



# Network News

## Your Arizona Parent School Connection



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### Transition from Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) to Preschool

by Allison Meritt

Are you the parent of a child who is receiving early intervention services through the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP)? Do you have questions about when or how your child may transition from these services to preschool services in the public school system? If so, the Parent Information Network (PIN) has the perfect training for you, Early Childhood Transition: AzEIP to Preschool. This training is currently being updated to reflect the changes made in the new Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) but should be available soon.

This training explains the differences between AzEIP and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Preschool. Parents will hear about the different preschool options that are available for their child and will receive important tips that will help to ensure a smooth transition. Best of all this training is *free!*



The Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) provides services to children birth to age 3 who are or are at risk of having a developmental delay. AzEIP services are designed to meet the individual developmental needs of eligible children and their families. These early intervention services are provided in “natural environments” (the home or community setting where the child would already be engaging with children without disabilities) to the maximum extent possible.

Preschool services are provided to eligible children age 3 to 5 who have been identified as having one of the following: developmental delay (DD), hearing impairment (HI), preschool severe delay (PSD), speech/language impairment (SLI), or visual impairment (VI). School-based services are designed to support the child’s learning and educational performance in various educational settings.

There are several meetings that are part of the transition planning process. At all of these meetings, parents are vital members of the decision-making team. The first meeting is the Transition Planning Meeting. This meeting generally happens at the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting after the child turns 2. It is at this time that families will learn about the

transition process and the options available for their child and give consent to share information with the public education agency (school).

When the child is between 2 years 6 months and 2 years 9 months old, parents will be invited to attend the Transition Conference. During this conference, parents will have the opportunity to meet with the public education agency representative, and representatives from other private and community-based preschools may also be invited at the parents’ request. At this meeting, the parents will hear about services and eligibility criteria for each program. They will also learn about the options for children who are found not to be eligible for services from the public education agency.

The next time the team will meet is the Eligibility Meeting. Throughout this meeting, the multidisciplinary evaluation team (MET), which includes the parents, will discuss evaluation results and the educational impact of the child’s disability. The team will then determine if the child is eligible for special education and/or related services.

The final meeting, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting, will be held within 30 days of determination of eligibility and before the child’s third birthday. The purpose of this meeting is to review and confer about the strengths of the child, the results of observations and evaluations, the academic, developmental, and functional concerns of the parents and the school. This information is then used to develop an IEP for the student.

Parents can help make this transition process easier for their child by:

- Talking about the new program and including the child in preparations and school visits;
- Reading books and telling stories about preschool to help the child know what to expect;
- Providing additional opportunities for the child to interact with other children;
- Encouraging the child to communicate wants and needs; and
- Preparing the child for separation by leaving her or him in the care of another adult for short periods of time.

If you would like to schedule this or any of the Parent Information Network trainings, please contact your PIN Specialist listed on page 4.

## Through the Eyes of a Sibling

by Lauren Dill

On a daily basis across Arizona, students are asked to write essays based upon a prompt or story starter. Parents of children with disabilities constantly wonder how the unique needs of their children with disabilities impact their other children. One Arizona parent was given a look into the other child's perspective. The essay below, brought home in the backpack along with all the other graded papers, is in response to the following writing prompt and is now a treasured keepsake.

*We all face challenges in life. Think about a challenge you or someone you know faced. Write to explain how the challenge was overcome . . .*

*My older brother Adam has autism so he has a big challenge. Autism is a special needs so his brain just thinks a little different than ours. He can't talk complete sentences or can't understand some things that are happening. That doesn't mean that stops him from being a regular kid. He still goes outside to play, he watches TV, he goes lots of places and he still cry's sometimes. His biggest challenge is that he can't talk well. Luckily, a few weeks ago, Adam got a talking device! What a talking device is you touch buttons and it talks for him! He loves it and he's also allowed to take it to school. I am so happy that my brother gets to show how smart he really is!*

Lauren  
Age 9



## State and Federal Law Resources

by Kathy Gray-Mangerson

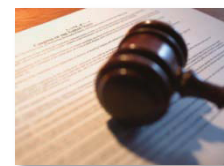
The Parent Information Network (PIN) is pleased to announce that a new PIN Clearinghouse document is available for review, *State and Federal Law Resources (SE07)*. Parents of children in special education with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) may be familiar with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) but may not know about other laws that protect their children.



This new document briefly explains all the Federal laws that protect children with special needs. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects people with disabilities from discrimination. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) discusses the privacy of student education records. McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act deals with the problems that homeless children face in dealing with all aspects of school.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB), also known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) ensures that all children have an opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. Children covered by The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) have a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits them in one or more areas.

Parents should also be aware of The Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS), which are the laws of the State of Arizona. Title 15 is the location of all the education statutes. It is also recommended that parents become familiar with the Arizona regulations that deal with special education. The Arizona Administrative Code (AAC) is the listing of the official rules of the State of Arizona that govern state agencies, boards, and commissions. The education rules are located in Title 7 of the AAC.



Equally important are the Governing Board Policies of the student's school district or charter school. Parents should be very familiar with their governing board's policies regarding behavior, discipline, attendance, and numerous other educational topics. Ask the child's school where these policies are located. They are commonly listed on the district's or charter's website as well as in the parent or student handbook.

As Sir Francis Bacon, an English author and philosopher said, "Knowledge is Power." Armed with the information listed in SE07, the new Parent Information Network Clearinghouse document, parents can use that knowledge to become active participants in their child's special education program.

To receive a copy of this new resource, please contact your Parent Information Network (PIN) Specialist, listed on page 4, or call the toll-free hotline at 877-230-PINS (7467).

## Parent Information Network Reorganization

by Teri Rademacher

The Parent Information Network (PIN), celebrating its 20th anniversary, provides parents of children with disabilities information that is essential for them to actively participate in their child's special education. PIN Specialists regularly assist parents, schools, and local agencies throughout Arizona to establish and sustain positive working relationships and improve outcomes for students.

In its infancy back in 1991, the PIN had three PIN Specialists who covered the entire State. In 2009, the Network grew to nine specialists, with three assigned to the densely populated Maricopa county. In October, the Parent Information Network was reorganized and now consists of six PIN Specialists covering larger geographic areas. All of the PIN Specialists are committed to continuing to provide "knock your socks off service," an Arizona Department of Education commitment to its citizenry.



One of the newest resources is the toll-free hotline. The hotline, 877-230-PINS (7467), is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. PIN Specialists rotate coverage of the hotline and provide callers with immediate access to special education resources and technical support.

Parents of children with disabilities often express their frustration with the large volume of technical information, which includes the complex terminology that comes with special education eligibility and services. They are always appreciative of the comprehensive collection of print resources available in the Parent Information Network Clearinghouse (PINC) as they work to understand the process. The PINC offers technical assistance documents in the following categories: assistive technology, behavior, disability specific information, early childhood, individualized education programs (IEPs), self-advocacy, special education, and transition to adulthood. There is a small collection of resources available in Spanish that is continuing to grow as the more popular English resources are translated.



Another valued resource available through the PIN is the *Blue Pages*, a directory of local, state, and national resources that support individuals with disabilities and their families. This resource is updated annually. Parents find this resource extremely helpful when trying to identify service providers in their communities. Families moving into Arizona from other states also find it helpful. Schools often use it to provide families with additional information about supports and services available locally and when identifying transition services for their high school students. This resource is available on CD in a very usable format.

The Media Lending Library Catalog is another free resource available from the PIN. Parents, school staff, and agencies can request a catalog of videos and DVDs available for loan. The

available titles cover a wide variety of disability-related subjects. Categories include: advocacy, assistive technology, behavior, disability specific topics, mental health, special education, and transition. Some titles have the option of Spanish audio and subtitles, which are noted in the title listing. Individuals are able to request two titles at a time, keep them for up to two weeks for their viewing pleasure, and then return them to the Flagstaff office. This service is also free; however, individuals do incur the cost of return postage, which should include a delivery confirmation.

PIN Specialists offer trainings designed to assist families as they navigate the special education process. They offer three trainings that provide a foundation for parents to more effectively participate in their child's special education. The three-part training series includes: *Participation in the Special Education Process*, *Participation in the IEP Process*, and *Parents as Partners: Effective IEP Team Skills*. Video-led trainings are also available and include all of the video presentations available from Rick Lavoie. Some of the titles include: *How Difficult Can This Be? Frustration, Anxiety, and Tension*; *Learning Disabilities and Discipline: When the Chips are Down*; and *Motivation Breakthrough*. When a training is scheduled with a PIN Specialist, it includes the development of a training marketing flyer, the presentation with handouts for note-taking, and supportive documents from the PINC that provide the participant with additional information on the subject matter, an evaluation, and a certificate of participation.

Here are the Parent Information Network Specialists and the areas that they cover:

**Allison Meritt** serves Apache, Coconino, Mohave, Navajo, and Yavapai counties.

She has been with the PIN for six years. She is the parent of two children and lives in Winslow, Arizona.



**Amy Dill** serves Gila and Maricopa (480 area code) counties. She has been with the PIN for three years. She is the parent of two children and lives in Phoenix, Arizona.

**Jill Castle** serves Maricopa County (602 and 623 area codes). She has been with the PIN for three years. She is the parent of two children and lives in Scottsdale, Arizona.



**Nilda Townsend** serves Cochise, Graham, Greenlee and Santa Cruz counties. She has been with the PIN for two years. She is the parent of two children and lives in Sierra Vista, Arizona.



**Kathy Gray-Mangerson** serves Pima and Pinal counties. She has been with the PIN for three years. She is the parent of one child and lives in Tucson, Arizona.

The Parent Information Network has a new logo. It is designed to signify the commitment of the PIN to provide information to families of children with disabilities as they navigate the special education process and encourage their children to reach for the stars.



Parent Information Network

**Teri Rademacher** serves La Paz, Maricopa (623 area code), and Yuma counties. She has been with the PIN for six years. She is the parent of two children and lives in Yuma, Arizona.



To access the Parent Information Network resources, contact your regional PIN Specialist. Contact information for the PIN Specialists is listed below. If you are unsure who your PIN Specialist is, simply call the toll-free hotline at 877-230-PINS (7467), and the specialist who answers will assist you. The best thing about the Parent Information Network is that all of their services and resources are free!

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**Parent Information Network (PIN) Specialists**  
**Toll-free: 1-877-230-PINS (7467) or e-mail [PINS@azed.gov](mailto:PINS@azed.gov)**

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