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AHEAD

Volume 21

Issue 1

Spring 2009

CHANGES IN IDEA INVOLVE PARENTS' RIGHTS

New regulations of the federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) became effective Dec. 31, 2008. IDEA provides a free, appropriate public education for children with disabilities.

Two changes of particular importance to parents of children with disabilities involve:

- a parent's right to revoke consent for special education and related services
- representation of parents and schools by non-attorneys in due process hearings

Since the passage of the first special education laws in 1975, parents have had the right to withdraw consent for special education services. However, school districts also had the right to contest the parent's decision. The new regulations allow parents to revoke their consent for special education and related services and require the school district to comply with the parent's request for the student's removal from special education.

Consequently, schools will not be able to challenge a parent's decision through mediation or due process hearing. Parents, however, must provide written consent to discontinue special education and related services. Schools must provide the parents with prior written notice detailing the changes in educational placement and services before the services are actually discontinued.

Cont. on Page 4

Powers of "Observation"

Become an effective participant at IEP meetings by systematically observing your child and documenting facts. Since planning an appropriate program for your child requires specific, documented facts rather than generalized impressions and concerns, you will need to collect your own facts. To convey personal knowledge of your child to school personnel — people accustomed to dealing with test scores, specific behaviors, [goals, and objectives](#) — written, concrete facts will be most influential. One way to collect these facts is to observe your child in a formal way. "Observe!" you say. "When? How?" You think of the days you barely have enough time and energy to brush your teeth before turning in for the night. But observations can be made. Gathering and organizing information is a vital part of becoming an effective educational advocate for your child.

Tips for Becoming a Skilled Observer

Step back. Suspend for a brief time (three to five minutes) your normal role. By not intervening where you normally would, you may see your child's abilities and problems in a new light.

Start fresh. Try to be open to new aspects of behavior you may have overlooked before. Observe behaviors that are happening now. Although reports on the past are important in describing a child's development, school personnel are interested in fresh, up-to-date information on what she can do now.

Get focused. Decide upon a specific behavior or skill to observe. The best rule is to look at those areas that trouble you or your child.

Go with the flow. As you watch your child's activities, record what you see actually happening, not your interpretations of your child's actions.

Write down detailed, factual information. Use the [Parent's Observation Record](#) and view complete article on greatschools.net

Example of a 5-minute Observation focusing on child's difficulty getting ready for school:

~Opens his sock drawer, stares at contents. ~ Notices battery on top of bureau and picks it up.
~Takes it over to battery tester to test; decides not to. ~Sets battery down on floor. ~Comes back to bureau, shuts drawer. ~Remembers he's looking for socks and opens drawer again. ~Picks out socks. ~Sits on bed with socks in his hand. ~Notices deflated balloon on floor. ~Puts socks down; picks balloon up.



Fresh observations collected prior to meetings with teachers and other professionals can assist in providing specific recommendations for her special education program. You will be more prepared to be an effective IEP participant.

Adapted from an article on <http://www.greatschools.net> By Deidre Hayden

STEP WORKSHOPS ACROSS TENNESSEE

Call (800) 280-STEP or e-mail us at information@tnstep.org

Preregistration is requested for all workshops.

Date	Time	Workshop	TN	Location	Contact
02/26/09	6:00 pm	Communication	E	Gray/Washington Co.	(423) 477-9361
02/26/09	5:00 pm	IEP	E	Cleveland Bradley Co.	(423) 624-6344x1019
03/10/09	5:30 pm	Basic	M	Cookeville/Putnam Co.	(931) 372-8900
03/14/09	8:00 am	T Institute	M	Nashville/Davidson Co.	(615) 463-2310
03/17/09	5:30 pm	Communication	M	Clarksville/Montgomery Co.	(931) 220-2702
03/21/09	10:00 am	Section 504	W	Martin/Weakley Co.	(731) 514-0797
03/31/09	5:00 pm	Basic	M	Nashville/Davidson Co.	(615) 936-5209
04/03/09	9:00 am	Basic	M	Tullahoma/Coffee Co.	(931) 454-0050 x3
04/09/09	6:30 pm	IEP	W	Memphis/Shelby Co.	(901) 547-7588
04/17/09	8:00 am	Spanish Basic	E	Knoxville/Knox Co.	(800) 975-2919
04/23/09	6:00 pm	Basic	E	Sevierville/Sevier Co.	(865) 428-3423x20
04/24/09	9:00 am	Basic	M	Murfreesboro/Rutherford Co.	(615) 898-2458
04/30/09	5:30 pm	Basic	M	Springfield/Robertson Co.	(615) 384-3588
05/05/09	6:00 pm	Basic	M	Fort Campbell/KY	(270) 798-2727
05/19/09	6:00 pm	Transition	E	Chattanooga/Hamilton Co.	(423) 645-0504
08/04/09	6:00 pm	Basic	M	Fort Campbell/KY	(270) 798-2727
09/12/09	3:00 pm	Basic	W	Memphis/Shelby Co.	(901) 726-4334

E= East M=Middle W= West

This list is as of 02/20/09, more workshops are being added daily!

Please call us or go to our Website (www.tnstep.org) to learn of the newest schedule!

These trainings are free to parents or other family members!

The New 2009 Parent Manual is now available with updates to IDEA and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act! Attend a training to receive a copy.

Professionals are welcome to attend, there may be a nominal charge for some materials.

**Preparando el camino para su viaje por el laberinto de la educación especial**

Conviértase en un participante eficaz en las reuniones del PEI al observar de manera sistemática a su hijo y documentando los hechos. A veces los padres de familia no saben como contestar las preguntas anteriores. Usted sabe muchas cosas sobre su hijo/a, pero ese conocimiento es general y no en la forma específica que se necesita para poder contestar esas preguntas. Puesto que planear un programa adecuado para la educación de su hijo/a requiere datos específicos y documentados en lugar de impresiones generales, usted va a necesitar recoger su propia información. Las personas que trabajan en la escuela están acostumbradas a tratar con resultados, comportamientos específicos, metas y objetivos, y por lo tanto usted será más eficaz si les puede proporcionar datos escritos y concretos. Una manera de recoger estos datos es observar a su hijo/a en la forma debida. "¡Observar! dirá usted. ¿Cuándo? ¿Cómo? Usted tal vez pensará en eso días en los que a duras penas tiene el suficiente tiempo y energía para lavarse los dientes antes de acostarse a dormir. Pero las observaciones se pueden hacer. El recoger y organizar la información es una parte muy importante para ayudar a tener una educación efectiva para su hijo/a

Claves para ser un buen observador

Quítese del medio. Suspenda por un período corto de tiempo lo que usted normalmente hace en su familia.

Empiece como nueva. Dese a si misma la oportunidad de ver esos aspectos de el comportamiento de su hijo/a que usted tal vez no había visto antes. Observe lo que está pasando ahora.

Enfóquese. Decida anticipadamente cual comportamiento o habilidad va a observar. ¿Cómo puede usted decidir en que se va a enfocar?

Siga el camino. Cuando esté observando las actividades de su hijo/a, escriba lo que en realidad esté sucediendo, y no la interpretación que usted le da a las acciones.

Escriba la información en la forma más real y detallada posible. Su trabajo será más fácil si usted solamente observa por periodos de tiempo cortos, tal vez cinco minutos o menos.

Durante todos los años escolares de su hijo/a usted va a necesitar hacer observaciones de su crecimiento y desarrollo. Información que es nueva y que se ha recogido antes de las reuniones con maestros y otros profesionales de la escuela, le van a permitir proveer recomendaciones importantes para ayudarle a su hijo/a en su programa educacional. El tener esta información a su alcance le hará sentir confiada en que usted está cumpliendo con su papel como una de las personas importantes en el proceso de la educación de su hijo/a. <http://www.greatschools.net>



STEP Staff and Board Members Honor Barbara Wagner

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At the February 2009 Board of Directors meeting Barbara Wagner was presented with a plaque in honor of her service to STEP, Inc. The plaque was inscribed with a poem written by STEP staff member, Donna Jennings. Families in TN who have children with disabilities have a tireless and passionate friend in Ms. Wagner.

**Your journey with STEP began in 1998,
You jumped right in with a willing heart and didn't hesitate.
Your hours spent in service are countless it is true,
Your time for R and R is long overdue.
The impact of your work will live on from day to day,
In the hearts and lives of those you have helped along the way.**



Barbara Wagner accepted the plaque of recognition from Karen Harrison, Project Director and had this to say:

"I am so touched by the thoughtfulness and sincerity in this beautiful plaque, particularly the very sweet poem written for me by Donna Jennings, one of STEP's most dedicated employees. There is no finer organization or group of people. I thank each of them for their hard work on behalf of children and families, for the opportunity to work with them over the years and for their friendship. It is a privilege to be part of STEP."

Special Education and Restraint Modernization and Positive Behavioral Supports Act

Adapted from a presentation by Steven Glowicki

The Purpose of this Act



- Ensure that every student receiving special education services is free from the unreasonable, unsafe and unwarranted uses of isolation and restraint practices
- Encourage the use of positive behavioral interventions & support methods in schools
- Develop properly trained staff in order to promote positive behavioral supports that reduce dependence on isolation and restraint practices
- Ensure that teachers of students receiving special education services are properly trained to protect the student, teachers and others from physical harm, if isolation or restraint is necessary.

What is Allowable?

- A student may be restrained if it is provided for in the student's IEP
- A student may be restrained or isolated in emergency situations, if necessary to assure the physical safety of the student or others nearby
- The brief holding by an adult in order to calm or comfort
- Minimum contact necessary to physically escort a student from one area to another
- Assisting a student in completing a task or response if the student does not resist, or resistance is minimal in intensity or duration
- Holding a student for a brief time to prevent a behavior that threatens a student's immediate safety

What is Prohibited?

- Chemical restraint without parent consent and without the direction of a physician
- Administering a noxious substance
- The use of a mechanical restraint
- Any form of life threatening restraint, including restraint that restricts the flow of air into a person's lungs
- The use of isolation or physical holding restraint as a means of coercion, punishment, convenience or retaliation on any student
- The use of a locked door, or use of any physical structure that substantially accomplishes the intent of locking a student in a room or structure, to isolate or seclude a student

The School's Reporting Obligations

If the school uses restraint or isolation in an emergency situation the school must contact the person designated to authorize the isolation or restraint who will evaluate the student's condition within a reasonable time. The parent or guardian must be notified orally or by written notice the same day of the incident. If the student's IEP does not provide for the use of isolation or restraint for the behavior or if school staff are required to isolate or restrain the child for an extended period of time an IEP Team Meeting shall be convened within 10 days after the isolation or restraint. If the behavior precipitating such action also warrants a change of placement, the child retains all rights provided under applicable state and federal law.

Thoughtful and careful consideration is being given by the Dept. of Education on guidelines to implement this new Act. To view the Act go to <http://www.michie.com/tennessee/> TN Code Title 49 (education) Chapter 10 (special education) Part 13 Contact the State Department of Education at 1/888-212-3162 for more information.

Changes to IDEA Regulations

(Cont. from page 1)

Parents should be aware that once the child is removed from special education services, the school is not required to remove references to special education in a child's records. Parents can still request amendments to anything in the records that might be inaccurate or misleading.

Parents should consider the following additional facts when revoking their consent to their child's special education services:

- When a parent withdraws consent, the student and parent no longer have rights under IDEA. The student becomes a regular education student and will be required to meet all state requirements for graduation.
- The child will be required to follow the same discipline policies as regular education students.
- Accommodations permitted to a student on an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for statewide accountability and graduation-required assessments

will no longer be available when a student exits special education.

- If the parent withdraws consent and the child is removed from special education, the parent at any time may request an evaluation, which will then be an initial evaluation.

The new regulations also clarify that schools and parents may utilize non-attorneys in due process hearings if a state does not already have laws prohibiting it.

TN SPECIFIC: Case law in Tennessee has led to the opinion in the Tennessee Department of State that non-attorney representation in IDEA cases would constitute the unauthorized practice of law and is not permissible."



Effective December 31, 2008

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LET SIG PARTNERS BE YOUR SOURCE ON THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY!

The TN State Improvement Grant Family Partners have an exciting array of information and services available for schools and families. The Family Partners include the Center for Literacy Studies UT Knoxville, Family Voices for Children, and Support & Training for Exceptional Parents.

Unlocking Your School's Family Involvement Potential:

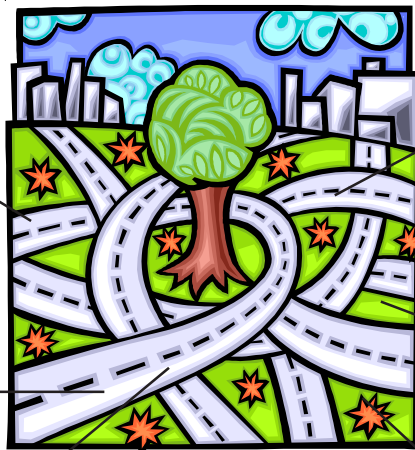
Discussion on how to reach families to improve family involvement that can lead to improved student outcomes. Handbook available.

Helping Your Child At Home:

PowerPoint and handout for families explaining areas of reading instruction and how parents can help children develop better reading skills.

Building Bridges Between Families and Schools:

An online class for teachers to enhance family involvement.



Response To Intervention: What Families Need to Know:

One hour presentation to inform families about the language of RTI and how to interact with school personnel through the process.

Literacy Goals In Your Child's IEP:

Dvd and presentation on how to weave literacy into student's IEP's

Families Helping Children Become Better Readers:

Book, PowerPoint and Facilitators' Guide

Visit the SIG website to see more! Contact us to schedule a training in your area!
www.sig.cls.utk.edu/

**There are no classes in life for beginners:
right away you are always asked to deal
with what is most difficult.**

Rainer Maria Rilke

STEP receives calls every day from families seeking information to help them navigate the maze that is before them and their children. Inevitably, there comes a point where the time for questions and learning meets the reality of the day of the IEP dawning!

"I'm not ready", is heard often. The truth is that there will always be some issue that we are not prepared for. What then can you do as a parent to calm the butterflies in your insides when you are uncertain if you will have "the answer" for everything that comes up at the IEP meeting?

The answer to the question is...a question! Why are you suggesting that method? What are you basing that recommendation on? When can we reconvene after I have had a chance to view what you are proposing? Who else can we bring to the table that can provide relevant information?

Use this strategy and you will feel empowered and confident and an active part in the IEP process!

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act Updated

Amendments were made to the regulations implementing the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which is section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act.

These amendments were needed to implement a provision of the USA Patriot Act and the Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act, which added new exceptions permitting the disclosure of personally identifiable information from education records without consent. The amendments also implement two U.S. Supreme Court decisions interpreting FERPA, and make necessary changes identified as a result of the Department's experience administering FERPA and the current regulations. These changes include:

- ~ clarifying permissible disclosures to parents of eligible students and conditions that apply to disclosures in health and safety emergencies;
- ~ clarifying permissible disclosures of student identifiers as directory information;
- ~ allowable disclosures to contractors and other outside parties in connection with the outsourcing of institutional services and functions;
- ~ revision of the definitions of attendance, disclosure, education records, personally identifiable information, and other key terms;
- ~ clarifying permissible redisclosures by State and Federal officials; and update investigation and enforcement provisions.

These regulations are effective January 8, 2009.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Frances Moran,
U.S. Department of Education, (202) 260-3887.
<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/E8-28864.htm>

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**Pull Out Your Blackberry, Palm,
or Other High Tech Device and
Mark Your Calendar!
(It's ok to use old-fashioned
pencil and paper too... ..
just don't miss
these exciting events!)**

Seventh Annual Tennessee DisabilityMegaConference

May 28 - 30

www.tndisabilitymegaconference.org
or call The ARC at 1/800-835-7077



STEP Transition Institutes

March 14, 2009

Location: TN School for the Blind
Nashville, TN

October 10, 2009

Johnson City, TN



Two informational strands:

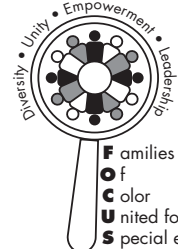
High school services and Adult Services!
Families, students, and service providers welcome!
Register online: www.tnstep.org
or call 1/800-280-7837

2009 Families of Color United for Special Education Conference

August 29, 2009

Chattanooga TN

Exciting speakers and information
designed to empower families from
diverse backgrounds!



East TN Disability Services and The Hispanic Community Conference

April 17, 2009

For service providers and Spanish-speaking parents of
children with disabilities in the school system

Topics Include:

- ➔ Tennessee Disability Pathfinder Hispanic Outreach Project
- ➔ Autism Spectrum Disorder: Information and Resources
- ➔ A Parents' Introduction To Their Basic Special Education Rights In Spanish
- ➔ Cultural Competence

This conference is FREE.

To register call 1/800-640-4630 ext. 11
To register for the Spanish workshop call
1/800-975-2919

SOCIAL SKILLS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Maria, a young girl with learning disabilities (LD), has struggled with peer interactions all her life. She avoids social situations, preferring to work and play on her own. This has begun to seriously affect her classwork, especially how she participates in group projects and pair work, and it's limiting her opportunities to learn from others and share her own knowledge and skills. Concerned, the members of Maria's IEP team meet to discuss ways to better support her. After careful consideration, they decide that she would benefit from a focused approach to improving her social skills. Maria's IEP team knows that her difficulties, left unattended, will continue to pose challenges for her both inside and outside the classroom. Evidence-based methods for building social skills have been developed by teachers, psychologists, and researchers.

Social skills are components of behavior that help an individual understand and adapt across a variety of social settings. Walker (1983) defines social skills as "a set of competencies that a) allow an individual to initiate and maintain positive social relationships, b) contribute to peer acceptance and to a satisfactory school adjustment, and c) allow an individual to cope effectively with the larger social environment". Social skills can also be defined within the context of social and emotional learning — recognizing and managing our emotions, developing caring and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically. With this understanding, researchers and educators seek to evaluate and build students' social skills within a variety of social contexts. The classroom is one such environment children must learn to navigate. In addition to their general importance for daily interaction, social skills can have a big impact on a child's ability to succeed in an academic setting. The classroom becomes both a training ground for development of social skills and an arena in which those skills are put to use.

Steadly, K.M., Schwartz, A., Levin, M., & Luke, S.D. (2008). Social skills and academic achievement. *Evidence for Education*, 3(2), 1-8. Visit the NICHCY at <http://www.nichcy.org> to see other wonderful articles and data about researched based practices and a link to the Technical Assistance and Dissemination Network, which is funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

Focus on social and emotional learning strategies that encourage reflection and self-awareness.

Encourage children to consider how individual actions and words have consequences.

Develop children's ability to take different perspectives and viewpoints.

Teach students to think through situations and/or challenges by rehearsing possible outcomes.

Create opportunities to practice effective social skills both individually and in groups.

Model effective social skills in the classroom and at home through praise, positive reinforcement, and correction and redirection of inappropriate behaviors.

Evidence-Based Resources for Social Skill Acquisition

Here is a small sample of interventions and programs recommended by researchers and leading organizations such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, based on significant research and evaluation.

"Stop and Think" Social Skills Program (Knoff)

<http://www.projectachieve.info/productsandresources/thestopthinksocialskillsprogramschool.html>

Primary Mental Health Project (Cowen et al.)

http://www.sharingsuccess.org/code/eptw/pdf_profiles/pmhp.pdf

The EQUIP Program (Gibbs, Potter, & Goldstein)

<http://www.researchpress.com/product/item/4848/#5133>

The PREPARE Curriculum (Goldstein)

<http://www.researchpress.com/product/item/5063>

The Walker Social Skills Curriculum — The ACCESS Complete Program (Walker et al.)

<http://www.proedinc.com/customer/productView.aspx?ID=615>

I Can Problem Solve: Interpersonal Cognitive Problem Solving (ICPS) (Shure & Spivack)

<http://www.researchpress.com/product/item/4628>

Tough Kids Social Skills Book (Sheridan)

http://www.addwarehouse.com/shopsite_sc/store/html/tough-kid-book.html

Adapted from The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), *Social skills: Promoting positive behavior, academic success, and school safety:*

http://www.nasponline.org/resources/factsheets/socialskills_fs.aspx

Use this article as a springboard to start a discussion with your child's IEP team if poor social skills is having an impact on their academic success. IEP goals can be written and evidence based practices can be put into place to address any need that is impacting your child in school.



The Social Times
A fun supplement to any social skills program.
http://www.asperger.net/social_times/

Discuss effective interactions with specific attention to the steps involved. For example, discuss the process of a conversation, showing how effective listening makes such interaction possible.

Role-play scenarios that build social skills.

Adjust instructional strategies to address social skills deficits.

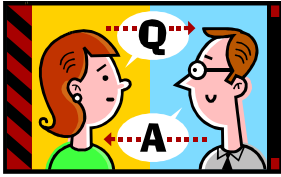
Arrange the physical environment effectively.

Clearly state instructional objectives and behavioral expectations throughout each lesson.

Simulate "real life" challenges students may encounter at school, home, and in the community to place social skills in their practical contexts.

Tailor social skill interventions to individual student needs.

Refer to assessment and diagnostic results when deciding upon an intervention.



STEP Into the Question and Answer Corner!

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Q: Hello! My son is in second grade and had lots of trouble in first grade—he barely got promoted last year. This year, I am suspecting that he may have attention problems that are interfering with his learning. My school system is doing something called Response to Intervention with all the kids in his grade, which sounds like really great instruction. However, I want to refer him for testing for eligibility for special education services—and I really don't know what his issues are. The school principal is telling me that I can't sign permission for them to test him until he has gone through a certain number of weeks of intervention—but I am worried that he is falling further and further behind. What can I do?

A: It sounds like there may be a bit of confusion about eligibility here. Response to Intervention is a great school-wide tool to provide all learners, including those who may be struggling, with researched, data-driven methodologies to promote enhanced skill building. It can also provide a lot of information, or data, on an individual student's abilities and disabilities. Because of that, our state is allowing school systems to submit a plan to use RTI as one piece of the diagnostic puzzle in identifying students with learning disabilities. So, for the category of SLD (specific learning disability), part of the diagnostic process is to have some pre-referral intervention using RTI. For other suspected categories of disability, (like Other Health Impaired—which often covers attention deficits) there are other required eligibility procedures. In this case, you should be allowed to sign a permission to evaluate form, specifying that you are wondering in particular about attention issues and the educational impact for your son, and the school then has 40 school days to evaluate, hold a meeting—and then develop a plan to serve the child if eligible.

Q: Hello. My daughter used to receive special education services as a child with a health impairment (attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity/impulsivity). Her father and I felt she was being taken out of the general education setting too much and because of that, decided to revoke permission for special education services. She has had behavioral issues in the past that we felt were related to her disability—she has even been suspended from school for some of those behaviors. My question is—if she has bad behavior now, will the same protections apply to her that apply to children with disabilities because the school knows she used to receive special education services?

A: I think the issues around disciplinary protections are important for parents to understand if they are considering removing their child from special education services. Schools must inform parents of the consequences of making that decision—and one of those consequences is that the child will be treated by the school just like any other child in regard to discipline. In comments to the new IDEA amendments that went into effect on December 31, 2008, the US Department of Education responded that if parents withdraw consent for special education and their child is subsequently involved in disciplinary action, their child's prior receipt of special education services does not indicate that the district knew or should have known of their child's special education needs and thus the child is not entitled to IDEA special education protections in the disciplinary process. The US Department of Education specifically noted that the regulations and their comments did not address whether that child might still be entitled to Section 504 services, including Section 504 protections in disciplinary matters. Asking your school system to consider your child's eligibility for services under 504 might be a good strategy to help ensure that disability-related behavior be considered in future disciplinary actions. **To learn more call to check out the STEP dvd Section 504: AntiDiscrimination.**

Federal Register Great Source for Information

IDEA comments in the federal register from the Office of Special Education Programs states "If a child is referred for an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education and related services, the public agency MUST implement the requirements in 300.301-311 and adhere to the {state established} timeframe to complete the evaluation. (Page 44639)

Department of Education is Requesting Public Comment: Your Input Matters!

Before a State can request federal IDEA funds for that fiscal year an Application must be made available for public participation to all interested parties. The application provides assurances that the State will follow the federal laws and also provides a spreadsheet on how the State proposes to spend the discretionary money that they will receive. The State is requesting comments within the next 30 days regarding this plan. At the end of



sixty days the document will be submitted for approval to the Office of Special Education Programs. Upon approval, the fiscal money for IDEA is released to the state for use as outlined in the Application.

The Notice and the Application can be read at <http://state.tn.us/education/speced/sereports.shtml>.

A paper copy is available upon request.

Direct comments and questions to: **Nan McKerley (615) 741-7796 Nan.McKerley@state.tn.us**



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Support & Training for Exceptional Parents, Inc.
712 Professional Plaza
Greeneville, TN 37745

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

STEP AHEAD

Helping Families Like Yours!

Families across Tennessee have responded to our annual phone survey with enthusiasm and thanks for the support and information they have received from STEP staff. Here are a few of the comments that we received:

"I would not have any knowledge of how to create a good IEP. STEP workshops provided concrete effective steps that worked. I am very grateful."

*"Every time I call or ask for help I receive great information."
I encourage every parent with a child with a disability to attend a STEP workshop.*

There are so many of us whom you've helped. We're so busy with the overwhelming demands of our lives that we often don't take the time to thank you, but what you do for our children is nothing short of life-changing.... "

For over 19 years STEP has been answering parents' questions regarding their children's educational rights and assisting them with strategies to help ensure positive outcomes for their children. Many families who learned about special education rights when their children were just transitioning into school services at age three are now sending graduation announcements!

STEP is one of the few agencies that provides FREE information to **ANY** family who has a child birth through age twenty-two with a suspected



disability. As children progress through school the needs of families change, the questions are different, and our staff are there to assist families each step of the way.

There is a great need for contributions to help STEP meet the needs of new families who are accessing our services as well as continue to provide accurate, high quality services to those who have come to rely on STEP.

Will you make a donation to STEP today? Write a check today or go to www.tnstep.org and make a tax deductible donation.