



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.

Administrative Center 3033 W. 2nd, Suite 106, Wichita, Kansas 67203 (316) 945-7747 www.familiestogetherinc.org
Wichita Center 1-888-815-6364 • Topeka Center 1-800-264-6343 • Garden City Center 1-888-820-6364 • Kansas City Center 1-877-499-5369
Statewide Spanish parent line 1-800-499-9443 (All toll free numbers for Kansas parents & education advocates)

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June 2005

The Promise within IDEA 2004

Submitted by ZoAnn Torrey, State Director of Special Education

The revisions of IDEA 2004 hold promise for higher expectations and improved results for children with disabilities. Our attitude about implementing these changes will either help our children get the most from it or freeze us in time. Although there are areas that may concern us, we should embrace the promise these changes provide.

There are several changes affecting IEPs. Frequent concerns are expressed about the elimination of short term objectives for the majority of students. However, if quality, MEASURABLE goals are written for students, the elimination of objectives should not be a concern. For example, we frequently see students who have met all of their reading objectives but have made limited improvement toward the act of reading. The steps to get to the goal are of little importance if we don't move any closer to the goal. In establishing measurable goals, the important thing is, we must have data. We must know the starting point and the expected end point. As long as we are clear on these two data points, we will be able to successfully monitor the student's progress over the course of the IEP. In addition, reporting of progress to parents was further defined in IDEA 2004. It is essential to the success of measurable goals that progress reporting occurs and parents are given this information in a timely manner.

The flexibility of making minor changes to an IEP outside of an IEP meeting sounds appealing. At the same time, it is critical that parameters be established for this practice. Parents and administrators are both concerned about managing this flexibility. We are encouraging everyone to "wait." We need to see the proposed federal regulations and hear the comments before establishing parameters.

As for the increased flexibility that has been added for IEP team attendance, it will be interesting to see how the regulations clarify this new law. In one way, the changes give us permission to reduce the number of people, especially related service providers, in attendance at some IEP meetings. Then again, I will be concerned if the flexibility is aimed primarily at decreasing the attendance of general education teachers. We will need to provide clear guidance on the intent of these changes as soon as possible.

As you know, Kansas maintained the requirement that secondary transition planning begins at age 14. The requirement for measurable post-school goals should encourage teams to think beyond completion of high school. We must ensure we make transition planning meaningful. Many of us are discouraged by the impact that excessive caseloads and shortages in other state programs has had on meaningful interagency transition planning. IDEA 2004 gives us the opportunity to strengthen our interagency agreements, ensuring students receive the support and services they need.

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The Garden City Center has a new address!

**Families Together, Inc.
Garden City Center
1518 Taylor Plaza
Garden City, KS 67846**



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Depending on how it is implemented, the flexibility to use 15% of the special education dollars for early intervening services may reduce the number of students referred for special education evaluations. Here again, KSDE's communication to districts has been, "Go slowly. Plan thoughtfully." Required planning, to ensure effective practices are being considered, will be built into the application for funds. It is unfortunate that the funds for early intervening services are not additional dollars. Many districts will not be able to consider reallocating funds.

IDEA 2004 holds the promise of teachers who are highly qualified in special education as well as the core content they teach. This is the right goal to have. The legislation provides us the opportunity to reconsider how we have provided instruction to children with disabilities. Our job is to ensure we do it right—keep what is working and improve in other areas, work to improve the system while realizing the limitations. Kansas has high standards for licenses to teach in our state. Kansas already has a shortage of qualified special education teachers. We must plan carefully to ensure the highly qualified requirements of IDEA 2004 won't add to this shortage.

The new requirements for data collection, analysis, and reporting will strengthen accountability for students with disabilities. Currently, we are working to develop a technology infrastructure to support this data reporting and collection. The Kansas State Department of Education is changing its special education

monitoring process as a means of focusing attention on improving outcomes for students with disabilities. I believe it is appropriate that the state and districts be held accountable for the results of our students with disabilities. The state will share accountability for improving the data and student results we report publicly.

The discipline provisions of IDEA have been further clarified by the recent revisions and seem more straightforward to me. I believe it is important that the law emphasizes access to the general curriculum and continued progress toward IEP goals while a student is suspended or in interim alternative settings. I am not worried that the addition of "serious bodily injury" will result in unilateral removal of a student from school since the referenced definition is very limited.

I believe what parents want most for their children is to be respected, valued, and treated fairly by the system. These things cannot be mandated. You cannot mandate what matters most (Michael Fullan). Rather than being frustrated with the changes, I think we renew our efforts to help improve things that really matter for our children.

While there are many other changes in the law, I believe these hold the most promise and in some cases concern. Through focusing on the promise, we can overcome the concerns. Let's continue to improve our practices, our relationships, and our expectations for students!



My name is Laurie Gerber.

I am the new Parent Information Specialist/Conference Coordinator in the Garden City Families Together Center. My husband, Steve, and I have four children. Our son, Anton, is 16 and still at home and cannot wait to get out on his own. Anton has ADHD and mental retardation with autistic characteristics. I have worked at St. Catherine Hospital for the last 25 years. I have done lots of volunteer work including my involvement with the REACH program locally. I look forward to being a part of the Families Together team. Please call or stop by the Garden City Center to meet me or to say hello.

*An exciting new
magazine is about to be
launched!*

The Autism Perspective- TAP Magazine



This will be a quarterly full-color publication devoted to the subject of autism spectrum disorders, persons with autism, parents and professionals. The magazine promises to be about options and different perspectives without taking sides. This will be a forum for discussion for everyone in the autism community. It will present a positive, upbeat and eclectic variety of perspectives. Visit the TAP website for subscription information at:

www.theautismperspective.org

"Discover the Magic" Early Childhood Family Enrichment Weekend

Submitted by Gloria Rader, Wichita Center

Sometimes, when it sounds too good to be true ... it really is true! Try to imagine showing up at a beautiful hotel on a Friday evening with your children. You check into a comfortable room then head into a first-class dining room for a scrumptious dinner. Your family is joined by trained volunteers who care for your children at the hotel while you attend a variety of workshops ranging from Individualized Family Service Plans to learning sensory activities for your little one. You receive a thick take-home manual of materials related to your child with a disability. You develop friendships with other families who also have a child with unique needs. Exhibits are in the hallway with information about resources such as the local Down Syndrome Support Group.

Now, imagine your children sharing in this magical weekend. They each have a volunteer companion and spend the day playing in day care rooms with other children their age. The rooms are filled with age appropriate toys, games and craft activities. A magic show by Puddles the Clown and a performance by The Wichita Children's Theatre treat everyone with lots of grins and giggles.

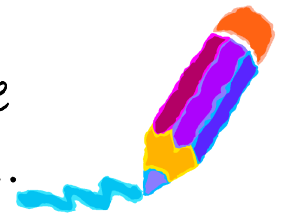
Is this for real? Well, just ask any of the families who attended the Early Childhood Family Enrichment Weekend in Wichita on April 8-9. Or ask one of the 35 volunteers who, regardless of their tiredness by Saturday evening, want to help again next year.

Did I mention that all expenses are paid by Families Together and supporting state agencies? That's just too good to be true! Watch for our fall newsletter with dates of upcoming events. You, too, can share a magical weekend with your family that really is true!

If you are a parent or professional who would like to learn more about early childhood services in your area, contact a Families Together Center near you for a free information packet.



A Note From the Director's Desk...



Dear Families and Education Advocates:

Whether we like it or not, Summer is here! There are certainly opportunities for a break from the routine, but the lack of structure is hard on some of us.

The staff at Families Together will be working this summer to put together great training opportunities for you during the next school year. Your evaluations of our past events will drive our work to improve and expand the topics you need to become even better advocates for the children and young adults in your life. The Theme for next school year will be "Recipes for Success". We are compiling a recipe book to carry out this theme. Submit your family's favorites to Kristen in the Kansas City center.

The Families Together, Inc. Board of Directors is recruiting new members at this time. They are particularly interested in persons who can bring a certain expertise to their discussions. Areas of expertise needed: state legislature, cultural diversity, banking experience, attorney, Philanthropic Experience, Special Events planning, Fund raising, media relations. If you have any of these gifts, or have a family member or an acquaintance with these gifts, please request an application for the board. The responsibilities of the board of directors include: promoting the mission of Families Together, providing for the financial soundness of the organization, and general oversight of the programs and administration of the organization.

Have a great summer!

Sincerely,

Connie

Family Story

People like Rebecca

By Pauletta Raines

When asked to write a one-page article about Rebecca, I said, "Sure, I can do that." After all, my training and experience are as a journalist. But as I've tried to put words on the page, I've found that there's an indefinable something about Rebecca that slows my fingers on the keyboard.

When I look at Beck, I see a plus-sized woman with short dark hair, moving slowly through life, often carrying two or three bags: one for her 12-Step books and a handful of markers, one for her lunch, and one for "her stuff." Rebecca has *presence*. She says hello to nearly everyone she encounters.

Depending on the group and circumstance, she's either an outgoing, enthusiastic friend-to-all, or a respectful, steadying influence during times of stress or sadness. Among family and friends, her warm hugs are legendary.



Rebecca lives in an apartment in West Wichita and catches the city bus early each weekday morning for her job at the Kansas Elks Training Center for the Handicapped, where she works as a candlemaker. Candlemaking isn't her only skill; she also contributes in other work projects, such as assembling notebook binders for corporations and putting together training kits for special education teachers. On some days, she comes home smelling like the air fresheners she's been making all day.

Rebecca's learning disabilities weren't diagnosed until she was nearly 5, because they were subtle. Developmentally delayed, she began attending special education classes from Kindergarten through ninth grade in her hometown of Colby. Moving to Wichita in 1989 with her mom was traumatic, but the transition to Wichita Northwest High School proved a good stepping stone when she entered into "the real world." With assistance from family, friends and social services agencies, Rebecca transitioned after her 1992 graduation into an independent lifestyle that she's maintained since 1993.

As a child, Beck was slow to begin talking, but today, she's not at all shy about speaking up – whether for herself, or for someone else. A phone is never far from her reach. When the department phone rings, her tone is all business: "Candles, Rebecca speaking." Just after 5 p.m., her voice is end-of-the-day tired when she checks in with her Mom or her sister, just to ask, "Hi, whatchadoin'?" She positively bellows at sporting events, but can transform her demeanor in a nanosecond to a smile and a gentle coo when she sees a baby, whether two-legged, or the furry, four-legged kind.

People like Rebecca bring out the best in the rest of us. I recognize her as one of the most important teachers in my life. Having her around always reminds me to be grateful and to accept my many blessings. Every day, she illustrates the principle of doing the best you can with what you have to work with. Without saying a word, she calls me to be kinder and more gentle, even toward myself. She epitomizes the live-and-let-live philosophy that leads us all to a better, more peaceful world. People like Rebecca. What a blessing she is; what a Presence.



Preemie magazine

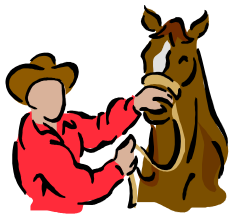
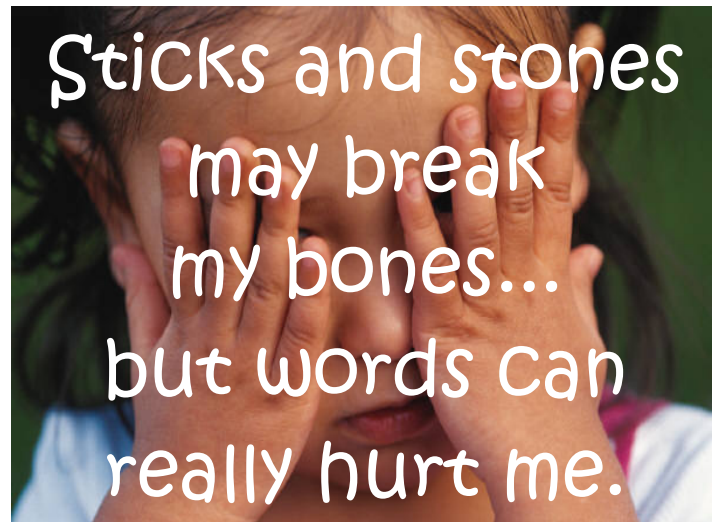


"The resource for the preemie community"

Parents of Premies
Pediatric Professionals

- A free print magazine, for qualified subscribers, Preemie magazine is packed with information for parents with preemies from birth into the school years. 703-598-5776
- A free online community with chats, forums, resources, and more.

www.preemiemagazine.com



2005 Kaw Valley Special Rodeo

Friday, July 29, 2005 7:00 pm
Wells Arena, Cico Park
Riley County Fair Grounds
Manhattan, Kansas

The Kaw Valley Special Rodeo is an opportunity for children with special needs to participate in fun and noncompetitive rodeo events such as:

Goat Relay	Steer Roping	Flag Race
Bull Riding	Bareback Riding	Steer Wrestling

All children have a ONE-ON-ONE prorodeo partner, leading them to each event. The children are assisted by Kaw Valley Rodeo Association members. All events are designed to be appropriate to the needs of the special children. Safety considerations are foremost at all times. Each child can choose any or all of the events they want.

There is no cost for participating children ages 5 to 12. The KVRA encourages the children and parents to stay and be their guests for the regular PRCA Rodeo which will follow the Kaw Valley Special Rodeo.

Due to the limited number allowed to participate, the children need to sign up in advance. This will also allow the staff to know of special needs a child may have and to have tickets mailed in advance.

Please contact by July 25th:

Sandy Chandler
1530 Pierre St
Manhattan, KS 66502-4243
785-776-0338

Family Voices

Submitted by Susan Arnold, Topeka Center

Health Resources

A Parent's Guide - Doctors, Disabilities, and the Family is a publication of the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY). This can be viewed on the website- www.nichcy.org. This guide explores "how to" questions relating to finding health care providers for your child.

A booklet, "Working with Doctors" is available from PACER's Health Information and Advocacy Center. Specifically for families with children with special health care needs and disabilities, the booklet explains how to effectively communicate with doctors, how to develop care plans, and how to look for a doctor. www.pacer.org

The Exceptional Parent Magazine Annual Resource Guide provides a multitude of information of national resources for specific disabilities, and much more. See www.eparent.com

And, the American Academy of Pediatrics website is a resource to find a pediatrician. Another resource is their Pediatric Subspecialist. Fact Sheets which explain information on the background and area of expertise for many pediatric subspecialties. www.aap.org Then go to the Parents' Corner.

Remember - Discuss a child's needs with a competent health care professional. The worldwide web is not a substitute for the care of a health care provider.

KANSAS 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

Reminder: The Regional Coordinators' yearly contracts ended May 31, 2005.

For assistance, please call the Center nearest you.

Make A Difference Information Network

1-800-332-6262

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

KPIRC

Kansas Parent Information Resource Center
(A resource for parents of any child)

PO Box 320 • Lecompton, Kansas 66050
785-887-6711 • 866-711-6711 • fax: 785-887-6711
e-mail: nkraft@nekesc.org • website: www.kpirc.org

NICHCY

*National Information Center for
Children and Youth with Disabilities*

NICHCY has NEW Website!!

Same address - 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 Internet Resources!



Special Child is an online publication dedicated to parents of children with special needs. www.specialchild.com

Advocates This site provides resources, links, and a forum for those who wish to advocate for students with special needs. www.infocom.com/~intern/

Emerel's Collection of Disability Resources is a huge, well organized site to search. www.emerel.org

Canine Companions for Independence is a national nonprofit that enhances the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained assistance dogs and ongoing support to ensure quality partnerships. caninecompanions.org

Exceptional Parent is the magazine's on-line resource. It provides information, support, ideas, encouragement and outreach for parents and families of children with disabilities and the professionals who work with them. www.eparent.com

Family Voices Learn more about children and youth with special health care needs, advocating for your child, Medicaid and other public financed programs. www.familyvoices.org

MUMS National Parent to Parent Network

MUM's main purpose is to provide support to parents in the form of a networking system that matches them with other parents whose children have the same or similar conditions. www.netnet.net/mums/

National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NDRR)

Provides leadership and support for a comprehensive program of research related to the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities. All of their programmatic efforts are aimed at improving the lives of individuals with disabilities from birth through adulthood. www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/nidrr/index.html?src=mr

Disability Resources, Inc. Information about rights, financial resources, assistive technology, employment opportunities, housing modifications, child rearing and educational options, transportation & mobility services and more. www.disabilityresources.org

Summer 2005 Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Contact
June 16, 2005	Education Advocate Training, Lawrence	800-264-6343
June 21, 2005	Grandparents - Legal Rights in Kansas Workshop, Topeka	785-286-2329
Aug 1-2, 2005	Governor's Conference on Juvenile Justice, Topeka	800-432-8222
Aug. 10-12, 2005	Kansas Disability Caucus, Topeka	800-217-4525
Aug. 20, 2005	Families Together Board Meeting, Wichita	888-815-6364



Sometido por Nancy Hernandez

Quiero empezar, dándole las gracias a aquellas personas, las cuales son responsables de que yo esté aquí. Quiero tomar un momento para introducirme, hola mi nombre es Nancy Hernandez. Yo soy la nueva Especialista de Familia Bilingüe y estare trabajando, en la oficina de Garden City. Yo estoy casada con Juan Hernandez, un fanático del fútbol. Nosotros tenemos dos niñas hermosas. Crystal es alegre y muy inteligente. Ella tiene 4 años de edad. Crystal tiene una incapacidad del habla, ella requiere mucha paciencia, pero qué niño no requiere lo mismo. Araceli es simplemente preciosa, ella tiene 20 meses de nacida, ella es muy inquieta y lo quiere todo. Yo nací en Midland, TX pero, crecí toda mi vida aquí, en Garden City. Estoy muy emocionada por mi nuevo trabajo. Cuando Tami me ofreció este oficio, no lo quería creer, todavía no lo puedo creer. Este trabajo me da una gran oportunidad de aprender más sobre la incapacidad de mi niña y sus derechos. Estoy contenta de ser parte de esta organización en la cual asiste a padres y sus hijos con incapacidades. Estoy ansiosa por conocer al resto de la organización. Por favor tenga la confianza de comunicarse conmigo, si tiene alguna pregunta o comentario.

Estamos compartiendo ideas sobre nuestro siguiente evento. El evento es Fin de Semana de Enriquecimiento Familiar. Este evento tomara lugar en la Plaza Inn, Inc., de Garden City. El tema de este enriquecimiento es Nuestra Herencia de Familia. Si usted gusta contribuir o ser una donación a este evento, por favor de comunicarse conmigo. Cualquier sugerencia o alguna pregunta, por favor de llamar a Familias Unidas, Inc. También necesitamos voluntarios de acompañantes para los niños.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COMMENT

The Kansas State Board of Education hereby gives notice of a 60-day comment period for public input on the proposed Application for Federal Fiscal Year 2005 Grant Award under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as Amended in 2004. The Application consists of the required assurances, certifications, and use of funds summary.

The Student Support Services Team of KSDE will accept written comments until June 30, by email to cdermyer@ksde.org, or by U.S. mail to Student Support Services, Kansas State Department of Education, 120 S.E. 10th Avenue, Topeka, Kansas 66612-1182. A copy of the Application can be accessed on the KSDE homepage at www.kansped.org (New Items), or a copy may be obtained from the Student Support Services Team, KSDE 1-800-203-9462.

Starkey Hearing Foundation

Our mission is to provide hearing aids to those persons around the world who cannot afford to buy them. We provide approximately 10,000 domestically and approximately 10,000 internationally per year. If you have someone who needs a hearing aid, please let us know and we'd be happy to help.

Debbie Wright
 Starkey Hearing Foundation
 866-354-3254 • 972-239-9637-fax
www.sotheworldmayhear.org

Due to constant increases in printing and postage, we are updating our mailing list and encouraging people to switch to receiving the Families Together Newsletter electronically. If you would like to receive the newsletter electronically, please send your e-mail address to:

kansascity@famielstogethelnc.org



DON'T MISS OUT!

Beginning with our Fall issue of the Families Together newsletter, professionals will need to access the newsletter either through our website at **www.famielstogethelnc.org**, or by sending a twenty dollar yearly contribution to the Wichita Administrative Center at 3033 W. 2nd Ste. 106 Wichita, KS 67203. Families will continue to receive the quarterly newsletter free of charge.

Return Service Requested

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