



Educating, Assisting, Supporting, and Informing through this newsletter...
A newsletter for and by parents with sons & daughters with disabilities and education advocates.

Families Together, Inc.

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Statewide Spanish parent line 1-800-499-9443

(All toll free numbers for Kansas
parents & education advocates)
www.familiesstogetherinc.org

Volume 84

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2010 Kansas Legislative Session

Submitted by Jane Rhys, Council for Developmental Disabilities

The Kansas 2010 Legislation began Monday January 11. This year is not an easy one because the Kansas revenue picture is bleak. The State's income has dropped in the first months of State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2010 which began July, 1. The Governor has made cuts to almost all programs including disability and education. Legislators are divided on whether to make more cuts or to raise taxes.

Different options include sin (alcohol and tobacco product) tax hikes along with efforts to consolidate schools and reduce funds for students in special education for whom school districts receive catastrophic funding.

This year is a crisis, all Medicaid funds were cut by 10%. Some service providers will probably go out of business. Others are dropping services that they are not required to provide. The Kansas Medicaid Home and Community Based Services Waivers have all dropped dental care for adults and respite care. The waiting list for persons with developmental disabilities (DD) has grown to 2,182 persons who receive no services and 1,957 persons who receive some services but who need more. The DD Waiver used to be the only one with a waiting list but the Physical Disabilities Waiver now has a waiting list.

Bills of interest include House Bill 2593. This Bill would double the tax rates on alcohol and use the increased tax revenue for developmental disabilities and mental health programs. House Bill 2533 would amend the Kansas Act Against Discrimination to bring this Act into alignment with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Several bills (Senate Bills 358 and 359) would reduce the State's budget for catastrophic aid and others would make it easier for school districts to consolidate (see House Bill 2627).

There are a few who are trying to put funding back into disability programs but so far this has not become a major effort.

If you want to track bills and/or read full copies, go to www.kslegislature.org. Under "Quick Search", you can fill in the bill number under "Full Text of Bills" and download the bill in pdf format. You can also see what the Legislature is doing each week by downloading a House or Senate Calendar under "Current Happenings".

Legislators do like to hear from their constituents so you can look on the Senate and House Rosters under "Hot Items" to see how to contact your representative and/or senator.

Generally speaking, there is little money so most programs will do well if they do not receive cuts for next fiscal year 2011 (begins July 1). If you have preferences for which program receives funding, let your legislators know!

(translated into Spanish on page 2)

Inside this Issue...



Legislatura de Kansas 2010 P. 2

Wichita Inclusion Conference P. 2

Least Restrictive Environment for Preschoolers P. 3

Education Advocate Update p. 3

Family Story p. 4

Tips from the Transition Trenches P. 5

Text4baby p. 6

From the Director's Desk p. 6

Resources..... p. 7

Calendar of Events.....p. 8

Legislatura de Kansas 2010

Translated by Yolanda Corral, Garden City Center

La Legislación de Kansas 2010 empezó el lunes 11 de enero. Este año no es fácil ni alentador. Los ingresos estatales han sido rebajados en los primeros meses del Año fiscal del Estado (SFY) 2010 el cual empezó el primero de julio.

1. El Gobernador ha hecho recortes a casi todos los programas incluyendo a los de discapacidades y la educación. Los legisladores están divididos en la decisión si hacer más recortes o aumentar los impuestos.

Las opciones diferentes incluyen el pecado (alcohol y productos de tabaco) aumento de impuestos junto con los esfuerzos de consolidar las escuelas y reducir fondos para los estudiantes en la educación especial por los cuales los distritos escolares reciben fondos catastróficos.

Este año es uno de crisis, todos los fondos de Medicaid fueron recortados 10%. Algunos proveedores de servicio probablemente se saldrán del negocio. Otros están recortando los servicios que no les exigen proveer. El Kansas Medicaid del Hogar y Renuncias de los Servicios Basados en la Comunidad todos han eliminado el cuidado dental para los adultos y desahogo familiar. La lista de espera para las personas con las discapacidades del desarrollo ha aumentado a 2,182 personas que no reciben servicios y 1,957 personas que reciben algunos de los servicios pero aun necesitan más. La Renuncia de DD era la única con una lista de espera pero la Renuncia de Discapacidades físicas tiene ahora una lista de espera.

Las facturas de interés incluyen el proyecto de ley 2593. Este proyecto doblaría los impuestos del alcohol y usaría esos ingresos para los programas de discapacidades del desarrollo y los programas de la salud mental. "El Proyecto de Ley 2533 presentado por la Cámara enmendaría el Acta de Kansas Contra la Discriminación traería esta Acta en la alineación con la Ley para Personas con Discapacidades (ADA).

Varias facturas (Factura del Senado 358 y 359) reduciría el presupuesto estatal para la ayuda catastrófica y otros harían más fácil para que los distritos escolares se consolidaran (vea el Proyecto de Ley 2627).

Hay algunos quiénes están intentando volver a poner fondos en los programas de las discapacidades pero hasta ahora esto no se ha vuelto un esfuerzo mayor.

Si usted quiere estar al tanteo de las facturas y/o leer las transcripciones completas, vaya a www.kslegislature.org <<http://www.kslegislature.org>>. Bajo la Búsqueda Rápida usted puede rellenar el número de la factura bajo el Texto Lleno de Facturas y puede transmitir el cargue en cuenta en el formato del pdf. Usted también puede ver lo que la Legislatura está haciendo cada semana transmite un Calendario del Senado o proyecto bajo los Acontecimientos Actuales.

Los legisladores les gustan oír de sus electores solo que usted puede mirar las listas del senado y de la Casa bajo "Hot Items" para ver cómo contactar a su Representante y/o senador.

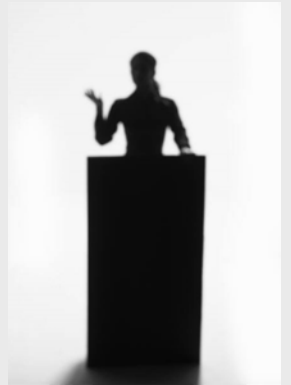
Generalmente hablando, hay muy poco dinero solo que la mayoría de los programas estarán bien si no reciben recortes durante el próximo año (2011, empieza el 1 de julio). ¡Si usted tiene preferencias por cual el programa reciba fondos, permita a sus legisladores saber!

Speakers and Silent Auction Score Big at Inclusion Conference

Parents and professionals from south central and western Kansas gathered in Wichita in December for Families Together's Annual Inclusion Conference. The conference highlighted the importance of least restrictive environments (LRE).

National speakers, Eleanor Bailey and her father, Michael, kicked off the conference with their heart touching inclusion journey from a student and a parent perspective. Eleanor shared her stories of friendships and advocacy as well as her seamless transition to adulthood. Dr. Charles Smith from Kansas State University shared his lessons on *Raising Courageous Kids* and how to deal with bullying. His methods and story telling brought the triangle of bully, target and spectators to life reinforcing that bullying cannot occur without all three. Participants engaged in a variety of breakout sessions focused on issues from medical homes, sexuality, hands-on reading strategies, LRE, interactive special education, supporting students with autism and occupational and speech techniques for the classroom setting. During breaks, vendors helped to connect parents with community resources.

A very competitive silent auction wrapped up the Inclusion Conference. Participants bid fiercely on gift certificates to local restaurants, shops and attractions. The silent auction brought in over \$750! Speakers, vendors, staff and volunteers made this conference truly amazing.



Least Restrictive Environment for Preschoolers

Submitted by Kayzy Bigler, Topeka Center

As a child transitions from the Infant-Toddler program to preschool services parents may note a change in the way services are provided. According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a child is to be educated in his or her least restrictive environment (LRE). IDEA defines LRE as the following: "that to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities, including students in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with students who are not disabled". It goes on to state that "students with disabilities are to be removed from the general education environment only when the nature or severity of the needs of the student is such that education in a general education classroom with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily".



A child's placement should only be determined after the goals and objectives have been written. It should revolve around the child's needs and how those needs can best be met. The team, which includes the parents, then determines what type of setting would best meet the child's needs while still providing an inclusive setting. Parents should be provided with different placement options to consider for their child. This can vary from child to child depending on the child's needs. Some children might receive services in a community based preschool while others might have their services provided in an Early Childhood Special Education classroom setting.

Many school districts form a collaborative partnership with community preschools, Head Starts, Early Head Starts, child care centers, day cares, Mother's Day Out programs, and play groups to provide services for the child in a more inclusive setting. Some districts form their own integrated programs or will place an Early Childhood Special Education program in the same location as an early childhood program, such as a 4 year old at-risk program. This allows the two programs to work in a collaborative manner to provide learning opportunities for all children with and without disabilities. Another option that might be considered is providing services in the child's home.



Be creative when determining the best placement for a child. Parents need to think about how their child learns best. What type of peer interactions would they like for their child to experience? What type of program would best suit their child and family? Parents should also consider the child's current setting (day care, preschool, etc.), and whether or not their child's needs can be effectively met there.

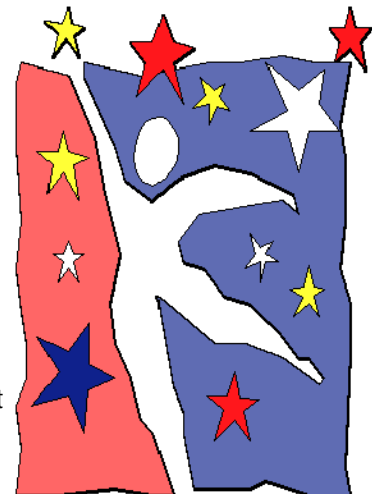
Remember, a child's placement should be based on the child's needs and not on administrative convenience. The goal of LRE is to educate children with disabilities side-by-side their non-disabled peers. If you have questions regarding LRE, please contact your local Families Together Center.

Education Advocate Update

Submitted by Darla Nelson-Metzger, Topeka Center

Q: Do IEPs expire?

A: Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) do not expire, but rather are to be reviewed annually. An IEP team may utilize the last agreed upon IEP until a new one is written. Once a student has been determined eligible for special education and the initial provision of services has been consented to, there should be no delay or denial of a free, appropriate public education. This is helpful information to know for children in foster care. Sometimes, kids move frequently or at the time of the review and the IEP review doesn't take place on or before its review date. This does not mean the student can't enroll or that the new school can't provide services. If you have any questions or are having difficulty enrolling a student, please contact the Families Together center in your region.





FAMILY STORY

Written by Becky Nowak

Kristin Duff and I started the Park on the Plains project in June 2008. She had a passion to have one of these parks here in Scott City and asked if I would help. It started as a \$100,000 project and ended up \$300,000. It was important to me from the very beginning to make this a handicap accessible park. \$100,000 I knew wouldn't make this park different or accessible. Anyone who has a child with a disability knows that equipment, and in order to make things accessible it will be expensive.

I have a 4 children. My 8 year old has spina bifida and is in a wheelchair. As a family, we didn't go to parks as Nate couldn't navigate them without much assistance. We would travel to Wichita or Denver to find a park that would only provide limited access. It was so important to me, that we fundraised and redrew numerous times until we came up with a great park.

We used a company out of New York called Leathers & Associates. They made the first drawing which was a neat drawing. After much consideration we realized that there weren't many platforms, mostly stairs. That plan ended up being revised up until the week before it was built. One big issue to make this park accessible was the ground surface. I know that woodchips are ADA approved, but anyone with a child in a wheelchair knows that they are not accessible. I wanted children to play shoulder to shoulder without much parental assistance. It took several months into the project before the ground surface became a part of the park. I was so excited when it passed. It is very expensive, but has proven to be one of the best assets of the park.

This project has taken much time and energy. I have wanted a park that was accessible since Nate was little. It seemed the task would be too overwhelming as we had so many medical issues with Nate in his early life. A child with medical issues can be overwhelming and sometimes survival was the best we could do. This project came at the perfect time in our lives. Nate has been doing well and the other children are becoming more independent as well. The one thing that I have learned along the way, in our journey of a life of disability, is that God loves my child more than I do. He has given us everything we have needed along the way. The park was no exception.

I encourage all parents to be an advocate for their child. I know that this park wouldn't be so accessible if I hadn't been a part. I wouldn't say that it wouldn't be wonderful, because we had awesome people working on it. I just think that when people, the city, schools, etc are wanting to make things handicap accessible they should have parents and people with disabilities themselves give input and test things out. I had insight that no one else on the committee had because of Nate. I had to pray a lot about things I wanted and I had to keep making my voice heard to make this park so accessible. I also knew that I had to be willing to put in the time and energy to fundraise and make it happen. It takes a lot of dedication, but the rewards have been amazing.

I hope everyone in the area will take the time to come visit our park. We had a little friend who is also in a wheelchair come and play at the park. It was a beautiful sunny day and we played for 4 1/2 hours. The kids had so much fun. It is located on Highway 83. It is truly a park for children of all abilities.

I have always wanted to have a get-together for children in wheelchairs to get together and play. We don't have much opportunity to do so here in western Kansas. If you would like to start being part of a group like that please give me a call.

Becky Nowak
620-872-5395/620-874-5611



Tips from the Transition Trenches

By Michelle Wilkerson

Our son, Trent is a young adult who loves rodeos, showing his 4-H animals at the county and state fairs, football, and country music. Although autism creates some challenges in his life, he is making progress towards independence. My husband and I would like to share some tips we have found helpful, as we help Trent move from school to a meaningful adult life.

Tip 1: Listen to your child's preferences and interests from the time they are in elementary school. By the time you start working on transition plans, you will have lots of info to help him/her focus on their strengths to find a life they will enjoy.

Tip 2: Get training from Families Together or other sources, so you can be a good member of your son/daughter's team. If you want individual help, call the Families Together office.

Tip 3: Work with the school team to help find resources in the community. We asked several people we knew to let Trent do a "job experience" with them. Trent worked on a farm and in a vet clinic afternoons of his senior year. Look for jobs that use the skills and interest your child shows.

Tip 4: Talk about graduation EARLY in the transition process. Even though we started late, Trent was able to participate in the graduation ceremony without accepting a diploma. This has allowed him to continue his education until he has completed his training in the 18-21 program in our co-operative. Trent said, "It was the best day of my life!" when asked about graduating with his class.

Tip 5: Have the school team visit the job sites and talk to the supervisor about job performance and any needed skill development. This will help the IEP team create a program to address additional job skills.

Tip 6: Make sure there is sufficient support on the job to make sure the student is successful.

Tip 7: Trust your instincts. If the IEP team has a different vision and idea for transition plans, stay true to

your son or daughter's needs, interests and preferences. Don't take "NO" for an answer- your child's future may depend on it.

Tip 8: Be a partner with the school team and call Families Together if you need ideas or need to brainstorm with another parent.

Tip 9: If your school district is in a co-op, make sure you understand which district calendar, policies, etc are in place for your student. This is particularly important if your child does not attend school in your "home district".

Tip 10: Build independent skills at home by supporting his/her interests in the community. Foster independence as the young adult is ready for more responsibility.

Tip 11: Be vigilant about the friend's associates and programs your son or daughter "hangs out with". Many times they are not able to distinguish good friends and situations from bad ones.

Tip 12: After 18 years old, be prepared for fewer choices in schools and in the school setting. In some situations, there are no peers in the transitional school environment. The classroom has become more restrictive.

Tip 13: There are educators who are part of a project funded by the Kansas State Department of Education to provide technical assistance to parents of students with autism and educators at the Kansas Instructional Support Network (KISN).

Finally, if you need help or don't understand something: Call for help...

- Families Together, Inc.
- Friend
- Trusted professional

Transition is not just about kids- it includes parents, too.

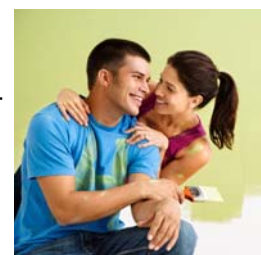


There are still openings for the Hays and Kansas City PNCs!!!

Parent Networking Conferences are fun get-aways **for parents only**. Leave the kids at home and enjoy an educational overnight stay at a hotel. You will participate in workshops and discussion groups, gaining lots of good information and getting the support you need from other families and Families Together staff. Childcare reimbursement of up to \$50 dollars will be available.

Hays • March 19-20, 2010 • 888-820-6364
Kansas City • April 9-10, 2010 • 877-499-5369

Come and join us!!!



Text4baby

Expectant mothers are getting a new tool to help keep themselves and their babies healthy: free tips sent directly to their cell phones timed to their due date or baby's date of birth. This is an exciting opportunity for moms and babies. For more information on text4baby, please visit text4baby.org



Text4baby is a free mobile information service designed to promote maternal and child health. An educational program of the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition (HMHB), text4baby provides pregnant women and new moms with information to help them care for their health and give their babies the best possible start in life. Women who sign up for the service by texting **BABY to 511411** (or **BEBE** in Spanish) will receive free SMS text messages each week, timed to their due date or baby's date of birth.

Envia BEBE al 511411 para Español

Critical information moms need to keep themselves and their babies healthy: The messages focus on topics critical to the health of moms and babies, including immunization, nutrition, seasonal flu, mental health, smoking and alcohol, oral health, and safe sleep.

Reducing premature births in America: More than 500,000 babies – 1 in every 8 – are born prematurely each year in the US. Premature babies can face lifelong health and intellectual development problems. The risk of premature birth can be reduced if moms take care of themselves and their babies during pregnancy (e.g. don't smoke!) and seek prenatal care. Text4Baby can help by giving moms information and connecting them to care.

Reducing health care costs: This free service could save us money by ensuring moms are connected to health knowledge and services as early as possible. Catching problems early can help avoid expensive and potentially harmful complications at birth and in the first year of life. This helps families as well – the average first year medical costs for premature babies are about 10 times greater than for full-term babies.

Text4baby is made possible through a broad, public-private partnership that includes HMHB, Voxiva, CTIA - The Wireless Association and Grey HealthCare Group (a WPP company). Johnson & Johnson is the founding sponsor, and premier sponsors include WellPoint, Pfizer and CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield. U.S. government partners include the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Department of Health and Human Services. The mobile health platform is provided by Voxiva and free messaging services are generously provided by participating wireless service providers. Implementation partners include BabyCenter, Danya International, Syniverse Technologies, Keynote Systems and The George Washington University.

A Note From the Director's Desk...



Dear Parents and Education Advocates:

As we all look forward to nicer weather, it is time to use our "indoor" time wisely to protect services for persons with disabilities in Kansas.

As most of you are well aware, the economic circumstances led the governor to make dramatic cuts in Medicaid services and in money for education. These cuts have affected many of your families or the students you advocate for. During the legislative session, there will be many decisions that will alleviate or aggravate the cuts to these vital programs.

It is more important than ever to:

- get to know your legislator;
- let them know your story (call, write, email); and,
- ask for their help in restoring the services that your family member needs.

If you are not sure of who your representative or senator is, call the Families Together, Inc. office and we will help you get the information you need to contact them. You can also look up your representative or senator on the legislative website at: <http://www.kslegislature.org/legsrv-portal/redistricting.do>

Together, we can make a difference in the way our legislators view the needs of families of children and youth with disabilities!

Stay warm and call them and invite them to come visit you when they are home!

Connie

RESOURCES



FAMILIES TOGETHER TOLL FREE NUMBERS:

Wichita	1-888-815-6364
Topeka	1-800-264-6343
Kansas City	1-877-499-5369
Garden City	1-888-820-6364
Spanish line	1-800-499-9443

www.familiestogetherinc.org

MAKE A DIFFERENCE INFORMATION NETWORK

1-800-332-6262

An information service for children and adults with disabilities, their families, and their service providers.

www.makeadifferenceks.org

KPIRC

Kansas Parent Information Resource Center
(A resource for parents of any child)
3500 SW 10th Room 011E • Topeka, Kansas 66604
785-783-2975 • e-mail: jgroff@kpirc.org
website: www.kpirc.org

NICHCY

*National Information Center for
Children and Youth with Disabilities*

NICHCY Website
www.nichcy.org

- ★ All text-only publications have been reformatted to a new easy-to-read layout
- ★ A side-bar menu makes navigation easy
- ★ The ALL-NEW resource library featuring the Technical Assistance & Dissemination (TA&D) Network makes finding information a breeze

Call us or visit
our website!

1-800-695-0285
www.nichcy.org

CHECK OUT THESE WEBSITES!



New Tool

The IEP Checklist: New App for Your iPhone

Be prepared for your next IEP meeting! This customizable checklist is available as a free iPhone app from the Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC). The tool is available in English and Spanish, and a step-by-step video tutorial shows you how it all works.

www.peatc.org/peatc.cgim

Videos

At <http://www.readingrockets.org/podcasts/special> you will find 2 videos of parents participating in IEP meetings. A 3rd video is about one of the mother's fighting for an appropriate reading program for her child. There are also 2 videos by Rick Lavoie who is an excellent presenter and advocate for children with learning disabilities. One is on Understanding Your Child - He says parents sometimes worry that they're overreacting when their child isn't reading in first & second grade, but they must be the advocate for their child. The other is about Social Skills & the LD child.

Bullying

Wright's Law This week's newsletter deals with bullying. The first section is on What Can Parents Do If Your Child is Being Bullied? Then there is an article on Bullying and its Effects: When Teachers & Administrators Fail to Intervene. Then 2 publications for parents, schools and kids are listed. This newsletter is at: <http://www.wrightslaw.com/nltr/10/nl.0209.htm>

Adaptive devices

Southpaw Enterprises We're not all left-handed, but we do take a different approach to business. We're all about creative solutions, information, and advice – not mass distribution of the latest gadget. In fact, since our founding in 1976, we've dedicated ourselves to developing and manufacturing sensory integration dysfunction (DSI) and neurodevelopmental products that help therapeutic professionals, people with special needs, their families, and other professionals, solve problems or meet new challenges.

<http://www.southpawenterprises.com/Default.aspx>

Spring Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Contact
<i>Mar 19-20, 2010</i>	<i>Families Together Parent Networking Conference, Hays</i>	888-820-6364
<i>Mar 26-27, 2010</i>	<i>Families Together Family Enrichment Weekend, Wichita</i>	888-815-6364
<i>Apr 9-10, 2010</i>	<i>Families Together Parent Networking Conference, Kansas City</i>	877-499-5369
Apr 14, 2010	Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) meeting, KSDE in Topeka (Public Comments at 11:45)	Deb Burns 1-800-203-9462
Apr 15-16, 2010	Kansas Employment First Summit	785-296-2608
<i>Apr 23-24, 2010</i>	<i>Families Together Family Enrichment Weekend, Manhattan</i>	800-264-6343

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