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AHEAD

Volume 16

Issue 2

Summer 2004

School's Out -- Congress' In

Once again, Congress is looking at changing the special education law our children depend on -- IDEA. The old news is that the House passed a bill with their version of IDEA. What is new is that recently the Senate passed their version. Because they are not the same the differences have to be worked out. To do that there will be a joint committee with representatives of both the House and Senate.

So this might not be a great time to be resting! There are strong opinions from people who range from selfless heroes to arrogant cynics -- they all have their own opinions about OUR children and what is best for them!

Parents have valuable opinions that need to be part of the final decision which this committee will make. Although the process is on

a fast pace right now, parents may find themselves on a slower "summer pace" -- a potentially hazardous thing to be doing at this important time.

If you have access to the internet you can stay up-to-date on the current and breaking issues. Some may include information on the best methods for you to use to for you to be heard. Try sites such as:

Center for the Study & Advancement of Disability Policy:

www.disabilitypolicycenter.org

National Association of Protection & Advocacy Systems:

www.napas.org

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." —Margaret Mead

National Autism Society:

www.autism-society.org

National Down Syndrome Society:

www.ndss.org

Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund:

www.dredf.org

You can be included on the Tennessee Disability Coalition's e-mail service that sends out late breaking news about disability issues important to Tennesseans. Send request to coalition@tndisability.org or for children's health issue alerts: child.health@tndisability.org

Due to the security precautions in place in Washington DC, regular mail is the slowest method to have a say in IDEA. The very best methods currently seem to be e-mail and faxes. Again, it requires access to technology. Let us know if we can help!

Disability Friend Speaks on IDEA

May 12, 2004 on the floor of the Senate, Senator Ted Kennedy said (condensed):

Today, the Senate considers the reauthorization of one of the nation's most successful civil rights laws -- the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This landmark law, originally enacted in 1975, guarantees the right of every child with a disability to a free, appropriate public education.

We know that disabled does not mean unable. Children with disabilities have the same dreams as every other child in America -- to grow up and lead a happy and productive life. We know that IDEA helps them fulfill that dream.

IDEA says children cannot be cast aside or locked away just because they have a disability. Those days are gone in America -- hopefully forever.

Children with disabilities have rights like every other child in America, including the right to join other children in public schools so they can learn and prepare themselves for the future.

In this debate, we'll hear a lot of talk about dollars and paperwork and lawyers. And those are important considerations. But we cannot allow those questions to distract us from what this debate is most about. It's about disabled children and their rights. It's about their hope and dream of living independent and productive lives. It's about parents who love their children and fight for them every day against a world that's too often inflexible and unwilling to help them meet their children's needs. It's about teachers who see the potential in a disabled child, but don't have the support or training they need to keep it alive.

That is what this law is about. It's our statement as a nation that these children matter and that we will do our part to help their parents and teachers and communities meet their education goals. That is why the government should make an iron-clad commitment to provide the resources for special education. That is why it is important to develop a solid education plan for each child, to chart

the progress, and to hold schools accountable when they fall short. It sounds like No Child Left Behind, and it is -- "No Child" means "No Disabled Child too. Later this month, we observe the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court's historic decision in Brown v. the Board of Education, which struck down school segregation by race and said that all children have equal access to education under the Constitution. But it wasn't until the passage of the Education for the Handicapped Act in 1975 that the Brown decision had real meaning for children with disabilities.

Only then did we finally end school segregation by disability, and open the doors of public schools to disabled children. Only then did the nation's four million disabled children begin to have the same opportunities as other children to develop their talents, share their gifts, and lead productive lives.

We must never go back to the days when disabled children were excluded from public education, when few if any pre-

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STEP WORKSHOPS ACROSS TENNESSEE

If you want to attend a workshop in your area, would you help us by letting us know so we can schedule one for you? Call (800) 280-STEP or e-mail us at information@tnstep.org -- Preregistration is required for all workshops (see contact number). Basic Rights is a three-hour basic special education training workshop: "First STEP: A Parent's Introduction to Special Education." Additional workshop topics include: IEP, Evaluation, Inclusion, Section 504, Communication & Conflict Resolution, Transition, and LRE, and Early Childhood.

(E=East TN, M=Middle TN, W=West TN)

Workshop Schedule

Date	Time	Workshop	TN	Location	Contact
05/05/04	6:00 p.m.	Basic Rights	E	Knoxville/Knox Co.	(865) 522-4991
08/17/04	6:00 p.m.	Basic Rights	E	Lenoir City/Loudon Co.	(800) 280-7837
09/02/04	6:00 p.m.	IEP	E	Knoxville/Knox Co.	(865) 522-4991
09/21/04	6:00 p.m.	Basic Rights	E	Maryville/Blount Co.	(865) 984-1212
09/23/04	6:00 p.m.	Basic Rights	E	Maryville/Blount Co.	(865) 984-1212
10/19/04	6:00 p.m.	Evaluations	E	Maryville/Blount Co.	(865) 984-1212
07/27/04	6:00 p.m.	Basic Rights	M	Pulaski/Giles Co.	(931) 424-1816
08/03/04	5:30 p.m.	Basic Rights	M	Clarksville/Montgomery Co.	(270) 798-8997
08/06/04	9:00 a.m.	Basic Rights	M	Murfreesboro/Rutherford Co.	(615) 898-2458
09/02/04	5:00 p.m.	Basic Rights	M	Nashville/Davidson Co.	(615) 936-5209
09/21/04	5:00 p.m.	Basic Rights	M	Nashville/Davidson Co.	(615) 322-8200
10/13/04	6:00 p.m.	Basic Rights	M	Nashville/Davidson Co.	(615) 269-7091
10/19/04	5:00 p.m.	IEP	M	Nashville/Davidson Co.	(615) 322-8200
09/17/04	9:00 a.m.	Basic Rights	W	Memphis/Shelby Co.	(901) 325-5941

This list is as of 6/16/04 (in time for publishing and distributing the newsletter), more workshops are being added daily! Please call us or go to our Website (www.tnstep.org) to learn of the newest schedule of workshops! Please let us know that you want to attend a workshop and we will set one up -- right in your county! As always, these trainings are free!

STEP's Accomplishments -- 2003 through 2004

During the 2003-2004 school year, STEP conducted more than 153 workshops. There were workshops in 49 counties and more than 1,172 parent and 529 professionals attended. Some of the evaluation comments were: *"My son is getting a job this summer and STEP helped"; "The information my son received helped renew his hope"; "The school had given up on my son... without STEP he would have been in jail or someplace else"; "After the workshop my son speaks up as to his preferences now & his needs for accommodations"; "My son passed his Gateway test !!! Thank you STEP for your help"; and "STEP services were helpful—it's a comfort to know I've got you to turn to & lean on for help".*

In addition we connected with more than 40,000 people (not counting the STEP newsletters or the "hits" on our Website). The evaluations revealed a 99% satisfaction rate with STEP services!

We traveled more than 25,000 miles to assist families so that they could get the help they needed to be effective participants in their child's education. We are proud that we are able to continue to use a "family-to-family" approach. Every staff member of STEP is an individual with a disability or a family member of an individual with a disability. Thanks to YOU, the word gets out about how STEP can help families! *Keep spreading the word - tell everyone about STEP!*



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A Tisket, A Tasket, An Information Packet

How empowering it is to receive a packet of information that specifically addresses the issue at hand. For parents, free of charge, we have information packets on the topics listed below (limit of two (2) per request please). You may request the particular packet that you need by either e-mailing us at information@tnstep.org, or by calling our toll-free number at 1-800/280-7837.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| → No Child Left Behind | → Mediation |
| → Transition From High School | → Bullying |
| → TCAP Alternate | → ADHD |
| → Early Childhood | → 504 |
| → Extended School Year (ESY) | → TCAP |
| → Assistive Technology | → Gateway |
| → Evaluations | → Autism |
| → Record Keeping | → Inclusion |

A "Taste" of STEP's Lending Library

Books:

Helping Children Who Are Deaf (Sandy Niemann, Devorah Greenstein, and Darlena David). This book was written primarily for parents and other caregivers of young children who are deaf or cannot hear well. "...The lay-out and illustrations supporting the carefully worded text help to convey the message of the book and make it easy to use." (Birgit Dyssegaard) Ask for STEP # 1772

Taking Care of Myself (Mary Wrobel). This book was specifically designed to address the health and safety needs of students aged five and up with autism

Congratulations to Gina Russell!

Congratulations to one of our district parent trainers Gina Russell. She has been named Volunteer of the Year for 2004 by the Volunteer of Memphis Group. She received the Spirit of Giving Award as seen in this picture. We are very proud of her example and the inspiration she gives for all of us.



spectrum disorders. The goals of this curricular program are to promote independence, instill personal safety and reduce fear and confusion. The vocabulary is simple, but specific. The activities are presented with suggestions for modifications as well as examples of visual cues to encourage comprehension of the subject matter. Ask for STEP # 1771

Self-Determination Strategies for Adolescents in Transition. (Sharon Field, Alan Hoffman and Shirley Spezia). This book written for transition instruction, has eight informative chapters with the following titles: The Importance of Self-Determination during Transitions, Know Yourself, Value Yourself, Plan, Act, Experience Outcomes and Learn, Putting It All Together, and Additional Resources. Ask for STEP #1762

Shift Happens—Making the Shift to Proactive Behavior Management. (George Sues) This book is intended to provide common sense information which will enable you to assist all children, as well as adults with certain disabilities, to maximize their potential for well-adjusted behavior and improve learning in general. Further, it provides methods to support individuals in attaining greater levels of decision making and self-determination. Ask for STEP #1763

Videos:

Autism Spectrum Disorders. (IEP Resources) Educational psychologist and author Glenis Benson, Ph.D. presents a comprehensive overview of autism spectrum disorders. Her developmental perspective covers major issue area: Cognitive style, diagnostic characteristics, communication skills and deficits, social behaviors, support strategies and challenging behaviors. 39 Minutes, closed captioned. Ask for STEP #1637

No Body's Perfect... Everybody's Special!! (Video Architects, I.I.c.) Come inside the Head Over heels Body Shop... A fun place to learn about kids with special conditions. Meet Jack, a mechanic of misconceptions and his friends Tristan, Olivia and Emily... they're busy fixing misunderstandings people have of others with special physical needs. 20 minutes 30 seconds, closed captioned. Ask for STEP #1641

The Challenging Kid—Assessment & Intervention. (IEP Resources) In this video, author and professor Sheldon Braaten, Ph.D. explains how you can identify students early and intervene effectively, using developmentally appropriate behavioral objectives to help them acquire pro-social competencies. This model is a comprehensive skill-based assessment tool that will help contribute to behavior intervention planning (BIPs) and IEPs. 21 minutes, closed captioned. Ask for STEP # 1632

Frequently Asked Questions

Voted Reader's Favorite Column



Q: I have concerns about how to tell if my child is making progress toward her goals. The IEP says that all the goals will be measured by "teacher observation" and I'm wondering, can you give me some examples of any other methods to measure progress that could be part of my child's IEP?

A: Teacher observation may be one way to measure progress but it can be very subjective, which Webster defines as "placing an emphasis on ones own moods, attitudes and opinions". An example of subjective teacher observation might be "I think Johnny has a better attitude today" or "I think Janie's handwriting has improved".

Although it might be important to have the teachers observations as PART of the measure of progress, you will probably need additional "objective" information. Webster dictionary defines "objective" as "not influenced by personal feelings or prejudice, unbiased." "Objective" measurement might look like this:

"I know Johnny is making progress toward demonstrating a positive attitude in the classroom because he made eye contact with me 4 times today, raised his hand and asked 2 questions, " etc. or "Let's look at Janie's handwriting work samples over the last 3 weeks to determine what progress she has made in writing legibly".

A way that I have used that is comfortable at an IEP meeting to address the issue of "teacher observation" is to say something like this:

√ "Can you describe to me what you specifically will be looking for when you are observing to see if Joe is behaving appropriately in the classroom?"

When the teacher lists that she will be looking for Joe to stay in his own space, ask permission before leaving the classroom, address the teachers by "Mr. or Mrs.", use his pencil to write on his paper and refrain from peeling the outside off layer by layer, etc. you can respond with, "Can you keep track of how many times you observe each of those so we can document how well he is learning from your instruction?"

(That then becomes "data collection" as another way to measure progress!)

It is very important to make sure that you have a good Present Level of Education Performance in each area so that you can decide as a team what is "sufficient progress" in each area. For example if you haven't established how many times Joe currently leaves the classroom without permission, it will be hard to determine if he making progress.

Another important step is to write the goals so that they are measurable and specific.

(We will cover that topic with answers to other questions in our next newsletter!!)

So, in summary, we have talked about two ways in addition to teacher observation to measure progress; data collection and work samples. Here are a few others with a brief description:

Standardized Tests: This could be a specific test that is given at the beginning of each school year, such as the Brigance, that you could compare the scores to document progress.

Peer Interviews: If you want to know if Emily is making progress on her goal of "initiating play interactions with a peer" you might want to ask Emily's classmates, "Mark, has Emily ever come up and asked you to play with her on the playground"?

Parent Observation/Data Collection/Interview: If Josh has a goal to feed himself with a spoon and Mom can observe him at home making progress, then we begin to see not only that he is mastering the skill but that he is demonstrating it in a variety of settings.

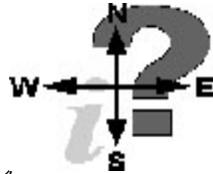
Remember that your child has a right to make progress that is sufficient to enable them to achieve the goals by the end of the year. *(IDEA Regulation 34 CFR 300.347)*

Q: My son has a disability and is struggling with reading. At the IEP meeting I don't feel prepared to ask the right questions so I can participate effectively in writing his IEP. Can you give me some examples of questions to ask?

A: It truly is important to be prepared and the following questions should assist you as you talk with your child's teacher and others at the IEP meeting. Use them to help you gather the information you need. Remember, if you do not understand something, ask to have it explained thoroughly.

If you have questions about your child's overall reading progress, ask...

1. What is my child's grade level in reading? What does that mean he can do? Where does he need to improve?
2. Is there a difference between how well my child reads individual words and how well he understands what he reads?
3. If so, what can we do to improve the weaker areas? Are you using specific program to teach my child?
4. If so, what skills does this program teach?
5. If you are not using a specific program, what strategies are you using to teach my child to identify words, read smoothly and understand what he reads?
6. Are there reading programs that are based on research that have been shown to work with students with disabilities similar to my sons?
7. Can we look into those and see if there is one that will help close the gap between the level my son is reading and his peers?



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8. What kinds of things are you doing to help my child succeed in reading? (such as provide support by a reading specialist, provide different materials)
9. What can I do at home to help my son/daughter read well? (For example: Can you suggest workshops, reading lists, parent/child materials that I may borrow, or website supports?)
10. How will I be notified about my child's reading gains? Can you update me every 2 -3 weeks?

If you have questions about Word Recognition, Sounds, and Fluency in Reading, ask...

1. Has my child ever been tested for language and sound awareness? If so, how recently and what did the testing show?
2. What is being done in the classroom to help my child avoid pausing unnecessarily at words?
3. What strategies are being taught to help my child work through difficult sounds or words when reading?
4. What are some books, poems, nursery rhymes, word games, books, videos, audio materials, etc. that I can use at home to help my child with word recognition, sounds and/or reading aloud?
5. For practicing reading at home, would you help me select material(s) that my child can read comfortably (i.e. where 90% of the words are ones my child knows)?

If you have questions about Reading Comprehension, ask....

1. When my child is having trouble understanding what he reads, what do you do to help him understand the material?
2. Would you show me what you are doing?
3. Can you tell me about some other activities that I can do at home to help him understand what he reads and provide me with some resources to use at home?

If you have questions about Reading Instruction in other subject areas, ask...

1. Which accommodations does my child need in core academic and special area classes to support his reading, writing and spelling needs? Where in the IEP will you list the special ways that his literacy needs are described in his IEP?
2. What are my child's other teachers doing to support and help her in light of her reading, writing and/or spelling needs?

I am sure that with these questions and your desire to help your child and be an active participant in the process you will be able to ask the questions that will lead to a more effective IEP for your child.

Watch for a related question in the next newsletter on questions you can ask regarding spelling, writing and testing

Framework of reading questions reproduced from material by ecac (NC PTI) www.ecac-parentcenter.org

Winners Announced!

Congratulations to the following people who have won the awards for submitting their evaluations to STEP. Each of them will receive a pin to proudly wear which represents all children together!

Jeff H. in Cleveland
 Cheryl R. in Johnson City
 Martha C. in Brownsville
 Rebecca S. in Old Hickory
 Sharon C. in Murfreesboro
 Lisa W. in Bristol



Upcoming Events...Mark Your Calendar

Fifth Annual FAST Conference
 "Celebrating Students First!"
 November 3 -4, 2004
 Downtown Knoxville Hilton
 Call (877) 239-5433

Tennessee Summit on Education Transition
 Tuesday, July 27, 2004
 Nashville, TN
 Contact The Arc of TN: (615) 248-5878

2004 TASH Annual Conference
 November 17 - 20, 2004 Reno Hilton
 1/800-648-5080 or www.tash.org

Disability Mentoring Day
 Empowering Students & Job Seekers
 with Disabilities
 Wednesday, October 20, 2004
www.dmd-aapd.org or 1 (800) 840-8844

TENNESSEE YOUTH TRANSITION FORM

The Tennessee Youth Leadership Forum is a training initiative of the TN Council on Developmental Disabilities. The Forum is designed to provide 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students who have disabilities with information about disability issues, and to help them advocate for themselves and for others in their communities.

Criteria for acceptance into the program require that each participant is a person with a disability, and that potential YLF delegates have an inclination toward leadership in their communities. The goal is to create a class with diversity in geographic location, gender, ethnicity and type of disability
 For information contact:
 Ned Solomon (615)532-6964 or
 e-mail: ned.solomon@state.tn.us



Collaboration Celebration!

STEP Joins with TN Department of Education in Statewide Training of NEW Special Education Manual

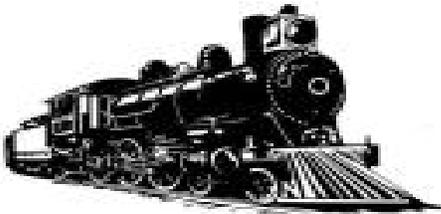
STEP and the TN Department of Education worked together on presenting training on their new Special Education Manual. There was strong representation of parents along with professionals in the field of special education that joined us across Tennessee. Everyone agreed it was a great success. Watch for new collaborative events in the future!



STEP's Annual Conference

The Mega Conference -- STEP's annual conference now in collaboration with The Arc of Tennessee, the Council on Developmental Disabilities, Tennessee Protection and Advocacy, and 50 other disability organizations was another huge success. Having the conference in Nashville to accommodate more families' worked well again. This year was the second annual event and nearly 500 people were in attendance. Watch for news of the 3rd annual conference in June of 2005! Follow the developments at:

www.tndisabilitymegaconference.org



Independent Living Centers Assist with On TRAC Project

STEP conducted three Independent Living Forums this past spring through the our Rehabilitative Services Administration (RSA) grant. The great success (Johnson City, Knoxville, and Chattanooga) was in part a result of collaborative efforts between STEP, the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), and the two Independent Living Centers which serve the communities that the grant serves. A special thanks to the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in Knoxville and TRAC in Chattanooga for providing the meeting locations and thanks to the SILC for providing their benefits specialists for the forums. A big thanks to Ed Maurer, a Clarksville-based attorney who led us through understanding special needs trusts and other important legal considerations for families in transition.

Mark your calendar for the September On TRAC Institute in Knoxville! It will be held on Sept. 11, 2004, 9am -3 pm.



My Older Brother Daryl

Daryl is an 18 year-old with special needs. He has 1:1 instruction for supervision needs (he likes to run away & is very fast) and is nonverbal. Daryl can do lots of things that no one expected given his limitations.

He can put 100 pegs on the peg board ~ but no one taught him how to put quarters in the coke machine...

He can fold a paper in halves & quarters ~ but he can not fold his clothes...

He can sort blocks by 10 different colors ~ but he can not sort the laundry for washing...

He can manipulate play-dough into snakes, towers, flowers and dogs ~ but he has never made cookies or biscuits...

He can string beads in alternating colors and lace up the DLM cards ~ but no one has taught him to lace & tie his shoes...

He can sign the alphabet, identify the letters of the alphabet out of sequence and has a picture vocabulary of 500 words ~ but he is assessed at a pre-K academic level because he can not read aloud...

He can identify weather symbols on the calendar at circle time ~ but has no idea you should wear a rain coat on a cloudy day...

He can walk on a balance beam forward, backward & sideways ~ but no one has taught him how to climb the bleachers to see his sister play basketball...

He can sit in a circle and have appropriate behavior while his class plays Duck-Duck-Goose ~ but nobody in his neighborhood seems to want to do that...

He can put a cube in the box, on the box and under the box ~ but no one has taught him how to open the trash can at Burger King and empty his tray without throwing the tray away...

He can play the Roller Coaster game, Solitaire and use the Internet on the computer ~ but no one will get him a voice output device because it is believed to be too complicated...

If we ever hope to encourage students to develop practical, functional skills, we need to remember to look at the function of the skills we are teaching our students and be sure that the ultimate goal is a practical one.

Used by permission by Matrix Parent Network and Resource Center, Novalto, Calif., www.matrixparents.org

Continued from page 1

school children with disabilities received services, and when the disabled were passed off to institutions and substandard schools where they were out of sight and out of mind.

We've made tremendous progress since those dark days. Today, six and a half million children with disabilities receive special education services. Almost all of them – 96% – are learning alongside their non-disabled peers. The number of young children with early development problems who receive childhood services has tripled since 1975.

More disabled students are participating in state and national testing programs, and graduation rates and college enrollment rates for disabled students are steadily rising.

The opportunities for further progress are boundless. We know far more about disability today than a quarter century ago. We understand the various disabilities of children, and how to help them all to learn and achieve. We are learning more each day about the enabling power of technology to help disabled children lead independent lives – it lets them communicate, explore the world on the Internet, move in ways we couldn't have imagined five years ago, much less in 1975 when the law was first enacted.

So we approach this reauthorization recognizing its extraordinary role in protecting rights and broadening opportunities for children with disabilities. IDEA is not broken. But we also know we can do more, and several priorities need to be addressed.

We must do better in bringing the law's promise to all disabled students in all schools. That means fully enforcing the law in every school district in the country.

A GAO analysis of compliance shows that from educational services to transition support, students are not getting what they're entitled to. In a preliminary sample of 13 states, 12 were not in compliance with the law.

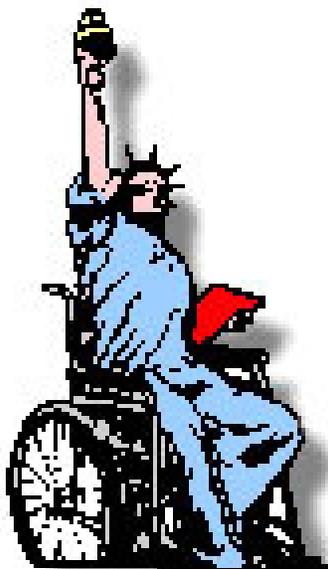
Even when non-compliance is identified, the federal response is intolerably slow. Some states violated the law for more than a decade before the Department of Education intervened. In several states, problems identified in 1997 or earlier are still unresolved.

This failure has real world consequences for real children struggling to get an education. In these books are almost 2,000 letters from parents across the nation whose disabled children have been denied their educational rights under IDEA.

This legislation will improve enforcement of IDEA at every level. It requires a State-Federal partnership to design a better monitoring system to hold states more accountable.

We must also improve services for children nearing graduation, so they can leave school with the skills and continuing support they need to succeed. For persons with disabilities, the adult world offers little help to meet the challenges of daily life.

It is vital for these steps to be taken in school, so that all children with disabilities can be reached before they enter the job market and the confusing maze of adult services.



So far, we have seen small improvements in graduation rates, but we are clearly failing to prepare disabled children to live independently after they leave school.

At best, only a little over half of students leaving special education have jobs or are continuing their education five years later. Often, they are transferred into the welfare system, with no recognition of their potential.

Our bill places a major focus on early planning for that all-important transition, and better coordination with other federal programs such as vocational rehabilitation and Ticket to Work, to link students to more options and maximize prospects for their independence.

In the legislation, transition activities will begin at age 14 for disabled students in IDEA. Vocational rehabilitation specialists will work with special education students and their families earlier and more effectively on post-secondary education and careers. Welfare can't be the only option for students with disabilities when they graduate from school.

In addition, now that disabled children are learning side-by-side with non-disabled classmates, we must do a better job of integrating special education and regular education in individual schools...

It creates better ways for parents, teachers, and school administrators to work together to meet children's needs without resorting to litigation.

Parents will have more flexibility to develop of their child's education program by teleconferencing and video conferencing.

I commend Senator Sessions and his staff for their bipartisan effort to solve the discipline issue, which has plagued the debate on IDEA for years.

Thanks to the leadership of Senator Clinton, the legislation also authorizes new funds to improve the quality of alternative placements, and to provide better behavioral supports through whole school interventions.

The legislation provides more flexibility for schools to discipline students, with safeguards so that discipline is not used as an excuse to halt educational services, and is not used to exclude or segregate disabled children because of the failure of the school to provide for the educational needs of the child.

Research tells us that suspension and expulsion are ineffective in changing the behavior of students with disabilities. When students with disabilities are suspended or expelled and their education is disrupted, they are likely to fall even farther behind, become even more frustrated, and drop out of school altogether. That's a disservice to the students, to their families, and to society.

We need to support disabled children, not punish them for what they can't control.

We have a rare opportunity in this reauthorization to improve the education of every disabled student in the nation. We want this bill to make that happen. If we succeed, and also meet the bipartisan commitment made a quarter century ago to fully fund IDEA, there is no limit to the progress special education students can make in the years ahead.

Education can work for all children with disabilities and their families. They don't have to struggle everyday to survive in a system that too often says "you can't" and "you won't." With sensible support, they can and they will.

STEP's Parent Manual Now in a Variety of Formats

STEP's *Parent Manual* has been a favorite reference for many families. It is now available on CD! It is in a completely searchable format. It has been done in PDF so that any computer (with a CD reader) can read it. Simply download a **FREE** version of Adobe Reader (if you don't already have it on your computer), put the CD in your computer and you will have every page of the *Parent Manual* there to search. Searching is easy! Simply click on the "spy glasses" icon and type in the word (or part of the word) you are looking for and in a few seconds you will have every instance of that word highlighted and the computer will "jump" to each instance of that word for you.

At STEP's Basic Information workshop, families will now have a choice of the book or the CD free. For families who wish to purchase the CD, it will be \$10 in person and \$15 by mail. Finally, STEP's *Parent Manual* is available on our Website (also searchable). Simply go to www.tnstep.org and click on the word "*Parent Manual*". Let us know what you think!



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