categories Under IDEA*, being held in your area. To see if there is a training in your area, visit www.azeapn.org and check the calendar or contact your regional PIN Specialist, listed on page 4, to schedule a training.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Arizona Office Closes



The Arizona office for Americans with Disabilities Act was closed on June 30, 2009 due to budget cuts. For help with information about compliance, rights, responsibilities, and guidance from ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), please contact the **Pacific ADA Center**. The Pacific ADA Center will now serve California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii and the Pacific Basin. For more information call 800-949-4232 or visit their website: www.adapacific.org.

Sensory Integration Issues in Children

by Allison Meritt

Sensory integration is the way our bodies and central nervous systems gather, organize, and process information about the physical world around us. Too much sensory input can overload the nervous system causing a physical stress response (e.g., fight, flight, or freeze): too little sensory input can cause us to be lethargic and hinder the learning process. The sensory system includes vestibular, proprioception, tactile, auditory, visual, olfactory, and gustatory. The following is an overview of each of these systems and how their dysfunction might impact a child.

Vestibular

The vestibular system is located in the inner ear. It allows us to detect movement, speed, direction, and where our body is in space. Vestibular input stays in the nervous system for four to eight hours. Linear movements (i.e., rocking and swinging) are calming; circular movements (i.e., spinning) are stimulating. Some signs of dysfunction include fear of heights, difficulty sitting still, rocking or spinning excessively. Some children dislike tilting their heads or being upside down. A child with vestibular processing impairments may appear to be clumsy and lack typical motor movement coordination. This may cause frustration and thus affect the child's confidence to participate in extracurricular activities.

Proprioception

Proprioception is the way receptors in our joints perceive muscle movements. These receptors allow us to coordinate movements. Proprioceptive input stays in the nervous system for up to 90 minutes. Children who have issues with this system might apply too much pressure when writing or coloring, seek pressure or appear too rough when touching other children or animals.

Tactile

The tactile system works through receptors in our skin which provide us with information about temperature, pressure, touch, and pain. This helps to alert us of danger in our environment. Tactile input stays in the nervous system for approximately 90 minutes. Cold or rough input is stimulating, while deep pressure and warmth are calming. Some children may have difficulty discriminating tactile information—making fine motor tasks (e.g., holding a pencil, using scissors, or opening containers) more difficult. Individuals who are tactilely hypersensitive (tactilely defensive) may dislike finger painting and using glue or clay, and may be bothered by tags in clothing or by certain materials. Children who are tactilely hyposensitive (sensory seeking) may seek additional input by mouthing objects and/or constantly touching things, such as textured items.

Auditory

The auditory system utilizes the structures of the ear, picking up sound waves and then sending those waves to the temporal lobe of the brain (directly above the ear) for interpretation. This system helps to facilitate communication, determine where sounds are coming from, and to differentiate between sounds. Auditory processing dysfunction is not a hearing

impairment. Hearing impairments are an inability to detect sound decibels within a given range. Children who have problems with auditory processing may have a normal decibel range, but have difficulty organizing, interpreting, or remembering auditory input. Some children may not be able to filter out background noises, while others may be extremely sensitive to auditory stimulus. For example, children who have auditory processing difficulties may cover their ears when they are exposed to sudden or loud noises. They may have trouble determining where a sound is coming from, or be distracted by seemingly normal background noises. Additionally, you may notice some delay or confusion when following verbal directions.

Visual

The visual system is made of several components: acuity, ocular motor function, visual motor coordination, and visual perception. Acuity is the ability to focus; it's how clearly we see objects. Ocular motor function allows us to move our eyes across a given field without turning our heads (tracking). Visual motor coordination allows us to coordinate movement like handwriting or dribbling a basketball (hand-eye coordination). Visual perception, the interpretation of visual stimulus (input), helps us to find patterns, discriminate between like objects (i.e., b, d, p, q), and to make visual sense of the world around us. Children who have poor visual processing skills may have trouble maintaining eye contact, transferring information from one page to another or the board, or keeping their place while reading.

Olfactory

The olfactory system is our sense of smell. Smells are processed in the limbic system. This is the same part of the brain that is responsible for emotional memory, motivation and for storing long term memory; therefore certain smells can evoke memories. Some children may be sensitive to even typically pleasant or normal smells, causing them to engage in atypical stress responses.

Gustatory

The gustatory system includes taste and oral motor function. Input to this system can be either calming or alerting to the nervous system. Foods that are salty, sour, or cold can be alerting, while foods that are sweet or warm are calming. Certain oral motor activities can have similar effects. Activities like chewing gum may help to increase alertness, focus, and concentration, while sucking and blowing are calming and help to relieve stress. Children with dysfunctions in these areas may complain or react adversely to smells or be picky eaters, preferring to eat foods with familiar tastes and textures.

For additional information on sensory interventions and accommodations please read *Sensory Integration (DR40)* available in the Parent Information Network (PIN) Clearinghouse at www.azed.gov/ess/pinspals or request a copy by contacting your regional PIN Specialist listed on page 4. You can also view the video *Sensory Processing Disorder: Simulations and Solutions for Parents, Teachers and Therapists (AV136)* available through the Parent Information Network's free Media Lending Library.



Arizona's Parent Involvement Survey Wants YOU!

This is your opportunity to report how well school staff facilitates parent involvement as a way to improve services and results for children with disabilities. To find out more information contact your PIN Specialist below or call the toll-free PIN hotline at 877-230-PINS (7467) or visit www.azed.gov/ess/parentsurvey. *Just do it!*

Parent Information Network (PIN) Specialists

Toll Free: 1-877-230-PINS (7467) or email PINS@azed.gov

Apache, Navajo Counties

Jana Bays
928-537-0250
Jana.Bays@azed.gov

Gila, Pinal Counties

Amy Dill
480-759-1029
Amy.Dill@azed.gov

East Maricopa County (480 Area Code)

Barbra Ross
480-607-3030
Barbra.Ross@azed.gov

Cochise, Graham, Greenlee Counties

Nilda Townsend
520-249-2834
Nilda.Townsend@azed.gov

La Paz, Yuma Counties

Teri Rademacher
928-344-0141
Teri.Rademacher@azed.gov

West Maricopa County (623 Area Code)

Jill Castle
480-699-0067
Jill.Castle@azed.gov

Coconino, Mohave, Yavapai Counties

Allison Meritt
928-289-5834
Allison.Meritt@azed.gov

Central Maricopa County (602 Area Code)

Vacant
877-230-PINS (7467)
PINS@azed.gov

Pima, Santa Cruz Counties

Kathy Gray-Mangerson
520-572-0896
Kathleen.Gray-Mangerson@azed.gov

For more information contact the PIN/Child Find Coordinator: Becky Raabe, (928) 679-8106, or Becky.Raabe@azed.gov.

The contents of this publication were compiled by Barb Ross and Teri Rademacher with funds allocated by the U.S. Department of Education under IDEA 2004. These contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the agency nor should endorsement by the Federal government be assumed. The Arizona Department of Education of the State of Arizona does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs, activities or in its hiring and employment practices. If you have questions or concerns related to this policy, please contact the Administrative Services at 602-542-3186. This document is in the public domain and may be freely reproduced in its current format. For more information, call the Parent Information Network at 877-230-PINS (7467).

Arizona Department of Education
Exceptional Student Services
Parent Information Network
1535 W. Jefferson St, Bin 24
Phoenix, AZ 85007 # 95678